Guide to the Robert Eugene Bell Papers

Descriptive Summary:
Creator: Robert Eugene Bell, 1926-1999
Title: Robert Eugene Bell Papers
Dates: 1940-1999
Quantity: 49.75 linear feet
Abstract: Correspondence, unpublished manuscripts, short stories, plays, memories, poems, personal journals, photographs, and scrapbooks.
Accession: 02-09-386 ; 386-2002

Biographical Note:
Robert Eugene Bell was born October 13, 1926, in Tarrant City, Alabama. After graduating Phillips High School in Birmingham, Alabama, he enrolled at Birmingham-Southern College in 1944. He served the following year in the U.S. Army and then returned to Birmingham-Southern where he earned a bachelor's degree in English in 1950. While attending college, Bell also worked at the Birmingham Public Library from 1949 to 1950. After graduation, he won a General Education Board Scholarship to Harvard University and earned a master's degree in English in 1952.

Bell began working in Mobile, Alabama, at the Mobile Public Library in 1951 and later became head of the reference department and acting director of the library. He continued his education by attending Louisiana State University during the summer of 1953. In 1955 Bell moved to Fort Worth, Texas, and became assistant director at the Fort Worth Public Library. While in Fort Worth, he published his novel, The Butterfly Tree (1959, reprinted 1992).

In 1960 Bell became executive director of the Book Club of California. He and his partner Mark Hanrahan opened the Banquette Book Shop in New Orleans and San Francisco in 1962, and he was a co-owner until 1971. Bell also began working at the New Orleans Public Library at this time. He returned to the Mobile Public Library in 1963 to accept the position
of head of adult services and remained there until 1965 when he returned to New Orleans to take a similar position. In 1966 the Orleans Parish grand jury indicted him on public contract fraud charges (using the power of his office at the library to obtain business for the Banquette Book Shop), and Bell resigned from his position in the New Orleans Public Library. He then completed a master's degree in librarianship at LSU in 1967.

Shortly after graduation, Bell enrolled in the University of California at Berkeley School of Librarianship, where he earned a Ph.D. in 1974. He also worked as assistant professor of librarianship at the University of South Carolina from 1971 until 1973. After earning his Ph.D., Bell was a lecturer at the School of Library and Information Services at Berkeley from 1974 until 1976. He also became reference librarian at the City College of San Francisco at this time. Bell then moved to work at the University of California at Davis library as head of humanities and social science reference. He remained at Davis until his retirement in 1991. During this time, he published three mythology reference books (see list of publications below).

Robert Bell passed away November 19, 1999, at Woodland Memorial Hospital in California.

**Scope and Contents:**
Robert Bell’s papers contain correspondence with publishers and friends, many of whom were noted authors, unpublished manuscripts, including a novel, several short stories, plays, poems, and memoirs. The papers also contain personal journals (1940, 1950-1999), photographs, and scrapbooks.

**Arrangement:**
Arranged into 8 series: 1. Biographical Files; 2. Journals; 3. Writings (including fiction, poetry, autobiographical, other authors, non-fiction, and lectures); 4. Correspondence (including personal and professional); 5. Lists and Miscellaneous; 6. Photographs and Scrapbooks; 7. Software; and 8. Artwork.
Access Restrictions:
This material is open to research.

Preferred Citation:
Robert Eugene Bell Papers, The Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library,
University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL.

Content List:

Box 1

Biographical Files:

1. Awards, Diplomas, Certificates
2. Bibliography
3. Education - High School, 1942-44
4. Education - Birmingham Southern, 1944-50
5. Education - Harvard University, 1950-52
6. Education - Louisiana State University, 1967-68
7. Education - University of California, Berkeley, 1967-71
8. Education - Miscellaneous
10. Employment - Mobile Public Library, 1953
11. Employment - Fort Worth Public Library, 1954-59
12. Employment - City College, San Francisco, 1971-75
13. Employment - UC Berkeley, Lecturer, 1973-75
14. Employment - University of South Carolina, College of Librarianship, 1973-74
15. Employment - UC Davis, 1974-79
17. Employment - UC Davis, 1984-85
18. Employment - UC Davis, 1986-87
22. Employment - Banquette Book Shop
23. Employment - Applications
24. Family genealogy
25. Membership - Book Club of California
26. Membership - Grolier Club
27. Membership - Roxburghe Club
28. Military Service
29. Memorial, 1999
30. NEH grant proposal, 1984
32. News clippings, 1950-54
33. News clippings, 1954-67
34. News clippings, 1971-75

