



Southwestern Writers Collection

Special Collections at the Alkek Library
Texas State University-San Marcos

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 Cristobel
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

Box Folder

Notes

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | 5 | 3" x 5" torn pages
5" x 7" torn pages
5" x 7" notebooks (5) |
|---|---|---|

Newspaper Clippings

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | 6 | Newspaper clippings containing biographical information |
|---|---|---|

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 [unpublished]

- | | | |
|---|------|----------------|
| 3 | 4 | Correspondence |
| 3 | 5 | "Durango" |
| 3 | 6 | Notes |
| 3 | 7-10 | Drafts |
| 4 | 1-6 | Drafts |
| 5 | 1 | Draft |

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 |

Series II: Novels

Box Folder

Reynolds, continued

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 – chapter
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
11	5	Proofs, corrected December, 2003 (1 of 2)
12	1	Proofs, corrected December, 2003 (2 of 2)
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”

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 |

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 |

Series III: Short Fiction

Box Folder

Haley, Texas 1959 – continued

Seven Days Working – Essays

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)

Haley, Texas 1959

16	7	Damon – Drafts
16	8	Notes, Drafts
16	9-10	Drafts

Series IV: Other Writings

Essays

17	1	<u>Essays A-Z</u> 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)
17	2	Chasing the Cantaloupe Man, “Dreaming Mexico and Other Mexico Essays”
17	3	Crossing the Border, “unpublished essay”

Series IV: Other Writings

Box Folder

Essays – continued

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 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 | <u>Correspondence and Notes</u>
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 | <u>Reviews, A-L</u>

Abbey, Edward. <i>A Voice Crying in the Wilderness</i>
Alvaraez, Julia. <i>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</i>
Babb, Sanora. <i>Whose Names are Unknown</i>
Baker, Kevin. <i>Dreamland</i>
Barthelme, Frederick. <i>Natural Selection</i>
Bragg, Rick. <i>All Over but the Shoutin'</i>
Bukoski, Anthony. <i>Time Between Trains</i>
Cameron, Carey. <i>Daddy Boy</i>
Colbert, David (ed.) <i>Eyewitness to the American West</i>
Crews, Harry. <i>Scar Lover</i>
Crumley, James <i>The Muddy Fork & Other Things</i>
Draper, Robert. <i>Hadrian's Walls</i>
Ely, Scott. <i>Pit Bull</i>
Erdrich, Louise. <i>Tracks</i>
Garro, Elena. <i>First Love & Look for My Obituary: Two Novellas</i>
Heinemann, Larry. <i>Cooler by the Lake</i>
Kimball, Michael. <i>The Way the Family Got Away</i>
Lacy, Allen (ed.) <i>The American Gardener. A Sampler</i> and Stein, Sara B.
<i>My Weeds, A Gardener's Botany</i>
Lott, Brett, <i>Reed's Beach</i> |
| 17 | 12 | <u>Reviews, M-Z</u>

Martin, Lee. <i>From Our House</i>
Matthiessen, Peter. <i>Killing Mister Watson</i>
McAfee, John P. <i>Slow Walk in a Sad Rain</i>
Mora, Pat. <i>House of Houses</i>
Navas, Deborah <i>Things We Lost, Gave Away, Bought High and Sold Low</i>
Poverman, C.E. <i>On the Edge</i>
Powers, Richard. <i>Prisoner's Dilemma</i>
Reynolds, Clay. <i>Monuments</i>
Shepard, Sam. <i>Cruising Paradise</i> |

Series IV: Other Writings

Box Folder

Review of Work by Other Authors

Reviews, M-Z – Continued

17	2	Silko, Leslie Marmon, <i>Almanac of the Dead</i> Smith, C.W. <i>Understanding Women</i> Stern, Daniel. <i>In the Country of the Young</i> Taylor, Benjamin, <i>Tales Out of School</i> Wilkinson, D. Marion. <i>The Empty Quarter</i>
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Series V: Media

18	1	VHS Video: “Donley Watt, October 7 2003. Craft Lecture, 11 a.m C.W.W. Reading, 7 pm Shirley Recital Hall.”
18	2	Book chapters on 3 ½ “, 2 HD Floppies (27 total)