



The Wittliff Collections

Guide to the Donley Watt Papers

1970-2004

Collection SWWC-104

Descriptive Summary

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|------------------------|--|
| Creator: | Watt, Donley |
| Title: | Guide to the Donley Watt Papers |
| Dates: | 1970-2004 |
| Abstract: | Correspondence, drafts, notes, research, and reviews from novelist Donley Watt. The collection is arranged into the following five series: Personal Papers, 1970-2004; Novels 1994-2004; Short Fiction; Other Writings; Media. |
| Identification: | SWWC-104 |
| Extent: | 7.5 Linear Feet, 18 boxes |
| Language: | English |
| Repository: | The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University |

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Biographical Notes

Writer Donley Watt was born in 1940, and he arrived in Athens in East Texas at the age of five. After graduating Athens High School, Watt attended Henderson County Junior College for one year then moved on to the University of Texas, where he received his Masters in History. In 1973, Watt helped found Austin Community College and was its dean for a few years. In his life, Watt has been a land man in the oil business, owned an herb farm, and owned a contemporary art gallery. In 1987, Watt decided to go back to school to achieve his childhood dream and become a writer. In the early 1990s, Donley Watt lived, traveled, and researched in Mexico and Guatemala. For six years, Watt was the writer in residence at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. He has also taught at Northern Arizona University and at the University of Arizona. Watt is the former vice-president of The Texas Institute of Letters. Currently he lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Can You Get There From Here?, a collection of short stories, was published in September 1994, which won the Texas Institute of Letters' Stephen F. Turner Award for best first work of fiction. *The Journey of Hector Rabinal* (also published in 1994) was a finalist for a Western Writers of America Spur Award and translated in Spanish in 1995 by a publisher in Mexico City. *Haley, Texas 1959*, and 2 novellas followed in 1999. Watt then published *Reynolds* in 2002 and *Dancing with Lyndon* in 2004. He has also published numerous essays and reviews.

Scope and Contents

The Donley Watt Papers span the years from 1970 to 2004. The collection includes correspondence, photographs, clippings, notes, drafts, and computer discs. The bulk of the papers is focused on the writings of his published works from 1994 to 2004: *Can You Get There From Here*; *The Journal of Hector Rabinal*; *Haley, Texas 1959*; *Reynolds*; and *Dancing with Lyndon*. Other materials in the collection concern Watt's short story ideas, essays, and reviews. Short story and essay titles often are repeated in Series III and Series IV. This follows the original arrangement of the collection by Donley Watt. There are five series in the collection: Personal Papers, 1970-2004; Novels, 1994-2004; Short Fiction; Other Writings; Media.

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Donley Watt in 2004 and 2006.

Preferred Citation

Donley Watt Papers, The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University.

Physical Location

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

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

Conditions Governing Use

Materials from the Wittliff Collections are made available for use in research, teaching, and private study. The user assumes responsibility for determining copyright status, obtaining permission to publish, and abiding by U.S. copyright laws.

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

Controlled Access Headings

- Authors, American -- Texas -- 20th century
- Books -- Reviews
- Fiction
- Teachers -- Texas

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Personal Papers, 1970-2004

Photographs

Box Folder

1 1 Various photographs including (a trip to San Cristobel, historical family portrait and family pictures)

Correspondence, 1970-2004, undated

1 2 Correspondence, undated

1 3 Correspondence, 1970-1992

1 4 Correspondence, 1993-1995

1 5 Correspondence, 1996-1997

1 6 Correspondence, 1998-1999

1 7 Correspondence, 2000-2004

2 1 University Letters (Southern Methodist University, Sul Ross State University, Texas Christian University, Southwest Texas State University [Texas State University])

2 2 Awards, Speeches, Employment

2 3 Specific Individuals (Busby, Scott, Graves, John, Malone, Paul, Root, Bill, Shearer, Bill)

