

An Inventory of the James A. Michener Papers, Hiroshima Bomb Re-Evaluation Letter

Repository: University of Northern Colorado, James A. Michener Library, Archival Services

Collection number: SC 1-13

Title: An Inventory of the James A. Michener Papers, Hiroshima Bomb Re-Evaluation Letter (formerly Small 7. 1995. Letter re re-evaluation of Hiroshima Bomb)

Author: Inventory prepared by Shirley Soenksen on May 8, 2006.

Dates: 1995-2000

Creator or Collector:

Size: Less than one linear foot (2 letters).

Abstract:

Consists of a letter dated 1995 October 11 from James A. Michener to Martin L. Allday regarding Michener's views on the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan during World War II.

Scope and Content Note:

Historical Note:

In 1995 there was to be an exhibit at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan and the end of World War II. It was to open May 1995. Amid the controversy over the planned content of that exhibit, the original design was scrapped and a pared-down exhibit was mounted in its place. That exhibit, *The Enola Gay*, opened in late June. During this time Allday and Michener had a conversation about these issues. Soon after, Michener wrote this letter to Allday and requested that it not be made public until after Michener's death.

For more information on the *The Enola Gay* exhibit see:

http://www.nasm.si.edu/exhibitions/gal103/gal103_former.html.

Biography of James A. Michener

James Albert Michener was born in 1907 to unknown parents and raised as an orphan in the care of widow Mabel Michener of Doylestown, Pennsylvania. By the time he graduated from high school in 1925, he had visited 45 out of the 48 states. He was given a scholarship to Swarthmore, and after graduating summa cum laude in 1929, he traveled and continued his education at nine universities inside and outside the United States. During this time, he also taught in Pennsylvania, Colorado, and at the Harvard School of Education.

When he was not teaching, Michener worked as a textbook editor in New York, and he joined the British Merchant Marines. During WWII, he joined the Navy, making use of his experience in the British Merchant Marines to climb through the ranks to lieutenant and his knowledge of history to carry out sensitive assignments in the South Pacific. It was this experience that brought about *Tales of the South Pacific* in 1947, which won a Pulitzer Prize. Michener used this novel as the cornerstone of his writing career, publishing almost 50 books in the next 50 years, including *Sayonara*, *Hawaii*, *The Source*, *Iberia*, *Caravans*, *The Covenant*, *Sports in America*, and *Poland*.

In 1977, a four-part public television series called *The World of Michener* covered Israel, Hawaii, Spain, and Poland, just a few of the countries upon which his books have been based. Several other books have been turned into movies or miniseries, and two of his novels have been turned into musicals (most notably *South Pacific*, which won its own

Pulitzer Prize).

During the time that he was publishing, however, Michener did not ignore the world around him. He ran for Congress in 1962 and held positions on several committees, including the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention, the U.S. Postal Service stamp committee, and an advisory position on a council for NASA. He also spoke often at congressional hearings and at functions of those organizations in which he held particular interest.

James A. Michener died at the age of 90 on October 16, 1997 in Texas, three years after his third wife, Mari Yoriko Sabusawa. He had no children.

Biography of Martin L. Allday:

Martin L. Allday was an eighteen year old infantry man who was wounded at Okinawa. Allday and Michener met at a wedding celebration and became involved in a conversation regarding the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan.

For a short biographical sketch of Martin L. Allday, see:
<<http://www.purpleheartaustin.org/allday.htm>>.

Arrangement (required for multiple level collections):

Restrictions on Access: The collection is open for research.

Restrictions on Use: User is responsible for copyright compliance.

Preferred Citation: [Description of Item], James A. Michener papers (SC 1-number), Collection Name, Archival Services, James A. Michener Library, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado.

Locations of Originals (if applicable):

Acquisition Information (if applicable):

Donated by Martin L. Allday on 1997 December 12.

Documentation relating to the acquisition is on file in Archives, RG 13 S1 F11-2, filed by Collection.

Subjects:

Michener, James A. (James Albert), 1907-1997
Allday, Martin L.
World War, 1939-1945 -- Japan -- Hiroshima-shi.
Atomic bomb -- Blast effect.
World War, 1939-1945 -- Japan -- Hiroshima-shi.
Hiroshima-shi (Japan) -- History -- Bombardment, 1945.

Inventory:

Original finding aid created by Richard Gibboney on March 14, 2000.

Letter dated 1997 December 12 from Martin L. Allday to Gary Pitkin enclosing a copy of a letter dated 1995 October 20 from James A. Michener concerning the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan.

A digitized copy of this letter is available online at:
<http://www.purpleheartaustin.org/Michener.htm> .

Letter dated 1995 October 11 from James A. Michener to Martin L. Allday regarding Michener's views on the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan during World War II.