

The Kate Simon Papers
1959-1989

Finding Aid



Archives and Special Collections



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GENERAL INFORMATION

Accession Number: 96-01

Size: 6.3321 cu. ft.

Location: Range 5 Section 8 Shelves 46 - 48

Provenance: Kate Simon

Restrictions: None.

Archivist: Prof. Julio L. Hernandez-Delgado

Assistants: Ms. Gretchen Opie
Ms. Nicole Thomas

Date: June 1999

Revised: November 2014

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kate Simon was born Kaila Grubschmeidt in Warsaw, Poland on December 5, 1912. At the age of four, with her mother and younger brother, she immigrated to the United States where they joined her father who had already been there for more than two years. In 1917 the family settled in a Jewish immigrant neighborhood in the Bronx.

Simon was raised in a traditional Jewish family with a father she has described as “tyrannical.” Her mother, unlike other women in the neighborhood, had once owned her own shop in Poland, and encouraged her daughter to get an education and to be financially independent before she married. After a difficult childhood, Simon left home at fifteen and supported herself with a variety of jobs. Eventually she was able to work her way through college, and in 1937 she graduated from Hunter College with a BA in English.

Simon married twice. Her first husband, Dr. Stanley Goldman, died in 1942, and a marriage to publisher Bob Simon ended in divorce in 1960. Her only child, Alexandra, died in 1954 at the age of twenty.

Simon began her writing career doing book reviews for several publications including *The New Republic* and *The Nation*. She began writing books after a publisher friend suggested she write a travel guide to New York City. The publisher’s idea had been to highlight the most chic and exclusive places in the city, but instead Simon wrote *New York Places and Pleasures: An Uncommon Guidebook*. Published in 1959 by Harper and Row, it vividly describes lesser known and unusual aspects of New York City from the intimate perspective of someone who had lived there nearly all her life. The book became a bestselling paperback, has been revised four times, and is now considered a classic among New York guidebooks.

After the success of her first book, Simon was able to continue writing travel guides, living at her publisher’s expense for months or years at a time in the area she was exploring. Her successful and popular guides include *Mexico: Places and Pleasures* (1963), *London: Places and Pleasures* (1968), *Kate Simon: Paris Places and Pleasures* (1971), *Rome: Places and Pleasures* (1972), *England’s Green and Pleasant Land* (1974), *Fifth Avenue: A Very Special History* (1978), and *Italy: The Places in Between* (1984).

Using the same vivid, descriptive prose she is known for, Simon also published three volumes of memoirs: *Bronx Primitive: Portraits of a Childhood* (1982), *A Wider World: Portraits in Adolescence* (1987), and *Etchings in an Hourglass* (1990). Simon has received several awards for her work. She won the National Book Critics Circle Nomination in 1982 and was named a Books-Across-The-Sea Ambassador of Honor in 1983. Her name was added to the Hunter Hall of Fame in 1983, and in 1989 she received an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Hunter College.

On February 5, 1990, when she was 77 years old, Kate Simon died from stomach cancer in her home in Manhattan.

Gretchen Opie
Nicole Thomas

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Kate Simon was a popular and prolific writer, known for her humor, her honesty and her vivid descriptions of the places and people around her. She was a world traveler who related her varied experiences to her readers in her many guidebooks. Her writings about New York, including her memoirs, have established her as an expert on the city, and she continues to be cited as an authority.

The Kate Simon Papers consists of documents dating from 1959 (the year Simon's first book was published) to 1989 (the year she was diagnosed with stomach cancer). There are personal documents, notes and drafts of Simon's writing, clippings of articles, reviews of her work, teaching materials, photographs from her travels, and slides that she used during her lectures.

The bulk of the collection contains materials relating to Simon's writings. There are travel logs, journals and handwritten notes which record her initial impressions of the places, people and events she would later write about. Similarly, the photographs in the collection capture the appearance of places described in her guidebooks.

The most extensive part of the collection contains typed drafts of Simon's well-known books and other writings. Simon generally gave the drafts working titles which don't always correspond to the names of published chapters or section headings. In some cases there is nothing else to identify the pieces, and it can be difficult for the researcher to determine which drafts later became parts of books, which were preparatory writings, and which may have been published as separate articles or essays. It is clear, however, that the drafts included in the collection are fairly comprehensive. There are parts of *Etchings in an Hourglass* and *A Wider View*, a musical version of *Bronx Primitive*, and sections from her various travel guides. *A Renaissance Tapestry: The Gonzaga of Mantua* is particularly well represented with two extensive drafts. In several cases there are multiple drafts revealing Simon's successive revisions.

