Descriptive Summary

Creator: O'Brien, Tim, 1946-
Title: Tim O'Brien Papers
Dates: 1914-2012, undated
Extent: 48 document boxes, 11 serial boxes, 2 oversize boxes (27.57 linear feet)
Abstract: The bulk of the Tim O'Brien Papers is made up of materials related to his novels and short stories, such as drafts, typescripts, proofs, correspondence, interviews, reviews, and book promotion and publishing items. Also present are smaller amounts of personal and family records.
Language: English
Access: Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition: Purchases, 2007 (R16545), 2012 (2012-12-002-P)
Processed by: Stephen Cooper, 2008, Katherine Casillo, 2013, Amanda Rousseau, 2014, Christine Bethke, 2018
Repository: The University of Texas at Austin, Harry Ransom Center
Scope and Contents

The materials in the Tim O'Brien Papers span not only his long career as an author, but also much of his life from his birth in Austin, Minnesota, through his teaching career at Texas State University San Marcos. The bulk of the collection is made up of materials related to his novels and short stories, such as drafts, typescripts, proofs, correspondence, interviews, reviews, and book promotion and publishing items, but also present are smaller amounts of personal and family records containing items as varied as O'Brien's baby book; short stories he wrote in junior high school; correspondence from the summer he was drafted, basic training, and his tour of duty in Vietnam; more than one hundred photographs of O'Brien and family members; and personal documents such as his parents' marriage certificate, birth certificates, and honorable discharge documents.

The papers are arranged in six series: I. Works, 1970-2007; II. Correspondence, 1977-2007; III. Career-Related, 1970-2007; IV. Family and Personal Records, 1916-2007; V. Works by Others, 1982-2006; and VI. Published Material, 1941-2006. Upon arrival, the majority of the material was arranged roughly in the present order; i.e., mainly grouped by novel, with some boxes containing unrelated items that were arranged into corresponding series. O'Brien’s handwritten comments appear throughout. Some of his notations appear to have been written for a contemporary second party; others seem directed at future researchers.

Series I. Works is further divided into two subseries, A. Novels, 1970-2007, and B. Short Works, 1970-2004. O'Brien's novels are well represented in Subseries A. with typescripts, proofs, and galleys, almost all with various amounts of revision, editing, and proofreading corrections, often in O'Brien's hand. Each novel also has at least two folders of related correspondence comprised of business and fan mail, as well as additional folders of interviews, reviews, promotion and production materials such as advertisements, reading announcements, and dust jacket proofs, and related works by others, including stage, film, and television scripts, theses, and dissertations. (Series V. contains additional works by others, and Series VI. contains short story excerpts from each novel as published in periodicals.)

Subseries B. Short Works contains drafts and proofs for essays, short stories, and reviews written between 1989-2004, as well as some tearsheets from serials in which some of the drafts were finally published. (Series VI. has a number of the actual serials as well.) Also present in Subseries B. are materials related to "Vietnam in Me," an article in which O'Brien describes his return to Vietnam more than twenty years after fighting there, including a final draft, article contract, trip itinerary and notes, photographs, and research materials.

The Correspondence Series contains chronological files of career-related and fan mail, as well as alphabetical files of correspondence from other writers including Ray Bradbury, Phil Caputo, Raymond Carver, James Grady, John Irving, Naomi Nye, Joyce Carol Oates, George Plimpton, Oliver Stone, James Webb, and Tobias Wolff. Perhaps most significant is the "literary correspondence" file, arranged chronologically, which O'Brien describes as "some pretty fair stuff about my early thinking/plans" regarding his
Series III. Career-Related contains a large group of financial papers primarily made up of literary contracts and royalty statements for novels, although some materials relate to awards, grants, and endowments. Also present are interviews and reviews, notes and research materials, speeches, lectures, and teaching notes, as well as some photographs.

