

**The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

Robert Stone

Papers, c.1950-1992

**Processed by William Stingone
September 1995**

Summary

Title: Robert Stone Papers c.1950-1992

Size: 9 linear feet (21 ABs, 2 1/2 ABs)

Source: Purchased from Robert Stone, 1994.

Access: Unrestricted

Description: The Robert Stone Papers (c.1950-1992) consist of notes, typescript drafts (on paper and computer disk), galleys, and proof pages for all of Stone's novels up to 1987; 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 Stone's career as a novelist; very few personal letters are present.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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 1971-1985 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 cowrote 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.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Robert Stone Papers (c.1950-1992) consist of notes, typescript drafts (on paper and computer disk), galleys, and proof pages for all of Stone's novels up to 1987; 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 Stone's career as a novelist; very few personal letters are present.

ARRANGEMENT NOTE

The Robert Stone Papers are arranged into two series as follows:

- I. Writings by Robert Stone
 - A. Novels (Boxes 1-20)
 - B. Other Writings (Box 21)
- II. Correspondence (Box 22)
 - A. Letters
 - B. Received

Three boxes of duplicate material (23-25) follow the correspondence.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

I. Writings

A. Novels: Boxes 1-20 (8 linear feet) c.1964-1992

This subseries, arranged alphabetically by title, contains typescript drafts for five of Stone's published novels, 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 is a typescript draft of Stone's screenplay for "Who'll Stop the Rain," an adaption of his novel *Dog Soldiers* (see Box 8, f.4-5).

B. Other Writings: Box 21 (1/4 linear foot) c.1950s-1988

This subseries consists of notes, holograph and typescript drafts, and printed forms of published and unpublished short stories, essays, and journalistic pieces written by Stone. 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.

II. Correspondence: Box 22 (1/2 linear foot) 1964-1985

A. Letters

Four typed letters by Stone, two of which are incomplete drafts, make up this sub-series.

B. Received

These letters received by Stone are arranged alphabetically by sender; most date from around the publication dates of Stone's novels, especially his first two, 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.

CONTAINER LIST

I. Writings

Box	Folder	
		A. Novels, c.1964-1992
		<i>Children of Light</i> (1986)
1-2		Notes and revised typescript drafts
3		Typescript drafts
	1-2	Fair copy, "3/26/85"
	3-4	Revised draft
	5	Copy-edited draft, notes, and typed fragments 1985 July 11
4	1	Copy-edited draft, etc. (continued)
	2-3	Setters copy, 1986 February 14
		Master Set of Galleys
	4-5	"First pass"
	6-7	"Second pass"
5	1	Computer disks (8") [housed in separate box at end of collection]
	2	Unbound gatherings ("F & Gs")
		Related material
	3	Re: Published excerpts
	4	Background information (re: King Lear performance)
		<i>Dog Soldiers</i> (1974) ¹
6	1-5	Revised typescript drafts and fragments [working title "Skydiver Devoured by Starving Birds"], c.1972
	6	Revised and corrected typescripts, rewrites, fragments
7	1-6	Revised and corrected typescripts, etc. (continued)
	7-8	Copy-edited typescript, 1974 May 7
8	1-2	Galleys, 1974 June 24
		Related Material
	3	Printed excerpts and reviews
	4-5	"Who'll Stop the Rain?" (screenplay). Typescript drafts
		<i>A Flag For Sunrise</i> (1981)
9		Notes, revised draft fragments, and revised typescript drafts
10	1-3	Revised typescript draft
	4-5	Incomplete photocopied revised typescript drafts
11	1-4	Typescript draft
	5-6	Corrected author's galleys
12	1	Corrected author's galleys (continued)
	2-3	Copy-edited page-proof galleys [black ink=Stone]

¹See also Box 21, f.2 (discussed in Series description "Other Writings").

Box	Folder	
	4	Incomplete unbound gatherings ("F & Gs") [British Edition] Related Material
12	5	Published excerpts
	6	Printed reviews
13	1	Reviews, profiles, advertisements, publicity material
		<i>A Hall of Mirrors</i> (1967) [originally titled "Children of Light"]
	2	Partial carbon-copy typescript, c.1964
	3-4	Notes and revised typescript fragments
	5-7	Corrected and revised setting copy
14	1-2	Galleys
	3	Author's list of corrections
	4-5	Related Material Printed reviews and publicity material
15		<i>Outerbridge Reach</i> (1992)
	1	Notes and clippings re yachting and boats
	2-3	Early typescript draft [Titled "Boat"]
	4-7	Typescript draft fragments
16	1-2	Revised typescript draft (chapters 1-28), "4/18/89"
	3-4	Typescript draft (chapters 1-49), [Chap. 7 dated "6/24/89"]
17	1-2	Photocopy of revised typescript draft (chapters 1-27), "4/18/89"
	3	Revised typescript draft (chapters 28-43), "5/29/90"
	4-7	Typescript drafts, notes, outlines, and rewrites
18	1-2	Typescript draft [some chapters missing]
	3-4	Revised and corrected typescript draft
19	1-3	Corrected setting copy [with editor's and nautical expert's queries] Page Proofs
	4-5	"Author's Marked Set"
20	1-2	"Master Proofs"
	3-4	"Author's Extra Set"

B. Other Writings, c.1950s-1988

21	1	Untitled short story [unpublished]. Typescript
	2	Alas That They Should Fall Apart (short story) [unpublished]. Holograph draft in notebook and typescript
	3	Dunaway, Faye (profile for Cosmopolitan). Partial typescript, c.1967-8
	4	Holiness Moon (short story) [unpublished]. Typescript, c.1950s
	5	[New York Harbor] (essay). Two typescript drafts
	6	[Republican National Convention, 1988] (essay). Holograph notes, 1988
	7	Shore Party (short story). Portion of printed version from <i>Apprentice</i> [NYU lit. mag.], February 1960

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
	8	[Vietnam Piece]. Clipping from Manchester Guardian, 17 July 1971
21	9	Miscellaneous

II. Correspondence, 1964-1988

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
22	1	A. Letters, c.1967-1970
		B. Received, 1964-1988
2		Unidentified
		_____, Merrill (1966-67)
		A
		Amussen, Carolyn - SEE: Houghton Mifflin Company
		B-D
3		Donadio, Candida (Agent) (1966-1975) [includes material from Houghton Mifflin Donadio forwarded to Stone]
4		E
		Ehrlich, Daphne - SEE: Houghton Mifflin Company
		English, Michael (1967)
		F-G
		Green, Hester [A.M. Heath & Co. Ltd.] (1968-70)
		Guggenheim, John Simon, Memorial Foundation (1968-70)
		H
5		Houghton Mifflin Company (1966-1975) [includes royalty statements]
6		I-N
		National Council on the Arts (19??)
		Newman Foreman (1968-71)
		Norman, Gurney (1967)
		O-P
		Paramount Pictures (1968-70)
		R
		Rogers, Deborah, Literary Agency (1970-71)
		S
		Stanford University (1988)
		Stegner, Wallace (1967)
		T-Y

Addenda I.

Box

Duplicate Material

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