

An Inventory of the James A. Michener Papers, Marjorie Christiansen Collection

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

Collection number: SC1-70

Title: An Inventory of the James A. Michener Papers, Marjorie Christiansen Collection

Author: Inventory prepared by Shirley Soenksen on April 14, 2008; revised 2008 April 24.

Dates: 1941

Creator or Collector: Christiansen, Marjorie Louise Rasmussen (Creator)

Size: 0.1 linear feet

Abstract:

This collection consists of negatives, photographs, and slides of the May 6, 1941 Hays Picnic held at Colorado State College of Education (now the University of Northern Colorado).

Scope and Content Note:

This collection consists of negatives, photographs, and slides of the May 6, 1941 Hays Picnic held at Colorado State College of Education (now the University of Northern Colorado). James A. Michener appears on one negative, photograph, and slide. The other negative and photograph shows a group of three unidentified women at the pie eating contest. It is unknown if one of the women is Patty Koon, Michener's wife.

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 Marjorie Louise Rasmussen Christiansen:

Marjorie Louise Rasmussen Christiansen was one of James A. Michener's students when he taught at Colorado State College of Education (now the University of Northern Colorado). Marjorie Louise Rasmussen attended Colorado State College of Education from 1939-1943, graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Health and Physical Education in 1943. While at the college, she was a member of the Physical Education Association, Pi Kappa Sigma, and Women's Athletic Association.

Sources:

- 1940 *Cache La Poudre*, pp. 151, 265.
- 1941 *Cache La Poudre*, pp. 88, 239.
- 1942 *Cache La Poudre*, pp. 180, 211, 245.
- 1943 *Cache La Poudre*, p. 89.
- 1943 Commencement program.

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, Marjorie Christensen Collection (SC 1-70), Archival Services, James A. Michener Library, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado.

Locations of Originals (if applicable):

Marjorie Louise Rasmussen Christiansen retains a copy of the original photograph. She loaned her photograph to Archival Services so negatives, photographs, and slides could be made for a celebration. The original photograph was returned to her.

Acquisition Information (if applicable):

Gift of Marjorie Louise Rasmussen Christiansen in 1999.

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

Subjects:

- Michener, James A. (James Albert), 1907-1997.
- Christiansen, Marjorie Louise Rasmussen.
- Colorado State College of Education -- Alumni and alumnae.

Inventory:

Collection	MSS #	Series	Box	Folder	Title
Marjorie Christensen Collection	SC 1-70			Photographs	"James Michener," Negative, 4"x5". James A. Michener Papers, Marjorie Christensen Collection (SC 1-70), Folder—Photographs, Archival Services, James A. Michener Library, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado. Scanned image available.

Collection	MSS #	Series	Box	Folder	Title
Marjorie Christensen Collection	SC 1-70			Photographs	"James Michener," Photograph, black & white, 4"x5". James A. Michener Papers, Marjorie Christensen Collection (SC 1-70), Folder—Photographs, Archival Services, James A. Michener Library, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado. Scanned image available.
Marjorie Christensen Collection	SC 1-70			Photographs	"James Michener," Slide. 2 copies. James A. Michener Papers, Marjorie Christensen Collection (SC 1-70), Folder—Photographs, Archival Services, James A. Michener Library, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado.
Marjorie Christensen Collection	SC 1-70			Photographs	"A Group of Three Unidentified Women at the May 6, 1941 Hays Picnic Pie Eating Contest." Negative. James A. Michener Papers, Marjorie Christensen Collection (SC 1-70), Folder—Photographs, Archival Services, James A. Michener Library, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado.
Marjorie Christensen Collection	SC 1-70			Photographs	"A Group of Three Unidentified Women at the May 6, 1941 Hays Picnic Pie Eating Contest." Photograph. James A. Michener Papers, Marjorie Christensen Collection (SC 1-70), Folder—Photographs, Archival Services, James A. Michener Library, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado
Marjorie Christensen Collection	SC 1-70			Photographs	Six photocopies of the photographs of James A. Michener at the May 6, 1941 Hays Picnic held at Colorado State College of Education.