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Phyllis Austin papers, 1944-2017

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Maine Women Writers Collection

Abplanalp Library
University of New England
716 Stevens Avenue
Portland, Maine 04103
cmiller10@une.edu
URL: <http://www.une.edu/mwwc>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Maine Women Writers Collection
Title:	Phyllis Austin papers
ID:	0008
Date [inclusive]:	1944-2017
Physical Description:	25 linear feet
Language of the Material:	English

Preferred Citation

Phyllis Austin papers, Maine Women Writers Collection, University of New England, Portland, Maine

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Biographical/Historical Note

Phyllis Austin was born November 14, 1941 in Four Oaks, North Carolina. As a child she dreamed of becoming a Southern Baptist missionary in China. After graduating from Meredith College in Raleigh, Austin shifted her interests to journalism where she became a member of the Associated Press capitol bureau in Columbia, South Carolina and initiated the bureau's environmental coverage. Austin moved to Maine in 1969 to cover the State House for the Associated Press and in 1972, she became the first Associated Press environmental writer for New England. Her career as an investigative environmental journalist flourished when she began to work for the alternative weekly newspaper, Maine Times, which encouraged the in-depth reporting about forestry, land use, public utilities, rural community development, and conservation that earned Austin her reputation. Her journalism garnered numerous awards including an Alicia Patterson Journalism Fellowship in Washington, D.C., and a John S. Knight Journalism Fellowship at Stanford University. When Maine Times ceased publication in 2002, Austin freelanced for a range of publications including AMC Outdoors, Backpacker, Wild Earth, Yankee, and Down East Magazine. She co-edited a collection of essays entitled, "On Wilderness: Voices from Maine" (2003), and wrote two biographies: "Wilderness Partners: Buzz Caverly and Baxter State Park" (2008), and "Queen Bee: Roxanne Quimby, Burt's Bees, and Her Quest for a New National Park" (2015). In 1984, Austin suffered a horrific cross-country skiing accident that required many surgeries throughout her life, leaving her with intense chronic pain. The accident was the eventual cause of her death. Austin

intentionally stopped eating and drinking, and passed away on November 21, 2016 at her Mere Point home in Brunswick where she lived with her partner of 25 years, Anne Dellenbaugh.

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Collection Scope and Content

The collection consists primarily of Austin's research conducted for various projects, mainly regarding Baxter State Park (see Series I Scope Note) and in preparation for her book, "Wilderness Partners: Buzz Caverly and Baxter State Park" (2008). It includes photos, maps, research books and annual park reports. The collection also includes Austin's articles published in various newspapers and magazines, primarily The Maine Times. Also included are awards given to her by a variety of organizations, including the Sierra Club and the Maine State Legislature. There is also a portrait of Austin painted by Jack Havy of Ad Media Associates.

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in four series: 1. Baxter State Park Research; 2. Research on Governor Baxter's Dogs; 3. Journalism; 4. Recognition and Awards.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Maine Women Writers Collection

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Access

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Related Materials

Separated Materials

The papers originally included Austin's research for her book, "Queen Bee: Roxanne Quimby, Burt's Bees, and Her Quest for a New National Park" (2015), however the materials were accidentally discarded during the cleaning of Austin's house in preparation for sale.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Pesticides -- Environmental aspects
- Environmentalism
- Women and the environment
- Forest products industry
- Conservation of natural resources
- Maine Life
- Journalism

Collection Inventory

Baxter State Park Research, 1962-2008, undated

Scope and Contents

The series includes research for Autin's book "Wilderness Partners: Buzz Caverly and Baxter State Park". This includes tapes and transcripts with Caverly, correspondence, Baxter State Park reports, maps/books relating to Baxter State Park, North Woods history books, newspaper/magazine articles re: park issues, and photos of Caverly and Austin.

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Governor Baxter's Dogs Research, 1889-2008 (2006-2008)

Scope and Contents

This series contains research Austin gathered on Governor Baxter's dogs for a book she did not write. Research includes dog licenses from the 1880s-1920s, photos, articles, and general dog research.

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Journalism, 1977-2003

Scope and Contents

The series includes Austin's articles largely from The Maine Times, also including Nothern Woodlands, American Forests, Enterprise, Yankee, Backpacker, Downeast, Garbage, and AMC Outdoors.

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Recognition and Awards, 1964-2017

Scope and Contents

The series includes Austin's college diploma, as well as the following awards: Alicia Patterson Fellowship, John S. Knight Fellowship, Maine Conservation Award from Natural Resource Council of Maine, Maine Legislative Recognition, Maine Press Association Award, Sierra Club Environmental Writing Award and others. It also includes a portrait of Austin painted by Jack Havy of Ad Media Associates.

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