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Martha A. Hall papers, 1971-2011, undated

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Maine Women Writers Collection

Abplanalp Library

University of New England

716 Stevens Avenue

Portland, Maine 04103

mwwc@une.edu

URL: <https://library.une.edu/mwwc/>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Maine Women Writers Collection
Creator:	Hall, Martha A., 1949-2003
Title:	Martha A. Hall papers
ID:	0177
ID [aspace_uri]:	/repositories/3/resources/631
Date [inclusive]:	1971-2011, undated
Physical Description:	2.25 linear feet 3 boxes
Language of the Material:	English .

Preferred Citation

Martha A. Hall papers, Maine Women Writers Collection, University of New England, Portland, Maine

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Biographical/Historical Note

Martha Hall was born on June 4, 1949, in Malden, Massachusetts, to Dwight and Gertrude Smith. She attended Deering High School in Portland, Maine, and then Smith College, graduating in 1971 with a degree in English. There she was honored for her poetry, winning the same prize that had previously been awarded to Sylvia Plath. She was married in 1971 to Alan Hall, and they had two daughters, Gabrielle (1976) and Danielle (1978).

From 1971 to 1975, Hall taught eighth grade English in South Portland, Maine. In 1972 she earned Art Education certification, and it was then that Hall began weaving. In 1973, Hall started teaching weaving, and in 1975 she traveled to Finland and Sweden to study weaving techniques. On her return, she taught Finnish weaving at Wittenburg University in Ohio. She established Martha Hall, Inc., a retail store selling yarn, books, spinning and weaving supplies, in 1979 and in 1983 the business was expanded to include a national mail-order catalog. To further improve her marketing and management skills, Martha took business classes at University of Southern Maine. In 1987, she entered the MBA program at Tuck School,

Dartmouth College. She became the first woman to be awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award from Dartmouth College. A week before she graduated from Dartmouth, Martha's long struggle with breast cancer began. Still, she continued to commute from Maine to New York for her job at American Express, and then returned to Maine in 1994 to work as director of customer service at L.L. Bean. She worked there until 2000, when illness forced her to retire.

In 1995 she attended the Paper Arts workshop at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Deer Isle, Maine, which marked the beginning of the creative pursuit that would become her legacy. In 1996, Hall took her first book arts workshop with Rebecca Goodale and Dennis Gilbert at Haystack and in the same year created her first artist's book, *The Raven*. In 1998 she moved to Orr's Island, Maine, and graduated from the BFA program at Maine College of Art. Martha helped to found the Cancer Community Center in South Portland, and served on the board of the YWCA.

Hall's books were featured in many special exhibitions across the country, and in 2001 the Maine Women Writers Collection acquired a core collection of her books for student use in the Medicine and Humanities curriculum as well as produced a video about her work entitled "I Make Books." Martha's works are now part of the permanent collections of such institutions as Bates, Bowdoin, Dartmouth, Smith and Wellesley colleges, and Harvard University, among others. It was Hall's wish that her books not be sold to private collectors but be made available for the public, cancer patients, and medical professionals. Hall said that her books helped her heal, that they were a way for her to explore the importance of living life fully. She died at her home on Orr's Island on December 5, 2003, at age 54.

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Collection Scope and Content

The Martha A. Hall papers document Martha's practice as a book artist, and include journals, notes, postcards from shows, email and postcards exchanged with Allison Cooke Brown (coauthor of *Paper Passages*) and multiple prototype books that show Martha's interest in form, texture and color. Also included are slides of work, artist's statements, promotional material and price lists, as well as a catalog published by Smith College for a traveling exhibit. There are some photocopies of letters written by UNE students to Martha Hall and her family, which were produced in response to Martha's work. The collection also includes Martha's obituary and a letterpress booklet created by Betsy Shepard for Martha's memorial service in January 2004. Additionally, there is a box of books that were made by other artists. Many of these works were made at Haystack, but others are of unknown origin.

The journals included in the collection span a wide range of time, from the Halls' honeymoon in 1971 to 2003, near the end of Martha Hall's life. The contents are a mixture of creative process and deeply personal reflections on illness and death, family, art-making and success.

