

Guide to
MS 491
Arturo Islas collection

Span dates, 1954-2000
Bulk Dates, 1990-1991

1 linear foot, 3 inches (3 document case boxes)

Processed by Desiree Campos
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Donated by Jovita La Farga Islas.

Citation: Arturo Islas collection, 1954-2000, MS 491, C.L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department. The University of Texas at El Paso Library.

C.L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department
University of Texas at El Paso

Biographical Sketch

Arturo Islas Jr. was a Chicano professor and writer. He was born to Arturo Islas Sr. and Jovita La Farga in El Paso, Texas on May 24, 1938. Islas credited his love of learning and reading to his grandmother, Crecenciana Sandoval Islas who instilled in him and his cousins the importance of education and being bilingual. At age 8, he contracted polio which left him with a limp. Islas experienced other serious health problems throughout his life. He was valedictorian of El Paso High in 1956 and earned a scholarship to attend Stanford University. At Stanford, he got his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in English. In 1971, he became a tenure-track professor at Stanford. A popular professor, he received the Dinkelspiel Award for Outstanding Service to Undergraduate Education from Stanford in 1976.

In 1976, he began working on a book called *Día de los Muertos*, which would later become *The Rain God*. The book was rejected several times during the 1980s. In 1984, *The Rain God* was published by a small local publishing press. He went back home to El Paso to be a visiting professor at the University of Texas at El Paso during 1986-1987 semesters. During this time, he began working on *La Mollie and the King of Tears*. Islas got a contract with William Morrow to publish the sequel to *The Rain God*, named *Migrant Souls*.

Islas wrote about the Chicano, gender, and queer experience on the border. He wanted to show that Chicano literature was as valid and important as mainstream literature. Islas was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association. In 1986 he received a Southwest Book Award from the Border Regional Library Association for *The Rain God*.

He died on February 15, 1991 of complications from AIDS.

References:

Aldama, F.L. (2009). Islas, Arturo, Jr., (1938-1991). In E. S. Nelson (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Contemporary LGBTQ Literature in the United States*. Vol. 1, pp.329-332. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press; *Contemporary Authors Online*. Detroit: Gale, 2003. From *Literature Resource Center*.

Series Description

The Arturo Islas collection is arranged in three series:

Series I: Biographical Information/Publications

Arranged by format and then chronologically. The series includes a yearbook, literary journals, magazines, books, flyers, articles, clippings, reviews, a letter and a postcard.

Series II: Photographs

Arranged chronologically, the series includes 3.5 x 5 prints, negatives and a contact print.

Series III: Oversized Materials

Arranged chronologically, the series includes clippings, copies of articles, and a poster.

Scope and Content Notes

The Arturo Islas collection spans the years 1954-2000. The bulk of the collection is from 1990-1991. Types of records found within the collection are books, newspaper clippings, photocopies of clippings, literary journals, a yearbook, programs, flyers, magazines, reviews, interviews and photos. The collection includes items written by and about Islas. The materials cover various issues relating to the border including bilingualism, biculturalism, family, affirmative action, and the literary merit of Chicano literature.

The collection is arranged into three series: Biographical Information, Photographs, and Oversized materials. The **Biographical information/Publications** series contains articles, poems, short stories, flyers, programs, reviews, interviews, literary journals, a yearbook and books written by or about Islas. The biographical information series was primarily arranged by format. The books, journals, yearbooks and magazines were grouped together and arranged chronologically in boxes 1 and 2. The flyers, programs, school notebook, articles, clippings and reviews were also grouped and arranged chronologically in box 3. The articles and clippings document various stages of Islas' life and reviews of his creative works. Some folders contain all the reviews in the collection concerning *The Rain God* and *Migrant Souls*. The clippings also document his time as a visiting professor to UTEP as well as his induction to the Herald Post's Writers Hall of Fame.

The **Photographs** series includes pictures of Islas and his parents at the 1990 Galarza lecture, pictures of an Ofrenda for Islas at Gilroy Library in Santa Clara County and other photographs of Islas. The **Oversized materials** series contains newspaper clippings and a poster.

