



The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

Robert Stone papers

1950-2012

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Compiled by William Stingone, September 1995. Additions from 2002 and 2012 were processed by Heather Lember in 2015.

Summary

Creator: Stone, Robert, 1937-2015

Title: Robert Stone papers

Date: 1950-2012

Size: 23.39 linear feet (57 boxes); 10.77 mb (455 computer files)

Source: Purchased from Robert Stone in 1994. Additions purchased in 2002, 2012 and 2015 from Robert's widow Janice Stone.

Abstract: Robert Stone was an award-winning American novelist and screen writer. His works include *A Hall of Mirrors*, *Dog Soldiers*, *A Flag for Sunrise*, *Children of Light*, and *Outerbridge Reach*. The Robert Stone papers date from 1950 to 2013, and consist of notes, typescript drafts (on paper and computer disk), galleys, and proof pages for all of Stone's novels; shorter pieces and excerpts from the novels in draft, galley, and published form; reviews and publicity material; and general correspondence. Typescript drafts of Stone's novels comprise the bulk of the papers and reflect his method of composition. Later drafts, galleys, and proofs document the books' progress up to the point of publication. Most of the correspondence are letters received by Stone and document his career as a novelist.

Access: Advance notice required.

Preferred citation: Robert Stone papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

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Creator History

Over his career, Robert Stone has received most of the accolades and awards possible for a contemporary novelist, he has been called the best writer of the post-Vietnam era, and his novels have enjoyed commercial success as well as critical acclaim. Often compared to Conrad's for their darkness, to Vonnegut's for their cynicism, Stone's books focus on the sordid aspects of modern life: drugs,

alcoholism, sexual perversion, violence, moral, and political corruption. They suggest no potential (satisfactory) resolution of the conflicts confronted by his characters, nor do they offer much hope of anyone's overcoming the basic human dilemmas faced by these characters. While he has some roots in the counter-culture, Stone does not see himself as a leftist, radical, or progressive. He believes his work is an attempt to foster "the awareness of ironies and continuities, showing people that being decent is really hard and that we carry within ourselves our own worst enemy."

Robert Anthony Stone was born on August 21, 1937 in Brooklyn, New York. His father abandoned Stone and his mother, a schizophrenic grammar school teacher who was in and out of hospitals, when Stone was still an infant. He lived at a Catholic boarding school until he was nine, then spent the next eight years living with his mother in rooming houses and SRO hotels on Manhattan's West Side.

When he was 17, Stone dropped out of high school and joined the Navy. After leaving the Navy in 1958, Stone enrolled at New York University from which he also dropped out. While working the night shift as a copy-boy at the Daily News, Stone began writing and reading poetry, catching the "tail-end" of the beat scene in the Greenwich Village. In 1959 he met and married his wife Janice G. Burr. The couple moved to New Orleans the next year, where they worked odd jobs, had a daughter (Deidre), and lived the poor life. New Orleans became the setting of Stone's first novel *A Hall of Mirrors*.

In 1961, the Stones moved back to New York City where Stone wrote furniture ads and began his first novel. On the strength its first chapter, Stone was offered a fellowship at Wallace Stegner's Stanford writing seminar. In California, Stone continued work on *Children of Light* (*A Hall of Mirrors'* working title and later the title of Stone's fourth novel); began his lifelong friendship with Ken Kesey; regularly consumed hallucinogenics and narcotics; and crossed the country with Kesey's group of Merry Pranksters in a bus driven by Neal Cassady. (Tom Wolfe immortalized the trip in his *The Electric Kool Aid Acid Test*.)

The first half of Stone's novel earned him a Houghton Mifflin literary fellowship, which provided Stone with financial support while he finished the manuscript. The book was published in 1967 and received the William Faulkner Foundation's prize for best first novel of the year. Stone later adapted the book for film; the result was an unsuccessful movie, *WUSA* starring Paul Newman.

