

Rachel Carson collection, 1946-2007

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Maine Women Writers Collection

Abplanalp Library
University of New England
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Portland, Maine 04103
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URL: <http://www.une.edu/mwwc>

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical/Historical Note	3
Collection Scope and Content	4
Arrangement	4
Administrative Information	5
Related Materials	5
Controlled Access Headings	6
Collection Inventory	6

Summary Information

Repository:	Maine Women Writers Collection
Creator:	Carson, Rachel, 1907-1964
Title:	Rachel Carson collection
ID:	0081
Date [inclusive]:	1946-2007
Physical Description:	.25 linear feet 15 folders
Language of the Material:	English

Preferred Citation

Rachel Carson collection, Maine Women Writers Collection, University of New England, Portland, Maine

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical/Historical Note

Rachel Louise Carson was born on May 27, 1907, on a Springdale Farm in Pennsylvania's Allegheny Valley to Maria Frazier McLean and Robert Warden Carson. Her mother instilled in her a love for natural history. In 1918, *St. Nicholas*, a magazine for young writers, published her story, "A Battle in the Clouds," which was set in World War I. She published several more pieces in the magazine, and her interest in writing continued to grow. Carson attended Springdale Grammar School, Springdale High School, and Parnassus High School, from which she graduated in 1925. She received a scholarship to attend Pennsylvania College for Women, and received her A.B. magna cum laude in 1929. She studied both English and biology, but was uncertain which to pursue. The summer of that same year Carson earned a fellowship at the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory and with the help of Mary Scott Skinker, her biology teacher in college, Carson was accepted to the graduate program in zoology at Johns Hopkins University. In 1930 she was able to assist in the genetics lab of Dr. Raymond Pearl. Carson graduated from the program in 1932 with an A.M. in zoology, continuing at Johns Hopkins as a doctoral student until 1934. After the deaths of her father in 1935 and her sister in 1937, Carson and her mother became responsible for her sister's children. Carson moved with them to Silver Spring, Maryland, where she lived for the remainder of her life. She worked as an editor of radio broadcasts for the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries and as a junior aquatic biologist under District Chief Elmer Higgins from 1936 to 1939.

During this time she wrote columns for Baltimore Sunday Sun on topics concerning the fisheries, and her article “Undersea,” published by Atlantic Monthly in 1937, prompted a Simon and Schuster book to be published in 1941. *Under the Sea-Wind: A Naturalist’s Picture of the Ocean* was Carson’s first book. By 1946, Carson was an aquatic biologist and director of the publishing program of the Fish and Wildlife Services. She worked to establish a Nature Conservancy branch in Maine, became director of the Washington D.C. Audubon Society, and wrote several magazine articles. After her second book, *The Sea Around Us* (1951), was published Carson was able to build a cottage on Southport Island, Maine. In 1955 Carson published *The Edge of the Sea*, a guide to identifying sea creatures found in tidal pools, marshes and shallows. After a break from writing due to family and health concerns, Carson published in 1962 her most important, groundbreaking book, *Silent Spring*. Documenting in detail for the first time the effects of pesticides and insecticides on the natural world, *Silent Spring* is widely credited with giving birth to the environmental movement in this country and around the world. Backlash from the chemical industry lead to Congressional hearings that bore out her findings, vindicating Carson and leading to the banning of DDT. Many attribute the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970 and the passage of the Clean Air Act, the Federal Environmental Pesticide Control Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act to the consciousness-raising of *Silent Spring*. During 1963 she won many awards for this effort, including the Conservationist of the Year Award, the Albert Schweitzer Medal, medals from the National Audubon Society and the American Geographic Society, and an election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Carson died of cancer and heart disease on April 14, 1964. In 1970 Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel dedicated the Rachel Carson Wildlife Refuge in Maine and in 1980 President Carter posthumously awarded Carson the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Collection Scope and Content

This collection includes material published in periodicals (photocopies) and one article about Carson.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

This collection is organized as a single series.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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cmiller10@une.edu
URL: <http://www.une.edu/mwwc>

Revision Description

materials added 2009

Access

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

For permission to reproduce or publish, please contact the Curator of the Maine Women Writers Collection.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Materials

Linda Lear collection of Rachel Carson books and papers, Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives, Connecticut College, New London, Connecticut

Rachel Carson papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut

Rachel Carson collection, College Archives, Chatham University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Conservation of natural resources
- Pesticides -- Environmental aspects
- Southport Island (Me.)
- Correspondence
- Photographs
- Clippings
- Exhibition catalogs
- Christmas cards
- Carson, Rachel, 1907-1964
- Carson, Rachel, 1907-1964

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Essay "Indoor Ocean" in This Month, 1947 June	Box 5	Folder 001
Conservation In Action #8: Bear River: A National Wildlife Refuge by Vanez T. Wilson and Rachel L. Carson, 1950	Box 5	Folder 002
Conservation In Action #4: Mattamuskeet: A National Wildlife Refuge by Rachel L. Carson, 1947	Box 5	Folder 003
Conservation In Action #5: Guarding Our Wildlife Resources by Rachel L. Carson, 1948	Box 5	Folder 004
New Yorker Silent Spring, Part I, 1962 June 16	Box 5	Folder 005
New Yorker Silent Spring, Part II, 1962 June 23	Box 5	Folder 006
New Yorker Silent Spring, Part III, 1962 June 30	Box 5	Folder 007
Rachel Carson, article by Paul Brooks, undated	Box 5	Folder 008
Book reviews, articles, 2007	Box 5	Folder 009
Keeping alive the sense of wonder, article in National Wildlife, 2007 April-May	Box 5	Folder 010
Correspondence from Carson to Joan (Daves), TLS, 1951 July 30	Box 5	Folder 011
Professional photograph of RC by Erich Hartmann; two Carson 17-cent US postage stamps, 1962	Box 5	Folder 012

ANS to Joan (Daves) accompanying printed booklet "Of Man and the Stream of Time," RC commencement address to Scripps College, 1962	Box 5	Folder 013
RC exhibition catalog Barker-Wright Memorial, Patten Free Library, Bath, ME, 1963	Box 5	Folder 014
Christmas greeting card signed from RC to Joan (Daves), undated	Box 5	Folder 015