Travel

2 4 Trip to San Cristobal, Mexico and other travels

Notes

2 5 Notes

Newspaper Clippings

2 6 Newspaper Clippings

Series II: Novels , 1994-2004

Journey of Hector Rabinal, 1994

3 1 Correspondence

3 2 Book reviews and correspondence

3 3 Notes and drafts

Day of the Dead, 2002

| | | |
|---|------|----------------|
| 3 | 4 | Correspondence |
| 3 | 5 | “Durango” |
| 3 | 6 | Notes |
| 3 | 7-10 | Drafts |
| 4 | | Drafts |
| 5 | 1 | Drafts |

Reynolds, 2002

| | | |
|---|-----|--|
| 5 | 2 | Correspondence |
| 5 | 3 | Reviews and promotional materials |
| 5 | 4 | Legal documents |
| 5 | 5 | Notes |
| 5 | 6 | Short story ideas |
| 6 | 1 | Short story ideas |
| 6 | 2-5 | Drafts – chapters |
| 7 | 1 | Complete draft |
| 7 | 2 | Complete draft, corrected, December 29, 1997 |
| 7 | 3 | Complete draft, 1999 |
| 7 | 4 | Complete draft, December 13, 2000 |
| 8 | 1 | Complete draft, undated |
| 8 | 2-5 | Proofs, October 17, 2001 |
| 9 | 1-2 | Proofs |

Dancing with Lyndon, 2004

| | | |
|----|-----|---|
| 9 | 3 | Correspondence |
| 9 | 4 | Book reviews |
| 9 | 5 | Notes |
| 9 | 6-7 | Drafts – chapters |
| 10 | 1 | Drafts – chapters |
| 10 | 2 | First draft of first 153 pages, July 2001 |
| 10 | 3 | First complete draft |
| 10 | 4 | Second draft, undated |
| 10 | 5 | Second draft, August 24, 2001 |
| 11 | 1 | Complete draft, June 28, 2001 |
| 11 | 2-3 | Complete drafts, undated |
| 11 | 4 | Final draft, undated |
| 11 | 5 | Proofs, corrected, December 2003 |
| 12 | 1 | Proofs, corrected, December 2003 |

12 2-3 Proofs, December 30, 2003

Series III: Short Fiction

Story Ideas and Incomplete Stories

- 12 4 Story Ideas, First Short Story, "Bonnie"
- 12 5 Flying from "Sarah & Deanie" and "Girl Stories"
- 13 1 "A Home Game", "House of Smiles"
- 13 2 "Houston Antique Dealer Story", Prologue to "Charlie"
- 13 3 "Shooting Straight", "Waiting"
- 13 4 "Wish Me Luck"

Can You Get There From Here? [Short Story Collection], 1994

- 13 5 Correspondence
- 13 6 Clippings
- 13 7 "Caddo"
- 13 8 "Can You Get There From Here?"
- 14 1 "Disappearing"
- 14 2 "Ducks"
- 14 3 "A High Place"
- 14 4 "In the Mood"
- 14 5 "The Man Who Talked to Horses"
- 14 6 "Not Just Another Waltz"
- 14 7 "Waiting for a Good Day to Leave"
- 14 8 "The Way the Big World Is"
- 14 9-10 "The Way Things Happen"

Haley Texas 1959 [Novella Collection], 1999

- 15 1 Correspondence
- 15 2 Book reviews and promotional materials
- 15 3 Legal documents
- 15 4 Film adaptation
- 15 5 Notes
- 15 6 Dreaming Mexico
- 15 7 "Bazette"
- 15 8 "Books"
- 15 9 "Church"
- 15 10 "A Day or Two of Fiddling"
- 15 11 "Events (Celebrations)"
- 15 12 "Five Days Working"

| | | |
|----|------|---|
| 15 | 13 | "Food" |
| 15 | 14 | "Land" |
| 15 | 15 | "Living and Dying and Other Temptations" |
| 16 | 1 | "Moving On" |
| 16 | 2 | "Something Old, Something New, Something Black and White and Brown" |
| 16 | 3 | "Vices" |
| 16 | 4 | Notes, Drafts |
| 16 | 5 | Drafts |
| 16 | 6 | Proof (partial) |
| 16 | 7 | Damon – Drafts |
| 16 | 8 | Notes, Drafts |
| 16 | 9-10 | Drafts |

