

C Burke, William Jeremiah (1902-1990), Papers, 1903-1985
3608 5 linear feet

RESTRICTED

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INTRODUCTION

Correspondence, diary, manuscripts of novels, poems, articles, photographs, books, memorabilia and other personal and professional papers of an author and director of editorial research at *LOOK* magazine, 1943-1968.

DONOR INFORMATION

The William J. Burke Papers were donated to the University of Missouri by William J. Burke, May through November 1973 (Accession No. 3914). Additions to the papers were made on May 23, 1978 (Accession No. 4168) and on September 12, 1986 (Accession No. 4742).

RESTRICTIONS

Consult with the reference staff about the restriction on this collection

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Jeremiah (Jerry) Burke was born in Richmond, Missouri, in 1902 to William Henry and Alice Jane (Brown) Burke, the ninth of ten children. While at Richmond High School he worked as a reporter and columnist for the *Richmond Conservator* and *Richmond News*. He attended the University of Missouri, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1924, and did graduate work in English literature at Harvard University before moving to New York City.

After working a short time as a reporter on the Kansas City *Kansan*, he returned to New York in 1925 and took a position in the reference department of the New York Public Library. While there he earned a Master's degree in library science from Columbia University, and wrote *The Literature of Slang*. In 1930 he and Margaret (Peggy) Stolpe were married; they had no children.

In 1937 he joined the publishing firm of Charles Scribner's Sons as an editor and book buyer. At Scribner's, Burke edited and wrote for the company's promotional magazine, *The Book Buyer*, compiled *American Authors and Books*, and edited the first volume of the *Album of American History*. He began his 25 year tenure as Director of Editorial Research at LOOK magazine in 1943. In the 1960s he was closely involved with the National Teacher of the Year Award, which was co-sponsored by *LOOK*. The result of his interviews with the finalists for the award was *Not For Glory: Who Are Today's Great Teachers?*, which was published in 1967.

After retiring in 1968, Burke settled in West Dennis, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod, where he pursued his long standing interest in the Cape, researching and writing articles, compiling a bibliography, and establishing a research library at the Dennis Historical Society. Jerry Burke died in 1990.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The William J. Burke Papers consist of a variety of materials related to his personal life

and professional work as a librarian, in the publishing industry, and as an author. The papers are arranged into seven series: **Correspondence, Writing and Research, Photographs, Memorabilia and Miscellaneous, Books, Thomas A. Brady, and Maurice M. Milligan**

The **Correspondence** series covers the years from 1919 through 1985, is predominantly incoming, arranged chronologically, and concerns both Burke=s professional and personal life. The early correspondence is primarily personal, beginning after his move to New York, from friends and former classmates, touching on a variety of subjects, including literary topics and aspirations, European travel, Cape Cod, Greenwich Village, and other topics. Along with continued personal correspondence, later material from the 1930s pertains to Burke=s research on English slang, various other aspects of his work at the New York Public Library, and writing and editing duties at Scribner=s. Continuing into the 1940s and through the 1960s, the correspondence details some of his work as director of editorial research at *LOOK* magazine and its sister publications *Quick* and *Flair* magazines, activities after his retirement in 1968, and personal matters. The series includes letters of members of his wife Margaret=s family .

The series also contains Burke=s 1924 to 1928 diary kept while at Harvard and his early days in New York, segments written while on European trips in 1929 and 1930, segments from the 1930s, and a short excerpt from 1983. The descriptions of New York in the 1920s and Burke=s social and intellectual life are especially vivid. Burke also created an edited version of the 1924 to 1928 diary.

The **Writing and Research** series contains Burke=s published and unpublished work in a variety of forms, and consists of a manuscript of an unfinished autobiographical novel; a manuscript and research notes for an historical novel concerning Abelard; short stories concerning his childhood; poems concerning Cape Cod, love, nature and religion; a children=s play; speeches; magazine articles about Cape Cod, slang, photograph cataloging, and other topics; publicity material for books published by Scribner=s; copies of newspaper articles and poems written by Burke throughout his career; clippings regarding Burke, the publishing industry, and libraries; and a film script and other materials for the UNICEF film, *AA Grain of Sand*≅. The series is arranged by type of material

The images in the **Photographs** series are arranged chronologically and depict Burke=s early life and family in Richmond, Missouri, his wife Margaret and their trips to Europe and other locations in the 1920s and 1930s, his time at *LOOK*, and various activities with family and friends from the 1940s through his retirement in 1968. Photos of members of his wife=s family and friends are also found in the series.

The **Memorabilia and Miscellaneous** series consists of a variety of materials related to Burke=s personal and professional life, and includes items from his high school days, time at the University of Missouri, and European trips; Burke family genealogical research papers; miscellaneous items pertaining to the Stolpe family (his wife=s family); and National Teacher of the Year Award materials.

The **Books** series includes several publications written by Burke, *The Literature of Slang*, 1939, *Not For Glory: Who Are Today=s Great Teachers?*, 1967, and columns in *The Book Buyer*, 1930s; and *The Missouri Waltz*, by Maurice Milligan, 1948, and the *Album of American History*, 1944, in which Burke collaborated. Also included are publications related to the history of Scribner=s publishing and *LOOK*_magazine, linguistics, and poetry.

The **Thomas Allan Brady** series consists primarily of correspondence of Burke and Brady, who attended the University of Missouri together in the early 1920s, and documents their close personal relationship from the 1920s through the 1960s. Also within the series are poems, short stories, and papers written by Brady.

Materials in the **Maurice M. Milligan** series relate to Burke=s collaboration in the late 1940s with Kansas City attorney Milligan in writing *The Missouri Waltz*, a study of Kansas City politician Tom Pendergast. The series consists of correspondence, rough drafts and revisions, research materials, and miscellaneous papers concerning book royalties and copyright.

FOLDER LIST

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- f. 273 1930, European trip
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Writing and Research Series

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- f. 122-125 Short stories
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- f. 139-140 Miscellaneous manuscripts
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- f. 279-280 Miscellaneous, Stolpe family
- f. 281 Genealogy, Burke family

Book Series

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- f. 173 *The Book Buyer*, vol. 3, 1937-1938
- f. 174 *The Literature of Slang*, 1939
- f. 175 *The Missouri Waltz*, Maurice M. Milligan, 1948
- f. 176 *Not For Glory: Who Are Today's Great Teachers?*, William J. Burke, 1967
- f. 177 *Drifted Leaves*, Hugh Irwin, 1924
- f. 178 *The Leigh Hunt Collection of Luther Albertus Brewer*, J. Christian Bay, 1933
- f. 179 *Lexical Evidence From Folk Epigraphy in Western North America*, Allen Walker Read, 1935
- f. 180 *Poems*, Edith Hedin, 1949
- f. 181 *Fools in the Forest*, Dan Totheroh, 1951
- f. 182 *The Shaggy Dog Story*, Eric Partridge, 1953
- f. 183 *From Sanskrit to Brazil*, Eric Partridge, 1952; *A Charm of Words*, Eric Partridge, 1960
- f. 282 *Album of American History*, James Truslow Adams, ed., 1944
- f. 283 *The World of Words*, Eric Partridge, 1939
- f. 284 *Of Making Many Books*, Roger Burlingame, 1946
- f. 285 *Records of the LOOK Years*, 1972
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