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Arrangement

This collection is organized as a single series, chronologically within each accession group.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Maine Women Writers Collection

Abplanalp Library
University of New England
716 Stevens Avenue
Portland, Maine 04103
mwwc@une.edu
URL: <https://library.une.edu/mwwc/>

Access

Collection is open for research.

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Related Materials

Related Materials

The Maine Women Writers Collection also holds many of Martha A. Hall's artists' books, along with some books that she collected by other artists.

Other institutions that hold Martha Hall's work include Bowdoin College and Smith College.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Book artists
- Artists' books
- Cancer
- Orrs Island (Me.)
- Exhibition catalogs
- Postcards
- Ephemera
- Correspondence
- Clippings
- Slides
- Video recordings
- Diaries
- Hall, Martha A., 1949-2003

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Directions in Maine Living Exhibition , 1973 <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 001
Work by other artists, 1990-1997 <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 002
Promotional postcards, 1999, undated <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 003
Postcards for shows, 1999-2003	Box 1	Folder 004

<u>Language of the Material:</u> English.		
Cinnamon stick blank book, 2000 <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 005
Resume, artist statement, book list, 2001 <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 006
Paper Passages emails, 2001 <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 007
Paper Passages publicity material, 2002 <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 008
Paper Passages slides, 2002 <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 009
Price list, 2002 <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 010
Postcards to Allision Cooke Brown, 2002 <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 011
Letter from Alice and templates, practice book from workshop, 2002 <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 012
Purchases from other artists, 2002, undated <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 013
Holding in, Holding On catalog, 2003 <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 014
Letters to Martha Hall from UNE students, 2003 <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 015
Obituary, 2003 <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 016
Booklet for "An Appreciation of Martha's Legacy" by Betsey Shepard, 2004 <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 017
Letters to Martha's family from UNE students, 2004, 2011 <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 018
Artists' books slides, undated <u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	Box 1	Folder 019
Diane Roesing O'Brien, Waiting for Christmas advent calendar, undated	Box 1	Folder 020

Language of the Material: English.

Fish handkerchief, undated	Box 1	Folder 021
<u>Language of the Material</u> : English.		
Cat fish game, undated	Box 1	Folder 021a
Prototype books, undated	Box 1	Folder 022
<u>Language of the Material</u> : English.	Box 1	Folder 023
	Box 1	Folder 024
	Box 1	Folder 025
	Box 1	Folder 026
	Box 1	Folder 027
	Box 1	Folder 028
	Box 1	Folder 029
Blank book with shell, undated	Box 1	Folder 030
Between the Lines--unfinished artist's book, 2003	Box 1	Folder 031
Draft copy of Voices: Five Doctors Speak	Box 1	Folder 032
Cancer as a Turning Point video	Box 1	Folder 033
Weaving journal, 1971-1975	Box 2	Folder 034
Gabrielle journal, 1976-1979, undated	Box 2	Folder 035
Helsinki journal pages, 1970s	Box 2	Folder 036
Morning pages journal, March-June 1996	Box 2	Folder 037
Morning pages journal, June-September 1996	Box 2	Folder 038
Morning pages journal, September 1996-January 1997	Box 2	Folder 039
Morning pages journal, January-March 1997	Box 2	Folder 040
Journal, 1996-1998	Box 2	Folder 041
Journal, 1997-1998	Box 2	Folder 042
Journal--quotations and inspirations, 1997-2000	Box 2	Folder 043
Journal, 1998	Box 2	Folder 044
Pages from journal, 1997-1999	Box 2	Folder 045
Creative journal, 2002-2003	Box 2	Folder 046
Calendar pages, 2003	Box 2	Folder 047
Medical notes, 1999-2000	Box 2	Folder 048
Notes and ephemera, 2002-2003, undated	Box 2	Folder 049
Notes and writing, 2002-2003, undated	Box 2	Folder 050

Notes and lists, undated	Box 2	Folder 051
Notes, lists and end of life planning, undated	Box 2	Folder 052
Song book [Martha Smith], undated	Box 2	Folder 053
Thirteen artists' books by other artists, 1998-2003, undated <u>Language of the Material</u> : English.	Box 3	

General

This group of books includes books made at Haystack by various artists in 2003, likely at a time when Martha attended a workshop there.