

An Inventory of the James A. Michener Papers, Elmer Ladislav Novotny

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

Collection number: SC 1-81.

Title: An Inventory of the Elmer Ladislav Novotny Collection

Author: Inventory prepared by Shirley Soenksen on 2006 May 30.

Dates: 1997-

Creator or Collector: Novotny, Elmer Ladislav (Creator); Archival Services staff and others (Collector)

Size: 1 linear foot

Abstract: Michener related printouts from the internet.

Scope and Content Note: Printouts from sites on the internet that mention James A. Michener, have Michener-related material, or have material by Michener. This collection is a sample of such sites found during limited time periods.

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 Elmer Ladislav Novotny:

Elmer Ladislav Novotny was born in 1909. He received a diploma from the Cleveland School of Art; a Bachelor's Degree from Case Western Reserve University; a Master's Degree from Kent State University; and studied at the Slade School of Fine Art at the University of London; in Zagreb, Yugoslavia; and at Yale University.

His 1936 master's thesis from Kent State University was titled, *The Development of Art in Education*.

He taught at the Cleveland Institute of Art from 1933 to 1943 and at Kent State University from 1936-1946 and was director of the school of art from 1946-.

He was the author of *Byways of Southern Europe* (1969).

Kent State University commissioned a painting of James A. Michener in 1971.

In 1973 Novotny received the Kent State University President's Medal.

In 1997 the School of Art Gallery at Kent State University held a "Faculty Exhibition & Tribute to Elmer L. Novotny."

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 (RG SC 1), Reference Files, Archival Services, James A. Michener Library, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado.

Acquisition Information (if applicable):

Material collected by Archival Services staff and others beginning in 1998.

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

Documentation relating to the acquisition of the Novotny portrait of James A. Michener is on file in Archives, RG 13 S13 F1, Library Owned Art.

Subjects:

Michener, James A. (James Albert), 1907-1997
Novotny, Elmer Ladislav, 1909-

Inventory:

Novotny, Elmer Ladislav. "James A. Michener, 1907." 1971. James A. Michener Library, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado.

This 1971 portrait of James A. Michener by Elmer Ladislav Novotny (Elmer Lodislaur Novatny on brass plate) previously hung on the wall east of the Circulation Desk as you walked into the Library Administration Office. It has been returned to the James A. Michener Special Collection. This painting was commissioned for the Michener Collection at Kent State University.

References for Elmer Ladislav Novotny:

Costello, Virginia. "Re: Plaques for Gifts to Michener." Memo (Photocopy). Greeley, CO: University of Northern Colorado, 1978. (Original memo filed in RG13 S13 F1).

Memo dated 1978 April 17 from Virginia Costello to Oren Sprague regarding "Plaques for Gifts to Michener" lists the Novotny portrait (1. James A. Michener, 1907 - by Elmer L. Novotny) as one of the gifts that was to receive a "brass plaque to be screwed to the wall."