Series IV. Family and Personal Records primarily spans O'Brien family history beginning with the lives of O'Brien's parents before his birth, documented by certificates of birth, marriage, and military discharge as well as some photographs, and continuing through his years at Harvard University, documented by class notes, school records, and photographs. The intervening years are represented by O'Brien's baby book and photograph, baptism record, correspondence prior to and during his military service, junior high school through Macalester College correspondence, newspaper clippings, and school records, and a folder containing material related to Lorna Lou Moeller, a childhood friend on whom the character of Linda in The Things They Carried was modeled.

Series V. Works by Others contains play and movie scripts, theses, criticism, a bibliography, and short works of fiction by fans, scholars, and professional writers.

Series VI. Published Material, is divided into four subseries, A. Fiction, B. Book Reviews, C. Interviews Given by and Articles about Tim O'Brien, and D. General Periodicals. Subseries A. is arranged alphabetically by novel, listing the serial publications in which corresponding stories or chapter excerpts were published. Subseries B. is arranged alphabetically by title of publication with the article title and year of publication listed, while Subseries C. and D. are arranged by alphabetical title only. Overall the collection is in good condition.

Separated Material

Books, audio recordings, computer disks, and personal effects received with the collection have been transferred to the appropriate departments within the Ransom Center.

Subseries A. Novels, 1970-2007, undated

*Going After Cacciato* (1978)  
Box 1 Folder

Typescript with corrections  
Folder 1-3

Page proofs  
Folder

- September 1977  
Folder 4-6

- Copy 2  
Folder 7

- Copy 2, cont'd  
Box 2 Folder 1-2

- Revised January 1986  
Folder 3-5

Galleys, with corrections for paperback editions  
Folder

- November 1988  
Folder 6

- April 1989  
Folder 7-8

"Lake Country, A Play for Radio" typescript  
Box 3 Folder 1

Correspondence  
Folder

- Personal and fan mail, 1978-1994, undated  
Folder 2-3

Folder 4

National Book Awards, 1979  
Folder

- Articles and announcements  
Folder 5

- Ceremony materials  
Folder 6

- Correspondence, 1979  
Folder

- Personal and fan mail, March-May  
Folder 7

- Professional, August  
Folder 8
O'Brien, Tim, 1946-

Interviews, 1978-2000, undated  
Reviews, 1977-1987, undated  
Reviews, foreign, 1978-1981, undated  
Dust jacket proofs  
Ads and promotion pieces  
"Retrospective pieces," 1976-1987

If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Ship Me Home (1973)

Final typescript, with revisions  
Page proofs, with corrections, 1989  
Dust jacket proofs, publicity photographs  
Correspondence  
Personal and fan mail, 1973-1995, undated  
Professional, 1970-2002  
Reviews, 1973-1995

In the Lake of the Woods (1994)

Typescript, final version  
Typescript, undated  
Setting copy, with corrections, May 1994  
Page proofs  
Undated, with corrections
O'Brien, Tim, 1946-

July 1994, with corrections

A.B.A. presentation copy

Presentation copy

Uncorrected advance, with paperback revisions

Advance reading copy, with paperback revisions

Notes and research materials

Promotion and production materials

Correspondence

Fan mail, 1992-1999, undated

Personal, 1994-1995, undated

Professional, 1985-1995

Awards materials

Interviews, 1994-1995

Reviews, 1994-2001, undated

Related works by others, 1996-2000

Thank-you book, 1998

*July, July* (2002)

Typescript fragments, chapters 15, 23

Typescript, with revisions

Typescript, cont'd

Typescript, undated

Page proofs, 2002

Folder 7-9

Box 6 Folder 1-3

Folder 4-6

Folder 7

Folder 8

Box 7 Folder 1

Folder 2

Folder 3-5

Folder 6

Box 8 Folder 1

Folder 2

Folder 3

Folder 4

Folder 5

Folder 6

Folder 7

Folder 8-9

Box 9 Folder 1

Box 41 Folder 5-6

Box 9 Folder
February 12, with revisions  
March 12, with corrections  
March 15, with copy edits  
March 15, cont'd  
March 26, with corrections  
June 13, with revisions  
Bound with minor corrections  

