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Ben Bufford manuscripts

Arkansas State University - Jonesboro

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Finding Aid of

BEN BUFFORD MANUSCRIPTS

1944-2003

MSS 004

Archives & Special Collections
Arkansas State University
Dean B. Ellis Library
P.O. Box 2040
State University, AR 72467
Phone Number: 870-972-2960
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Summary Information

Compiled By: Will Reaves, April 5, 2024; Matthew Mayton, Editor

Creator: Ben Bufford

Date: 1944-2003; Bulk, 1956-2003

Physical Description: 2.917 linear feet. The collection consists of 88 folders in 7 document boxes.

Language: English

Abstract

Ben Bufford was an English teacher at Jonesboro High School in Arkansas and Madera High School in California who wrote numerous poems. He also wrote manuscripts for several short stories and novels. This collection consists of manuscripts of the various literary works of Ben Bufford.

Acquisition

Mildred Bufford donated this collection to the Archives and Special Collection with the help of Floyd Barnhill, a family friend, in 2008. Further additions are not expected.

Processing Information

This collection was initially arraigned by Kristi Wilkes, and completed by Will Reaves in April 2024.

Conditions Governing Access

This manuscript collection consists of physical materials. This collection has not been digitized. This collection is open for research use only in the Reading Room. It is not available for request through Interlibrary Loan. Please contact the archive via email (archives@astate.edu) at least a week in advance of your arrival to ensure the availability of the material.

Rights Statement

Standard Copyright laws (U.S Title 17) apply.

Preferred Citation

Ben Bufford Manuscript Collection, Item Name and Date, Box and Folder Numbers, Archives and Special Collections, Dean B. Ellis Library, Arkansas State University.

Biographical Note

Ben Bufford was born on August 19, 1922, and grew up around Batesville, Arkansas. He attended Arkansas State College, obtaining a Degree in English. During World War Two, Bufford joined the Army Air Force, and served in the South Pacific. After the war, Bufford taught English at Jonesboro High School before moving with his family to Merced, California. In California, he taught English at Madera High School. During this time, he wrote several works of literature, including five novels and 1,422 poems.

One of his novels, *Run Naked to Hell*, is inspired by his experience serving in the Pacific during World War Two. *The Day God Slept* is a story about a kid moving to his grandmother's ranch during the

Vietnam Conflict. An unpublished trilogy, *The People of Elgin*, chronicles the lives of people in a fictional Ozark community.

He died on July 28, 2005, and is buried at San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery, in Santa Nella, California.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of the various written works of Ben Bufford. Included in this collection are manuscripts of published and unpublished novels, poetry, and manuscripts of short stories. This collection also contains some personal correspondence.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged in five series.

Series 1: Published Works. The "Published Works" series contains manuscripts from Bufford's two published novels. This series is divided into two subseries: Subseries 1.1, *The Day God Slept* and Subseries 1.2, *Run Naked to Hell*. Each subseries focuses on a single published work. As a note, *Run Naked to Hell* was originally titled *Reach for the Sun*, so some manuscript pages have that title.

Series 2: Unpublished Works. The "Unpublished Works" series contains manuscripts of novels Bufford did not publish. This series is divided into four subseries. Subseries 2.1, "*People of Elgin Trilogy Series*," contains the manuscripts of three works from an unpublished trilogy series; *People of Elgin*, *The Waitress and the Heir*, and *Thorns and Roses*. Subseries 2.2, "*My Brother Lindy*," contains various drafts of the work. This work went through some name changes, including *Consequences* and *The Sacrifice*. Subseries 2.3, "*Jimtown*," and Subseries 2.4, "*Ashley*" each contain a single manuscript of proposed novels.

Series 3: Poetry. The "Poetry" series consists of numerous poems Bufford wrote. This series is divided into two subseries. Subseries 3.1 "*The Dying Unicorn*," contains a collection of over 1,200 poems under *The Dying Unicorn* series. This subseries is arranged sequentially. Subseries 3.2 "Various Poems," consists of a collection of unaffiliated poems Bufford wrote. Included is a folder with poems Bufford submitted to various periodicals.

Series 4: Short Stories. The "Short Stories" series consists of a collection of short stories written by Ben Bufford. This series is divided into three subseries. Subseries 4.1, "The Sound of Crickets" and Subseries 4.2 "A Touch of Elegance" each contain two drafts of the short story. Subseries 4.3, "Various Titles," contains manuscripts of the different short stories Bufford wrote. Many of these have edits and notes.

Series 5: Correspondence. The "Correspondence" series contains letters and postcards Bufford received. This series is arranged chronologically.

Subjects

- Authors
- Authors, American
- Fiction
- Historical Fiction

- Literature
- Literature publishing
- Manuscripts
- Poetry
- Rural Families in literature
- Short stories
- Short stories, American

Names

- Bufford, Benjamin F. (Ben)

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Published Works

Subseries 1.1: *The Day God Slept*

Box 1:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
1	Synopsis and Pages 1-100	Circa 2001
2	Pages 101-200	Circa 2001
3	Pages 201-300	Circa 2001
4	Pages 301-329 and Epilogue	Circa 2001
5	Copy of Book	2001

Subseries 1.2: *Run Naked to Hell*

Box 1:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
6	<i>Reach for the Sun</i> , Pages 1-100	Circa 1957-1959
7	<i>Reach for the Sun</i> , Pages 101-199	Circa 1957-1959
8	<i>Reach for the Sun</i> , Pages 200-300	Circa 1957-1959
9	<i>Reach for the Sun</i> , Pages 301-400	Circa 1957-1959
10	<i>Reach for the Sun</i> , Pages 401-500	Circa 1957-1959