The critical success of *A Hall of Mirrors* earned Stone a Guggenheim fellowship and numerous job offers from universities. From 1971 to 1985 Stone was steadily employed as a writer in residence or instructor at several universities around the United States, including Amherst (where the Stones settled), Stanford, University of Hawaii, Harvard, University of California Irvine and San Diego. After the publication of *A Hall of Mirrors*, however, the Stone family (now with a second child, Ian) moved to London where they remained until 1971.

In 1971, the British bi-weekly *Ink* sent Stone to Vietnam as its correspondent. The magazine soon folded but Stone remained for six weeks, his articles for *Ink* appearing in the Manchester Guardian (see Box 21, f.8). More importantly, while in Vietnam Stone witnessed the dealings of Saigon's heroin and gold black market. This underworld, predominately inhabited by foreign diplomats and journalists, became the backdrop for Stone's second novel *Dog Soldiers*. It is a story of an American journalist's attempt to smuggle heroin from Vietnam to the United States.

After his time in Saigon, Stone returned to the United States, as a writer in residence at Princeton, and began work on *Dog Soldiers*. It was published in 1974 and won the National Book Award. The book was eventually made into the movie *Who'll Stop the Rain?* starring Nick Nolte. Stone co-wrote the screenplay (see Box 8, f.4-5) with Judith Rascoe. *Who'll Stop the Rain?* was not a box office success; however, it received some critical acclaim.

Like *Dog Soldiers*, Stone's next novel, *A Flag for Sunrise* (1981), was inspired by a trip. This time Stone visited Central America. The novel takes place in the imaginary Latin American country of Tecan (part Nicaragua, part El Salvador). Its cast of characters (CIA operatives, revolutionaries, secret police, Catholic missionaries etc.) and plot anticipate the unfolding of various Central American conflicts during the 1980s.

Stone's next book, *Children of Light* (1986), explored the movie world in Hollywood. It grew out of Stone's frustrations in adapting his own novels for the screen. This novel was the least well received of Stone's novels: many critics felt it lacked the scope and broad social relevance of his other three.

Outerbridge Reach (1992) is the story of a man's participation in a solo circumnavigation competition as he struggles through the midst of a mid-life crisis. It is loosely based upon the experiences of a British sailor, Donald Crowhurst, who entered such a race in 1965.

Stone continued to write and publish novels, short stories, and articles until 2013. These novels include *Damascus Gate* (1998), *Bay of Souls* (2003), and *Death of the Black Haired Girl* (2013). The 1997 short story collection *Bear and His Daughter* was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, and his next collection of short stories, *Fun with Problems*, was published in 2013. In 2007, Stone published a memoir, *Prime Green: Remembering the Sixties*, in which he recounts the 1960s counterculture and his friendship with Ken Kesey. He also wrote numerous articles, reviews, and short stories for such publications as *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *The New York Review of Books*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Playboy*.

Robert Stone died in Key West, Florida in 2015.

Scope and Content Note

The Robert Stone papers date from 1950 to 2012, and consist of notes, typescript drafts, galleys, and proof pages for all of Stone's novels. Also present are shorter pieces and excerpts from the novels in draft, galley, and published form; reviews and publicity material; and general correspondence.

Typescript drafts of Stone's novels comprise the bulk of the papers and reflect his method of composition. Later drafts, galleys, and proofs document the books' progress up to the point of publication. Most of the correspondence are letters received by Stone and document his career as a novelist.

Key Terms

Occupations

Authors
Journalists
Screenwriters

Subjects

Authors, American
Drug abuse -- Fiction
Drug traffic -- Fiction
Journalists -- Fiction

Nineteen sixties
Short stories, American
Vietnam -- Fiction

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Correspondence
Galleys
Manuscripts
Proofs (printing)

Geographic Names

New Orleans (La.)
Saigon (Vietnam)
Stanford (Calif.)