Publicity and production materials (*floor displays removed to Oversize Box 32)  
Short story drafts for *Esquire* and *The New Yorker*, 2002  
Correspondence  
  Personal, 2001-2003  
  Professional, 1999-2002  
Interviews, 2002, undated  
Reviews  

*Northern Lights* (1975)  
Final typescript, with revisions  
Notes and research materials  
Dust jacket proofs  
Correspondence  
  Fan mail, 1983  
  Professional, 1973-1975  
  Reviews, 1975-1976, undated  

*The Nuclear Age* (1981)
O'Brien, Tim, 1946-

Typescript

With revisions

Final version

Final version, cont'd

Page proofs for paperback editions

With corrections, 1985

"Final corrected" set, 1985

Laurel paperback edition, 1993

Uncorrected advance, undated

Corrected galleys for paperback edition, 1985

Notes

Research materials

Production materials

Correspondence

Fan mail, 1976-1995, undated

Personal, 1980-1985, undated

Professional, 1980-1987, undated

Interviews, 1979-1986, undated

Reviews, "good" and "bad," 1980-1986, undated

The Things They Carried (1990)

Typescript

"Original" draft, with revisions

"Earliest" draft, with revisions

Folder 5-7

Folder 8-9

Box 13 Folder 1

Folder 2-3

Folder 4-6

Folder 7-8

Box 14 Folder 1

Folder 2-4

Folder 5

Folder 6-7

Box 15 Folder 1

Folder 2

Folder 3

Folder 4

Folder 5

Folder 6

Folder

Folder 7

Folder 8
"1st" draft, with revisions

"2nd" draft, with revisions

Page proofs, with revisions

"Sampler" proofs for marketing

Speeches, short stories, 1995-2003, undated

Production materials (*cover proof for *Minnesota Monthly*, March 1990; Chicago Book Festival floor display removed to Oversize Box 32)

Appalachian State University scrapbook (*removed to Oversize Box 32)

Scan of original hardcover book, with changes for paperback edition and notes and deletions for readings


Mariner Edition, page proofs, cont'd

Cover proofs, 2009

Correspondence

Awards, 1984-1993

Fan mail, 1987-2004

Fan mail, cont'd, undated

Personal, 1990-2000, undated

Professional, 1986-2000, undated

Interviews, 1990-2000, undated

Reviews, 1989-2007, undated

Works by others: thesis, dissertation, criticism
O'Brien, Tim, 1946-

Works by others, cont'd

"A Soldier's Sweetheart," Showtime publicity packet, photographs  

_Tomcat in Love_ (1998)

Page proofs

"Penultimate pass," with corrections, June 1998  

"Final and last pass," May 1998  

Final pass, cont'd

For paperback edition, April 1999

Notes

Short stories, drafts and tearsheets

Production materials

Correspondence

Fan mail, 1998-1999

Personal, 1997-1998, undated

Professional, 1995-2001, undated

To Mr. and Mrs. William O'Brien, 1998

Interviews, 1998, undated

Reviews, 1998-1999, undated

Subseries B. Short Works, 1970-2009, undated


Essay, review, short story drafts, 1989-2004, undated
Foreign language publications with short stories, 1984

