



The New York Public Library
Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and
American Literature

Guide to the

John Steinbeck and George Bernard Shaw legal files collection

1926-1970s

Berg Coll MSS 185676

Processed by Amy Lau in 2021.

Summary

Creator: Buchman, Harry, 1906-1984

Title: John Steinbeck and George Bernard Shaw legal files collection

Date: 1926-1970s

Size: 0.75 linear feet (3 boxes)

Source: Gift of Dr. Lewis Glickman (b. 1929), in memory of Harry Buchman (1906-1984), Dorothy Buchman (1907-2006), and Alice Buchman Glickman (1939-2015), in 2020.

Abstract: The John Steinbeck and George Bernard Shaw legal files collection dates from 1926 to the 1970s, and contains correspondence and legal documents exchanged between the partners at Stern & Reubens, a law firm, and their clients. The bulk of the collection is made up of personal and professional letters from Steinbeck to his personal lawyer, Harry Buchman.

Conditions Governing Access:

Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.

Preferred citation: John Steinbeck and George Bernard Shaw legal files collection, Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Amy Lau in 2021.

Creator History

Harry Buchman (1906-1984), was a publishing lawyer and partner at the New York City-based law firm of Stern & Reubens. He was also the personal lawyer of the American writer, John Steinbeck (1902-1968).

Benjamin H. Stern (1909-1951) was a copyright expert and partner at Stern & Reubens, who

represented the Irish playwright, critic, and political activist, George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950).

After Buchman became the sole surviving partner of Stern & Reubens, he retained all of the legal documents and correspondence with Steinbeck and Shaw. Buchman also maintained the firm's legal files for the English writer, director, actor, and singer, Noël Coward (1899-1973), and Belgian writer, Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949).

Scope and Content Note

The John Steinbeck and George Bernard Shaw legal files collection dates from 1926 to the 1970s, and contains legal documents and correspondence written between the partners at Stern & Reubens, a law firm, and their clients. While the collection predominantly consists of letters from the Steinbeck and Shaw files, it also holds Noël Coward's 1940 last will and testament, and a letter from Maurice Maeterlinck to Gabriel Pascal about the Walt Disney Company optioning *La vie des Fourmis* and *La vie des Termites*. There are a few documents, such as Harry Buchman's 1955 Supreme Court of the United States bar admission certificate and correspondence between Buchman and Alfred and Blanche Knopf, that pertain solely to Buchman's professional life.

The majority of the collection is composed of the personal and professional correspondence between John Steinbeck and Harry Buchman, dating from the 1940s to 1966. Some topics mentioned in Steinbeck and Buchman's correspondence feature discussion of Gwyndolyn and Elaine Steinbeck; Steinbeck's sons; Rocinante, Steinbeck's truck from *Travels with Charley*; legal matters, including Steinbeck deferring jury duty; Steinbeck soliciting feedback from Buchman for his 1962 Nobel Prize speech; and Steinbeck's purchase of a Sag Harbor house and New York City apartment. Present are a copy of Rocinante's vehicle registration and 1961 bill of sale. In addition to the correspondence, there are copies of Steinbeck's March 20, 1964 will; Elaine Steinbeck's 1959 will; hairpins folded inside of Steinbeck stationery; three handwritten letters from Elaine Steinbeck to Buchman; a letter from Gwyndolyn Steinbeck to John Steinbeck; and two legal documents appointing Elizabeth R. Otis (Steinbeck's literary agent) as Steinbeck's attorney.

The collection also features correspondence and legal documents, dating from 1926 to the 1940s, that relate to George Bernard Shaw. The Shaw correspondence consists of letters mainly about legal matters with some personal discussion of Shaw's and Benjamin H. Stern's health. The legal matters discussed constitute copyright lawsuits, such as whether or not Shaw authorized the film *The Chocolate Soldier* to borrow material from Shaw's play *Arms and the Man*; contracts; copyright registrations; right of privacy; and United States tax issues.

Arrangement: The collection is grouped by client's last name and filed in received order. Materials related solely to Harry Buchman are grouped together. The groupings are as follows: Buchman, Harry; Coward, Noël; Maeterlinck, Maurice; Shaw, George Bernard; and Steinbeck, John.

Key Terms

Occupations

Actors.

Lawyers.

Novelists.