Container List

Series I: Writings 1950-2012

This series consists of files from all ten of Stone's published novels, as well as his memoir, unpublished short stories, essays, and journalistic pieces. The novels are arranged alphabetically by title, and contain typescript drafts, most of which are revised, corrected, and annotated in Stone's hand. There is a mixture of complete drafts, partial drafts, rewrites, and fragments. An attempt was made to arrange the drafts and fragments in the sequence of composition. These drafts remain in the groupings (which often consist of an unsorted mingling of several stages of composition) in which they were received unless definite connections between groups could be made, or there was good reason to believe that unmingling a draft would not distort evidence of Stone's method of composition. This method is already obscured by Stone's use of a word processor to write his last three novels and apparent habit of separately revising several printouts of a manuscript in the same stage. Notes, outlines, and separate annotations were kept with the draft with which they belong whenever this association could be made. (Some of the longer additions were written on the back of typescript pages within a draft or draft fragment.) Otherwise they precede the drafts of the corresponding novel.

The drafts of each novel are followed by pre-publication material, such as copy-edited typescripts, galleys, and page proofs; and, in some cases, related material such as magazine excerpts in draft, galley, or printed form, printed reviews, and publicity material. Of special note are typescript drafts of Stone's screenplays for *Who'll Stop the Rain* and *WUSA*, which were adapted from his novels *Dog Soldiers* and *A Hall of Mirrors*.

The other writings are made up of notes, holograph and typescript drafts, and printed forms of published and unpublished short stories, essays, journalistic pieces, and Stone's memoir, *Prime Green: Remembering the Sixties*. The published articles are arranged alphabetically by publication name, and include drafts, notes, and revisions, as well as some correspondence with editors. The spiral notebooks in this series also contain brief random notes for some of Stone's novels and unrealized projects, see especially the notebook containing the holograph draft of "Alas That They Should Fall Apart" (see Box 21, f.2), an unpublished short story, which also contains some notes for *Dog Soldiers* and outlines for "Literature of Alienation", a class Stone taught at Amherst.

Novels

Bay of Souls

Chapter Drafts 1993-2001

er.1 (731.9 Kilobytes (47 computer files))

- b. 26 f. 1-5 Chapter Drafts 2002
- b. 27 f. 1-6 Chapter Drafts 2002
- b. 28 f. 1-5 Drafts and Proofs 2002
- b. 29 f. 1-6 Drafts and Proofs 2002
- b. 29 f. 7-8 Book Tour 2003
- b. 30 f. 1-3 Correspondence with Publisher 2002-2004

Bear and His Daughter

- b. 30 f. 4-6 Proofs 1997
- b. 30 f. 7 Correspondence and Dust Jackets 1997-1998
- b. 31 f. 1-2 Drafts and Proofs 1997
- b. 31 f. 3 Book Tour 1997

Children of Light

- b. 1-2 Notes and revised typescript drafts
- Typescript drafts
- b. 3 f. 1-2 Fair copy 03/26/1985
- b. 3 f. 3-4 Revised draft

Series I: Writings (cont.)

Novels (cont.)

Children of Light (cont.)

Typescript drafts (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 5 Copy-edited draft, notes, and typed fragments 1985 July 11
- b. 4 f. 1 Copy-edited draft, etc. (continued)
- b. 4 f. 2-3 Setters copy 1986 February 14
- Master Set of Galleys
- b. 4 f. 4-5 First pass
- b. 4 f. 6-7 Second pass
- b. 5 f. 1 Computer disks (8") [housed in separate box at end of collection]
- b. 5 f. 2 Unbound gatherings ("F & Gs")
- Related material
- b. 5 f. 3 Re: Published excerpts
- b. 5 f. 4 Background information (re: King Lear performance)

Damascus Gate

- b. 31 f. 4-5 Drafts 1997
- b. 32 f. 1-5 Drafts and Proofs 1997
- b. 33 f. 1-24 Drafts and Proofs 1997
- b. 34 f. 1-27 Chapter Drafts 1997
- Chapter Drafts 1997
- er.2 (4380 Kilobytes (260 computer files))
- Notes 1997
- er.3 (14.41 Kilobytes (4 computer files))
- b. 35 f. 1-5 Drafts 1997
- b. 36 f. 1-4 Working Drafts 1997
- b. 37 f. 1-6 Working Drafts 1997
- b. 38 f. 1 Preliminary Earlier Version 1997

Death of the Black Haired Girl

- Drafts of Stories 2012
- er.4 (1479 Kilobytes (86 computer files))
- b. 38 f. 2-6 Drafts and Revisions 2012
- b. 39 f. 1-2 Drafts and Revisions 2012

