



The Wittliff Collections

Southwestern Writers Collection

Southwestern & Mexican Photography Collection

A Guide to the Ralph Sipper Collection of Larry McMurtry, 1982-2021 [Bulk dates 1988-2018]

Collection 145

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Larry McMurtry
Title:	Sipper Collection of Larry McMurtry
Dates:	1982-2021 [Bulk dates 1988-2018]
Abstract:	The Sipper Collection is comprised of over 100 letters from McMurtry to Sipper ranging from 1982-2018. Arranged chronologically, they document McMurtry's practice of and thoughts on book selling and buying. Frequent topics include the sale of screenplays, his work in the film business, and mutual acquaintances in the literary world.
Identification:	Collection 145
Extent:	1 box; .5 linear feet
Language:	English
Repository:	The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Open for research

Preferred Citation

Sipper Collection of Larry McMurtry, The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

Acquisition Information

Purchase, 2021

Processing Information

Processed by Katie Salzmann, 2021

Notes to Researchers

Rice University holds additional material by Larry McMurtry.

Indiana University's Lilly Library holds the business papers, correspondence, and professional writings of Ralph Sipper.

Biographical Note

Ralph B. Sipper and Carol Sipper established Joseph The Provider/Books, an internationally known rare-book firm in 1970. Since 1996 he has been conducting business under his own name. He is a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America and has served on that organization's board of governors.

In 1970, Larry McMurtry founded Booked Up in Washington, D.C., and the two bookmen developed a long friendship over their mutual interests. In his 2021 obituary for McMurtry, Sipper recounts that over 50 years, “Larry and I discussed books on a professional level or swapped stories about our colleagues.” They occasionally met in person, but primarily communicated via letters.

Scope and Contents Note

The Sipper Collection is comprised of over 100 letters from Larry McMurtry to Ralph Sipper ranging from 1982-2018. Arranged chronologically, they document McMurtry’s practice of and thoughts on book selling and buying. Frequent topics include the sale of screenplays, his work in the film business, and mutual acquaintances in the literary world.

Container List

Box	Folder	
1	1	Obituary of Larry McMurtry written by Ralph Sipper, 2 pages, 2021
1	1	"I think it's a nice idea for a collection..." discusses Hollywood books. Handwritten, 1 page. Sunday, undated
1	1	"Thanks a lot for the interesting book. And for the kind review..." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope. Enclosed photocopy of Sipper's review of Cadillac Jack, December 15, [1982]
1	1	"Thanks for the letter..." mentions stores and finishing a novel. Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 2 pages, March 13, 1988
1	1	"Thanks for the offering, but I think we'll pass." Discusses modern first editions \ and buying in D.C. Typed on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page, July 8, 1988
1	1	"Thanks for the handsome 20th anniversary catalog..." Discusses previous catalogues. Typed on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page, September 11, 1990
1	1	"Thanks for your letter. Mary Phagan has been produced and released..." Discusses selling active scripts. Typed, 1 page, August 7, 1991
1	1	"Thanks, recovery [fine].... Handwritten, 1 page, March 3, 1992
1	1	"I'm sorry if I was brusque. Your catalogue arrived in a week when I had had a major disagreement with Mr. Bev Cheney, and a major fight with Peter..." Discusses booksellers and friendships with dealers. Typed, 2 pages, October 11, 1992
1	1	"The article was not offensive..." Discusses being angry Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 2 pages, October 22, 1992
1	1	"Saying that I'm sorry for hurting your feelings is not to say I don't think you knowingly miscalculated it..." Discusses disliking modern first edition dealers. Typed, 1 page plus envelope, March 3, 1994
1 1	1	"Thanks again but its not for me. I'm just not the Investor Type..." Handwritten, 1 page, January 30, 1995
1	1	"Thanks for thinking of me first. I have bought remnants of about a dozen stocks..." Typed, 1 page plus envelope, January 21, 1998