Subjects

Authors, American -- 20th century -- Correspondence

Authors, Irish -- 20th century -- Correspondence

Lawyers -- United States

Playwrights

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Business correspondence

Contracts

Essays

Personal correspondence

Speeches

Names

Buchman, Harry, 1906-1984

Coward, Noel, 1899-1973

Maeterlinck, Maurice, 1862-1949

Shaw, Bernard, 1856-1950

Steinbeck, John, 1902-1968

Stern, Benjamin H, 1909-1951

Container List

- Buchman, Harry 1955 April 25-1970s
- b. 1 f. 1 From Collins, Alan C. -- Correspondence 10 June 1958
 - b. 3 f. 2
 - b. 1 f. 1 From Knopf, Alfred -- Correspondence 8 March 1962
 - b. 2 Supreme Court of the United States Bar Admission Certificate and
 - b. 3 f. 1 Container 1955 April 25
 - b. 1 f. 1 Business Card 1970s
- Coward, Noël 1940 June 7
- b. 1 f. 2 Last Will and Testament 1940 June 7
- Maeterlinck, Maurice 1941 August 12
- b. 1 f. 3 To Pascal, Gabriel -- Correspondence 1941 August 12
- Shaw, George Bernard 1926 January 26-1940s
- Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
- b. 1 f. 12 Stern, Benjamin H. -- Correspondence 1926 January 26-February 9
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
 - b. 1 f. 12 Stern, Benjamin H. to "Gentlemen" -- Correspondence 1926 February 18
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
 - b. 1 f. 4 From Horner and Horner, Solicitors -- Correspondence 1926 March 8
 - b. 1 f. 4 Stern, Benjamin H. -- Correspondence 1926 March 10-22
 - b. 1 f. 4 From Wakefield, Madeleine -- Correspondence 1926 March 26
 - b. 1 f. 4 Stern, Benjamin H. -- Correspondence 1926 April 17
 - b. 1 f. 4 Levinson vs. Shaw and Others -- Answer to Summons 1926 April 17
 - b. 1 f. 4 To Stern, Benjamin H. -- Correspondence 1936 September 14
 - b. 1 f. 4 Memorandum of Agreement with Gabriel Pascal 1938 June 16
 - b. 1 f. 4 Memorandum of Agreement with Gabriel Pascal 1939 February 23
 - b. 1 f. 4 To Stern, Benjamin H. -- Correspondence 1933 January 13
 - b. 1 f. 4 Academy of Political Science Invitation 1933 April 11
 - b. 1 f. 12 From Stern, Benjamin H. -- Correspondence 1933 April 4
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
 - b. 1 f. 4 To Stern, Benjamin H. -- Correspondence 1934 June 1-1941 August 9
 - b. 1 f. 4 To Smee, C. Walter -- Correspondence 1941 August 9
 - b. 1 f. 12 From Barbay, M.G. -- Correspondence 1943 January 26
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
 - b. 1 f. 4 Statement of Payments 1944 December 31
 - b. 1 f. 12 From Stern, Benjamin H. -- Correspondence 1945 May 25
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
 - b. 1 f. 4 From Patch, B. to Benjamin H. Stern -- Correspondence 1945 August 2
 - b. 1 f. 4 From Brylawski, Fulton to Benjamin H. Stern -- Correspondence 1948 March 19
 - b. 1 f. 12 From Stern, Benjamin H. to Edward Dodd Jr. -- Correspondence 1949 January 18
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
 - b. 1 f. 5 To "Dear Sirs" -- Correspondence 1949 January 3

Shaw, George Bernard (cont.)