Provenance Statement

This collection was donated by Jovita La Farga, Arturo's mother on April 8, 2003. Many of the items in the collection are inscribed by Islas to his parents and siblings. More items were added to the collection on October 10, 2003.

Restrictions

Photographs, articles and books are subject to copyright law.

Literary Rights Statement

Permission to publish material from the Arturo Islas Collection, must be obtained from the C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department, the University of Texas at El Paso Library. Citation should read, Arturo Islas Collection, MS 491, C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department, the University of Texas at El Paso Library.

Notes to the Researcher

The papers from the Islas' English 5 book are covered with archival paper.

Please handle "*Coming of Age in America*" with extra care because spine is damaged.

A program, postcard and letter were found in *Coming of Age in America* and *Grand Street*. All items are in a folder in box 2.

See also:

Cynthia Weber Farah Haines papers, MS 319

Lesbian and Gay Ephemera collection, MS 322

El Paso High collection, MS 415

José Antonio Burciaga collection, MS 412

Aldama, F. L. (2008). *Critical mappings of Arturo Islas's fictions*. Tempe, Ariz.: Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe.

Islas, A., & Aldama, F. L. (2003). *Arturo Islas: the uncollected works*. Houston: Arte Público Press.

Islas, A., & Skenazy, P. (1996). *La Mollie and the king of tears: a novel*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Islas, A. (1990). *Migrant Souls: a novel*. New York: Morrow.

Islas, A. (1991). *The rain god: a desert tale*. New York: Avon Books, 1991, c1984.

Container List

Series I: Biographical Information/Publications

Box #	Folder #	Title	Date
1	1	Stanford Quad Yearbook	1960
1	2	<i>Misquitzli Journal</i>	1972
1	3	<i>Misquitzli Journal</i> (3 Copies)	1974
1	4	<i>Misquitzli Journal</i> (2 copies)	1975
1	5	<i>The Rain God</i> (2 copies)	1984 and 1991
1	6	<i>Revista Chicano-Riquena</i>	Summer 1985
1	7	<i>Nova Quarterly</i>	1987
1	8	<i>Sequoia</i> , Centennial Issue	1987
1	9	<i>Literature and Landscape: Writers in the Southwest</i>	1988
1	10	<i>Stanford Magazine</i>	1989
2	1	<i>Stanford Humanities Review</i> - Vol.1, No.1	Spring 1989
2	1	William Morrow Catalog	Winter 1990
2	1	<i>Grand Street</i> 36-Vol. 9, No. 4	1990
2	2	<i>Stanford Magazine</i>	March 1990
2	3	<i>Western Journal of Medicine</i>	January 1991
2	4	<i>Guadalupe Review</i> - No. 1	October 1991
2	5	<i>Stanford Magazine</i>	December 1991
2	6	<i>Stanford Humanities Review</i> - Vol. II,	Spring 1992

		No. 2-3 (two copies)	
2	7	<i>Newsweek</i>	January 18, 1993
2	8	<i>San Jose Studies</i> - Vol.19, No. 1	Winter 1993
2	9	<i>Stanford Magazine</i>	June 1993
2	10	Items found in books: Matisse Postcard; New Press letter; Arts and Letters Program	Undated, 1994, 1995
2	11	<i>Coming of Age in America</i>	1994
3	1	Arturo Islas English 5 Notebook	1954
3	2	Flyers/Programs	1984-1993
3	3	Articles/ Clippings	1969-1986
3	4	Articles/ Clippings	1987-2000
3	5	<i>The Rain God</i> Reviews/ Clippings	1984-1985
3	6	<i>Migrant Souls</i> Reviews/ Clippings	1989-1991
3	7	Posthumous Articles/ Clippings	1991

Series II: Photographs

3	8	Photos of Arturo Islas' Ofrenda, Islas and the Islas family at the Galarza Lecture	March 1989-1991
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Series III: Oversized Materials

3	9	Oversized Materials- clippings and poster of <i>On the Bridge at the Border</i> lecture	1973-1990, undated
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