Box	Folder	
1	1	“Right now various things are happening which taken my Book Business clean out of my mind...” Handwritten, 1 page, February 4, 1995
1	1	“The 1st issue of Streets was done by my god daughter, [Sara] Ossama...” Handwritten, 1 page, April 16, 1995
1	1	“You and [Larry] are of course welcome in Texas...” Handwritten and typed, 1 page, July 17, 1995
1	1	“Gee, That book’s moving up. It only cost \$1250 when Anacopa had it.” Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, February 21, 1996
1	1	“Sure, fine to sell [those] although Cantrell is still active...” Handwritten on Book Up letterhead, 1 page, undated
1	1	“Alas I won’t be in A.C. [Archer City] on the 9th – I’m moving into new house in LA that week...” Gives directions to bookstore. Fax, 1 page, June 28, 1996
1	1	“Glad you enjoyed AC... Sure, you can write about the book town...” Typed, 1 page, July 16, 1996
1	2	“DIANA OSSANA: The Archive, in order of writing” list of scripts in 22 storage containers. Typed, 1 page, October 10, 1997
1	2	“An afterthought. I noticed that I failed to separate the container with the contracts in it from the rest...” Fax, 1 page, October 12, 1997
1	2	Receipt from Archer City Booked Up, October 20, 1997
1	2	“Airport to Archer City about 30 minutes” Provides directions to house. Fax, 1 page, October 21, 1997
1	2	“Thanks for the package. It was great to have you, although we were in skunk-recovery and not quite our usual selves...” Fax, 1 page, October 29, 1997
1	2	“I got the appraisals and the bill; check herewith...” Discusses collaboration with Diana Ossana. Typed, 1 page plus envelope, November 9, 1997
1	2	“Not to worry. Just send corrected version to Dianna in Tucson...” Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, November 11, 1997
1	2	“After 1915 the books should have dust wrappers. I cranked up on lady travellers again after my defeat at the Hopkirk sale...” Discusses buying Barber’s book stock. Fax, 1 page, December 2, 1998

Box	Folder	
1	2	"I looked at Robin Smiley's questionnaire and think I'll pass this time, the reason being that I've dealt with all this in the book-length essay that S and S will publish early 99..." Discusses writing about his bookselling. Fax, 1 page, February 26, 1998
1	2	"Mine was simply that I got slapped down by mountain cedar..." Was just in Austin. Typed, 1 page, February 18, 1999
1	2	"That plan sounds fine. I doubt I can make any difference in the galleys of wealth of Benjamin____" Fax, 1 page, February 23, 1999
1	2	"Send them on. These evidently well off dealers in Lawrence, Kansas are buying us out of scholarly books..." Fax on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page, March 15, 1999
1	2	"Thanks for the catalogue. I think Waverly landed the best travel collection..." Has recently been in French Polynesia. Handwritten notecard, front and back, February 20, 2000
1	2	Thanks for sending the review – he was the only reviewer so far to review Still Wild the anthology I edited. Discusses buying books. Handwritten, 1 page, August 2, 2000
1	2	"At this writing I'm still hoping for neBel [electors]... Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page plus envelope, Postmarked December 16, 2000
1	3	"Confusion - I thought _____ finally tool that archive off my hands?" Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page, February 13, 2001
1	3	"Thanks for our list - [impressive] having The Power and the Glory inscribed is a big ____." Producing Riders of Judgment in Canada. Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page plus envelope, May 5, 2001
1	3	"Thanks for ____ words. I did know George..." Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page, January 30, 2002
1	3	"We did talk about Dope Danley and David Garnett did write his memoirs..." Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page plus envelope, February 8, 2002
1	3	"Thank you for your daughter's lovely CD and the Dope Danley cover." Discusses appraisal and inventory of Susan [Sontag's] archive. Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page, both sides, plus envelope, February 27, 2002

Box	Folder	
1	3	"Thanks for the new list and the essay, which I liked." Riders of Judgment aired on Hallmark; Discusses the accidental nature of film making. Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 2 pages , September 17, 2002
1	3	"Not much at the top level over here.... Discusses [Ezra] Pound letters and [T.S.] Eliot collections. Handwritten on Booked up letterhead, 1 page, October 24, 2002
1	3	"I agree about the stupidity of Christies and of course [Clem] has admirable hustle and cunning..." Discusses Eliot collections and copy of Dead Man's Waltz. Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 3 pages, plus envelope, November 3, 2002
1	3	"I had heard that Glenn's [Horowitz] finder's fee was 6% of gross..." Discusses having given away copies of Dead Man's Walk and the availability of his essay "Night at the White House." Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page, both sides, plus envelope , November 11, 2002
1	3	"That's my _____. He's richer than God. We sold him about 12,000 books - such customers come along seldom." Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page plus envelope, November 14, 2002
1	3	"I'm glad you liked the [Kesey]. He had not been very friendly in the last 10 years or so but what the Hell..." Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page plus envelope, December 11, 2002
1	4	"I got John Baxter Book earl from Heywood Hill. Mildly amusing...." Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page plus envelope, January 9, 2003
1	4	"Oh no, Dope Danley is not for me. I just wonder if my Big Ticket books are being sold for these I sign," May 23, 2003
1	4	"[Thanks] for the book. I guess Liebestod has something pocket - I got a letter from an old girlfriend of the Polish writer _____ saying that they made a death pact and it was wildly exciting. But he died and she stayed." Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page plus envelope, May 28, 2003
1	4	"I'm just leaving on a trip; be back July 15..." Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page plus envelope, June 23, 2003