Dog Soldiers

(See also Box 21, f.2 (discussed in Series description "Other Writings"))

- b. 6 f. 1-5 Revised typescript drafts and fragments [working title "Skydiver Devoured by Starving Birds"] circa 1972
- b. 6 f. 6 Revised and corrected typescripts, rewrites, fragments 1972-1974
- b. 7 f. 1-6 Revised and corrected typescripts, etc. (continued) 1972-1974
- b. 7 f. 7-8 Copy-edited typescript 1974 May 7
- b. 8 f. 1-2 Galleys 1974 June 24
- Related Material
- Who'll Stop the Rain? (screenplay)*
- b. 8 f. 4-5 Typescript drafts 1977
- b. 53 f. 14 Drafts and Notes 1977
- b. 57 First Draft 1977

Series I: Writings (cont.)

Novels (cont.)

Dog Soldiers (cont.)

Related Material (cont.)

Who'll Stop the Rain? (screenplay) (cont.)

- b. 54 f. 1-2 Second Draft 1977
- b. 54 f. 3 Final Draft 1977
- b. 8 f. 3 Printed excerpts and reviews 1972-1974
- A Flag For Sunrise*
- b. 9 f. 4-5 Notes, revised draft fragments, and revised typescript drafts
- b. 10 f. 1-3 Revised typescript draft
- b. 10 f. 4-5 Incomplete photocopied revised typescript drafts
- b. 11 f. 1-4 Typescript draft
- b. 11 f. 5-6 Corrected author's galleys
- b. 12 f. 1 Corrected author's galleys (continued)
- b. 12 f. 2-3 Copy-edited page-proof galleys [black ink=Stone]
- b. 12 f. 4 Incomplete unbound gatherings ("F & Gs") [British Edition]
- Related Material
- b. 12 f. 5 Published excerpts
- b. 12 f. 6 Printed reviews
- b. 13 f. 1 Reviews, profiles, advertisements, publicity material
- Fun with Problems*
- Drafts of Stories 1997-2008
- er.5 (979.6 Kilobytes (41 computer files))
- b. 39 f. 3-5 Drafts 2002
- b. 40 f. 1-8 Chapter Drafts 1999-2009
- A Hall of Mirrors*
- Originally titled "Children of Light."
- b. 13 f. 2 Partial carbon-copy typescript circa 1964
- b. 13 f. 3-4 Notes and revised typescript fragments
- b. 13 f. 5-7 Corrected and revised setting copy
- b. 14 f. 1-2 Galleys
- b. 14 f. 3 Author's list of corrections
- Related Material
- b. 54 f. 4 *WUSA Screenplay* 1970
- b. 14 f. 4-5 Printed reviews and publicity material 1964-1970
- Outerbridge Reach*
- b. 15 f. 1 Notes and clippings re yachting and boats
- b. 15 f. 2-3 Early typescript draft [Titled "Boat"]
- b. 15 f. 4-7 Typescript draft fragments
- b. 16 f. 1-2 Revised typescript draft (chapters 1-28) 04/18/1989
- b. 16 f. 3-4 Typescript draft (chapters 1-49)
- Chapter 7 dated 6/24/89.
- b. 17 f. 1-2 Photocopy of revised typescript draft (chapters 1-27) 04/18/1989
- b. 17 f. 3 Revised typescript draft (chapters 28-43) 05/29/1990
- b. 17 f. 4-7 Typescript drafts, notes, outlines, and rewrites

Series I: Writings (cont.)

Novels (cont.)

Outerbridge Reach (cont.)

