A Guide to the Donley Watt Papers

1970 – 2004

Collection 104

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Watt, Donley
Title: The Donley Watt Papers
Dates: 1970-2004
Abstract: Correspondence, drafts, notes, research, and reviews from novelist Donley Watt. The arrangement of the materials occurs in the following five series: Personal Papers, 1970-2004; Novels 1994-2004; Short Fiction; Other Writings; Media.
Identification: Collection 104
Extent: 18 boxes (7.5 linear feet)
Language: English
Repository: Southwestern Writers Collection, The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University-San Marcos
Biographical Sketch

Writer Donley Watt was born in 1940. 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 also 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 1990’s, Donley Watt lived, traveled, and researched in Mexico and Guatemala. For six years, Watt was the writer in residence at the Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. He has also taught at Northern Arizona University and at the University of Arizona. Donley Watt is the former vice-president of The Texas Institute of Writers. Currently he is the fiction writing editor and a consultant for Gemini Ink in San Antonio.

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. An additional publishing occurred in 1994 with The Journey of Hector Rabinal. The novel 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 Content Note

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.

There are five series in the collection: Personal Papers, 1970-2004; Novels, 1994-2004; Short Fiction; Other Writings; and Media. The Donley Watt Papers contain significant correspondence with Scott Busby, Bill Root, Paul Malone, Bill Shearer, and Robert Compton. 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.

SERIES I: Personal Papers, 1970 - 2004

Boxes 1 - 2

This series contains personal papers, photographs, correspondence, travel papers, notes, and newspaper clippings that pertain to every aspect of Donley Watt’s life. The photograph folder includes headshots, formal occasions, vacations, and research trips. In addition, there are proofs for printing on book covers. Each section with correspondence is organized chronologically (1970–2004), and by subject (university, awards/speeches/ employment, and specific individuals). Individuals Donley Watt corresponded with in high volume include Bill Shearer; John Graves, Bill Root, Paul Malone, and Scott Busby. Correspondence with Ron Query occurs throughout the correspondence years of 1970 through 2004.
SERIES II: Novels, 1994-2004
Boxes 3 – 12

This series is in chronological order by publication date for the novel. Each subseries is a different novel. The subseries contain correspondence, promotions, book reviews, notes, and drafts that pertain to that book. Day of the Dead remained unpublished. Some subseries contain drafts of short stories that later became developed into novels.

SERIES III: Short Fiction
Boxes 12 – 16

This series is arranged by short story ideas, the published works in Can You Get There From Here?, and the two novellas in Haley, Texas 1959. The subseries contains correspondence and promotions pertaining to the published works. The bulk of the series consists of drafts with notes. The subseries Short Story Ideas is in alphabetical order by the title. The folders in the subseries Can You Get There From Here? are arranged alphabetically.

SERIES IV: Other Writings
Box 17

This series contains essays, poetry, and book reviews of other authors. Most reviews published are from the Dallas Morning News between 1988 and 1995. Folders contain typescripts, copies of printed reviews, drafts, and notes. Poetry is principally student work. The essays and poetry are in alphabetical order. The reviews are in alphabetical order by the name of the author critiqued.

SERIES IV: Media
Box 18

This series contains a VHS video of Donley Watt lecturing. It also contains versions of drafts from various works on 3 ½” discs and two HD floppies.
Administrative Information

Access Restrictions
Open for Research.

Preferred Citation
The Donley Watt Papers, Southwestern Writers Collection, Texas State University-San Marcos

 Acquisition Information
Donated by Donley Watt in 2004 and 2006.

Processing Information
Processed by Michael (Mac) McFadden, Chad McFadon, Adrienne Richey, and Martha George Withers, 2011
Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Personal Papers, 1970-2004

Box   Folder

Photographs
1   1    Trip to San Cristobal
       Historical family portrait
       Family pictures

Correspondence, 1970-2004, undated
1   2    Undated
1   3    1970-1992
1   4    1993-1995
1   5    1996-1997
1   6    1998-1999
1   7    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
        Other travels
### Series I: Personal Papers-Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Folder</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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| 2   | 5      | 3” x 5” torn pages  
|     |        | 5” x 7” torn pages  
|     |        | 5” x 7” notebooks (5) |

#### Newspaper Clippings

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<td>Newspaper clippings containing biographical information</td>
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### Series II: Novels, 1994-2004

#### *Journey of Hector Rabinal (1994)*

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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Notes and drafts</td>
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#### *Day of the Dead, 2002 [unpublished]*

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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>“Durango”</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7-10</td>
<td>Drafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>Drafts</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Draft</td>
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#### *Reynolds (2002)*

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<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reviews and promotional materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Legal documents</td>
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<td>Notes</td>
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<td>Short story ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>Drafts – chapters</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Complete draft</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Complete draft, corrected December 29, 1997</td>
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### Series II: Novels

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<td>Complete draft, 1999</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Complete draft, December 13, 2000</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Complete draft, undated</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>Proofs, October 17, 2001</td>
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**Dancing with Lyndon (2004)**

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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Book reviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>Drafts – chapters</td>
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<td>Drafts – chapter</td>
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<td>First draft of first 153 pages, July 2001</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>First complete draft</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Second draft, undated</td>
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<td>Second draft, August 24, 2001</td>
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<td>Complete draft, June 28, 2001</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Complete drafts, undated</td>
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<td>Final draft</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Proofs, corrected December, 2003 (1 of 2)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Proofs, corrected December, 2003 (2 of 2)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Proofs, December 30, 2003</td>
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### Series III: Short Fiction

**Story Ideas and Incomplete Stories**

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<tr>
<th>Box</th>
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<th>Notes</th>
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</table>
| 12 | 4 | Story Ideas  
First Short Story  
Bonnie |
| 12 | 5 | Flying from “Sarah & Deanie” and “Girl Stories” |
**Series III: Short Fiction**

**Box**  **Folder**

**Story Ideas and Incomplete Stories - Continued**

| 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  


| 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  

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### Series III: Short Fiction

#### Box  Folder

**Haley, Texas 1959 – continued**

**Seven Days Working – Essays**

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<tr>
<th>15</th>
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<td>10</td>
<td>A Day or Two of Fiddling</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Events (Celebrations)</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Five Days Working</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Food</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Land</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>Living and Dying and Other Temptations</td>
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<table>
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<th>Moving On</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Something Old, Something New, Something Black and White and Brown</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Notes, Drafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Drafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Proof (partial)</td>
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**Haley, Texas 1959**

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<th>Damon – Drafts</th>
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<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Notes, Drafts</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>Drafts</td>
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### Series IV: Other Writings

**Essays**

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<th>17</th>
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<th>Essays A-Z</th>
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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 TX Observer June 1995”
A Silver Watch, with note from author’s daughter
A Special Place (3 copies)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>17</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Chasing the Cantaloupe Man, “Dreaming Mexico and Other Mexico Essays”</th>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Crossing the Border, “unpublished essay”</td>
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Series IV: Other Writings

Box  Folder

Essays – continued

17 4  Dreaming Mexico and Other Mexico Essays
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
   Compton, Bob. April 25, 1988
   Compton, Bob. May 3, 1988
Series IV: Other Writings

Box  Folder

Review of Work by Other Authors

Correspondence and Notes – Continued

17 10  Books to be Reviewed
1990, with note from Bob [Compton], 1992-1993; 1995
Notes, Packing slip

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*
Series IV: Other Writings

Box Folder

Review of Work by Other Authors

Reviews, M-Z – Continued

17 2
- 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

18 1

18 2
- Book chapters on 3½“, 2 HD Floppies (27 total)