



The Wittliff Collections

Guide to the Fred Gipson Papers

1945-1957

Collection SWWC-062

Descriptive Summary

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|------------------------|--|
| Creator: | Gipson, Fred, 1908-1973 |
| Title: | Guide to the Fred Gipson Papers |
| Dates: | 1945-1957 |
| Abstract: | Literary papers of Fred Gipson, including drafts of several of Gipson's short stories, screenplays, and one nonfiction autobiographical piece. |
| Identification: | SWWC-062 |
| Extent: | .5 Linear Feet, 1 boxes |
| Language: | English |
| Repository: | The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University |

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Biographical Notes

Texas novelist and journalist Frederick Benjamin Gipson was born February 7, 1908, in Mason, TX, and is best known for his novel, *Old Yeller*. He graduated from high school in 1926, worked various jobs until he attended the University of Texas from 1933-37. Although he did not complete his degree, he found work as a reporter for the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* from 1938-40. He began working as a freelance writer in 1940, publishing many short stories, especially in the *Southwest Review*. His first non-fiction book, *Fabulous Empire : Colonel Zack Miller's Story*, was published in 1946, and his first fictional work, *Hound-Dog Man* in 1949.

Gipson went on to publish many more fiction and non-fiction works, winning numerous awards, and garnering special recognition for *Old Yeller*, which was pronounced a classic almost immediately after its publication in 1956. Although many of his fictional works were written for young audiences, “Fred Gipson’s tales of the Texas hill country have charmed young and old, in print and film, for more than three decades... (He) was a top-notch storyteller, he had a good ear for dialect and a light hand in transcribing it. He handled well, if not very originally, that most familiar them in American fiction: initiation.” (William T. Pilkington, *Twentieth Century Western Writers*). *Old Yeller*, *Savage Sam*, and *Hound Dog Man* (as *Return of the Texan*) were all produced as films, working from scripts by Gipson. The author died at his home near Mason, in 1973.

Scope and Contents

These papers represent drafts of several of Gipson's short stories, screenplays, and one nonfiction autobiographical piece, arranged by genre and in chronological order, with dates ranging from 1948-1957, and many items having no date. For each item there is typically one annotated typescript and one final draft typescript, along with a custom made folding box for the items related to each title. Of particular note is the 1957 shooting script for the Walt Disney film production of Gipson's *Old Yeller*, which also includes a letter from Gipson to Joe Small.

Administrative Information

Physical Location

Materials may be stored off-site. Advance notice is required for use:

<https://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu/research/makearesearchappointment.html>.

Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Bill and Sally Wittliff, 1994.

Preferred Citation

Fred Gipson Papers, The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University.

Conditions Governing Use

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<https://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu/research/visit/policies/publication.html>

Controlled Access Headings

- Authors, American -- Texas -- 20th century
- Screenwriters -- United States

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Short Stories , 1957, undated

Natural Born Hunter , 1957, undated

Box Folder

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | Original annotated typescript, 1957 |
| 1 | 2 | Final draft typescript, undated |
| 1 | 3 | Tan cloth folding box with gold stamped label on spine, undated |

Wolf Eater, undated

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4 | Annotated typescript, undated |
| 1 | 5 | Brown cloth folding box with gold stamped label on spine, undated |

Series II: Screenplays and scripts , 1957, undated

Old Yeller screenplay, 1957-1958, undated

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 6 | Old Yeller shooting script, with 2/22/1958 letter to Joe Small, 1957-1958 |
| 1 | 7 | Brown half morocco folding box with gold stamped label on spine, undated |

Old Man Lepley's Hound screenplay, undated

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| 1 | 8 | Outline, undated |
| 1 | 9 | “Brief”, Annotated typescript, undated |
| 1 | 10 | Tan cloth folding box with gold stamped label on spine, undated |

Series III: Nonfiction , 1948

Autobiography of a Texas Writer, 1948, undated

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| 1 | 11 | Annotated typescript, 1948 |
| 1 | 12 | Russet half morocco folding box on marbleized paper over boards, gold stamped label on spine, undated |