Box	Folder	
1	4	"This startling delivery we owe to the estimable D. A. Sachs who dug it out of our vast and disordered pamphlets...." Mentions Dope Danley. Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page, August 3, 2003
1	4	"Thanks for the little present..." Discusses logistics of transporting books; mentions sister and former trucker boyfriend. Typed, 1 page plus envelope, September 20, 2003
1	4	"It's okay about the books - not a good time for us to receive 10,000 books really..." Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page plus envelope, October 20, 2003
1	4	"I think I better take myself out of the running for those books..." Discusses allergy attack. Typed, 1 page plus envelope, November 7, 2003
1	4	"Thanks for the note..." Discusses allergies and moving to Tucson due to them. Typed, 1 page, November 18, 2003
1	4	"Unless called away on movie business - Ang Lee ____ ____ ____ come tomorrow and I will be here I would take you and Carol to dinner..." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, December 1, 2003
1	4	"Great to see you and Carol in Tucson and nice to meet the Smileys..." Bought the 57,000 book library of Elizabeth Waldron. Typed, 1 page plus envelope, December 19, 2003
1	4	"Got the list - my, times are hard..." Packing up the Waldron library. Typed, 1 page plus envelope, December 26, 2003
1	4	"I'm sorry to disappoint you but I've decided to admit no dealers to the Pasadena site..." Plans to unveil the library in Archer City. Typed, 1 page plus envelope, December 31, 2003
1	5	"Thanks for your understanding note..." Has bitten off more than he can chew [the Waldron library]. Handwritten, 2 pages, January 9, 2004
1	5	"Thanks for the invites but I'm out of Pasadena where I hope never to return..." Discusses packing up Waldron library. Typed, 1 page plus envelope, January 20, 2004
1	5	"Have fun in New York...Movie work heating up. I'm getting drawn into production of <i>Brokeback Mountain</i> which shoots 15 May - 1 July in Canada. At least it's getting made after 7 years." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, Postmarked March 11, 2004

Box	Folder	
1	5	"I heard that Peter was trying to sell Melvin's books for her. It won't be easy..." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, March 30, 2004
1	5	"I believe Gary O. circulated his last of Matthew's M's McMurtry in '97..." Discusses former employee embezzlement, the script for Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas, selling to Rice University, and Brokeback Mountain. Typed, 1 page plus envelope, May 29, 2004
1	5	"The man at Rice is Chuck Henry (Dr. Charles). They have money - almost bought Susan Sontag's archive. I remember Phil [Lanbech] was a commercial director - he could not do scenes over 20 seconds." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, June 8, 2004
1	5	"The road chews up every body. Fortunately James has a regular gig in Austin which he can fall back on when he's exhausted..." Discusses hopes for son James' success. Typed with handwritten addition, 1 page plus envelope, June 18, 2004
1	5	"What a beautiful bride and what distinguished parents..." discusses large sale of books. Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, October 19, 2004
1	5	"Oh thanks, we have Neville II. We've always subscribed to all books / mss Sotheby's / Christies -- although I weeded out hundreds of the old green London sales when we moved to AC..." Typed, 1 page plus envelope, November 3, 2004
1	5	"Congratulations on your high-end coup..." Off to Victoria, Texas to look at a library for sale. Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, November 15, 2004
1	6	"I found the Elliott Paul Film Flam some years after publicity by book..." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, January 15, 2005
1	6	"Dear Friends and Customers: I want to let you know that, as of the close of business on 31 December 2005 Booked Up will be closing its doors --- for a term." Taking a sabbatical to travel. Typed with handwritten note, 1 page plus envelope, February 1, 2005
1	6	"DC store absorbed into the Book Town 3 years ago, though Marcia still buys. Much agitation in Archer City but no rush to buy." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, February 11, 2005

