

Guide to the Alan Bowne papers C0319

Alan Bowne papers

1980-1989

Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

C0319

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/553

Unit Date

1980-1989

Unit Date

circa 1964-1991

Language

English .

Abstract

The Alan Bowne papers consists of five boxes of materials created over the course of Bowne's career as a playwright and author. These include play scripts and drafts, short story and novel drafts, screenplays, technical writings, correspondence, notebooks, photographs, audio cassettes, and one reel-to-reel tape. These materials originate from circa 1964 - 1991, with the bulk of the collection originating from the 1980s.

Creator

Bowne, Alan

Extent

3 Linear Feet 5 boxes

Physical Location

R 73, C 3, S 1 & 4

Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

Use Restrictions

The copyright and related rights status of this collection have not been evaluated (See <http://rightsstatements.org/vocab/CNE/1.0/>)

Acquisition Information

Donated by Barbara Hayes in January 2019.

Additional materials donated by Broadway Play Publishing, Inc. in August 2021 and by Barbara Hayes in November 2023.

Processing Information

Processing completed by Amanda Menjivar in March 2019. EAD markup completed by Amanda Menjivar in March 2019. Finding aid updated by Amanda Menjivar in February 2023. Additional processing completed and finding aid updated by Meghan Glasbrenner from March-April 2024.

Preferred Citation

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Biographical Information

Alan Bowne was an American playwright and author. Born William Alan Bowne on February 20, 1945 in Hemet, California, Bowne was best known for a handful of works, including "Beirut," "Forty-Deuce," "Sharon and Billy," as well as a novel, "Wally Wonderstruck." Perhaps his most famous and enduring work, "Beirut" is a one-act play that tells the allegorical story of a heterosexual couple dealing with a mysterious disease that ravages dystopian New York. This fictional disease presumably represented the real HIV/AIDS epidemic of the 1980s. "Beirut" was eventually adapted into a 1993 television movie, re-titled "Daybreak." Bowne passed away from AIDS-related complications on November 24, 1989 in his Sonoma County home at 44 years old.

Scope and Content

Content Warning: Many of the notebooks in this collection contain graphic sexual content.

The Alan Bowne papers consists of five boxes of materials created over the course of Bowne's career as a playwright and author. These include play scripts and drafts, short story and novel drafts, screenplays, technical writings, correspondence, notebooks, photographs, audio cassettes, and one reel-to-reel tape. These materials originate from circa 1964 - 1991, with the bulk of the collection originating from the 1980s. The collections contains four series.

Series 1: Writings and Correspondence (1971 - 1991) includes multiple drafts and scripts of Bowne's work, including drafts for "Forty-Deuce," "Sharon and Billy," and "Wally Wonderstruck." It also includes correspondence and other materials related to submitting his written work to various publishers. Notable are two notebooks Bowne wrote in, one containing his thoughts on his presumed AIDS diagnosis.

Series 2: Photographs and Audiovisual Materials (circa 1970s - 1989) includes photographs of Bowne himself, with friends, on vacation, and of his Sonoma County, CA home and the surrounding countryside. The two audio cassettes and reel-to-reel tape contain recordings of a 1984 production of his play "Sharon and Billy."

Series 3: Additional writings (circa 1960s - 1980s) includes additional written materials donated in 2021 and 2023. These include drafts and scripts of Bowne's work, including "Cocaine and Underpants", "The Little Monsters", and draft materials for additional uncompleted novels and short stories, as well as freelance technical writings, resumes, and an obituary written after Bowne's passing.

Series 4: Notebooks (1979 - June 1989) includes five additional notebooks containing handwritten writing by Bowne. Contents include personal journal entries, including thoughts on his AIDS diagnosis, as well as personal reading and writing projects, including one focused on reading and responding to each of Shakespeare's plays.

Related Materials

The Special Collections Research Center holds other performing arts collections.

Keywords

AIDS (Disease)
Filmmaking (Motion pictures)
LGBTQ+
New York (N.Y.)
Playwriting
Theater -- United States
Screenplay writing
Sonoma County (Calif.)
Creative writing
LGBTQ+ drama

Bibliography

Technical Requirements

The Special Collections Research Center does not have the equipment necessary to play reel-to-reel tapes. Additional time and money may be required to digitize this material for access.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into four series by format and then chronologically.

