

**James A. Michener Papers**  
**A Guide to the James A. Michener Special Collection, University of Northern Colorado**

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

**Collection number:** SC1-75a

**Title:** A Guide to the James A. Michener Special Collection, University of Northern Colorado

**Author:** Inventory prepared by Shirley Soenksen on 2010 November 10.

**Dates:** 1997-

**Creator or Collector:** Archival Services staff

**Size:** .1 linear feet

**Abstract:** This collection consists of materials related to the establishment of the James A. Michener Special Collection at the University of Northern Colorado.

**Scope and Content Note:** This collection consists of materials related to the establishment of the James A. Michener Special Collection at the University of Northern Colorado.

**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.

**Arrangement (required for multiple level collections):**

This collection is organized into the following series:

Series 1: Photographs

Series 2: Clippings

**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, James A. Michener Special Collection, University of Northern Colorado (SC 1-75a), Archival Services, James A. Michener Library, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado.

**Acquisition Information (if applicable):**

Collected by Archival Services Staff.

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

**Subjects:**

Michener, James A. (James Albert), 1907-1997.

University of Northern Colorado. Libraries. James A. Michener Special Collection.

**Inventory:**

**Box 1**

Folder 0 – Finding Aid Finding Aid

**Series 1: Photographs**

Folder 1 -- Photographs

**Series 2: Clippings**

Folder 2 -- Clippings

Myers, Theresa. "Michener Archives Collect Write Stuff: UNC Museum Honored to Have Author's Collection," *Denver Post*, Mar. 12, 2001, p. 4B.

Article about the newly established James A. Michener Special Collection at the University of Northern Colorado.