

Ms.
Coll.
00432

McFee, Oonah
papers, 1963-2002

MCFEE (OONAH) PAPERS

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Oonah McFee is a Toronto novelist and short story writer. Her most famous work of fiction is *Sandbars*, a novel set in Ottawa in the 1930s and which, upon its publication in 1977, was immediately considered a Canadian classic and was awarded the Best First Novel Award. Mrs. McFee's other writing, beginning with a short story entitled "Song of Araby," has been published in *Texas Quarterly*, *Redbook* and *Chatelaine*.

Raised in Ottawa and the Gatineau Valley, McFee (nee Browne) is the former wife of CBC radioman Alan McFee. She came to writing in middle age, enrolling in a creative writing course in the mid-1960s at the North Toronto Y, a three-month seminar course at the *Instituto Allende* in San Miguel, Mexico in 1967, and the Breadloaf Summer School in Vermont in 1971. She was a Writer-in-Residence at Trent University in 1979, and has conducted readings and lectures across Canada. After the publication of *Sandbars*, Mrs. McFee spent thirteen years researching and drafting a sequel to *Sandbars* entitled *Silent Eyes* which was never published.

Extent: 7 boxes and items (1 metre)

Gift of Oonah McFee 2005

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	Writing assignments- Toronto, 1963 Mostly typescript, with handwritten editorial revisions by either the author or the instructor.
	2	Writing assignments- Toronto, 1964 Mostly typescript, with handwritten editorial revisions by either the author or the instructor.
	3	Writing assignments- Toronto, 1965 Mostly typescript, with handwritten editorial revisions by either the author or the instructor.
	4	Writing assignments- Toronto, 1966 Mostly typescript, with handwritten editorial revisions by either the author or the instructor.
	5	Writing assignments- San Miguel, Mexico, 1967 Mostly typescript, with handwritten editorial revisions by either the author or the instructor. Original report of final grades as well as several xeroxed copies.

Box	Folder	Contents
1	6	Three small, handwritten notebooks used by the author while enrolled in Master's seminar courses at Instituto Allende in San Miguel, Mexico.
	7	Eighteen black and white photographs taken by the author for a photography course at Instituto Allende in San Miguel, Mexico.
	8	Early Fiction- 1968 Two typescript short stories with handwritten comments by Evelyn Cotter (a former instructor).
	9	Early Fiction- 1970 All typescript with holograph comments and revisions by Evelyn Cotter.
	10	Stories submitted to Disney Three typescript short stories- "The Reunion," "The Stranger," and "The Elves that Whispered"- as well as an original and xeroxed letter of response from W.B. Butler. Unopened envelopes containing these stories for copyright purposes.
	11	"Song of Araby"- various drafts 1 st typescript draft, several xeroxed later drafts, and the final draft as it appeared in <i>Texas Quarterly</i> .
	12	Undated writing exercises Typescript, with some holograph revisions and comments by the author or instructor.
	13	Undated writing exercises Typescript, with some holograph revisions and comments by the author or instructor.
	14	"A Moment in Time"- various drafts The original, with comments by Evelyn Cotter, and sections of a later draft (both original and Xeroxed) with holograph comments by Pierre Delattre from the Instituto Allende.
2	Item 1	Oversized and Xeroxed revision (1967) of a 1963 short story entitled "The Reunion."