Series

- Series 1: Writings and Correspondence
- Series 2: Photographs and Audiovisual Materials
- Series 3: Additional writings
- Series 4: Notebooks

Description of Subordinate Components

Series 1: Writings and Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136506

Unit Date 1971-1991

Mixed Materials 1-2 (box)

Scope and Contents

Includes multiple drafts and scripts of Bowne's work, including drafts for "Forty-Deuce," "Sharon and Billy," and "Wally Wonderstruck." It also includes correspondence and other materials related to submitting his written work to various publishers. Notable are two notebooks Bowne wrote in, one containing his thoughts on his presumed AIDS diagnosis.

"Loony Tunes" submission envelope and folder with notes

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136508

Unit Date 1971; April 1976

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 1 (Folder)

"Pale Dead Suburban Moon" draft and envelope

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136509

Unit Date 1977 - 1978

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 2 (Folder)

"Bijou in Birdland" - two copies and envelope

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136510

Unit Date October 1978

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 3 (Folder)

"Miss Bojangles" short story drafts and submission notes and correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136511

Unit Date circa 1978 - 1979

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 4 (Folder)

"Jamaican and Jew" draft and folder

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136512

Unit Date circa 1980s

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 5 (Folder)

"Loony Tunes" draft

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136513

Unit Date circa 1980s

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 6 (Folder)

Magic Theatre, Berkeley, CA's 20th Birthday Season pamphlet featuring "Sharon and Billy" by Bowne

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136514

Unit Date circa 1980s

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 7 (Folder)

"East Human" draft and envelope

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136515

Unit Date October 1981

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 8 (Folder)

Author's copy of "Sharon and Billy" script, including related notes and correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136516

Unit Date 1982

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 9 (Folder)

First Annual Vancouver International Film Festival fold-out program

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136517

Unit Date May 13 - May 30, 1982

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 10 (Folder)

Letter from Robert Lantz of The Lantz Office, Inc. to Bowne

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136518

Unit Date August 30, 1982

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 11 (Folder)

"Forty Deuce" script with notes

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136519

Unit Date 1983

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 12 (Folder)

"New York City" notebook

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136520

Unit Date 1983 - 1984

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 14 (Folder)

Scope and Contents

Graphic sexual content warning. Includes Bowne's thoughts on his potential, and eventually confirmed, AIDS diagnosis.

"Spook" script and envelope

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136521

Unit Date circa 1985

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 15 (Folder)

"A Snake In The Vein" author's copy draft

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136522

Unit Date circa 1985

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 1 (Folder)

"Spook" draft, notes, and envelope

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136523

Unit Date circa 1986

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 2 (Folder)

"Throwback" screenplay draft and folder

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136524

Unit Date March 1986

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 3 (Folder)

"Sharon and Billy" newsclippings

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136525

Unit Date May 1986

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 4 (Folder)

"Wild Side" screenplay - first draft - two copies

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136526

Unit Date November 1987

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 5 (Folder)

"Notes on Henry James - Sonoma Mountain" notebook

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136527

Unit Date 1988

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 6 (Folder)

Scope and Contents

Includes a typed insert of some of Bowne's journal entries.

"Wally Wonderstruck" original draft - Part 1

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136528

Unit Date June 1989

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 7 (Folder)

"Wally Wonderstruck" original draft - Part 2

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136529

Unit Date June 1989

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 8 (Folder)

"Wally Wonderstruck" original draft - Part 3

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136530

Unit Date June 1989

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 9 (Folder)

Letter from Peter Frankling of William Morris Agency, Inc. to Barbara McEdwards about "Beirut" screenplay

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136531

Unit Date June 17, 1991

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 10 (Folder)

Series 2: Photographs and Audiovisual Material

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136507

Unit Date circa 1970s-1989

Mixed Materials 2-3 (box)

Scope and Contents

Includes photographs of Bowne himself, with friends, on vacation, and of his Sonoma County, CA home and the surrounding countryside. The two audio cassettes and reel-to-reel tape contain recordings of a 1984

production of his play "Sharon and Billy."

Photograph of Alan Bowne with friends

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136532

Unit Date circa 1980s

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 11 (Folder)

Two black and white portrait photographs of Alan Bowne

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136533

Unit Date circa 1980s

Mixed Materials 3 (Box)

Photo album scrapbook pages

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136534

Unit Date 1984

Mixed Materials 3 (Box)

Scope and Contents

Scrapbook pages compiled for Bowne by friend Ed Kruse. Includes photographs of Bowne with friends, travel photos from various locales, and postcards.

