

Ruel Foster, Professor of English, Papers, 1906-2000 A&M 3461

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1906-2000



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Abstract

Papers of Ruel Foster, a former professor of English and Chairman of the English Department, West Virginia University. Includes material related to author Thomas Wolfe (box 6); an extensive series of correspondence with acclaimed Appalachian writer Jesse Stuart (boxes 1-3 and 8); and letters from Helen Pancake, mother of Breece D'J Pancake (box 6). Also includes records related to the publication of Foster's book on Jesse Stuart in Twayne's United States Author Series, a photographic portrait of Jesse Stuart, and other records related to Stuart. There is also a manuscript by author Davis Grubb of his stage adaptation of his novel "The Night of the Hunter" with signed manuscript cover letter to Foster by Grubb discussing this adaptation, with reference to actress Lillian Gish.

Creator

Foster, Ruel E. (Ruel Elton), 1916-

Extent

11.9 Linear Feet Summary: 11 ft. 11 in. (1 document case, 5 in.); (9 records cartons, 15 in. each); (1 large flat storage box, 3 in.)

Physical Location

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Repository

West Virginia and Regional History Center

Administrative Information

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Biographical / Historical

Jesse Hilton Stuart was born August 8, 1906 in Greenup County, Kentucky. He published over 2000 poems and over 60 books, writing primarily about Appalachian life in poems, novels, children's books, autobiographical works, and short stories. He received several prestigious accolades for his work, including the highest award for poetry in America, the Fellowship for the Academy of American Poets. Stuart spent the majority of his life in his hometown of Greenup and remained deeply devoted to his Appalachian roots until he died February 17, 1984.

Scope and Contents

Papers of Ruel Foster, a former professor of English and Chairman of the English Department, West Virginia University. Includes material related to author Thomas Wolfe (box 6); an extensive series of correspondence with acclaimed Appalachian writer Jesse Stuart (boxes 1-3 and 8); and letters from Helen Pancake, mother of Breece D'J Pancake (box 6). Also includes records related to the publication of Foster's book on Jesse Stuart in Twayne's United States Author Series, a photographic portrait of Jesse Stuart, and other records related to Stuart. There is also a manuscript by author Davis Grubb of his stage adaptation of his novel "The Night of the Hunter" with signed manuscript cover letter to Foster by Grubb discussing this adaptation, with reference to actress Lillian Gish.

Thomas Wolfe material includes: letter from Mrs. Julia E. Wolfe, Thomas Wolfe's mother, to Mrs. George Jones regarding lease on house, 1942; five postcards from Mabel Wheaton, Thomas Wolfe's sister to Mrs. George Jones, and one postcard to Mr. Jonathan Brown, regarding trip to Florida, 1942; two letters from Mabel Wheaton to Mr. and Mrs. George Jones regarding lease on house, 1942. The letter of August 15, 1942 includes discussion of the disposition of Thomas Wolfe's property in New York, including his furniture, typewriters, and books, and intent to move them into a house and create a museum, and to "leave the

property and all in memory of Tom and for all who are interested in his work." There is also an unsigned carbon copy of a letter from Thomas Wolfe to "Max", August 19, 1938; and a photograph of Mabel W. Wheaton with a portrait of her brother in the background, taken in Washington, D.C. in 1941.

The Jesse Stuart letters are substantive in content, documenting professional and some personal activities. Most of these letters are to Ruel Foster. Since Professor Foster was writing an evaluative work on Stuart for Twayne's United States Author Series with Stuart's knowledge and approval, Stuart is forthcoming in his letters in providing biographical information, and in giving his opinions regarding the literary scene of his time, including comments on writers, critics, editors, professors, scholars, and his place in literature. Stuart also comments freely regarding canonic authors like Mark Twain, Ernest Hemingway, and William Faulkner, among others.

There are also records regarding Foster's book on Stuart (including correspondence with his publisher, reviews, and royalty statements), clippings of miscellaneous articles by Stuart, two poem typescripts, a copy of his Guggenheim Fellowship application, postcards (blank) of his home and of the Jesse Stuart Lodge, and a photographic portrait from approximately 1968-1969.

There is a typescript of "The Life and Passion of a Sea Island Man" by Esau Lanier, 1969.

Oversize material includes clippings regarding Jesse Stuart, 1970-1977, and a sound recording of poetry by Vachel Lindsay recited by his son Nicholas Cave Lindsay on Caedmon Records, TC 1216, undated.

Separated Materials

West Virginia folk culture photographs filed in Photograph Subject Files: Portraits - Folk Musicians - Gainer, Patrick; Portraits - Folk Musicians - Foster Collection; Folk Festivals - Glenville Folk Festival - Foster Collection.

Keywords

Foster, Ruel E. (Ruel Elton), 1916-

Stuart, Jesse, 1906-1984

Wolfe, Thomas, 1900-1938