The collection as a whole thoroughly documents the various stages of Simon's writing process, from her initial ideas to the published piece. The papers are as unique and idiosyncratic as Kate Simon herself, and provide researchers with a unique opportunity to better understand Simon's life and work.

Gretchen Opie
Nicole Thomas

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Series I – Biographical Information

Series I consists of articles about Kate Simon, awards she received, her marriage certificate, financial documents, royalty records, and handwritten travel logs. In addition, there are articles about Simon receiving an honorary doctorate from Hunter College. Folders are arranged alphabetically.

Series II – Correspondence

Series II consists of incoming and outgoing letters which are arranged chronologically from 1959 to 1989.

Series III – Writings

Subseries 3.1 Drafts

Subseries 3.2 Research Notes

Subseries 3.3 Articles Written by Kate Simon

Subseries 3.4 Articles Written by Kate Simon Undated

Subseries 3.5 Brochures and Essays

Subseries 3.6 Miscellaneous Materials

Subseries 3.7 Publisher Announcements of Kate Simon's Books

Subseries 3.1 consist of drafts of articles, essays, and book chapters. Many of the drafts contain corrections, inserts, deletions, and comments. Subseries 3.2 consists of handwritten research notes that Simon referred to while preparing several of her publications. Subseries 3.3 consists of articles written by Kate Simon which appeared in various newspapers and magazines. The articles are arranged by date of publication. Subseries 3.4 consists of articles written by Kate that are undated. The articles are arranged alphabetically by title. Subseries 3.5 includes a brochure on the Cooper Union Museum and an essay on writing. Subseries 3.6 consists of miscellaneous materials and Subseries 3.7 consists of publisher announcements of *Bronx Primitive Portraits in a Childhood* (1982), *Italy The Places In Between* (1971), and *New York Places & Pleasures: an uncommon guidebook* (1959).

Series IV – Reviews of Kate Simon's Works

Series IV consists of reviews of Simon's works that appeared in *The Cooper Union Magazine*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Herald Tribune*, *Newsday*, *New York Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *Travel & Leisure*, and *Vogue Magazine*. Reviews are arranged alphabetically by title of each work.

Series V – Teaching Materials

Series V consists of instructional materials that Simon used in the classes and seminars she taught. There are also documents relating to speeches, lectures and readings she participated in.

Series VI – Photographs

Series VI consists of black-and-white and color photographs and slides. Included are publicity shots of Simon as well as prints and slides of her numerous travel destinations. Many of the photographs are untitled.

CONTAINER LIST

SERIES I – BIOGRAPHICAL AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	1	Articles, 1951 - 1989
	2	Awards, 1982 - 1983, 1986, 1989
	3	Biographical Materials
	4	Clippings, n.d.
	5	Financial Documents, 1986 - 1988
	6	Marriage Certificate, November 27, 1946
	7	Medical Documents, 1980
	8-9	Royalty Statements, 1973 - 1978, 1980 - 1981, 1983, 1988
	10	Tenant Association Papers, 1985 - 1989
	11	Travel Logs, n.d.
2	1	Honorary Doctorate from Hunter College including the Ceremonial Shawl, 1989

SERIES II – CORRESPONDENCE

		Incoming
3	1	1949, 1956, 1958 - 1962
	2	1963 - 1964, 1970 - 1971, 1973 - 1980, 1982 - 1985
	3	1986 - 1989
	4	n.d.
		Outgoing
	5	1959 - 1961, 1970, 1972, 1975, 1978, 1983 - 1986, 1989
	6	n.d.