"Shack and Garden - Sonoma Mtn '88" photo album

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136535

Unit Date 1988

Mixed Materials 3 (Box)

Scope and Contents

Includes photographs of a house - presumably Bowne's - and friends in Sonoma County, CA.

"Sonoma County Countryside - Sonoma Mountain Scenes" photo album

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136536

Unit Date 1989

Mixed Materials 3 (Box)

Scope and Contents

Includes photographs of a house - presumably Bowne's - and countryside scenes in Sonoma County, CA.

45 RPM vinyl records of popular music

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136537

Unit Date circa 1970s - 1980s

Mixed Materials 3 (Box)

Scope and Contents

20 vinyl records.

"Sharon and Billy" master recording - reel-to-reel tape

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136538

Unit Date April 3, 1984

Mixed Materials 3 (Box)

"Sharon and Billy Tape #1" audio cassette tape

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136539

Unit Date circa April 1984

Mixed Materials 3 (Box)

"Sharon and Billy Tape #2" audio cassette tape

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136540

Unit Date circa April 1984

Mixed Materials 3 (Box)

Series 3: Additional writings

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189094

Unit Date 1964-1989

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Scope and Content

Includes additional written materials donated in 2021 and 2023. These include drafts and scripts of Bowne's work, including "Cocaine and Underpants", "The Little Monsters", and draft materials for additional uncompleted novels and short stories, as well as freelance technical writings, resumes, and an obituary written after Bowne's passing.

"Solitary Song" handwritten draft

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189095

Unit Date 1964

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

"RD" handwritten draft

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189096

Unit Date 1969

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Scope and Content

Original title "Hermitage" is crossed out and "RD" written above it

Resumes and lists of publications

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189097

Unit Date circa 1974-1976

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

"The Use and Usurpation of Power by the President" for the Writer's Alliance

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189098

Unit Date January 21, 1975

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

"Handling Divorces for the Catholic Client" for Michelson's

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189099

Unit Date May 1976

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

"President's Report" Jah Johnson, Greenhouse Assn

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189100

Unit Date February 26-27, 1977

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

"Cocaine and Underpants" typed script with edits and handwritten draft notes

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189101

Unit Date 1984-1985

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

"Ear-Wax" novel typed draft pages and handwritten outline notes

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189102

Unit Date circa 1980s

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

"The Little Monsters" typed script with edits

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189103

Unit Date circa 1980s

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

"Sainted Lady" novel typed and handwritten draft and outline pages

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189104

Unit Date circa 1980s

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

"The Able-Bodied Seaman" typed script

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189105

Unit Date circa 1983

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Obituary for Alan Bowne

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189106

Unit Date 1989

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

Series 4: Notebooks

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189107

Unit Date 1979-June 1989

Mixed Materials 5 (box)

Scope and Content

Includes five additional notebooks containing handwritten writing by Bowne. Contents include personal journal entries, including thoughts on his AIDS diagnosis, as well as personal reading and writing projects, including one focused on reading and responding to each of Shakespeare's plays.

"Journal" large black notebook

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189108

Unit Date 1979-February 1982, November 1986-January 1988

Mixed Materials 5 (box)

Extent The binding is very unstable, care should be taken when opening and turning pages. Stored flat in box to avoid further damage.

Scope and Content

The book has been written in from both ends. One side is labeled "Journal 1979-1982" and the other is

The book has been written in from both ends. One side is labeled "Journal 1979-1982" and the other is labeled "November 1986-January 1988". There are some blank pages in the middle between these two uses and some papers and wrappers inserted to mark various pages.

"Sonoma County Scribblings, Xmas in LA, Caribe" black floral notebook

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189109

Unit Date 1982-March 1983

Mixed Materials 5 (box)

Extent Binding is unstable, particularly near the front. Care should be taken when opening.

Scope and Content

Includes several items, including two postcards, one photograph, and one postage stamp, adhered to various pages. There is a torn piece of a post-it note inserted to mark pages.

"Alan Bowne his notes on Shakespeare" brown floral notebook

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189110

Unit Date 1984-March 1985

Mixed Materials 5 (box)

"Notes on Francis Bacon" blue notebook

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189111

Unit Date October 1986

Mixed Materials 5 (box)

"Vagrant Notes" green notebook

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/189112

Unit Date 1988-June 1989

Mixed Materials 5 (box)

Extent Exterior binding has a chunk torn out of the bottom corner, but interior binding seems stable.

Scope and Content

There are some papers inserted to mark various pages.