

GABRIELLE ROY, 1909-1983

Papers, 1936-1983

MSS 1982-11/1986-11

FINDING AID

93 boxes 18 m

Prepared by

Irma Larouche

LITERARY MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTION

National Library of Canada

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Pages</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	V
<b>PLAN AND CONTENT</b> .....	VI
<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	VIII
<b>A. CORRESPONDENCE</b>	
<b>I. Family</b>	
Senders surnamed Roy.....	1
Senders not surnamed Roy .....	3
Correspondents identified by given name only.....	6
Family papers .....	6
<b>II. M<sup>e</sup> Jean-Marie Nadeau File</b>	
Taxes .....	7
Investments.....	7
Gabrielle Roy and family.....	7
Friends, readers, writers, etc.	
as senders .....	8
as recipients.....	13

II

Publishing houses, literary agencies, etc.  
    as senders ..... 16  
    as recipients ..... 22  
Publishing contracts..... 24  
Statements of account ..... 29

**III. Gabrielle Roy File**

Friends, readers, writers, etc.  
    as senders ..... 30  
    as recipients ..... 81  
François Ricard  
    as sender ..... 86  
    as recipient ..... 86  
Personal papers ..... 87  
Publishing houses, literary agencies, etc.  
    as senders ..... 89  
    as recipients ..... 100  
Publishing contracts..... 101  
Statements of account ..... 110

**B. NOVELS, STORIES, SHORT FICTION**

*Bonheur d'occasion* ..... 111  
*The Tin Flute*..... 111  
*La Petite Poule d'eau*..... 114  
*Where Nests the Water Hen* ..... 116  
*Alexandre Chenevert*..... 116

### III

<i>Rue Deschambault</i> .....	118
<i>La Montagne secrète</i> .....	119
<i>The Hidden Mountain</i> .....	120
<i>La Route d'Altamont</i> .....	120
<i>The Road Past Altamont</i> .....	122
<i>La Rivière sans repos</i> .....	122
<i>Windflower</i> .....	125
<i>River without Rest</i> .....	126
<i>Cet été qui chantait</i> .....	127
<i>Enchanted Summer</i> .....	129
<i>Un Jardin au bout du monde</i> .....	130
<i>Le Printemps revint à Wolhyn</i> became	
<i>Un Jardin au bout du monde</i> .....	131
<i>Exile</i> became <i>Garden in the Wind</i> .....	133
<i>Garden in the Wind</i> .....	133
<i>Ces enfants de ma vie</i> .....	134
<i>Children of my Heart</i> .....	137
<i>Fragiles Lumières de la terre : Écrits divers, 1942-1970</i> .....	138
<i>The Fragile Lights of Earth, 1942-1970. Selected Essays</i> .....	140
<i>De quoi t'ennuies-tu, Éveline? : Récit</i> .....	141
<i>Ély! Ély! Ély! : Récit</i> .....	141
<i>Ma Vache</i> .....	142
<i>Courte-Queue</i> .....	143
<i>Cliptail</i> .....	143
<i>L'Espagnole et la Pékinoise</i> .....	144
<i>La Détresse et l'Enchantement</i> .....	144
<i>Newspaper clippings</i> .....	146

<b>C.</b>	<b>NEWSPAPER AND PERIODICAL ARTICLES, THEATRE .....</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>UNPUBLISHED.....</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>E.</b>	<b>MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS .....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>F.</b>	<b>OTHER ARCHIVAL RECORDS</b>	
<b>I.</b>	<b>Honorary distinctions .....</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Honorary doctorates.....</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>Prizes and medals.....</b>	<b>191</b>
	<b>Invitations .....</b>	<b>195</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Photographs.....</b>	<b>196</b>

## INTRODUCTION

This writer, who left her mark in both French and English Canada, was born on March 22, 1909 in St. Boniface, Manitoba. After studies at the Académie Saint-Joseph in St. Boniface and the Winnipeg Normal Institute, Gabrielle Roy taught in Manitoba from 1929 to 1937, notably in Marchand and Cardinal, then at the Institut Provencher. Meanwhile, she was involved in theatre with the Cercle Molière. In the summer of 1937, she taught at the Little Water Hen, then left for Europe in the fall.

First she visited London and Paris, where she studied dramatic art, then Provence, where she wrote her first articles to be accepted in the French periodical *Je suis partout*. Returning to Canada in 1939, she settled in Montreal, where she contributed to the newspaper *Le Jour*, to *La Revue populaire*, to *La Revue moderne* and to the *Bulletin des agriculteurs*. Her feature articles and short fiction were already demonstrating a sense of observation and a talent for storytelling.

The Second World War period was the backdrop to the gestation of Gabrielle Roy's first novel *Bonheur d'occasion*, which was published in 1945 and won the Prix Femina, a French publishing award, in 1947. The English translation, *The Tin Flute*, was chosen book of the month by the Literary Guild of America. Also in 1947, Gabrielle Roy married Dr. Marcel Carbotte and moved to Quebec City.

In 1946, *Bonheur d'occasion* won its author the Médaille de l'Académie canadienne-française and the Médaille de l'Académie française. The English and French film adaptation of *Bonheur d'occasion* premiered at the Moscow Festival in July 1983, on the eve of Gabrielle Roy's death. In that year, it also won the International Press Award for best Canadian feature film at the World Film Festival.

The other novels and short fiction which Gabrielle Roy published subsequently earned her the Prix Duvernay (1956), the Prix David (1971), the Molson Award (1977), and three Governor General's Awards. In 1947, she was the first woman to become a Member of the Royal Society of Canada. She was named a Companion of the Order of Canada in 1967, and in 1968, received a Canada Council medal in the "novels" category. Her works have been translated into more than 14 foreign languages.

