



Susan Dalsimer Papers

1969-1970

1 box (0.25 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS578

Collection overview

Famous Long Ago launched the literary career of Raymond Mungo with a splash, but even before the book had reached the shelves, he turned to his next project. In October 1969, Mungo began planning for a memoir of his life at the Packer Corners commune. Soon titled *Total Loss Farm*, the book would become a classic in the literature of the 1960s counterculture. Signing a contract in November with E.P. Dutton, he worked with a young and sympathetic editor, Susan Stern (later Susan Dalsimer).

This small, but rich collection consists of a series of letters between Raymond Mungo and his editor at E.P. Dutton, Susan Stern, regarding his ideas on writing and life. Beginning in October 1969 with editorial commentary on *Famous Long Ago* and Mungo's additions, the Dalsimer Papers offer insight into the development of *Total Loss Farm* from concept to printed page.

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Background on Susan Dalsimer

Famous Long Ago launched the literary career of Raymond Mungo with a splash, but even before the book had reached the shelves, he turned to his next project. In October 1969, Mungo began planning for a memoir that would recount a year in the life of the Packer Corners commune where he then lived, a memoir that would become a classic in the literature of the 1960s counterculture. While talk of a movie based on *Famous Long Ago* swirled around the commune, and with the Atlantic and several other publishing firms circling in hopes of taking on the second book, Mungo signed a contract in November with E.P. Dutton. There, he worked with a young and sympathetic editor, Susan Stern (later Susan Dalsimer).

The manuscript for what would become *Total Loss Farm* developed rapidly during the winter months of 1969-

1970, and even as the writing and editing were in full swing, Mungo hardly remained still. In January, he traveled to the West Coast, only to be disappointed by California, and he spent most of May with Verandah Porche and Helene on a trip to Switzerland and Scotland, where he stayed at a commune with Peter McLardy and others. Both trips became integral to the narrative. During editing, Stern was a steady sounding board, shepherding through the process of book design and cover illustration until *Total Loss Farm* finally went to press in May 1970.



Steve Diamond, Raymond Mungo, Susan Stern (Dalsimer), ca.1969

Scope of collection

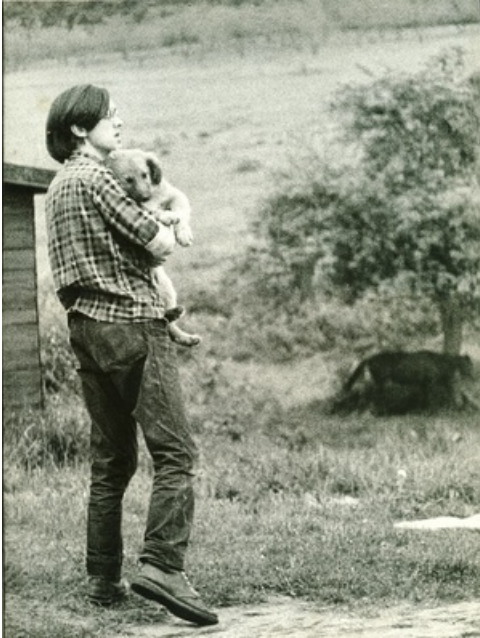
This small, but rich collection consists of a series of letters between Raymond Mungo and his editor at E.P. Dutton, Susan Stern, regarding his ideas on writing and life. Beginning in October 1969 with editorial commentary on *Famous Long Ago* and Mungo's additions, the Dalsimer Papers offer insight into the development of *Total Loss Farm* from concept to printed page.

In addition to the content relating to *Total Loss Farm*, Mungo's letters provide an interesting perspective on the process of writing, the editorial process, and the events in his personal life, particularly his adventures traveling on the West Coast and in Scotland and Switzerland. A few letters offer glimpses into life at Packer Corners and one or two make poignant references to Mungo's friend and associate from the Liberation News Service, Marshall Bloom, who committed suicide in November 1969. The original manuscripts and galley proofs for both *Famous Long Ago* and *Total Loss Farm* are located in the Raymond Mungo Papers (MS 659).

Inventory

| | | |
|---|------------------|----------|
| Correspondence: Ray Mungo to Susan Stern Dalsimer | 1969 October | Box 1: 1 |
| <i>Contents:</i> Commentary on draft of <i>Total Loss Farm</i> ; Raymond's notes on edits; "We've had snow a couple times here already and there is a Big Big Rush to get everything that must be done, done, before everything just gets cold and icy and wet and hopeless til April...; it has a way of really crushing you if you get under it... But I know when the situation get beyond remedy by man, I'll be stuck in house for duration, snowed-in even, and then I will write many words on my friendly typewriter and draw pictures in my black book for there will be nothing else constructive to do..." | | |
| Correspondence: Ray Mungo to Susan Stern Dalsimer | 1969 November | Box 1: 2 |
| <i>Contents:</i> Death of Marshall Bloom; thoughts on the contract for the second book | | |
| Correspondence: Ray Mungo to Susan Stern Dalsimer | 1969 December | Box 1: 3 |
| Correspondence: Ray Mungo to Susan Stern Dalsimer | 1970 January | Box 1: 4 |
| <i>Contents:</i> "They told me in Taos and Santa Fe that California was over and they were right" | | |
| Correspondence: Ray Mungo to Susan Stern Dalsimer | 1970 February | Box 1: 5 |
| <i>Contents:</i> John's criticism | | |

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|--|------------|----------|
| Correspondence: Ray Mungo to Susan Stern Dalsimer <i>Contents:</i> Working on chapter 2 | 1970 March | Box 1: 6 |
| Correspondence: Ray Mungo to Susan Stern Dalsimer <i>Contents:</i> Graphics for the book; IRS threat to subpoena LNS tax records; Total Loss Farm; May Day and Kurt Vonnegut visiting | 1970 April | Box 1: 7 |
| Correspondence: Ray Mungo to Susan Stern Dalsimer <i>Contents:</i> Afternoon with Vonnegut on the Cape; design for Total Loss Farm; travel in Switzerland and Scotland; Total Loss Farm | 1970 May | Box 1: 8 |
| ➤ Photographs: Ray Mungo with puppy. Photo by Peter Simon | ca.1969 | Box 1: 9 |



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| ➤ Photographs: Steve Diamond, Ray Mungo, and Susan Stern Dalsimer in front of Max's Kansas City, New York, N.Y. | ca.1969-1970 | Box 1: 10 |
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Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Susan Dalsimer, 2009.

Processing Information

Processed by Dex Haven, July 2010.

Related Material

See other collections in the Famous Long Ago Archive, including:

- Raymond Mungo Papers (MS 659)
- Liberation News Service Records (MS)

Language:

English

Copyright and Use ([More information](#))

Cite as: Susan Dalsimer Papers (MS 578). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

- Bloom, Marshall, 1944-1969.
- Communal living--Massachusetts.
- Communal living--Vermont.
- Diamond, Stephen.
- McLardy, Peter.
- Montague Farm (Mass.).
- Mungo, Raymond, 1946- . Famous Long Ago.
- Mungo, Raymond, 1946- . Total Loss Farm.
- Nineteen Sixties.
- Packer Corners (Vt.).
- Simon, Peter, 1947- .

Contributors

- Dalsimer, Susan. **[main entry]**
- Mungo, Raymond, 1946- .

Genres and formats

- Photographs.

Link to similar SCUA collections

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