- b. 18 f. 1-2 Typescript draft [some chapters missing]
- b. 18 f. 3-4 Revised and corrected typescript draft
Corrected setting copy [with editor's and nautical expert's queries] Page Proofs
- b. 19 f. 4-5 Author's Marked Set
- b. 20 f. 1-2 Master Proofs
- b. 20 f. 3-4 Author's Extra Set
- b. 40 f. 9-10 Miscellaneous Page Drafts 1989-1990

Other Writings

- b. 21 f. 1 Untitled short story [unpublished]. Typescript
- b. 21 f. 2 Alas That They Should Fall Apart (short story) [unpublished]. Holograph draft in notebook and typescript
Article Drafts 1997-2008
er.7 (10.82 Kilobytes (3 computer files))
- b. 21 f. 3 Dunaway, Faye (profile for Cosmopolitan). Partial typescript circa 1967-1968
- b. 21 f. 4 Holiness Moon (short story) [unpublished]. Typescript circa 1950s
- b. 21 f. 5 [New York Harbor] (essay). Two typescript drafts
- b. 21 f. 6 [Republican National Convention] (essay). Holograph notes 1988
- b. 21 f. 7 *Shore Party (short story). Portion of printed version from Apprentice [NYU lit. mag.]* February 1960
- b. 21 f. 8 [Vietnam Piece]. Clipping from Manchester Guardian 17 July 1971
- b. 21 f. 9 Miscellaneous
Images of War
1985-1986
- b. 46 f. 1-5 1985-1986
- b. 47 f. 1 Proofs 1985
- b. 47 f. 2 Drafts 1985
- b. 47 f. 3 Galleys 1985
- b. 53 f. 13 *Phosphorescence* 1971-1978
Prime Green: Remembering the Sixites
2002-2005
- b. 41 f. 1-5 2002-2005
- b. 43 f. 1-6 2004-2007
- b. 42 f. 1-6 2005-2006
Photographs 2006
er.6 (3369 Kilobytes (2 computer files))
- Published Articles, Interviews, and Reviews
- b. 47 f. 4 *American Film* 1987
- b. 47 f. 5 *Architectural Digest* 1986
- b. 47 f. 6-7 *Best American Stories* 1992-1997
- b. 47 f. 8 Brick Coach House Press 1991
- b. 47 f. 9 Book of the Month Club 1989
- b. 47 f. 10 *Buzz* 1992
- b. 47 f. 11 Century Books 1994

Series I: Writings (cont.)

Other Writings (cont.)

Published Articles, Interviews, and Reviews (cont.)

- b. 48 f. 1-2 Criticism 1992-1994
- b. 48 f. 3-12 *Esquire* 1983-1996
- b. 48 f. 13 Film Criticism 2000
- b. 48 f. 14 *Forward* 1992
- b. 48 f. 15 *Granta* 1995-1996
- b. 48 f. 16 *GQ* 1989-1990
- b. 49 f. 1-13 *Harper's* 1977-2000
- b. 50 f. 1-2 Interviews 1982-1993
 - b. 50 f. 3 *L.A. Times* 1987
 - b. 50 f. 4 *Life* 1970
- b. 50 f. 5-9 *The New Yorker* 1987-1999
- b. 51 f. 1-9 *The New York Review of Books* 1993-2000
- b. 52 f. 1-20 *The New York Times* 1989-2000
- b. 52 f. 21-23 *Outside* 1994-1997
 - b. 52 f. 24 *Paris Review* 1986
- b. 52 f. 25-27 *Playboy* 1987-1999
 - b. 52 f. 28 *Poetry Project* 1987
 - b. 52 f. 29 Polaroid 1987
- b. 53 f. 1 *Rolling Stone* 1982
- b. 53 f. 2 *Salon* 1997-2001
- b. 53 f. 3 *Sophisticated Traveler* 1987
- b. 53 f. 4-8 *TLS* 1998-1999
 - b. 53 f. 9 *Traveler* 1993
- b. 53 f. 10-11 *Village Voice* 1991-1995
 - b. 53 f. 12 *Washington Post* 1998
- Review Drafts 1997
 - er.8 (50.47 Kilobytes (6 computer files))
- b. 44 f. 1-33 Short Stories, Prose, and Poetry 1950-1989
- b. 45 f. 1-10 Short Stories, Poetry, and Article Drafts 1980-1997

Series II: Correspondence 1950-2000

Although the bulk of the correspondence is comprised of letters received by Stone, there is a group of outgoing correspondence written by Stone. Most of these letters were sent to Stone's wife Janice in the 1960s and 1970s while he was living in California to work on *Hall of Mirrors*.