After Gabrielle Roy's death on July 13, 1983, literary experts unanimously hailed her as "one of the greatest post-war writers in French Canada".

Gabrielle Roy is no longer here, but her work survives.

## PLAN AND CONTENT OF THE FONDS

The National Library of Canada acquired Gabrielle Roy's manuscripts from the Fonds Gabrielle Roy Inc. in 1982. Another acquisition from the same source was added in 1986.

The collection totals approximately 18 metres of stacks, organized as follows:

<b>CORRESPONDENCE</b>	26 boxes, i.e. 4.5 metres of stacks
<b>NOVELS, STORIES, SHORT FICTION</b>	44 boxes, i.e. 8 metres of stacks
<b>NEWSPAPER AND PERIODICAL ARTICLES, THEATRE</b>	7 boxes, i.e. 1.5 metres of stacks
<b>UNPUBLISHED</b>	5 boxes, i.e. 1 metre of stacks
<b>MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS</b>	3 boxes, i.e. 50 centimetres of stacks
<b>OTHER ARCHIVAL RECORDS</b>	8 boxes, i.e. 2.5 metres of stacks

The Gabrielle Roy Fonds includes manuscripts of published and unpublished works, personal and other correspondence, and archival records concerning the artist's work and career.

As far as we know, the oldest published record is "La Grotte de la Mort" in *Le Samedi*, dated May 23, 1936. Gabrielle Roy wrote a few periodical articles under two known pseudonyms: Aline Lubac and Danny.

We do not have any manuscript pages from *Bonheur d'occasion*, and only a few pages from *La Petite Poule d'eau*. This evidence is confirmed by the author herself: "I no longer have any manuscript pages from *Bonheur d'occasion*. From *La Petite Poule d'eau*, only a few pages which Marcel [Carbotte] saved from the slaughter. But since then, I have made it my responsibility to save them..."<sup>1</sup>.

In addition to being translated into English, *Bonheur d'occasion* has been translated into nine foreign languages (Czech, Danish, German, Norwegian, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Spanish and Swedish).

The script used for the film version of *Bonheur d'occasion* is not part of the collection. The script in our possession is divided into five episodes and was used only for the version televised in 1984.

The manuscripts of the other novels and short fiction – *Alexandre Chenevert*, *Rue Deschambault* and *La Montagne secrète* – are typed and hand-corrected. However, with the exception of *Un Jardin au bout du monde*, most of the works produced after 1966, such as *La Route d'Altamont*, *La Rivière sans repos*, *Cet été qui chantait* and *Ces enfants de ma vie*, are handwritten in notebooks, with a typed manuscript of course. When Gabrielle Roy wrote, she made three drafts. The drafts of her early novels have disappeared, because she did not enjoy rereading her work. "I do not like to reread what I have written. I just find it trying to revise drafts," she said in an interview with Marc Gagné.<sup>2</sup>

This great lady of French-Canadian literature left us one very last work before her death on July 13, 1983. Her autobiography, entitled *La Détresse et l'Enchantement* [1987 translation by Patricia Claxton: *Enchantment and Sorrow*], was published by Boréal Express in 1984. It has two parts: "Le Bal chez le gouverneur" [The Governor's Ball] and "Un oiseau tombé sur le seuil" [A Bird Knows Its Song]. It is the story of her youth in Manitoba until her return from Europe in 1939. In addition to typed manuscripts, *La Détresse et l'Enchantement* fills 14 handwritten notebooks.

The unpublished work covers a metre of stacks. Needless to say, these works will only be published with the consent of the Fonds Gabrielle Roy Inc.

Correspondence, which covers approximately four and a half metres of stacks, includes letters, postcards and telegrams to and from Gabrielle Roy's family, friends, collaborators and numerous admirers, as well as strictly business correspondence. Restrictions apply only to the personal correspondence.

What we call "Other archival records" includes honorary distinctions, prizes and medals, invitations and photographs.

A list of books which are part of the manuscript collection and accompanied the Fonds Gabrielle Roy Inc. has been drawn up as follows: surplus copies of novels, including translations into English and foreign languages, serial works or publications (newspapers and periodicals) containing articles, stories, short fiction and excerpts from novels written by the author. This covers approximately two metres of stacks and is not included in the finding aid.

All of the archives may be consulted except the personal correspondence, which for the moment remains "confidential". No record which is part of the manuscript collection may be published or reproduced in whole or in part without written authorization from the Fonds Gabrielle Roy Inc.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> July 8th interview with Marc Gagné in *Visages de Gabrielle Roy, l'oeuvre et l'écrivain*. Montréal, Librairie Beauchemin, 1973. P. 179.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

**ABBREVIATIONS**

a/s	Aux soins de
B.	Boîte/Box
B.C.	British Columbia
Ch.	Chemise
Chap.	Chapitre/Chapter
cm	centimètre
c/o	care of
c.s.c.	Congrégation de Sainte-Croix
2 <sup>e</sup>	deuxième
D <sup>r</sup>	Docteur
Ed.	Editor
Éd.	Éditions
etc.	et caetera
c.-à-d.	c'est-à-dire
M.	Monsieur
Man.	Manitoba
MC	Map cabinet
M <sup>gr</sup>	Monseigneur
min.	minute(s)

M <sup>me</sup>	Madame
Ms	Manuscrit/Manuscript
n.d.	no date
n.d.s.c.	Notre-Dame du Sacré-Coeur
n <sup>o</sup>	numéro
no.	number
Ont.	Ontario
p.	page
1 <sup>er</sup>	premier
1 <sup>re</sup>	première
pseud.	pseudonyme
Qué.	Québec
s.d.	sans date
sec.	seconde
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'enfance (FISE)
Vol.	Volume