

Noël Riley Fitch:

An Inventory of her Papers at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Fitch, Noël Riley, 1937-
Title:	Noël Riley Fitch Papers
Inclusive Dates:	1930-2001,
Extent:	15 boxes, 1 oversize box (7.56 linear feet)
Abstract:	The collection contains Fitch's research, from inception to culmination, for the 1993 publication of the biography, <i>Anaïs: The Erotic Life of Anaïs Nin</i> . Materials in the collection document the book's research and publication process, and include correspondence, interviews, notes, publisher's proof and manuscript fragments, newspaper and magazine clippings, photographs, legal documents, creative works, and other items.
Access:	Open for research, except for one correspondence file

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	Gift, 1999 and 2002 (G11541, G12152)
Processed by:	Monique Daviau and Eileen Costello, 2000; Liz Murray, 2002
Repository:	Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Noël Riley Fitch (1937-) was born in New Haven, Connecticut, and educated at Northwest Nazarene College (B.A., 1959) and Washington State University (M.A., 1965 and Ph.D., 1969). She was professor of literature (1971-1987) and chair of the Department of Literature and Modern Languages (1982 -1985) at Point Loma College. She lectures at the University of Southern California (since 1986) and the American University of Paris (since 1987).

As a scholar of American expatriate intellectuals living in Paris in the first half of this century, Fitch cast a new perspective on Paris literary life with her first biography, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation*, 1983. Anatole Broyard of the *New York Times* called it "probably the best and most complete history of that period." Her 1990 *Walks in Hemingway's Paris: A Guide to Paris for the Literary Traveler* is a compendium of locations where the American author and his friends lived, ate, and socialized in Paris.

Fitch continued her investigation of the literary life in Paris with her 1993 biography of another prominent Paris personality, *Anais: The Erotic Life of Anais Nin*. Anais Nin (1903-1977) authored more than a dozen books of fiction and erotica over the course of her life. She was a cult figure of the feminist movement who, as a liberated woman, broke the confines of American Victorianism. Although Nin published her diaries over the years, literary critics believe that they present a constructed, stylized image of the woman. Fitch analyzed the novelist's/diarist's own writings to create an in-depth examination of Nin who was as well known for her literary work as for her numerous and unconventional love affairs. For example, Nin's illicit relationship with Henry Miller and his wife, June, was explored in the 1990 Hollywood feature film, *Henry and June*. Fitch sought to present an honest portrait of the author that reveals the psychological abuse that Nin suffered as a child and may have led to her lifelong insecurities.

Fitch also wrote *Literary Cafes of Paris* (1989), and contributed to *Faith and Imagination: Essays on Evangelicals and Literature* (editor with Richard W. Etulain, 1985), and *In Transition: A Paris Anthology* (introduction, 1990). In addition, she has contributed chapters to the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (Volume 4: *Americans in Paris, 1920-1939*, 1980); *James Joyce: The Augmented Ninth* (1988); *Lesbian Texts and Contexts: Radical Revisions* (1990); and *A Living of Words: American Women in Print Culture* (n.d.). Her most recent biography, *Appetite for Life: The Biography of Julia Child*, was published in 1997.

Source:

Dictionary of Contemporary Authors-Volume 144. Ed. Donna Oldendorf. (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1994)

Scope and Contents

Correspondence, interviews, notes, publisher's proof and manuscript fragments, newspaper and magazine clippings, photographs, legal documents, creative works, and other materials document from inception to culmination Fitch's research for the 1993 publication of her biography, *Anais: The Erotic Life of Anaïs Nin*. The material is organized in two series: Series I. Research, and Series II. Publication Process.

Series I. is divided into two subseries: A. Sources of Information, and B. Chapters and General Notes. Present are correspondence and interviews with over 160 people who either knew or were associated with Nin. The folders remain in their alphabetical order and key personalities include Kay Boyle, John Cage, Judy Chicago, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Erica Jong, Timothy Leary, Joaquin Nin-Culmell, Studs Terkel, and Gore Vidal. Of note are 21 interviews (1990-1993) with Rupert Pole, Nin's friend and lover for over forty years (1947-1977) and the executor of her estate. In some cases, the biographer collected obituaries and journal articles about the correspondents that provide insight into their relationship with Nin. Also included are creative works such as poetry by Daisy Aldan, essays by the erotica scholar Gershon Legman, and a dissertation on Nin by Wendy Dubow who subsequently edited *Conversations with Anaïs Nin* (1994). Fitch's handwritten notes disclose her thought process in composing the biography and manuscript fragments (1990-1992) submitted to contributors for fact checking substantiate the published text.

Subseries B encompasses Fitch's other research materials and has been maintained in the creator's original arrangement by chapter. Each chapter relates chronologically to Nin's life; the book begins with her genealogical tree and family history. The chapters subsequently track her peregrinations, publications, and relationships with men. A substantial amount of notes are written on Nin's first husband, Hugh Guiler (Ian Hugo), Henry Miller, and Lawrence Durrell. Since Henry Miller was such a significant part of Nin's life, one file fully documents the 1991 Miller Centennial Celebration. Clippings and biographies of other salient members of Nin's circle such as June Miller and her analyst, Dr. Rene Allendy, are also included. Of particular interest is Fitch's investigation of desertion, abandonment, and incest issues as related to Nin's childhood. This work includes letters from Nin's analysts, Otto Rank and Martha Jaeger as well as Legman's interview. Freud's published notes on "Seduction Theory" and published articles pertaining to gender writing and women psychoanalysts round out Fitch's analysis of the heretofore-ignored areas of Nin's psyche. Fourteen files of snapshots taken by Fitch of Nin's residences in France enhance the textual research. Interspersed amongst the chapter notes is Fitch's study of Nin's published and unpublished work. Original reviews of these texts and copies of rejection letters from publishers to Nin are included. Fitch visited numerous libraries while carrying out her research. Photocopies of materials from these institutions present in this collection may not be reproduced further.

Series II. Publication Process, includes Fitch's original book proposal, proofs, copy editing notes and correspondence, publisher's files, permissions, publicity, reviews, readers' responses, and post-publication material.

Fitch, Noël Riley, 1937-

Books received with the papers were transferred to the HRC library.

I. Research

A. Sources of Information

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