The letters received by Stone are arranged alphabetically by sender or subject matter; many date from around the publication dates of Stone's novels, and are predominately from Stone's agent Candida Donadio, and the publisher of his first two novels Houghton Mifflin. Also present are several fan letters, offers from universities to teach writing, as well as letters regarding movie deals and the various grants and awards Stone received, such as the Guggenheim Fellowship.

Also included is a binder of incoming letters that date between 1964 and 1978, which predominantly consists of mail from fellow writers. These letters are arranged alphabetically by correspondent's last name, and contain notes from Jeremy Brooks, Max Crawford, and L.J. Davis, as well as Timothy Leary associate and bookseller, Michael Horowitz.

Letters Sent

Series II: Correspondence (cont.)

Letters Sent (cont.)

- b. 22 f. 1 circa 1967-1970
Four typed letters by Stone, two of which are incomplete drafts.

- Drafts of Letters 1997-2008
 er.9 (7.316 Kilobytes (6 computer files))
- b. 55 f. 13-14 Janice Stone 1950-1975
- Letters Received
- b. 56 1964-1978
- b. 22 f. 2 Unidentified
- b. 22 f. 2 _____, Merrill 1966-1967
- b. 22 f. 2 A
- b. 22 f. 2 Amussen, Carolyn
 See: Houghton Mifflin Company
- b. 22 f. 2 B-D
- b. 54 f. 5 Bowan, David 1992
- b. 55 f. 15 Business Correspondence 1973-1978
- b. 54 f. 6 Crown Publishing Group 2000
- b. 22 f. 3 Donadio, Candida (Agent) 1966-1975
 Includes material from Houghton Mifflin Donadio forwarded to Stone.

- b. 22 f. 4 E
- b. 22 f. 4 Ehrlich, Daphne
 See: Houghton Mifflin Company
- b. 22 f. 4 English, Michael 1967
- b. 22 f. 4 F-G
- b. 55 f. 12 Fan Letters 1992
- b. 54 f. 7 Franklin Library 1991
- b. 55 f. 1 Grants 1982
- b. 22 f. 4 Green, Hester [A.M. Heath & Co. Ltd.] 1968-1970
- b. 22 f. 4 Guggenheim, John Simon, Memorial Foundation 1968-1970
- b. 22 f. 4 H
- b. 55 f. 2 *Harper's* 1987-1993
 Houghton Mifflin Company
- b. 22 f. 5 1966-1975
 Includes royalty statements.

- b. 55 f. 3 2002
- b. 22 f. 6 I-N
- b. 55 f. 4 *The Irish Times* 1989
- b. 55 f. 5 National Book Award Nomination 1992
- b. 22 f. 6 National Council on the Arts 19??
- b. 22 f. 6 Newman Foreman 1968-1971
- b. 22 f. 6 Norman, Gurney 1967
- b. 22 f. 6 O-P

Series II: Correspondence (cont.)

Letters Received (cont.)

- b. 22 f. 6 Paramount Pictures 1968-1970
- b. 55 f. 6 PEN Faulkner 1989-1992
- b. 22 f. 6 R
- b. 22 f. 6 Rogers, Deborah, Literary Agency 1970-1971
- b. 22 f. 6 S
- b. 55 f. 7 Secker and Warburg 1981
- b. 55 f. 8 Solotaroff, Robert 1991
- b. 22 f. 6 Stanford University 1988
- b. 22 f. 6 Stegner, Wallace 1967
- b. 22 f. 6 T-Y
- b. 55 f. 9 Thames and Hudson 1989
- b. 55 f. 10 Writers Guild of American 1973-1977
- b. 55 f. 11 University of California, Irvine 1981

Series III: Addenda I 1974-1992

Duplicate Material.

- b. 23 f. 6 *Children of Light, Dog Soldiers* 1974-1992
- b. 24 f. 6 *Dog Soldiers, Who'll Stop the Rain* 1974-1992
- b. 25 f. 6 *A Flag for Sunrise, Outerbridge Reach, Reviews, Publicity* 1974-1992