Series IV: Other Writings

Essays

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 17 | 1 | Books "not included in Haley TX 1959" God, Church and other Unfathomables, "An Innocent in a new Land" (with cover letter, July 6, 1995), "Primogeniture" (Published in Texas Observer June 1995), "A Silver Watch" (with note from author's daughter), "A Special Place" (3 copies), 1995 |
| 17 | 2 | Chasing the Cantaloupe Man, "Dreaming Mexico and Other Mexico Essays" |
| 17 | 3 | Crossing the Border, "unpublished essay" |
| 17 | 4 | Dreaming Mexico and Other Mexico Essays |
| 17 | 5 | Junior's World "JR's World – Essay – 'Graves 2" |
| 17 | 6 | Mexessa (Night of the Nino) unpublished essay |
| 17 | 7 | My Father's Black Book "House Beautiful – unpublished essay" includes correspondence with Elaine Greene, 1999 |
| 17 | 8 | The Texas Stream, with correspondence regarding the 1997 John Graves essay contest |

Poetry

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 17 | 9 | Poetry A-Z Note: "Don Watt Poetry – some for a class at University of Arizona. Some early bad attempts – wrong genre for me." |
| | | Another Tuesday Night in Longview |
| | | The County Courthouse |
| | | From Sundays I Remember |
| | | Granite Jetty at Port Aransas |
| | | The Hawk |
| | | Hills of East Texas; East Texas Hills |
| | | History Lesson |
| | | Jealousy |
| | | Joe, edited |
| | | Letter to John |
| | | New York Letter Poem |
| | | Perpetual Motion Machine |
| | | Poems for Bill Zavatsky |

Poets Never Die
 A Short Visit to a Small Town After Thirty Years
 Thibodaux, LA 1962
 The Wasp
 What Do You Expect in the Spring?
 Why I am Not a Banker
 Untitled

Reviews of Work by Other Authors, 1988-1995

17 10 Correspondence and Notes (Correspondence: Bob Compton April 25, 1988, May 3, 1988; Notes: Books to be Reviewed 1990, with note from Bob [Compton], 1992-1993; 1995 with notes and packing slip), 1988-1995, undated

17 11 Reviews, A-L

Abbey, Edward. A Voice Crying in the Wilderness
 Alvaraez, Julia. How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents
 Babb, Sanora. Whose Names are Unknown
 Baker, Kevin. Dreamland
 Barthelme, Frederick. Natural Selection
 Bragg, Rick. All Over but the Shoutin'
 Bukoski, Anthony. Time Between Trains
 Cameron, Carey. Daddy Boy
 Colbert, David (ed.) Eyewitness to the American West
 Crews, Harry, Scar Lover
 Crumley, James The Muddy Fork & Other Things
 Draper, Robert. Hadrian's Walls
 Ely, Scott. Pit Bull
 Erdrich, Louise. Tracks
 Garro, Elena. First Love & Look for My Obituary: Two Novellas
 Heinemann, Larry. Cooler by the Lake
 Kimball, Michael. The Way the Family Got Away
 Lacy, Allen (ed.) The American Gardener. A Sampler and Stein, Sara B. My Weeds, A Gardener's Botany
 Lott, Brett, Reed's Beach

17 12 Reviews, M-Z

Martin, Lee. From Our House
 Matthiessen, Peter. Killing Mister Watson
 McAfee, John P. Slow Walk in a Sad Rain
 Mora, Pat. House of Houses
 Navas, Deborah Things We Lost, Gave Away, Bought High and Sold Low
 Poverman, C.E. On the Edge
 Powers, Richard. Prisoner's Dilemma
 Reynolds, Clay. Monuments
 Shepard, Sam. Cruising Paradise
 Silko, Leslie Marmon, Almanac of the Dead
 Smith, C.W. Understanding Women
 Stern, Daniel. In the Country of the Young
 Taylor, Benjamin, Tales Out of School
 Wilkinson, D. Marion. The Empty Quarter

Series V: Media, 2003, undated

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| 18 | 1 | VHS Video: "Donley Watt, October 7, 2003. Craft Lecture, 11 a.m C.W.W. Reading, 7 pm Shirley Recital Hall.", October 7, 2003 |
| 18 | 2 | Book chapters on 3 1/2 ", 2 HD Floppies (27) |