Box 2

Journals (bound) 1940, 1950-1995; (printouts from disk), 1995-1999:

1. Diary 1940
2. October, 1950
3. September, 1951
4. June, 1955
5. October, 1956
6. April, 1958
7. October, 1959
8. February, 1960
10. September, 1966
11. September, 1971
12. May, 1972
13. August, 1973
15. August, 1977
16. October, 1981
17. January, 1983
18. November, 1984
19. August, 1989
20. October, 1992
21. Summer 1951-August 1953
22. September-December 1953 (with footnotes)
25. April 1, 1996-June 30, 1996
27. October 1, 1996-December 31, 1996
29. April 1, 1997-June 30, 1997
31. October 1, 1997-December 31, 1997
34. September 1, 1998-December 31, 1998
35. January 1, 1999-August 26, 1999
36. Second Journey to Greece, 1978 (bound)
37. Seventh trip to Greece, September/ October, 1986 (bound)
38. European Trip (Germany, Italy, Greece, etc.) October 4 - 25, 1976

Box 3
Writings:

Published Fiction:

1-2. The Butterfly Tree (2 signed cloth copies with jackets), 1959
3-5. The Butterfly Tree, typescript, n.d.
6. "Touch and Run" (short story) in Descant, 1959

Unpublished Fiction:

7. "Angels Forsake Us" (a novel), original typescript
8-17. "Letters to Jeffery" (a novel), handwritten ms, typescript, and notes
18-24. "Adagio for a Glass Harmonica" (a novel), handwritten fragments & disk printout
25. "Rockhard" (a play), outline and character sketches, printout from disk
26. "Squirrel Cage" (a play), handwritten notes
27. "The Metamorphoses" (short story), typescript
28. "Ocnus-by-the-Sea" (short story), partial handwritten ms and typescript
29. "New Orleans Medley" (short story), handwritten ms
30. "Tina, the one-eyed mouse" (short story), handwritten and typed with drawing
31. "Forever a Stranger" (short story) typescript
32. "Calliope" (short story), handwritten
33. Library-related satire, typed
34. Miscellaneous fiction

Box 4

Writings [Please see Box 10 for other writings]:

Published Poetry:

2. "After the Songs of Apollo," n.d. (bound)
3. Harvard Poems (Mobile, 1954) photocopy (original in USA Library, ALGU)

Autobiographical Works:

5. "Meditations for Mark," 1961 (bound)
10. Memoir notes, 1929-1953
11. "Belcarmac," "World War II - Prelude," "Sergeant Mingle," "Fort McClelland" (covers college and military years)
12. "Food, Beautiful Food"
13. Untitled, about family, handwritten
14. "Good but not good enough," n.d. (about Mensa)
15. "Bettye," n.d
16. "If He Hollers"
17. "Tarrant"
18. "Genesis" (memoir covers 1930s not included in "The Wind's Will")
19. "Genesis" (memoir covers 1940s not included in "The Wind's Will")
20. "Fairhope Memoirs" (portions used in Meet Me at the Butterfly Tree)

By other authors: (see also Box 10 for writings by other authors)

21. Formicello, Joe, "Meaning behind Meaning," essay on The Butterfly Tree (see also, Formicello in Professional Correspondence, Box 8)
22. Gancher, Jean, poetry, n.d.
23. Roundtree, Thomas, essay on The Butterfly Tree, 1991 (see also, Roundtree in Professional Correspondence, Box 8)
25. Self, Frank and George Lefteris, correspondence, 1983-89
27. Self, Frank, "The Queen is Dead, Long Live the Queen," n.d.
28. Self, Frank, "I love your hat, Miss Garbo," n.d.
29. Self, Frank, "Would you like to Segue?" n.d.
30-31. Walter, Eugene, Miscellaneous writings by and about
32. Poetry (most unidentified)
33. Hanrahan, Mark, Various

Box 5

Published Non Fiction:

7. "Introduction," to Pains of April, 1999
8. "Marietta Johnson" in Meet Me at the Butterfly Tree, 2001, draft (see file 11)
10. Banquette Book Shop Catalogues 10-18 (bound)
11. Meet Me at the Butterfly Tree: A Fairhope Memoir, 2001) (author, Mary Lois Timbes)

Unpublished Non Fiction and Lectures:

15. "A Comparison of the Water Voyages in Poe with Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn," 1951
16. "Writings about Heinrich Schliemann, the discoverer of Homeric Troy," 1968
18. Gottschalk research materials
28. "Publishing during the Civil War Years," ca. 1969
31. "Eulogy for Barton Moir," June 1979
32. Notes for mythological genealogy (project abandoned, n.d.)
40-41. Miscellaneous non-fiction, n.d.

