

Jane Auer Bowles:

An Inventory of Her Collection at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Bowles, Jane Auer, 1917-1973
Title: Jane Auer Bowles Collection
Dates: 1944-1966
Extent: 2 boxes, 1 galley folder (.83 linear feet)
Abstract: Manuscript drafts and correspondence comprise the bulk of this American author's collection.
RLIN Record #: TXRC99-A16
Language: English.
Access: Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition: Purchase and gifts, 1967-1997
Processed by: Chelsea S. Jones, 1999
Repository: [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](#)

Biographical Sketch

The author Jane Auer Bowles, 1917-1973, published one novel, *Two Serious Ladies* (1943); one play, *In the Summer House* (1954); and a short story collection, *Plain Pleasures* (1966). *The Collected Works of Jane Bowles* (1966) combined these works in one volume. *My Sister's Hand in Mine* (1978) is an expanded edition of *The Collected Works*, containing an additional six short stories previously published only in magazines. A posthumously published collection of the short stories and a selection of letters, *Feminine Wiles*, appeared in 1976. Additional arrangements of her work, including some previously unpublished notebook material, and letters, were published under the titles of *Out in the World: Selected Letters of Jane Bowles* (1985) and *Everything Is Nice: The Collected Works of Jane Bowles* (1989).

The only child of Sidney and Claire Stajer Auer, Jane Stajer Auer was born February 22, 1917, in New York City. The Auer family moved to Woodmere, Long Island, when Jane was ten years old. Upon her father's death in 1930, Jane and her mother returned to New York City for two years before moving to Leysin, Switzerland, where Jane received treatment for tuberculosis of the knee. After returning to New York in 1934, Jane decided to be a writer; her first work, *Le Phaéton Hypocrite* (manuscript lost), was completed in 1936. Jane married the writer-composer Paul Bowles on February 21, 1938. Following their marriage, they traveled to Latin America and Europe and briefly resided in New York. After 1948, they lived in Tangier, Morocco, but continued to make frequent visits to Europe, Latin America, and the United States. Although both were bisexual and they often lived apart, the Bowles' marriage endured until Jane's death in 1973. Among their wide circle of friends and acquaintances were literary, musical, and theatrical figures, such as Tennessee Williams, Libby Holman, William S. Burroughs, Peggy Guggenheim, and Virgil Thomson. Another important figure in Jane Bowles's life was her Arab housekeeper and lover, Cherifa.

Jane Bowles's active period as a writer only lasted for about ten years; she always experienced difficulty in writing, but by 1950 this difficulty, worsened by alcohol, became complete writer's block. In 1957, at the age of 39, Jane Bowles suffered a severe stroke which left her with acute aphasia and vision impairment. She made several attempts to continue writing but was unable to complete any work, due in part to the effects of her heavy dependence on alcohol and prescription drugs. By 1967, her mental and physical health deteriorated to the point that Paul Bowles placed her in a psychiatric hospital in Málaga, Spain. The following year she was moved to the Clínica de los Angeles in Málaga. In 1969, she returned to Tangier for four months but had to be readmitted to the convent hospital where she died on May 4, 1973.

More information about Jane Bowles may be found in Millicent Dillon's *A Little Original Sin: The Life and Works of Jane Bowles* (Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1981).

Scope and Contents

Holograph drafts in notebooks and typescripts of *In the Summer House* make up the bulk of the Jane Bowles Collection, 1944-1966. The collection is organized into three series: Series I. Works, 1952-1966 (1 box); Series II. Correspondence, 1944-1966 (1 box); and Series III. Personal Papers, 1957-1958 (2 folders). This collection was previously accessible through a card catalog as part of the Paul Bowles Collection, but has been re-cataloged as a separate collection during a retrospective conversion project.

The Works Series contains three typescript versions of *In the Summer House*, as well as pieces of other works, mostly untitled. Additionally there are four undated notebooks with parts of stories and plays as well as doodles and sketches, and one notebook contains a completed short story, "Everything is Nice." Two untitled plays and an untitled story round out the series. A complete list of works can be found at the end of this guide in the Index of Works.

The Correspondence Series is divided into Outgoing and Incoming correspondence. The outgoing section contains three personal letters from Bowles, while the incoming section contains letters from Libby Holman, Ruth Fainlight, Oliver Smith, and Tennessee Williams, as well as others. A complete list of correspondents can be found at the end of this guide in the Index of Correspondence.

The small Personal Papers series contains memoranda of agreement and medical information from the fifties as well as a letter from the U.S. Consulate in Madeira, to be used in lieu of a lost passport.

Elsewhere in the Ransom Center is one Vertical File containing newspaper clippings of Bowles's works as well as reviews. The Literary Files of the Photography Collection contain over 500 images in the Paul Bowles Collection, many of which include Jane Bowles and their mutual friends.

