

# Fred Urquhart:

## An Inventory of His Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

- Creator:** Urquhart, Fred, 1912-1995
- Title:** Fred Urquhart Papers
- Dates:** 1935-1965
- Extent:** 5 document boxes (2.10 linear feet)
- Abstract:** Scottish author Fred Urquhart published numerous short stories and several novels, and also served as the editor of several short story anthologies. His papers contain handwritten manuscripts and typescript drafts of his literary works, as well as material related to his editorial projects. Also present is Urquhart's personal correspondence with contemporary authors such as Rhys Davies and Norah Hoult, and correspondence documenting his editorial work.
- Call Number:** Manuscript Collection MS-4316
- Language:** English.
- Access:** Open for research. Part or all of this collection is housed off-site and may require up to three business days notice for access in the Ransom Center's Reading and Viewing Room. Please contact the Center before requesting this material: [reference@hrc.utexas.edu](mailto:reference@hrc.utexas.edu)
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### Administrative Information

- Acquisition:** Purchases, 1965-1970 (R2299, R4357, R4815)
- Processed by:** Shelley Rowland, Tan Tiantian, and Sarah Weinblatt, 2007, updated by Hagan Barber, 2012
- Repository:** [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](#)
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## Biographical Sketch

Frederick Burrows Urquhart was born on July 12, 1912, in Edinburgh, Scotland. He is acknowledged as both a novelist and short story writer, but achieved recognition from his short stories. Urquhart also spent time editing and reviewing books. The constant theme of his stories centers upon the lives of ordinary people, especially violence and cruelty towards women.

His education took place in village schools in Scotland until 1927, when at fifteen he left school to work for a bookshop in Edinburgh. During this time he began to write his first novel. He left the bookstore to concentrate on his writing in 1935, and by 1938 this novel, *Time Will Knit*, was published. Because he was a declared pacifist, at the outbreak of World War II he was sent to work on the land. At this time, his first collection of short stories, *I Fell for a Sailor* (1940), was published, followed by his second collection of stories, *The Clouds Are Big with Mercy* (1946), and his two later novels, *The Ferret Was Abraham's Daughter* (1949) and *Jezebel's Dust* (1951). Further volumes of stories include *The Year of the Short Corn* (1949), *The Last Sister* (1950), *The Laundry Girl and the People* (1955), *The Dying Stallion* (1967), and *The Ploughing Match* (1968). His final works were the novel *Palace of Green Days* (1979), which drew upon his childhood in Perthshire where his father worked as a chauffeur, and a collection of short stories, *A Diver in China Seas* (1980).

In 1944 he began working at the estate of the Duke of Bedford. This gave him the opportunity to meet the Scottish painters Robert Colquhoun and Robert MacBryde, and two literary notables, George Orwell and Rhys Davies. Starting in 1947, Urquhart began work as a reader for a London literary agency, and from 1951-1954 he worked as a script-reader for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. He was also a reviewer for *Time and Tide* and other journals between 1947 and 1974 and a literary scout for Walt Disney Productions (1959-1960). As interest in the serious short story waned, he took on a number of editing tasks for works such as *W.S.C.: A Cartoon Biography* (1955), which consisted of political cartoons focusing on Winston Churchill, and *Scottish Short Stories* (1957).

In 1958 he moved to East Sussex with his companion, dancer Peter Wyndham Allen, but when Allen died in 1990 Urquhart moved back to Scotland and settled in Musselburgh. He died in Edinburgh on December 2, 1995.

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## Sources:

*Contemporary Authors Online*, <http://www.galegroup.com> (accessed 13 November, 2007)

*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com> (Accessed 13 November, 2007)

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## Scope and Contents

Literary works, correspondence, and printed material, 1935-1965, document the life and work of Scottish author Fred Urquhart, including his literary production, editorial projects, and role in contemporary literary circles. The material is arranged in two series: I. Works, 1935-1965, and II. Correspondence, 1950-1964.

The literary works consist of typescripts and handwritten manuscripts of Urquhart's numerous short stories and two novels *Time Will Knit* and *The Ferret Was Abraham's Daughter*. Also included are drafts of introductions, notes, ledgers, and book request slips illuminating Urquhart's role as editor of two short story anthologies, *Scottish Short Stories* and *Colour Book of Scotland*, and a comic anthology about Winston Churchill, *W.S.C.: A Cartoon Biography*. Galley proofs and manuscripts for the *Cartoon Biography* contain the cartoon captions but not the cartoons. Drafts of a proposed serial, "The Beckoning Globe," and a non-fiction work, "A Bevy of Bad Women," document Urquhart's unsuccessful literary collaboration with Louis Golding. The bulk of the literary material dates between the years 1935 and 1949. The earliest manuscript, "No Fields of Amaranth," is dated 17 December 1935, and the latest, "Water Water Wildflower," 21 February 1965.

Notable in the Urquhart correspondence in Series II. are letters received from authors Rhys Davies (69 items, 1953-1962) and Norah Hault (26 items, 1956-1963) that discuss contemporary writers such as Frank Swinnerton, Ivy Compton-Burnet, and A. J. Cronin. The majority of the correspondence documents Urquhart's editorial communications with authors, literary agents, and publishing companies for the aforementioned anthologies. The correspondence with Louis Golding includes clippings of Golding's serial, "The Ring Cycle," which appeared in the *Daily Sketch* in March 1953. Individual correspondents represented include J.R. Ackerley, Nancy Cunard, Francis King, John Lehmann, Sir Compton Mackenzie, Naomi Mitchison, John Cowper Powys, Muriel Spark, and Alan Sillitoe.