SERIES III – WRITINGS

Subseries 3.1 Drafts

		Addresses
4	1	Abigail Adams Smith, n.d.
	2	42 nd Street Library “5 th Avenue,” n.d.
	3	Address delivered at (Hunter College) Commencement, Times Square, April 1989

SERIES III – WRITINGS

Subseries 3.1 Drafts

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
4	4	Alberti, Leon Batista (1404 - 1472)
	5	Albi and Monte Carlo, n.d.
	6	Aldo, n.d.*
	7	And Music, n.d.
	8	And Once Again, Hospital, n.d.
	9	Aristo, n.d.
	10	Bandello, n.d.
	11	Barcelona, 1979
	12	Bazar Sabado, n.d.
	13	Betty and Golf Pro, n.d.
	14	Bill, n.d.
	15	Bob Simon, n.d.
	16	Box Material, n.d.
	17	Brinton, n.d. (The first 22 pages are missing)
	18	Brooklyn College, n.d.
	19	Bronx Primitive (a musical), n.d.
	20	Castiglione, n.d.
	21	Children, n.d.
	22	The City Dwellers, n.d.
5	1	Cuidad Trujillo and Haiti, n.d.
	2	Collections, n.d.
	3	Culture Encounters (Caribbean), n.d.
	4	Culture Shock, n.d.
	5	Culture Shock/India, n.d.
	6	Culture Shock Overwhelming India, n.d.
	7	Dalmation Montage, n.d.
	8	Death My Friend & Companion, n.d.
	9	Eastward Ho, n.d.
	10	Eating, n.d.
	11	Encounters—Ruth, n.d.
	12	End, n.d.
	13	Enna, n.d.
	14	Episodes in the Life of a Step-Parent, n.d.
	15	Essays – Literature, n.d.
	16	Est ce que vous ete Juive?, n.d.
	17	Estes, n.d.

*(Different drafts of this work are titled Aldo, Aldo the Gold, Aldo the Shoe Shine Boy, Aldo with Italy, Italy Aldo, My Italian Life Aldo?, and My Life in Italy??? Aldo?)

SERIES III – WRITINGS

Subseries 3.1 Drafts

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
5	18	Etchings in an Hourglass, n.d.’
	19	Ethel—Ruth, n.d.
	20	Fifth Avenue Christmas, n.d.
	21	Five –Spot Café, n.d.
	22	Following Separation, n.d.
	23	Forward, n.d.
	24	Girl, n.d.
	25	Golden Man—Cordoba, n.d.
	26	The Gonzaga Lords of Mantua, Selwyn Brinton, 1927
	27	Greek Island, n.d.
	28	Greg and Laura, n.d.
	29	The Greenbelt, n.d.
	30	Haiti Revisited, March 18, 1975
	31	Harvard, n.d.
	32	History, n.d.
6	1	History—Europe and Italy, n.d.
	2	Hold for “Machismo”, n.d.
	3	Hollywood Romance, n.d.
	4	Hospital, n.d.
	5	Illness, Analysis, n.d.
	6	India, n.d.
	7	Introduction to New York Observed, n.d.
	8	Isabella, n.d.
	9	Ischia, n.d.
	10	Israel, n.d.
	11	Italy, n.d.
	12	Jaffa, n.d.
	13	Jerome, n.d.
	14	Jerry, n.d.
	15	Jerusalem, n.d.
	16	Jerusalem Byways, n.d.
	17	Jugoslavia, n.d.
	18	Julius II - Michelangelo Buonarotti, n.d.
	19	Layering Views of New York City, n.d.
	20	Lessons, n.d.
	21	Letter, n.d.
	22	Letter to My Nieces, n.d.
	23	Lexie Illness, n.d.
	24	The Little Virtues, n.d.

SERIES III – WRITINGS

Subseries 3.1 Drafts

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
6	25	Machiavelli, n.d.	
	26	Machiavelli and Castiglione, n.d.	
	27	Machiavelli's "Prince," n.d.	
	28	Magics and Sciences, n.d.	
	29	Mantegna, n.d.	
	30	Mantua, n.d.	
	31	Marriage, n.d.	
	32	Marthe and Del, n.d.	
	33	The Meeting, n.d.	
	34	Melteme, n.d.	
	35	Memoires of a Renaissance Pope, n.d.	
	7	1	Mexico I: Places and Pleasures, n.d.
		2	Mexico II, n.d.
3		Mexico Paris 7, n.d.	
4		Mexico-Tom, n.d.	
5		Minor Deities—Esther, n.d.	
6		Monreale, n.d.	
7		Mysteries ñ Puzzles Conundrums (Edgar Wind Pagan Mysteries), n.d.	
8		Ned, n.d.	
9		Not Quite Chance Encounters, n.d.	
10		Opening, n.d.	
11		Oxaxca, n.d.	
12		Painter, n.d.	
13		Pandora's Box Dora and Erwin Panofsky, n.d. Pantheon Books, 1956	
14		Paris, n.d.	
15-19		Paris II, n.d.	
8	1	Parks Renaissance, n.d.	
	2	Pavanne for a Dead Princess, n.d.	
	3	Peter and Norma, n.d.	
	4	Plague, n.d.	
	5	Poetry, n.d.	
	6	Preface, n.d.	
		A Renaissance Tapestry: The Gonzagas of Mantua	
	7	p. 1 - 100	
	8	p. 82 - 129	
	9	p. 101 – 200	