Related Material

Other materials associated with Bowles may be found in the collection of her biographer, Millicent Dillon, and the following collections at the Ransom Center:

- Bowles, Paul
- Ford, Charles Henri
- *Harper's*
- Owen, Peter

See also the Authorized Paul Bowles Website at: <http://www.PaulBowles.org>.

Index Terms

Correspondents

Bowles, Jane Auer, 1917-1973

Holman, Libby

Fainlight, Ruth

Smith, Oliver

Wanklyn, Christopher

Williams, Tennessee, 1911-1983

Subjects

Americans--Morocco

Authors, American--20th century

Women authors--20th century

Series I. Works, 1952-1966

A-Z; Untitled	box 1 folder 1
Untitled Red O'Shaugnessy play, holograph notes and typescript with author edits, nd, 19pp	folder 2
Untitled Rita play, holograph and typescript with author edits, nd, 238pp	folder 3-4
Untitled story, holograph drafts in notebook with author revisions, nd, 29pp	folder 5
<i>The Collected Works of Jane Bowles</i> , galley proofs, 1966, 143pp (removed to galley folder 1)	
Everything is Nice, holograph draft in notebook, nd, 33pp	folder 6
In the Summer House	
"Ann Arbor version," typescript, nd, 80pp	folder 7
Typescript with author notes, nd, 77pp	folder 8
Typescript with inscription to Andreas Brown, 1952, 75pp	folder 9
Notebooks, holograph drafts and notes, nd, 379pp	folder 10-11
Notebooks (cont.)	box 2 folder 1-2
Once by Fire, Once by Wind, typescript with author deletions, nd, 50pp	folder 3
Out in the World	
Holograph draft fragments with author revisions in eight notebooks, nd, 418pp	folder 4-5
Typescript draft fragment with author revisions, nd, 27pp	folder 6

Bowles, Jane Auer, 1917-1973

Series II. Correspondence, 1944-1966

Subseries A. Outgoing, 1954-1966

A-Z, Unidentified

box 2 folder 7

Subseries B. Incoming, 1944-1965

A-Z; Unidentified

folder 8

Alfred Knopf Inc., 1944-1954

folder 9

Fainlight, Ruth, 1963-1964

folder 10

Smith, Oliver, 1956-1958

folder 11

Bowles, Jane Auer, 1917-1973

Series III. Personal Papers, 1954-1963

Legal documents, 1954-1963

box 2 folder 12

Prescriptions and medical records, 1957-1958

folder 13

Assorted envelopes

folder 14

Jane Bowles Collection--Index of Correspondents

Box and folder numbers are followed by a number in parentheses which indicates the number of items by that person. A single item is indicated where there is no number in parentheses following the box and folder number. Where there is correspondence from Jane Bowles, the number in parentheses is followed by the phrase "from Bowles." So in the example:

Saher, Lilla Van--2.7 (from Bowles), 2.8 (2)

there is 1 letter from Bowles in box 2, folder 7, and 2 letters from Saher in box 2, folder 8.

- Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.--2.9 (3)
- Ashbery, John--2.8
- Ashley-Steiner-Famous Artists, Inc.--2.8 (4)
- Aswell, Mary Louise White, 1902- --2.8 (2)
- Bourjaily, Vance Nye--2.8 (2)
- Bowles, Rena Wenewisser--2.7 (from Bowles)
- Codman, Florence--2.8 (2)
- Fuhs, Claire--2.8 (2)
- Fuhs, Julian--2.8 (2)
- Glyndal-Bonnier-Hasselbalch--2.8
- Goodwin, John, fl. 1957--2.8
- Hamill, Katherine--2.8 (2)
- Holman, Libby--2.8 (5)
- Ingram Merrill Foundation--2.8
- Kanin, Farson, 1912- --2.8
- Kominars, Sheppard B.--2.8
- Liebling-Wood--2.7 (from Bowles)
- MCA Artists, Inc.--2.8 (3)
- Mendle, Norma--2.8
- Moorepark, Howard--2.8
- Perkins, Helvetia--2.8
- Saher, Lilla van--2.7 (from Bowles), 2.8 (2)
- Sillitoe, Alan--2.8
- Fainlight, Ruth--2.10 (4)
- Smith, Oliver--2.11 (5)
- Sorenson, Virginia M.--2.8
- U.S. Consulate, Funchal, Madeira--2.12
- *Vogue*--2.8
- Wanklyn, Christopher--2.8 (3)
- **Williams, Tennessee, 1911-1983--2.8**
- Windham, Francis--2.8
- Windward Films--2.8

Jane Bowles Collection--Index of Works

- Composition written during her illness--1.1
- Fragments--1.1
- A Day in the Open--1.1
- Everything is Nice--1.6
- *In the Summer House*--1.7-9
- Lists of addresses--1.1
- Once by Fire, Once by Wind--2.3
- *Out in the World: Selected Letters of Jane Bowles*--2.4
- A Quarreling Pair--1.1
- A Stick of Green Candy--1.1
- Untitled Red O'Shaugnessy play--1.2
- Untitled Rita play--1.3-4
- Untitled story--1.5