

**JOHN CROWE RANSOM  
and  
JOSEPH EDGAR SIMMONS  
CORRESPONDENCE COLLECTION**

**MSS # 359**

**Arranged and described by Molly Dohrmann  
December 2007**

**SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
Jean and Alexander Heard Library  
Vanderbilt University  
419 21<sup>st</sup>. Avenue South  
Nashville, Tennessee 37240  
Telephone: (615) 322-2807**

## Biographical Note

John Crowe Ransom was born in 1888. He graduated from Vanderbilt University and went to Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar. He taught English at Vanderbilt until he accepted a Chair in Poetry position at Kenyon College in 1937, and there founded and edited *The Kenyon Review*. John Crowe Ransom was one of the Fugitive poets who published poetry in Nashville in the early 1920's. He also contributed an essay to *I'll Take My Stand*, the Agrarian manifesto published in 1930. Ransom was instrumental in developing what came to be called the New Criticism. He wrote and was internationally recognized for his poetry, his lifelong vocation, as well as for his teaching and works of criticism. He died in 1974 at the age of eighty six.

Joseph Edgar Simmons taught English at DePauw College, William and Mary College in Virginia, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, and at Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi. Over the period of the almost seven years of this correspondence, Simmons wrote to Mr. Ransom regularly, often requesting comments on his poetry and philosophic writings and asking for recommendations as he tried to find new teaching positions. This collection is a record of John Crowe Ransom's response to the letters sent by Simmons.

## Scope and Content Note

The letters in this small collection were written between September 17, 1959 and June 30, 1966 from John Crowe Ransom to Joseph Edgar Simmons, an aspiring poet and teacher. The letters consist primarily of advice, information, and concern Ransom gives for Simmons' personal and professional growth as a poet, writer, and teacher. Altogether there are 17 letters. These letters were purchased in the fall of 2001.

## File Listing

### Correspondence – John Crowe Ransom to Joseph Edgar Simmons

1)

September 17, 1959

September 24, 1962

January 12, 1963

December 27, 1963

February 17, 1964

March 9, 1964

May 13, 1964 (envelope postmarked May 11, 1964)

May 16, 1964

May 22, 1964

June 5, 1964  
November 23, 1964  
March 31, 1965  
April 20, 1965  
May 5, 1965  
June 30, 1965  
December 31, 1965  
June 30, 1966

2) Envelopes