SERIES III – WRITINGS

Subseries 3.1 Drafts

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
8	10	A Renaissance Tapestry: The Gonzagas of Mantua p. 130 - 200
	11	p. 201 - 255
	12	p. 201 - 300
	13	p. 261 - 295
	14	p. 301 – 381
	15	Untitled Chapters
	16	Inserts
9	1	Roads Not Taken, n.d.
	2	Rubens, n.d.
	3	Russian Lessons, n.d.
	4	Siena et al (Information), n.d.
	5	Simon for November, n.d.
	6	Small Loves, n.d.
	7	Small Renaissance Court, n.d.
	8	Songs without Words, n.d.
	9	The Smith from Lichterfeld, n.d.
	10	Spanish Civil War, n.d.
	11	Speech: 158th Commencement Address at Hunter College
	12	Splendor of Israel, n.d.
	13	Stella and Fanny, n.d.
	14	The Storekeeper, n.d.
	15	Sylvia, n.d.
	16	Theatre, n.d.
	17	Third Autobiography, n.d.
	18	Three Faces of Humanism Mantegna, n.d.
	19	Three Faces of Humanism Vittorino Ramboldini, n.d.
	20	Travel and Leisure Possibilities, n.d.
	21	Triangles, n.d.
	22	Triptych, n.d.
	23	Two Bronx Girls, n.d.
	24	Two Men, Two Women, A Phantom, n.d.
	25	Untitled Drafts, n.d.
	26	Vignettes, n.d.
	27	Visits to Israel, 1953
	28	Who and Where Am I, n.d.
	29	A Wider World: Portraits in An Adolescence, n.d.
	30	Women, n.d.
	31	Words and Thought, n.d.

SERIES III – WRITINGS

Subseries 3.1 Drafts

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
9	32	The Zocalo: The Immortal Place, n.d.

Subseries 3.2 Research Notes

10	1	Autobiography III
	2	Gonzaga
	3	Jerusalem
	4	Mexico
	5	Miscellaneous I
	6	Miscellaneous II
	7	New York
	8	Park Renaissance
	9	Smithsonian Institute
	10	Travel and Leisure

Subseries 3.3 Articles Written By Kate Simon

11	1	Simon, Kate. "The New York Shopper A To Z: An Alphabet of Oddities." <i>Harper's Bazaar</i> (May 1959): 134 - 135, 154. ---. "The Three Harlems and What is Happening to 'Them.'" <i>Harper's Magazine</i> (March 1960): 62 - 65. ---. "Hongos Magicos/Mexico's Hallucinogenic Mushrooms." <i>Cavalier</i> (September 26, 1963): 26, 62-65.
	2	---. "Did the Italians Invent Opera – Or Vice Versa?" <i>The New York Times</i> , February 8, 1970, n.p. ---. "Encounter on a Train." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (February 1976): 14, 19 - 20. ---. "Double Takes." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (December 1976): 6, 8.
	3	---. "A Modest Proposal." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (December 1976): 58. ---. "A Modern Canterbury Tale." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (January 1977): 68. ---. "The Spanish Girl." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (July 1977): 74.

