

## **An Inventory of the James A. Michener Papers, Manuscript by Sue Binkley Tatem**

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

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**Title:** An Inventory of the James A. Michener Papers, Manuscript by Sue Binkley Tatem

**Author:** Inventory prepared by Shirley Soenksen on 2009 December 4.

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**Creator or Collector:** Michener, James A. (James Albert), 1907-1997

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**Abstract:** This manuscript is a guide to the writings of James A. Michener with a possible title of "The Michener Companion" (as well as other suggestions for a title). The manuscript provides biographical information on Michener, information on each of his books, and various resources available on Michener.

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### **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.

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**Locations of Originals (if applicable):**

**Acquisition Information (if applicable):**

Gift of Sue Binkley Tatem?

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

**Subjects:**

Michener, James A. (James Albert), 1907-1997.  
Tatem, Sue Binkley.

**Inventory:**

Collection	MSS #	Series	Box	Folder	Title
Manuscript by Sue Binkley Tatem	SC 1-84	Series	Box 1	Folder 0	Finding Aid
Manuscript by Sue Binkley Tatem	SC 1-84	Series	Box 1	Folder 1	Manuscript