Box	Folder	
1	6	"I will only skip through AC in June, don't know when. I have delivered the 8th book of an 8 book contract to S and S; Diana and I are going to be working on Hollywood stuff. We are hot due to the terrific buzz on <i>Brokeback Mountain</i> ..." May 9, 2005
1	6	"Thanks for your letter..." Discusses Booked Up not closing, moving "big time" to screenwriting. Typed, 1 page plus envelope, July 11, 2005
1	6	"First books are interesting - I imagine in these heady days the inscriptions are where the top dollar is..." Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page plus envelope, July 18, 2005
1	6	"Enjoyed your essay, though I've never myself been keen about first books..." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, September 7, 2005
1	6	"Thanks for your letter. During the Oscars is 7-8 hours of extreme discomfort, involving boredom with it all..." Discusses effect of awards season. Typed, 1 page plus envelope, March 11, 2006
1	6	"Thank you for your kind invite, but I seldom travel now except to AC for brief visits..." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, August 29, 2006
1	6	"Thanks for that piece..." Discusses final novels. Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, November 18, 2006
1	7	"Nice catalogue, the cinema one." Discusses Film Flam and book stock, January 11, 2007
1	7	"Lucky you, Martin Stone. I've never met him but have missed him by a hairsbreadth in London a couple of times..." Has written Books: A Memoir. Inquires after Grace David. Typed, 1 page plus envelope, September 7, 2007
1	7	"Thanks for Grace's address. I have a long chapter about the Davids in the book and want her to see it." Typed, 1 page plus envelope, September 21, 2007
1	7	"Thanks so much for Grace's book. What a remarkable woman she is." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, September 26, 2007
1	7	"Grace [David] sent me an inscribed copy of her book the day after yours arrived. I sent mine to James who gets a mention near the end." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, October 9, 2007

Box	Folder	
1	7	"I wrote a piece about No Country for Old Men which I think is the man's masterpiece, the same week the archive went to San Marcos..." Mentions promoting Comanche Moon. Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page plus envelope, January 15, 2008
1	7	"Congratulations on your ever-increasing progeny and two successful fairs..." Mentions award from LA Public Library. Typed, 1 page plus envelope, May 17, 2008
1	7	"I'm glad the [loblolly] will at least keep his hand in..." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, May 30, 2008
1	7	"You're not the only one waiting for my memoir..." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, June 21, 2008
1	7	"Good luck with the Black Sparrow..." Discusses a "little book saga" about an edition of Moving On. Typed, 2 pages plus envelope, July 31, 2008
1	7	"Thanks for the grandpa pictures - yours are lovely, mine seems determined. He's still 15..." Handwritten on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page plus envelope, August 8, 2008
1	7	"Thanks for the lovely catalogue - I didn't hate Horseman; I just don't remember it. I can't even remember Lonesome Dove..." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, December 6, 2008
1	8	"I'm confused. There was a book about the Hoffman Dickinson forgery, which I thought was Amhearst but I didn't blurb it..." Discusses book thieves. Typed on Booked Up letterhead, 1 page plus envelope, June 2, 2009
1	8	"I did not know that L. Edmunds sold porn. As you may or may not know I bought the general stock of L Edmunds in 1964 or so, when I worked for Grace..." Typed on Booked Up letterhead, 2 pages plus envelope, June 12, 2009
1	8	"Alas I don't have even one copy of that book..." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, September 12, 2009
1	8	"Just means [I'm] to a degree responsible for 4 teenagers that are the children of a sick friend. They are not the product of my loins such as they were." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, September 17, 2009
1	8	"Yes, I ____ about Peter a day before the fateful diagnosis..." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, January 26, 2010

Box	Folder	
1	8	"I talked to Peter yesterday and he was not dapper. 4th stage pancreatic ____ quite..." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, February 2, 2010
1	8	"Oh. I've added by ____ about 100 books to the Matheson well.." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, February 4, 2010
1	9	"Sure, sell the script - Peter [Bogdanovich] was hot when we started but he cooled off quickly and John Wayne turned it down..." Discusses "Streets of Laredo" screenplay. Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, July 16, 2011
1	9	"Only a few... [illegible]" Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, March 19, 2012
1	9	"To our guests" announcing large book sale. Typed, 2 pages plus envelope, Postmarked April 23, 2012
1	9	"Thanks for your letter. We did pretty well and are still doing. Discusses book sale. Typed, 1 page plus envelope, August 18, 2012
1	9	"I liked James Bryant but have a longer and more thorough documentary about my life with books...I've just begun to enjoy my book life again..." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, January 17, 2014
1	9	Photocopy of check for \$1250 from McMurtry to Sipper, May 15, 2014
1	9	"A Defining Confluence" essay y McMurtry. Facsimile, 3 pages, July 13, 2014
1	9	Letter from Sipper to McMurtry, Print out, 1 page, undated
1	9	"I do have a list of the poetry, novels - the Matheson list." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, January 20, 2017
1	9	"Alas and alack we're going..." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, May 21, 2018
1	9	"I think I met D---- once but that may be a false memory..." Handwritten, 1 page plus envelope, September 26, 2018