SERIES III – WRITINGS

Subseries 3.3 Articles Written By Kate Simon

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
11	4	Simon, Kate. "Monumental Mexico." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (May 1978): 22 - 25. ---. "Serendipitous Discoveries." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (July 1978): 78. ---. "The Magic Market." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (November 1978): 156
	5	---. "Mr. Lincoln's Land." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (September 1978): n.p. ---. "Barcelona." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (December 1978): n.p. ---. "Sienna in the Sun." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (June 1979): 82 - 88.
	6	---. "Private Eye on New York." <i>Vogue Magazine</i> (July 1980): 110, 120, 122. ---. "Saluting the Statue of Liberty." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (July 1984): 73 - 84. ---. "The Tower of London." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (June 1985): 123 - 126, 160.
	7	---. "Jerusalem." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (January 1986): 95 - 136. ---. "A Contempt for Danger." <i>The New York Times</i> , November 16, 1986, n.p. ---. "Bringing New Life to the Parks." <i>The New York Times Magazine</i> , April 26, 1987, pp. 22-25, 39.
	8	---. "The Cloisters: New Treasures and Pleasures." <i>The New York Times</i> , May, 15, 1988: Section 2: 1, 45. ---. "Two Girls from the Bronx." <i>Newsday</i> , December 12, 1988, 62.

Subseries 3.4 Articles Written By Kate Simon Undated

11	9	Simon, Kate. "Central Park, Recycled." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> , n.d. ---. "Cozumel." (n.d.): 188. ---. "London For Sale." (n.d.): 91-96.
	10	---. "Love Letter from Mexico." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> , (n.d.): 88.

SERIES III – WRITINGS

Subseries 3.4 Articles Written By Kate Simon Undated

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
11	10	Simon, Kate. "No Place Like Home: A Traveler Returns to New York." <i>New York Magazine</i> (n.d.): 108 - 113
	11	---. "The Tourist As Writer." <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (n.d.): 118
		---. "They Who Guard the Treasures" <i>Travel & Leisure</i> (n.d.): 122
		---. "Typical New Yorker?" <i>Herald Tribune</i> (n.d.): n.p.
		---. "What About America?" <i>The New York Times</i> , (n.d.)
	12	---. Published Excerpts (n.d.)

Subseries 3.5 Brochures and Essays Written By Kate Simon

11	13	Simon, Kate. "The Cooper Union Museum as seen by Kate Simon" in <i>New York Places & Pleasures</i> , Meridian Books, Inc., 1959.
		Simon, Kate. "Jimmy and Death." from <i>Bronx Primitive</i> in <i>The St. Martin's Guide to Writing</i> by Rise B. Axelrod and Charles R. Cooper, New York: St. Martin's Press, p. 18 - 23.

Subseries 3.6 Miscellaneous Materials

11	14	Miscellaneous Materials
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Subseries 3.7 Publisher Announcements of Kate Simon's Books

11	15	Bronx Primitive, 1982 Italy: The Places In Between, 1970 New York: Places and Pleasures: an uncommon guidebook, 1959
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SERIES IV – REVIEWS OF KATE SIMON’S WORKS

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
12	1	Bestsellers List
	2	Bronx Primitive, 1982
	3	Bulletins, 1963 - 1964, 1974, 1982, 1988 - 1989
	4	England’s Green and Pleasant Land, 1975
	5	Fifth Avenue: a Very Social History, 1978
	6	Italy: The Places In Between, 1970
	7	London: Places and Pleasures, 1968
	8	Mexico: Places and Pleasures, 1963
	9	New York, 1963
	10	New York: Places and Pleasures: an uncommon guidebook, 1959
	11	Paris: Places and Pleasures, n.d.
13	1	A Renaissance Tapestry: The Gonzaga of Mantua, 1988
	2	Rome: Places and Pleasures, n.d.
	3	A Wider World: Portraits In An Adolescence, 1986

SERIES V – TEACHING MATERIALS

13	4	Class Materials
	5	Instructional Materials
	6	Lectures, Speeches and Readings

SERIES VI – PHOTOGRAPHS

13	7	Candid and Portrait Photographs of Kate Simon, 1963
		General Photographs
	8	<i>Arts in New York</i> , 1983 <i>Literary Lions</i> , 1989 <i>The New York Times Book Review</i> , 1986
		Slides
14		The New York Public Library, 42 nd Street & 5th Avenue Byron Book, James Book, Library Torch, Crystal Palace and the Frick Collection Lecture: Slides from Abigail Adams Smith Unlabeled Transparencies of Countryside Unlabeled Photographs and Negatives