Lectures:

42. On the *Butterfly Tree*, n.d.
43. "Private Presses"
44. "The Mechanics of Poetry"
45. On Poe--dream world and reality
46. "Caveat Lector, or, Reader Beware--Categorically Speaking"

Box 6

Published Non Fiction:


Box 7

Personal Correspondence:

1. J. D. Adkins, 1993-99
2. Rebecca Bace, 1992-95
3. Mrs. Archie Bell, Sr, 1992-96
4. Archie Bell, Jr., 1992-96
5. Archie Bell, Jr., 1997-99
6. Billy Bell, 1984-91
7. Billy Bell, 1992
8. Billy Bell, 1993
9. Billy Bell, 1994
10. Billy Bell, 1995
11. Billy Bell, 1996
14. Paul Bertram, 1952-95
15. Samuel Bostaph, 1995
16. Lillian Jackson Braun, 1995
22. Edith and Harold Cohen, 1964-72
23. Edith and Harold Cohen, 1966
25. Harold Cohen, 1992-93
26. Harold Cohen, 1994-95
27. Harold Cohen, 1996-97
29. Daniel Curzon, 1992-93
30. Andrew Dacovich, 1993-98
31. Frank Daugherty, 1999-2000
32. Clarice and Lawrence Davis, 1993-99
33. Ann Deagon (includes poem), 1972-93
34. Morris Dees, 1992-97
35. Jimmy DeGirolamo, 1994-97
37. Winifred Duncan, 1950s
38. Malcolm Sonny Evans, 1994-99
40. Fannie Flagg, 1994-99
41. Ellinor and Mandi Gottesmann, 1994-97
42. French Greene and Faye Rollins, 1972-94
43. Wayne Greenhaw, 1994-96
44. Sheila Bancroft Hackworth, 1998-97
45. Mark Hanrahan, 1994-97
46. Bert Hitchcock, 1994
47. Gene Houston, 1976
49. Ken Jackson, 1995-99
50. James William "Bill" Johnson, 1994-95
51. Bill Johnson, 1996-98
52. Dr. Bertram W. Korn, 1960-62
54. Oscar Lewis, 1960-76
55. Theo Manning, 1993-95
56. Theo Manning, 1993-95
57. Frank and Maybelline Minor, 1995-99
58. Theron Montgomery, 1997
59. Patty Morales, 1994-97
60. Doris Mozley, 1995
61. Ann Nall, 1992-95
62. Soula Philippatou, 1990-93
63. Elspeth Pope, 1992-99
64. Merle Reagle, 1992-95
66. Frances and Rosa Lee Romano, 1991-95
67. Frank Self, 1960s
68-73. Frank Self, 1975-1982
74-81. Frank Self, 1984-1994
82. Frank Self, May 1994 "His Last Correspondance on Earth"
83. Nadine Self and John Gregory Self, 1994-95

Box 8

Personal Correspondence, Continued:

1. Annie "Butch" Sheldon, 1993
4-7. Mary Lois Timbes, 1993-1999
11-12. Eugene Walter, 1940s-1980s
16. Tom Wilson and Virginia Wyman, 1994
16B. Gus Arriola, 1970-71
19. Misc. Authors, 1990s
31. Greeting Cards
32-33. Correspondence with the media, 1980-1998
34. Correspondence with businesses
35. Correspondence with public officials
36. Correspondence with charitable organizations
37. Correspondence with realtors and banks
37B. Correspondence to libraries
38. Correspondence re: AIDS
39. Correspondence re: Family Genealogy
40. Correspondence re: Jefferson Square Homeowners
41. Correspondence re: Medical
42. Correspondence re: Stamp Collection
42A. Correspondence re: Warhol Collection, 1989-92, 1996

Professional Correspondence:

43. Correspondence re: *The Butterfly Tree*, 1957
44. Correspondence re: *The Butterfly Tree*, 1958
45. Correspondence re: *The Butterfly Tree*, January-March 1959
46. Correspondence re: *The Butterfly Tree*, April 1959
47. Correspondence re: *The Butterfly Tree*, May 1959
48. Correspondence re: *The Butterfly Tree*, June 1959
49. Correspondence re: *The Butterfly Tree*, July-August 1959
50. Correspondence re: *The Butterfly Tree*, September-November 1959
51. *The Butterfly Tree*, reviews comments following 1959 edition
52. Correspondence re: *The Butterfly Tree*, 1960s
53. Correspondence re: *The Butterfly Tree*, 1970s
54. Correspondence with Thomas Roundtree re: *The Butterfly Tree* reprint, 1990-92
55. *The Butterfly Tree*, reviews, articles following 1991 reprint
56. Correspondence re: *The Butterfly Tree* reprint, 1990-92
57. Correspondence with UA Press re: *The Butterfly Tree* reprint, 1990-92
58. Correspondence with Joe Formichella re: *The Butterfly Tree*, 1993
59. Correspondence re: *The Butterfly Tree*, 1993-97
60. Bell books, royalties, review, and brochures
61. Correspondence re: *Bibliography of Mobile*, 1955-56
62. Correspondence re: "Lafcadio Hearn," 1956-60
63. Correspondence re: "Angels Forsake Us," 1960-61
64. Correspondence re: *Women of Classical Mythology*, 1989-91
65. Correspondence re: *Women of Classical Mythology*, 1991-93
67. Correspondence, reviews re: *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*
68. Correspondence, reviews re: *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*
69. Correspondence, reviews re: *Place-Names in Classical Mythology: Greece*
70. Correspondence re: Alabama fiction bibliography
71. Correspondence re: Banquette Book Shop
75. Correspondence re: Introduction to *Pains of April*, 1999
76. Copyright Agreement, *Dictionary of Symbols, Attributes and Associations in Classical Myth*
77. Royalty Statements and Related Items

**Box 9**

**Lists and Miscellaneous:**

1. List of Classical Music, A-G (loose leaf notebook)
2. List of Classical Music, R-Z (loose leaf notebook)
3. Lists of Orchestras, Musicians, Vocalists (loose leaf notebook)
6. List of Greek mythological figures and associations (bound - arranged alphabetically)
7. "Alabama Authors" (bound - alphabetical listing)
11. "Tennessee Williams Notebook," 1960 (bound - list of books by Williams, and criticism)
12. "Biblioteca Classica" (bound - list of books relating to classical Greece)
13. Miscellaneous, ca. 1987-98 (bound - lists of Christmas cards received, movies, suicides, quotes, etc.)
14. "Gourmand Code" by Horace Raisson, originally published in Paris, fourteenth century (handwritten copy by Bell, bound)
15. "Mobile Notebook" (bound - bibliography of Mobile writers)
17. List of Cat Books in Bell/Hanrahan library (file - printout from disk)
18. List of Cat Names in Literature (file - printout from disk)
19. List of Books about Cats (file - printout from disk)
20. List of Names of Students at Tarrant Elementary (file - printout from disk)
21. List of Butterflies (file - printout from disk)
22. List - Butterfly taxonomy (file - printout from disk)
23. List - Book collection (file - printout from disk)
24-27. Lists - Miscellaneous (4 files - printout from disk)
28. List - Movies (file - printout from disk)
29. List of Butterfly Stamps
30. Bibliography of classical Greek sources
31. Receipts, inventories and price lists - Stamps and Books
32. Address Books (15 total)
33. Passport (Bell) - March 6, 1970 - March 5, 1975
34. Passport (Bell) - Feb. 6, 1975 - Feb. 5, 1980
35. Passport (Bell) - Dec. 31, 1979 - Dec. 30, 1984
36. Passport (Bell) - Dec. 21, 1984 - Dec. 20, 1994
37. Passport (Hanrahan) - Feb. 5, 1982 - Feb. 4, 1997
38. Sketchbook
40. 1996 Directory - Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America, Northern California Chapter
41. Homeri quae extant omnia (WorldCat Printout)

Box 10

Miscellaneous (stamps, published works, and other ephemera [see also Box 4 for works by authors other than Bell]):