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**Series I. Works, 1935-1965 (bulk 1935-1949)**

<i>A Cartoon Biography</i> (1955)	<b>Box 1 Folder 1</b>
Collaboration between Fred Urquhart and Louis Golding, 1964, undated	<b>Folder 2</b>
<i>Colour Book of Scotland</i> (1961)	<b>Folder 3</b>
<i>The Ferret Was Abraham's Daughter</i> (1949)	<b>Folder 4-5</b>
Reviews, 1962, undated	<b>Folder 6</b>
<i>Scottish Short Stories</i> (1957)	<b>Folder 7</b>
Short stories, 1935-1965	<b>Box 2 Folder</b>
A-B	<b>Folder 1</b>
C-F	<b>Folder 2</b>
G-K	<b>Folder 3</b>
L	<b>Folder 4</b>
M	<b>Folder 5</b>
N	<b>Box 3 Folder 1</b>
O-Q	<b>Folder 2</b>
R-T	<b>Folder 3</b>
U-Z	<b>Folder 4</b>
<i>Time Will Knit</i> (1938)	<b>Box 4 Folder 1-5</b>

**Series II. Correspondence, 1950-1964**

<i>A Cartoon Biography</i> , 1953-1955	<b>Box 5 Folder 1</b>
<i>Colour Book of Scotland</i> , 1960-1961	<b>Folder 2</b>
Davies, Rhys, 1953-1962	<b>Folder 3</b>
Golding, Louis, 1952-1954, 1963	<b>Folder 4</b>
Hoult, Norah, 1954-1963	<b>Folder 5</b>
Individuals, A-Z, 1950-1964	<b>Folder 6</b>
<i>Scottish Short Stories</i> , 1956-1961	<b>Folder 7-8</b>
<i>Time and Tide</i> , 1951-1960	<b>Folder 9</b>

**Fred Urquhart Papers--Index of Works**

- Alicky's Watch--2.1
- Allow the Lodger--2.1
- Backgreen Concert--2.1
- Bag Washing--2.1
- Barbara of Shalott--2.1
- The Barmaid with the Dirty Past--2.1
- Beautiful Music--2.1
- Being a Bohemian--2.1
- The Big Apple--2.1
- Big with Mercy--2.1
- The Bike--2.1
- Blackout--2.1
- Call Me Blondie--2.2
- *A Cartoon Biography*--1.1
- The Christ Child--2.2
- A Christmas in the Alps--2.2
- Cleopatra Had Nothing On--2.2
- *Colour Book of Scotland*--1.3
- Cuckoo--2.2
- A Day's Shopping--2.2
- Dirty Linen--2.2
- Dirty Minnie--2.2
- The Dream Book--2.2
- The Eleventh March--2.2
- English in Three Months--2.2
- Excuse Me Cow--2.2
- *The Ferret was Abraham's Daughter*--1.4-5
- The Flower Girl and the Mountie--2.2
- For the Heathen--2.2
- Gary's Party--2.3
- The Gay Gush Girls--2.3
- Gentlemen, the Queen--2.3
- Glamour Boy among the Neeps--2.3
- Grandma Was a Land Girl--2.3
- The Gulls--2.3
- The Heretic--2.3
- Highlanders--2.3
- I Died Young--2.3
- I Love Work--2.3
- I Married Three Actresses--2.3
- I'll Join the Merchant Navy--2.3
- It Always Rains in Glasgow--2.3
- Jam for Gran--2.3
- The Last Meet--2.4
- The Last G.I. Bride Wore Tartan--2.4
- The Last Sister--2.4
- Lend Me Your Ears--2.4
- Let Us Endure an Hour--2.4
- Like Arrows in the Hands of a Giant--2.4

- Local Boy Makes Good--2.4
- The Lodger--2.4
- The Loony--2.4
- Lost to All But Heaven--2.4
- Luncheon Is Served--2.4
- Maggie Logie and the National Health--2.5
- Man about the House--2.5
- The Matinee--2.5
- The Meeting--2.5
- The Moley Was a Diddler--2.5
- Namietnose or the Laundry Girl--3.1
- Next Stop, Sailor--3.1
- No Experience--3.1
- No Fields of Amaranth--3.1
- No Monopoly--3.1
- No Second Key and Kafka--3.1
- Nostalgia for a Waltz Dream--3.1
- Not So Pretty Polly--3.1
- Once Bitten--3.2
- One Film Fan's Story--3.2
- The Platform Ticket--3.2
- Polish for Passion/ Le Roi Est Mort--3.2
- The Prisoners--3.2
- Private War--3.2
- Provide for Your Poor Sisters--3.2
- Quiet Sunday--3.2
- A Sailor Comes Home--3.3
- The Sands of Dunkirk--3.3
- *Scottish Short Stories*--1.7
- Those Things Past--3.3
- *Time Will Knit*--4.1-5
- Tomorrow Will Be Beautiful--3.3
- Tortoises Are So Affectionate--3.3
- The Touring Tinker--3.3
- Two Ladies--3.3
- Washed in the Blood--3.4
- Washing the Adjective of Copulation Bags--3.4
- Water Water Wallflower--3.4
- We Never Died in Winter--3.4
- We Who Are About to Die--3.4
- Week-end with Alistair--3.4
- What's to Become of Us All--3.4
- Whoever Gets the Cross--3.4
- Win Was Wild--3.4
- The Year of the Short Corn--3.4
- You Kill Me--3.4
- You're the Mean Type Mabel--3.4
- You're Not Franchot Tone?--3.4

**Bar Code List**

- 1--059188000054912
- 2--059188000054923
- 3--059188000054934
- 4--059188000054945
- 5--059188000054956