Published short story and article tearsheets, 1970-2002


Unidentified typescripts, undated

Unidentified typescripts, undated

Various article, essay, short story drafts, 2008-2009, undated


Article with corrections, proofs, final draft, 1993-1994

Contract, trip itinerary, notes, and correspondence, 1993-1994

Fan mail, 1994-1995, undated

Photographs

Research materials

Typescript
Series II. Correspondence, 1977-2012, undated

Career-related, 1980-2003

Career-related, 1996-2012, undated

Career-related, cont'd

Career-related, cont'd

Fan mail, 1980-2003

Fan mail, 2001-2012, undated

Fan mail, cont'd

Fan mail, cont'd

Fan mail from online guestbook, 1997-2007

Fan mail from online guestbook, 2007-2010

Foreign publishing, 1979-1998

Foreign translation, 1978-1998

From other writers, A-W, unidentified, 1977-2007, undated

"Literary correspondence," from Tim O'Brien, 1986-1990

Fan mail from online guestbook, 1997-2007

Box 23 Folder 1

Box 23 Folder 2-3

Box 23 Folder 4

Box 23 Folder 5

Box 23 Folder 6

Box 23 Folder 7-8

Box 23 Folder 9
Series III. Career-Related 1970-2012, undated

American Academy of Arts and Sciences awards, 1992-1999 (*group photo of honorees for 1992 award removed to Oversize Box 32)

Awards and Curriculum Vitae, 2008-2012

Financial papers

Grant and endowment materials, 1970-1987

Literary contracts

Articles and short stories, 1975-1999

Articles and short stories, 1989-2011 (*award announcement articles removed to Oversize Box 61)

Foreign publications, 1978-1999

Foreign Publications, 1998-2011

Going After Cacciato, 1975-2011

In the Lake of the Woods, 1986-1994

Movie, musical, play, and television, with correspondence, 1983-2007

Movie, musical, play, and television, 2008-2011

The Nuclear Age, 1979-2011

The Things They Carried, 1994-2012
O'Brien, Tim, 1946-


Royalty Statements

*Going After Cacciato*, 1979-2007

*Going After Cacciato*, cont'd

*If I Die in a Combat Zone*, 1973-2007

*In the Lake of the Woods*, 1998-2006

*July, July*, 2003-2006

*Northern Lights*, 1976-2007

*The Nuclear Age*, 2004-2006

*The Things They Carried*, 1990-2007


Summary of number of novel copies sold

Interviews, 1978-2007

Notes and research materials, 1981-2001, undated

Notes and research materials, 2007-2010, undated

Photographs

Photographs, 2009-2012 (publicity and reading/book signing promotional posters and matted framed award certificates removed to Oversize Box 61 and promotional posters removed to Oversize Flat File 38.4)

Quotations and poems by others

Readings, announcement articles and pamphlets, 1981-2006, undated (*Shady Side Academy Distinguished Writers Series 2005 publicity posters; Ohio State University Creative Writing Program poster removed to Oversize Box 32)
Readings, announcement articles, clippings, Fisher House Foundation materials, and pamphlets, 1979-2011, undated (*some clippings removed to Oversize Box 61) Box 49 Folder 10-11*

Record of Sales Rank, 2007-2010 Box 48 Folder 1-2

Reviews, 1997-2007 Box 26 Folder 7-8

Speeches, lectures, and notes, 2004-2007, undated Box 27 Folder 1-3

Speeches, lectures, and notes, 1977-2012, undated Box 50

Teaching materials, "other writers" Box 27 Folder 4

Writing conference packets, 1975-1993, undated Folder 5
Series IV. Family and Personal Records 1914-2012, undated

Announcements, invitations, speeches, 1970-2001, undated

"Army Days"

Clippings, correspondence, records, 1969-2007, undated (*1969 Vietnam Map removed to Oversize Flat File 41.15)