- b. 1 f. 5 From Kegan, Albert -- Correspondence 1949 April 14
- b. 1 f. 5 Stern, Benjamin H. with Louis E. Swarts -- Correspondence 1949 June 08-14
- b. 1 f. 5, 12 To Stern, Benjamin H. -- Correspondence 1949 July 26
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
- b. 1 f. 5 To Stern and Reubens -- Correspondence 1949 July 27
- b. 1 f. 5, 12 Stern, Benjamin H. -- Correspondence 1949 August 15-September 14
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
- b. 1 f. 5 Play License 1940s
- b. 1 f. 5 Memorandum of Agreement [1938]
- b. 3 f. 3 Folder 1940s
- Steinbeck, John 1940s-1966 April 15
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
- b. 1 f. 6 Agreement with Films Asociados Mexico-Americanos 1944 November 1
- b. 1 f. 6 *Origin and Development of the Motion Picture No Minor Voices* 1940s
- b. 1 f. 6 From Williams, Annie Lauren to Stern, Benjamin H. -- Correspondence 1947 March 24
- b. 1 f. 6 Appointment of Attorney 1949 December 2
- b. 1 f. 12 Farmer, Arthur E. -- Correspondence 1948 October 8-November 19
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
- b. 1 f. 6 To Otis, Elizabeth R. -- Correspondence 1949 December 1
- b. 1 f. 12 From Farmer, Arthur E. to Elizabeth R. Otis -- Correspondence and Appointment of Attorney 1949 December 2
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
- b. 1 f. 6 To "Miss Simmons" -- Correspondence 1951 January 12
- b. 1 f. 12 Scott, Zachary and Elaine -- Property Settlement Agreement 1951 February 1
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
- b. 1 f. 6, 12 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1954 March 18-1955 May 9
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
- b. 1 f. 6 To Vellis, George -- Correspondence 1955 April 30
- b. 1 f. 12 From Buchman, Harry to Annie Laurie Williams -- Correspondence 1955 May 9
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
- b. 1 f. 12 *From Vellis, George -- Pipe Dream Correspondence* 1955 April 18-May 3
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
- b. 1 f. 7, 12 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1945 August 2-1955 September 1
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
- b. 1 f. 7 From Buchman, Harry to Elizabeth R. Otis -- Correspondence 1955 April 5-September 16
- b. 1 f. 7 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1956-1957
- b. 1 f. 7 From Otis, Elizabeth R. to Harry Buchman -- Correspondence 1958 January 1
- b. 1 f. 7 To Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1959 June 19-July 24
- b. 1 f. 7 To Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence and Report 1958 January 9-January 24
- b. 1 f. 7 To Buchman, Harry, Elizabeth R. Otis, and Annie Laurie Williams -- Correspondence 1958 January 24
- b. 1 f. 7, 8, 12 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1953 December 3-1959 February 06
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.

Steinbeck, John (cont.)

- b. 1 f. 8 From Scott, Waverly to Harry Buchman -- Wedding Invitation 1956 July 15
- b. 1 f. 8 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1959 April 01-June 19
- b. 1 f. 8 From Steinbeck, Elaine to Harry Buchman -- Correspondence 1959 June 24
- b. 1 f. 8, 9, 12 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1959 June 14-September 25
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
- b. 1 f. 9 From Steinbeck, Elaine to Harry Buchman -- Correspondence [1959] October 8
- b. 1 f. 9 To Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1959 October 29-1960 May
- b. 1 f. 9 Hairpins and Envelope 1960 May 9
- b. 1 f. 9 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1960
- b. 1 f. 9 To Steinbeck, Gwyndolyn -- Correspondence 1940s
- b. 1 f. 9 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1960 August 29-October 26
- b. 1 f. 9 From Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence, Bill for Sale, and Vehicle Registration 1961 August 15
- b. 1 f. 9 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1961 August 18-November 10
- b. 1 f. 9 From Buchman, Harry to Asher Hiesiger -- Correspondence 1961 December 27
- b. 1 f. 9, 10 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1962
- b. 1 f. 10 From Steinbeck, Elaine to Harry Buchman -- Correspondence 1963 January 01
- b. 1 f. 10 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1963 March 01-August 12
- b. 1 f. 10 Notes on a Recent Trip to Nassau 1957
- b. 1 f. 10 *The Lost Treasure of King Philip IV -- Pamphlet* 1950s
- b. 1 f. 10 Notes on a Conversation with Terrence McNally 1964 April 21
- b. 1 f. 10 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1964 January 17-March 20
- b. 1 f. 10 Nobel Prize for Literature Acceptance Speech 1962
- b. 1 f. 10 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1964 March 23-April 24
- b. 1 f. 10 From Buchman, Harry to Elizabeth R. Otis -- Correspondence 1964 May 21
- b. 1 f. 10 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1950s-1964 June 18
- b. 1 f. 10 From Buchman, Harry to Elizabeth R. Otis -- Correspondence 1964 June 1
- b. 1 f. 10 From Gwyndolyn Steinbeck -- Correspondence 1954 June 15
- b. 1 f. 10 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1954 June 9-1964 September 1
- b. 1 f. 10 From Buchman, Harry to Asher Heisiger -- Correspondence 1964 September 15
- b. 1 f. 10, 11 Buchman, Harry -- Correspondence 1964 September 19-1966 April 15
- b. 1 f. 11 Otis, Elizabeth R. -- Correspondence 1940s
- b. 1 f. 12 To "Dear Arthur" -- Correspondence 1951 May 23
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
- b. 1 f. 12 Steinbeck, Elaine -- Last Will and Testament 1959 January 31
Materials in folder 12 are restricted due to preservation concerns. Please use service copies.
- b. 1 f. 11 Appointment of Attorney 1952 February 14
- b. 1 f. 11 Last Will and Testament 1964 March 20