Box	Folder	Contents
3	1	Seymour Epstein's comments on four of McFee's short stories submitted to him at the Breadloaf Writer's Conference, 1971. Handwritten by Mr. Epstein, with several xeroxed copies produced by Mrs. McFee.
	2	<u>Sandbars</u> synopsis prepared for Macmillan in 1977 prior to the novel's release. Typed, with editorial revisions by the author, plus several xeroxed copies.
	3	Letter of introduction by Don Montador, editor of <u>Sandbars</u> . Original, holograph draft signed by Mr. Montador.
	4	Correspondence with Dennis Lee. 36 letters to McFee regarding the progress of <u>Sandbars</u> . Typed and signed by Mr. Lee.
	5	Cut chapter XIX of <u>Sandbars</u> . Xeroxed.
	6	Cut chapter XXI of <u>Sandbars</u> . Xeroxed.
	7	MacMillan's Spring 1977 catalogue, with <u>Sandbars</u> featured on page 6.
	8	Original reviews of <u>Sandbars</u> . Includes <i>Journal of Canadian Studies</i> , <i>Brick</i> , <i>Books in Canada</i> , <i>The Globe and Mail</i> , and others.
	9	Xeroxed copies of original reviews of <u>Sandbars</u> .
	10	First drafts of Author's Foreword and Prologue to <u>Sandbars</u> . Typed, with handwritten revisions by the author.
	11	Statements of royalty earnings for <u>Sandbars</u> from MacMillan, McClelland and Stewart and Gage Publishing, between 1979 and 1991.
	12	Publicity photographs for <u>Sandbars</u> and <i>The Toronto Star</i> . Approx
3	Item 1	Tape of interview for CBC Radio program "One to One," 1979.
4	Item 1	Third (second to last) draft of <u>Sandbars</u> . Typed, with editorial revisions in the hand of the author.

Box	Folder	Contents
5	1	Research and notes for <u>Silent Eyes</u> . Mostly handwritten on looseleaf paper. Some typed, with revisions.
	2	Newspaper clippings relating to World War II (research for <u>Silent Eyes</u>).
	3	Correspondence RE: research for <u>Silent Eyes</u> . Letters from various museums and historians regarding World War II. Typed and signed by respective authors.
	4	Correspondence with Keith Rodgers re: research for <u>Silent Eyes</u> . Holograph drafts in the hand of the author, with some photocopies made by McFee. Correspondence takes place between 1986 and 1988.
	5	Newspaper clipping: "Globe literary editor wins newspaper award." Globe and Mail- March 20 th , 1978. In reference to William French, who reviewed <u>Sandbars</u> favourably.
	6	Newspaper clippings: promotional articles about <u>Silent Eyes</u> . The Toronto Sun and The Royal Gazette, April 1989.
	7	Xeroxed copy of Royal Gazette promotional article for <u>Silent Eyes</u> .
	8	Contact addresses (undated).
	9	Ideas and notes for short stories (undated). Handwritten by Mrs. McFee on looseleaf paper.
	Items 1-12	

Box	Folder	Contents
6	1	Letter from Evelyn Cotter to Oonah McFee, 1967. Holograph draft.
	2	Correspondence with teachers at Instituto Allende. Typed and signed letters from Pierre DeLattre and Lucien, 1967.
	3	Contract with the MacMillan Company of Canada (photocopied).
	4	Correspondence with Canada Council re: grant applications. Typed and signed, 1973-1980.
	5	Misc. correspondence 1975-1980. Includes typed and signed correspondence with the University of Texas, CBC, The New Yorker, The Atlantic Monthly Press, Chatelaine, The Alan Hamel Show.
	6	Correspondence with Elizabeth Duncan. Handwritten letters from Ms. Duncan to Mrs. McFee between the years of 1977-1978.
	7	Fan letters from the general public, 1977-1978. Mostly handwritten and signed.
	8	Correspondence with Eric Friesen, William French, Larry Henderson, Doug McCalla, Stan Dragland, 1977-1985. Mostly handwritten, some typed and signed.
	9	Correspondence with Margaret Laurence (some through Dennis Lee), 1973-1977. Some handwritten letters, others typed and signed. Includes originals and photocopies, as well as a photocopied version of Laurence's comments on an early draft of <u>Sandbars</u> for Macmillan.
	10	Correspondence with MacMillan of Canada, 1977-1980. Mostly professional correspondence, typed and signed.
	11	Correspondence with <u>Who's Who in Canadian Literature and Contemporary Authors</u> , 1983-1988.
	12	Correspondence with New Canadian Library, 1982.
	13	Misc. correspondence 1980-1990. Includes Smith College, Sean Kane, Senate of Canada, Malcolm Ross, Women's Press, The Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and others.
	14	Correspondence with the Public Lending Right Commission, 1991-2002.