Clippings, correspondence, records, 1969-2008, undated

Photographs

Photographs, 1968-1969, undated

Baby book, baby photograph, baptism record, clippings

Children’s records, 2010-2012, undated

Children’s records, cont’d

Correspondence

Alpha Company, 2007-2012, undated

Basic training, with photographs, 1967-1968

Colonel (RGT) R.V. Olsen Jr., undated

Personal, 1956-1999

Personal, 1940-2012, undated

Personal, cont’d

Summer drafted, 1968
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Box 52 Folder 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thank you notes, 2008-2012, undated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family photographs, circa 1915-1989, undated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family photographs, 1931-1989, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family photographs, 1942-2008, undated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family photographs, 1867-1995, undated (*family photographs removed to Oversize Box 61)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances, 2008-2011</td>
<td>Folder 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going back to Vietnam photographs, 1994</td>
<td>Folder 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going back to Vietnam photographs, cont'd</td>
<td>Box 55 Folder 1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade school records, 1953-1974, undated</td>
<td>Folder 3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvard University notes, records, photographs, 1971-1972, undated</td>
<td>Box 28 Folder 6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school correspondence, clippings, 1960-1964</td>
<td>Box 29 Folder 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior high school short stories</td>
<td>Folder 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorna Lou Moeller clippings, correspondence, photographs</td>
<td>Folder 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macalester College</td>
<td>Folder 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macalester College diploma (*Saturday Evening Post, March 16, 1957, and honorary Doctor of Laws, Babson College removed to Oversize Box 61)</td>
<td>Box 55 Folder 5*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
O'Brien, Tim, 1946-

Senior class president-related, 1965-1967

SPAN summer abroad, 1967

Parents' records, 1916-2007

Parents’ records, 1932-2008, undated

Parents’ records, 1914-2010, undated (*photograph and sketch of Bill O’Brien removed to Oversize Box 61)

Print of Vietnamese school children, by T. Bayard 1967/1995 (*removed to Oversize Box 32)
Series V. Works by Others 1982-2006, undated

Criticism, articles, bibliographies, fiction, 1982-2006, undated

Playscripts

Frellick, Paul, "In the Lake of the Woods," 1999

Linney, Romulus, "Going After Cacciato," 2003

Unidentified author, "The Things They Carried," undated

Screenplays

Cassavetes, Nick, "Going After Cacciato," 2002

Donnelly, Thomas Michael, "The Things They Carried," undated

Grigsby, Josh, "The Things They Carried," 2002

Hayes, Jonathan, "Tomcat in Love," 2004

Theses


Donelli, Shevaun, *Tomcat in Love and the Digression of Ill-Repute*, 2005


Pappas, Ben, *How to Tell a True War Story*, 1994

Vietnam notebook, an English class project, undated
Teaching for Our Times, “Success: One Student’s Viewpoint,” 2011


Oversize materials
Series VI. Published Material 1941-2011, undated

Subseries A. Fiction, 1974-2002

Going After Cacciato:

*Denver Quarterly,* "Landing Zone Bravo," 1975

*Esquire,* "The Fisherman," 1977

*FIF* (Polish), "Going After Cacciato," 1984

*Firedam,* "Going After Cacciato," (Iranian)  
*Box 58*

*Gallery,* "Going After Cacciato," 1976, 1986  
*Box 33*

*Ploughshares,* "Going After Cacciato," 1976

*Redbook,* "Keeping Watch by Night," 1976

*Redbook's Famous Fiction,* "Where Have You Gone, Charming Billy?" 1977

*Shenandoah,* "The Way It Mostly Was," 1976

If I Die in a Combat Zone:

*Literary Cavalcade,* "Centurion," 1976

In the Lake of the Woods:

*The Atlantic,* "The People We Marry," 1992

*Esquire,* "How Unhappy They Were," 1994

July, July:

*Esquire,* 2000-2002

"July '69"

"July '69," 2000  
*Box 58*

"Little People"

"Little People," 2001  
*Box 58*

"What Went Wrong"  
*Box 34*
O'Brien, Tim, 1946-

"What Went Wrong," 2002  
Box 58

*The New Yorker*, 1999-2002

"Half Gone"  
Box 34

"Nogales"

"Nogales," 1999  
Box 58

"The Streak," 1998

"Too Skinny," 2001

"Too Skinny"

"Winnipeg"

