

Larry McMurtry:

An Inventory of His Collection in the Manuscript Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	McMurtry, Larry, 1936-2021
Title:	Larry McMurtry Collection
Dates:	1960-1976
Extent:	6 boxes (2.52 linear feet)
Abstract:	The Larry McMurtry Collection consists of typed manuscript drafts for several of his works dating from the 1960s and 1970s, correspondence related to those works, and contracts and royalty statements. Several of the manuscripts were acquired directly from McMurtry, but the bulk of the collection was acquired from McMurtry's agent, Dorothea Oppenheimer. The materials are arranged in three series: I. Works, 1960-circa 1975; II. Correspondence, 1960-1974; and III. Contracts and Royalty Statements, 1960-1976. The collection was previously accessible through a card catalog but has been recataloged as part of a retrospective conversion project.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-02777
Language:	English
Access:	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	Purchases, 1964 (R2072); 1976 (R7266) Note: Several of the manuscripts were acquired directly from McMurtry, but the bulk of the collection was acquired from McMurtry's agent, Dorothea Oppenheimer.
Processed by:	Katy Hill, 2008
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Larry Jeff McMurtry was born on June 3, 1936, in Wichita Falls, Texas. His father and grandfather were cattle ranchers and McMurtry grew up near Archer City, Texas, traveling between the small town and his grandparents' ranch, and witnessing the end of an era of cattle ranching. Drawn toward books more than the physical life of ranching, after graduating from high school in 1954 McMurtry enrolled at Rice University in Houston, Texas. He soon transferred to North Texas State College in Denton, Texas (now the University of North Texas) and studied literature.

McMurtry earned a B.A. degree from North Texas in 1958, and then returned to Rice for an M.A. degree. In July of 1959, he married Jo Ballard Scott with whom he had a son, James Lawrence McMurtry, before divorcing in 1966. After completing his master's degree in 1960, McMurtry accepted a fellowship to study at Stanford University and published his first novel *Horseman, Pass By* (1961), which won the 1962 Texas Institute of Letters Jesse H. Jones Award.

McMurtry taught creative writing and literature courses at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas, from 1961 to 1962 and at Rice in 1963. He published two more works, *Leaving Cheyenne* (1963) and *The Last Picture Show* (1966), focusing on the decline of small town, west Texas life also portrayed in his first book. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1964 and pursued a passion for book collecting while living in Houston in the mid-1960s, working as a book store scout and dealer.

In 1969, McMurtry moved near Washington, D.C. and taught for a short time at George Mason University and American University. He wrote a second trilogy of novels, *Moving On* (1970), *All My Friends Are Going to Be Strangers* (1972), and *Terms of Endearment* (1975), all set in Houston and marking a move in his work from rural to urban settings. While living near Washington, McMurtry purchased a rare and used book store in Georgetown, which he renamed Booked Up. He later opened branches in Archer City, Texas; Houston, Texas; and Tucson, Arizona.

McMurtry served as president of the American Center of PEN from 1989 to 1991, leading efforts by the organization to support author Salman Rushdie after a fatwa was proclaimed against him in February of 1989. He continued to write numerous novels, essays, and other books, some reprising characters and stories from earlier works. Many of his books, including the Pulitzer Prize winning *Lonesome Dove* (1985), have been made into acclaimed feature films and television movies, and McMurtry worked on film adaptations of his own and other works, and shared an Academy Award for the screenplay of *Brokeback Mountain* in 2006.

McMurtry died on March 25, 2021, in Archer City, Texas.

Sources:

"Larry McMurtry." *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 2*. Detroit: Gale, 1978.

"Larry McMurtry." *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 143*. Detroit: Gale, 1994.

"Larry McMurtry." *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 256*. Detroit: Gale, 2002.

"Larry McMurtry." *Contemporary Authors*, <http://galenet.galegroup.com> (accessed 28 April 2008).

Scope and Contents

The Larry McMurtry Collection consists of typed manuscript drafts for several of his works dating from the 1960s and 1970s, correspondence related to those works, and contracts and royalty statements. Several of the manuscripts were acquired directly from McMurtry, but the bulk of the collection was acquired from McMurtry's agent, Dorothea Oppenheimer. The materials are arranged in three series: I. Works, 1960-circa 1975; II. Correspondence, 1960-1974; and III. Contracts and Royalty Statements, 1960-1976. The collection was previously accessible through a card catalog but has been recataloged as part of a retrospective conversion project.

Series I. Works contains typed drafts of *Horseman, Pass By* (1961), *The Last Picture Show* (1966), *Terms of Endearment* (1975), and an early version of *Moving On* (1970) titled "The Water and the Blood." Several drafts of *Horseman, Pass By* are present in the series, as is a six-page excerpt from the work titled "Lonnie Bannon: The City Lights." Also present is a screenplay draft of *All My Friends Are Going to Be Strangers* (1972); a typed draft of the essay "Cowboys, Movies, Myths, and Cadillacs: Realism in the Western," first published in 1967 and included in McMurtry's book of collected works, *In a Narrow Grave* (1968); and a typed draft of McMurtry's speech at the 1962 Texas Institute of Letters awards dinner. Most of the typed manuscripts contain handwritten changes and some include handwritten draft fragments. The series is arranged alphabetically by title.

Series II. contains correspondence to and from McMurtry, primarily between him and his agent, Dorothea Oppenheimer. Also present are Oppenheimer's correspondence files related to McMurtry's works, containing her correspondence with third-parties. The materials are arranged as two types: outgoing correspondence from McMurtry, and Oppenheimer's correspondence. McMurtry's outgoing correspondence consists of single letters to Andreas Brown and Franklin Gillian. Oppenheimer's files are arranged as incoming from McMurtry, outgoing to McMurtry, and third-party, with each group arranged chronologically.

Series III. Contracts and Royalty Statements consists of business papers related to print and film versions of McMurtry's early works. The bulk of the series contains employment and memoranda agreements dating from 1960 to 1974. Also included are screenwriting and other writing agreements from the early 1970s, and royalty statements dating from 1962 to 1976.

Related Material

Additional Larry McMurtry materials are located in several other collections at the Ransom Center. These include the manuscript collections for Judson Crews, J. Frank Dobie, *Genesis West*, Elizabeth Hardwick, Norman Mailer, and Laura Wilson. The Vertical File Collection also includes additional McMurtry material acquired from Dorothea Oppenheimer.

Other Larry McMurtry manuscript collections are located at Rice University in Houston, Texas; The University of North Texas in Denton, Texas; Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas; and The Center for American History at The University of Texas in Austin, Texas.

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Texas--Fiction.

Western stories--Fiction.

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