Box 2:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
11	<i>Reach for the Sun</i> , Pages 501-546	Circa 1957-1959
12	Additional Chapter, "Aloha to Pearl," Pages 1-49	Circa 1957-1959
13	Additional Chapter, "Mia," Pages 491-518	Circa 1957-1959
14	Copy of First Edition	2003

Series 2: Published Works

Subseries 2.1: *People of Elgin* Trilogy Series

Box 2:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
15	<i>People of Elgin</i> , Chapters 1-5	Circa 1995 October
16	<i>People of Elgin</i> , Chapters 6-10	Circa 1995 October
17	<i>People of Elgin</i> , Chapters 11-15	Circa 1995 October
18	<i>People of Elgin</i> , Chapters 16-21	Circa 1995 October
19	<i>People of Elgin</i> , Chapters 22-27	Circa 1995 October
20	Correspondence	1997 April 23
21	<i>The Waitress and the Heir</i> , Chapters 1-5	Circa 1995 October – 1996 January
22	<i>The Waitress and the Heir</i> , Chapters 6-10	Circa 1995 October – 1996 January

Box 3:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
23	<i>The Waitress and the Heir</i> , Chapters 11-15	Circa 1995 October – 1996 January
24	<i>The Waitress and the Heir</i> , Chapters 16-20	Circa 1995 October – 1996 January
25	<i>The Waitress and the Heir</i> , Chapters 21-25	Circa 1995 October – 1996 January
26	<i>Thorns and Roses</i> , Chapters 1-6	Circa 1996
27	<i>Thorns and Roses</i> , Chapters 7-12	Circa 1996
28	<i>Thorns and Roses</i> , Chapters 13-18	Circa 1996
29	<i>Thorns and Roses</i> , Chapters 19-24	Circa 1996

Subseries 2.2: *My Brother Lindy*

Box 3:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
30	<i>Consequences</i> , Synopsis and Incomplete Draft with Notes	undated
31	Maxine L. Shore's Critique of <i>Consequence</i>	undated
32	<i>The Sacrifice</i> , Synopsis and Pages 1-100	undated

Box 4:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
33	<i>The Sacrifice</i> , Pages 101-200	undated
34	<i>The Sacrifice</i> , Pages 201-300	undated
35	<i>The Sacrifice</i> , Pages 301-370	undated
36	<i>My Brother Lindy</i> , Pages 1-100	Circa 1997 July
37	<i>My Brother Lindy</i> , Pages 101-200	Circa 1997 July
38	<i>My Brother Lindy</i> , Pages 201-329	Circa 1997 July

Subseries 2.3: *Jimtown**Box 4:*

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
39	Chapters 1-6	Circa 1997 February
40	Chapters 7-11	Circa 1997 February
41	Chapters 12-17	Circa 1997 February

Subseries 2.3: *Ashley**Box 5:*

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
42	Chapters 1-6	Circa 2000 February
43	Chapters 7-11	Circa 2000 February
44	Chapters 12-17	Circa 2000 February
45	Undisclosed Page	2002 December 27

Series 3: Poetry

Subseries 3.1: *The Dying Unicorn**Box 5:*

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
46	Numbers 1-100	1980 December 14 – 1980 December 30
47	Numbers 101-200	1980 December 30 – 1981 January 3
48	Numbers 201-300	1981 January 3 – 1981 January 9
49	Numbers 301-400	1981 January 9 – 1981 January 15
50	Numbers 401-500	1981 January 15 – 1981 January 21
51	Numbers 501-600	1981 January 21 – 1981 January 29

Box 6:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
52	Numbers 601-700	1981 January 29 – 1981 May 23
53	Numbers 701-800	1981 May 23 – 1981 December 6
54	Numbers 801-900	1981 December 6 – 1983 November 16
55	Numbers 901-1000	1983 November 16 – 1984 February 28
56	Numbers 1001-1100	1984 February 28 – 1986 August 10

57	Numbers 1101-1200	1986 July 27 – 1988 December 31
58	Numbers 1201-1268	1989 January 1 – 1997 August 30

Subseries 3.2: Various Poems

Box 6:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
59	Booklet of Poetry	Circa 1956-1957, undated
60	Poems	Circa 1956-1957, undated
61	Poems	Circa 1972-1975, undated
62	Poems	Circa 1969-1980, undated
63	Poems	undated
64	Poems Submitted to Various Periodicals	1957, 1997

Series 4: Short Stories

Subseries 4.1: "The Sound of Crickets"

Box 7:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
65	Original Draft	Circa 1970
66	Last Revision	1970 August 31

Subseries 4.2: "A Touch of Elegance"

Box 7:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
67	"Christmas in Appalachia" Draft	undated
68	"A Touch of Elegance," Possible Revised Draft	undated

Subseries 4.3: Various Titles

Box 7:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
69	"A Night Like This"	1958 January
70	"Go to the Mountain"	1965 May 26
71	"Always a Witness"	1967 November 11
72	"The Foreman"	1968 January 23
73	"The Red Blouse"	1968 January 30
74	"The First Rain" with Notes	undated
75	Incomplete Manuscript of "Inside Looking Out" with Notes	undated
76	"The Littlest Christmas Tree" with Notes	undated

77	"Night Train" with Some Notes	undated
78	"The Picket Fence"	undated
79	"Run to the Sea" with Some Notes	undated
80	"Sign of the Gemini"	undated
81	"To the Bridge"	undated
82	"The Wish" with Edits	undated
83	"The Wisteria Curse"	undated
84	"What You Need is a Hypo"	undated

Series 5: Correspondence

Box 7:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
85	V-Mail	1944 November 26
86	Last Revision	1970 August 31
87	Almus F. Williams	1998
88	Miscellaneous	1998