6 cont.	15	Correspondence with Trent University, 1979-1985. Typed and signed letters from Trent University regarding Mrs. McFee's time as Writer-in-Residence and her participation in a symposium.
	16	Correspondence with the Ontario Arts Council, 1975-1985. Typed and signed letters regarding grant applications and awards.
	17	Correspondence with the Canada Council re: funding for public readings, 1978-1991. Typed and signed.
	18	Correspondence with schools and libraries re: public readings. Typed and signed by respective authors, though some are handwritten. Most are either invitations, clarifications, or thank-yous.
	19	Correspondence with the Bella Pomer Agency, 1984-1988. Typed and signed.
	20	Correspondence with The Iona Foundation of Canada, PEI, 1985. Typed and signed.
	21	Correspondence with Sean Kane (Trent University) re: Dennis Lee's Honorary Degree, 1995. Typed and signed. Includes photocopies of press release, and Dr. Lee's acceptance speech.
	22	Correspondence 2000+ A handwritten letter from Zoe to Oonah, 2002. Includes several photographs.

Box	Folder	Contents
7	1	Notes on lectures delivered at the Bread Loaf Writer's Conference, Vermont, 1971. A Spiral notebook containing notes on lectures by Seymour Epstein, John Garder, Isaac Asimov, and others. Also includes some correspondence from the event's organizers.
	2	Newspaper clipping: "Dief says memoirs 'of tremendous interest'" (Toronto Star: November 20, 1974).
	3	Newspaper clipping re: Hugh Kane's retirement (The Globe and Mail: October 3, 1976).
	4	Newspaper clipping: "The Case of the Midwife Lode: Without Dennis Lee , a lot of Recent and Valuable CanLit Would Probably Not Have Been Born." (Books in Canada: December, 1977).
	5	Oonah's McFee's biography, prepared by Sean Kane of Trent University.
	6	Reference letters from two of Mrs. McFee's former employers. Typed and signed, plus several xeroxed copies of each.
	7	Newspaper clippings: "Toronto Arthritis Discovery Called Possible Breakthrough," and "Enzyme Tied to Arthritis," 1988. Both articles feature McFee's former employer.
	8	Newspaper clippings re: The Conference on the Canadian Novel, 1978.
	9	Oonah McFee's letter to the editor regarding The Conference on the Canadian Novel, 1978. Typescript with editorial revisions by the author.
	10	CBC's original contract and license to broadcast "Song of Araby."
	11	Magazine articles, by or featuring Mrs. McFee, xeroxed. Includes Ottawa Citylife (March 1979) and Chatelaine (December 1979).
	12	Galleys from Chatelaine magazine, with attached handwritten note from editor Rhonda Rovon.
	13	Lectures delivered at Trent University as a Writer-in-Residence, 1979. Handwritten on lined looseleaf paper.
	14	Lectures and talks delivered at various schools and libraries. Most are handwritten, but some are typed with editorial revisions.

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7 cont	15	Notebook of favourite quotations. Handwritten by Mrs. McFee.
	16	Quill and Quire, January, 1984. Full issue.
	17	Prize-winning photograph in The Toronto Star, May 28, 1992. Photograph taken by Oonah McFee.
	18	Undated New Yorker cartoon, plus several xeroxed copies.
	19	Invitations to various literary events (many undated). Some typed and signed, others handwritten by their respective authors.
7	Item 1	VHS videotape of Oonah McFee addressing students at the University of Prince Edward Island, July, 1985.
	Item 2	First Edition of <u>Sandbars</u> inscribed by Oonah McFee.