"Winnipeg," 2000  
Box 59

*Northern Lights:*

*Ploughshares*, "A Man of Melancholy Disposition," 1974  
Box 34

*The Nuclear Age:*

*The Atlantic*, "The Nuclear Age," 1979

"Civil Defense," 1980

"Underground Tests," 1985  
Box 35

*Granta*, "Quantum Jumps," 1985

*Ploughshares*, "Quantum Jumps," 1983

Poetry and Prose: Broadsides The Writer’s Symposium at The Overlake School (*removed to Oversize Box 61*)

*The Things They Carried:*

*Esquire*


"The Things They Carried," 1986

"The Things They Carried," 1986
O'Brien, Tim, 1946-

"How to Tell a True War Story," 1987  
Box 35

"How to Tell a True War Story," 1987  
Box 58

Box 35

"Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong," 1989  
Box 36

"Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong," 1989 (Japanese)  

GQ, "In the Field," 1989

Harper's, "Enemies and Friends," 1990


McCall's, "Field Trip," 1990


Box 59

Tomcat in Love:

The New Yorker, "Faith," 1990  
Box 58

The New Yorker, "Faith," 1996  

Subseries B. Book Reviews, Non-Fiction Articles, 1972-2011

Box 37

Esquire, "The Violent Vet," 1979  
Box 57

"Interviews given by and articles about Tim O’Brien, "1980-2012, undated

Life

"A Letter to My Son," 2004  
Box 57 Folder 1

"A Letter to My Son,"2004

"A Letter to My Son,"2004  
Box 59
"The Best of Times," 2006
"The Best of Times," 2006

The New Republic, "The Youth Vote," 1972

Newspaper clippings, 2009-2012 (*removed to Oversize box 61)


Penthouse, 1974

"Prisoners of Peace"

"Revolt on the Turnpike"

"The Vietnam Veteran"


Redbook, "Claudia Mae's Wedding Day," 1973

Saturday Review, 1979-1980

"Falling Star"

"Tales His Father Told Him"

"Burning Love"

"Honor Thy Commander"

Smithsonian, “Fenced In,” 2009

Smithsonian, “Fenced In,” 2009 drafts and revisions

Subseries C. Interviews Given by and Articles About Tim O'Brien, 1979-2011
Articles, bibliographies, fiction related to Tim O’Brien, 1980-2012, undated

*The Alcalde,* "Ransom Center scores Tim O’Brien archive," 2008

*ANQ* "Five Points," 1990-2004

*Entertainment,* "The 100 Best Books of the Last 25 Years," 2008

*Esquire*

"An Explosion of Creators," 1984

"The Things in Vietnam I Carried (Japanese)," 2000


*Macalester Today,* "Class Notes," 2010


*National Endowment for the Arts,* "The Things They Carried," 2008

*Oxford American,* "The Things She Carried," 2011


*Southwestern American Literature* "Writers Notes Magazine," 1979-2005

James Sadwith, Screenplay, *The Things They Carried,* 2008

James Sadwith, Screenplay, *The Things They Carried,* undated

*The Things They Carried,* Various Book Reviews, undated

"This is Just a Story," Doctoral Thesis, Dra. Cristina A. Risquez
O'Brien, Tim, 1946-

*Wabash* "Voices from ‘The War of the Living,’" 2008  


*The Writer,* "The Power of Memory and Imagination," 2010  

**Subseries D. General Periodicals, 1941-2006**  

*Boston Magazine* "Whiskey Island," 1941-1996  

**Oversize Materials**  

Family photographs, 1867-1995, undated  
Honorary Doctor of Laws, Babson College, 1998  
Newspaper clippings, 1990-2012  
Photograph and sketch of Bill O’Brien, 1956, undated  
Poetry and Prose: Broadsides The Writer’s Symposium at The Overlake School, undated  
Publicity and reading/book signing promotional posters and matted framed award certificates, 1991-2011, undated  

*Saturday Evening Post,* March 16, 1957