1. Photographs
2. Miscellaneous and Loose Stamps
2B. Mint Condition Stamps
3. *Retrospective: Andy Warhol* by Heiner Bastian
4. *A Field Guide to Butterflies Coloring Book* by Roger Tory Peterson, Robert Michael Pile, and Sarah Anne Hughes
5. *Bug Rogers* by Gus Arriola
6. *Gordo's Pets* by Gus Arriola
7. *Tehuana Mama* by Gus Arriola
8. *Poosy Gato* by Gus Arriola
9. *Popo and the Sun* by Gus Arriola
11. *Ponce De Leon* by Gus Arriola
12. *Gordo the Lover* by Gus Arriola
14. Collectible Correspondence Stored with the Stamps
15. Wildlife Stamp Collection with Checklist (printout)
16. Stamps - The 1982 Fifty State Birds and Flowers Mint Set (includes illustrated check list)
17. Stamps - 1990 "Indian Headdresses" commemorative stamps
18. Magazines
19. Postcards from Madrid
20. Souvenir Gift Cards by artist Joan Betancourt
21. Flyer for 1987 "Viking Tours of Greece" (includes the names and addresses of 22 other passengers along with Bell's)
22. "Cat Names" in Literature (103 notecards)
23. Andy Warhol Stamps, Ebay Info.
24. Toys/Games: One deck of Round Playing Cards; One cribbage board; One small shadow box

Box 11
Photographs, Scrapbooks, etc.:

Photo Albums - Family, Friends
Loose photos and postcards (box)
Scrapbooks (photocopied, see Box 1, News clippings)
Illustrations

Box 12

Photographs, Scrapbooks, etc.:

3 Photo Albums - Greece, England, Italy
Scrapbook - Banquette Book Shop (3-ring binder)
Index Cards - Banquette Book Shop (2 gray boxes)
3 Yearbooks - Birmingham Southern, 1948-50
Alumni Directory - Birmingham Southern, 1986
Alumni Directory, Theta Chi - Birmingham Southern, 1996-97
Memory Book, Class of 1950 - Birmingham Southern, 1995
Sketch Book
Stamp Album - Cats
Guest Book - Banquette Bookshop, ? – 1976

Box 13

Photographs:

Seven Three-Ring Binders with Photographs

Box 14

Software:

Computer Discs 1-69 (most documents have been printed)
CD Rom Backup
Software CD Rom
Cassette Tape - "Sodom Me Insane" by The Incompetents

Box 15

Original Artwork and Ephemera:

11x14 - Presentation Portfolio "A Signature from the Ephemera of Adrian Wilson"

5x11 - Autographed publicity print of "The Man with the Hoe" by Edwin Markham, dated 1935

11x14 - Sepia tone publicity photo of Edwin Markham, autographed and dated 1935

8x10 - Grace Harper Press Booklet - Red and Black print announcing "A Common-Place Book with Something for Everybody" edited by Sherwood Grover and James D. Hammond
8x10 - One page numbered 9 and 10 from "Turnabout - I am Become Death the Destroyer of Worlds," with quote by Robert Oppenheimer and reference to Martin Elginbrodde

3 2 x 5 - Greeting Card to Miss Boylow from Carol Savada, marked Tokyo Japan

5x8 - Greeting Booklet modeled on 15th century Basel Missal, 1927

5x8 - Presentation Booklet, The Collector's Guild, Ltd.

11x14 - Grunewald - "Happy Couple"

11x14 - Grunewald - "What's Cooking"

5x7 - back dated 1976, pen and ink - Cat on Log

8x10 - Asian signature, 1929, pen and ink – Cat

11x14 - Asian symbol, pastels - Tabby Cat

8x10 - C. Dubert, two pencil drawings of women

8x10 - [Soinefond], watercolor - man on horse with sombrero

8x10 - Terushi, watercolor - Asian soldier seated

15x8 - matted 3x6 color panorama - "View of Savannah from the River"

15x14 - color panorama - "Puente de la India en el Paseo de Israel"

11x14 - matted 5x7 color "Jester and Cour Tesean?"

8x14 - pen and ink - "Narcissus and Hyacinthus"

11x14 - Fairy Tale Posters depicting Little Red Riding Hood and The Three Little Pigs (animated)

11x14 - print entitled "Marie Prevost (Universal Star)"

10x4 - print entitled "Sierra Juniper," 1916 (cut from a greeting card)

Four Magazine Fold-outs of various and irregular sizes

**Publications by Robert Bell:**


