



The Wittliff Collections

Guide to the Hart Stilwell Papers

1963-1975

Collection SWWC-013

Descriptive Summary

Creators:	Stilwell, Hart, 1902-1975; Lee, Russell, 1903-1986
Title:	Guide to the Hart Stilwell Papers
Dates:	1963-1975
Abstract:	Two boxes of manuscripts, clippings, published articles, programs, correspondence, photographs, and artifacts (1963-1975, undated), contain the books and essays that Stilwell was working on at the time of his death as well as related materials donated by his widow and daughter. The collection has been arranged into three series: Works, (1963-1975, undated), Personal Materials (1967, 1971, 1975, undated), and Photographs (undated).
Identification:	SWWC-013
Extent:	1 Linear Feet, 2 boxes
Language:	English
Repository:	The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

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Biographical Notes

Hart Stilwell was born in 1902 in Yoakum, Texas. When he was two, his large family relocated to the Rio Grande Valley, an area they would roam throughout Stilwell's childhood as his father sought undeveloped farmland and the freedom of the frontier. Stilwell's upbringing was marked by psychological and physical conflict with his father, a former Texas Ranger prone to sudden mood-swings and threats of violence. At the age of seventeen Stilwell entered The University of Texas at Austin, where he worked for *The Daily Texan* and graduated with a degree in journalism in 1924. One of his first jobs was as a reporter for *The Brownsville Herald*, a paper he also edited for two years. In the late 1920s Stilwell lost interest in working full-time and turned to free-lance writing, although for the rest of his life he regularly contributed articles to newspapers across Texas, including *The San Antonio Light*, *The Houston Chronicle*, and *The Austin American-Statesman*. Stilwell's first novel was published in 1945. An indictment of race relations in the Rio Grande Valley, *Border Town* was narrated by a cynical reporter in love with a Mexican woman who had been raped by a wealthy Anglo businessman. Two years later, Stilwell published his most critically acclaimed novel, *Uncovered Wagon*, which included a thinly fictionalized account of Stilwell's relationship with his father, called "The Old Man" in the book. *Uncovered Wagon* was named one of the fifty best books of Texas by A.C. Greene, who wrote "you don't find many Texas writers who can face the bitter reality of rural poverty in a changing society as Stilwell does." Stilwell published a third novel, *Campus Town*, which was less successful than the others. All of his novels draw heavily from personal experience (Stilwell's daughter called *Uncovered Wagon* an "autobiography" and said that Stilwell changed names and place names only after his mother objected to the harshness of his narrative) and are marked by a fierce liberalism and hatred of intolerance. Stilwell was also known for his nonfiction. He collaborated with Slats Rogers on Rogers' autobiography and helped write a book on neglected children, titled *The Child Who Walks Alone*, with his social worker wife, Anne Stilwell. He was an avid sportsman and published two well-known books on hunting and fishing in Texas and Mexico. *Field and Stream*, *Outdoor, Hunting Yearbook*, and other outdoor sports magazines also published articles by Stilwell. In the early 1970s he began work on a full-length book on human interference in the natural world; he was particularly concerned about the domestication of wild animals and the increasing use of biological engineering on animals and plants consumed by humans. Stilwell was working on this book, tentatively titled *The Great White Immaculate Bird and Other Toys*, along with a manuscript on fishing, a

children's book on wolves, and a number of short essays when he died on May 13, 1975 in Austin. Stilwell married twice and had two children. His daughter, Mary Gray Hughes, is also a writer.

Scope and Contents

Two boxes of manuscripts, clippings, published articles, programs, correspondence, photographs, and artifacts (1963-1975, undated), contain the books and essays that Stilwell was working on at the time of his death as well as related materials donated by his widow and daughter. The collection has been arranged into three series: Works, (1963-1975, undated), Personal Materials (1967, 1971, 1975, undated), and Photographs (undated). See also gifts of Anne Stilwell Strong, Mary Gray Hughes, Jean Lee, and Wilfred and Bridget Webb for books by Hart Stilwell. The Russell Lee Collection contains photographs of Hart Stilwell. The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at The University of Texas at Austin has 23 letters from Stilwell to J. Frank Dobie in the Dobie Collection.

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gifts of Anne Stilwell Strong and Mary Gray Hughes since 1988.

Physical Location

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

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

Preferred Citation

Hart Stilwell Papers, The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University.

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

Controlled Access Headings

- Authors, American -- Texas -- 20th century
- Environmental literature
- Literature

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Works , 1963-1975, undated

Box Folder

1	1	Glory of the Silver King, draft, undated
1	2	Glory of the Silver King, updated draft, undated
1	3-4	Great White Immaculate Bird and Other Toys (with edited insert), undated
1	5	Great White Immaculate Bird and Other Toys, revised draft (pages 1-145) , undated
2	1-2	Great White Immaculate Bird and Other Toys, includes edited chapter entitled "Genesis, Paleface Style," undated
2	3	"Old Two Toes," short story with rejection letter from Alfred A. Knopf, 1975, undated
2	4	Short essays including "Benny the Toad Frog," "The 'Frank Erwin' of U.T. in the Roaring Twenties" (with rejection letter from Texas Monthly), and "How about Hizzer and Shehee and Manwo?" , 1975, undated
2	5	Magazine articles, including "Hog Calling for Javelina," in Hunting Yearbook, November 14, 1963, "Deflaming the Jalapeno," in San Antonio Express News, January 31,1971, "Don't Let High Meat Prices Get You Down," in the Houston Chronicle, October 20, 1974, "I Saw them Kill Sam Bass," in Badman, Summer 1971, and "The Great Shrimp Boil," in the Houston Chronicle, July 13, 1975, 1963-1975

Series II: Personal Materials , 1967, 1971, 1975, undated

2	6	Clippings including Stilwell's obituary, programs, materials from Stilwell's campaign for the Houston School Board, typewriter ribbons, and "The Judge, A Story," by Mary Gray Hughes in The Atlantic, 1967,1971, 1975, undated
2	7	Originals of photocopied clippings, 1967,1971, 1975, undated

Series III: Photographs, undated

2	8	Photographs, includes one of Stilwell with J. Frank Dobie, undated
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