
Inventory of the Wallace Stevens Oral History Collection, 1975-1985, (bulk 1976-1978)

The Huntington Library

San Marino, California

Contact Information

- Manuscripts Department
- The Huntington Library
- 1151 Oxford Road
- San Marino, California 91108
- Phone: (626) 405-2203
- Fax: (626) 449-5720
- Email: lgarcia@huntington.org
- URL: <http://www.huntington.org/huntingtonlibrary.aspx?id=554>

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Wallace Stevens Oral History Collection,

Date (inclusive): 1975-1985, (bulk 1976-1978)

Creator: Brazeau, Peter A.

Extent: 605 pieces, consisting of 137 tapes, 105 transcriptions, and 363 pieces of correspondence

Repository: The Huntington Library

San Marino, California 91108

Language: English

Provenance

Tapes and transcriptions acquired from J. R. Harrison (executor of Peter Brazeau's estate) in June, 1989. Correspondence acquired from Harrison in July, 1990.

Access

Collection is open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information please go to following [URL](#) .

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Wallace Stevens Oral History Collection, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Scope and Content

The oral history tapes and transcriptions, together with the correspondence, that make up this collection were created by Peter A. Brazeau during the course of his research for his oral history biography of Wallace Stevens: *Parts of a World: Wallace Stevens Remembered* (New York: Random House, 1983). Brazeau, a member of the English Department faculty of St. Joseph College, wrote to and interviewed dozens of Stevens' relatives, friends, neighbors, employees, business colleagues, and literary associates and acquaintances in order to elicit their recollections about the poet.

While Brazeau mined the material fairly thoroughly, the mass of information was too great for it all to be used in the book, and there yet remains a good deal of unused data. Therefore, this collection is an excellent research tool for Stevens scholarship.

Researchers are advised to use Brazeau's *Parts of a World: Wallace Stevens Remembered* as a reference source for the collection, to identify the people whose interviews and correspondence are contained in the collection.

Physical Description

There are three formats of material:

1. Tapes. Duplicate cassette tapes have been made from the master tapes (which are in both cassette and reel-to-reel formats). A fairly substantial number of the master tapes are of markedly inferior sound quality, and, while the copies are no worse in quality, it has not been possible to improve or enhance the quality of the copies. The most frequent problem is either very low volume or loud background noise, or a combination of the two.

Researchers are cautioned that there is almost certainly some duplication in the tapes for some individuals. This is often due to Brazeau's inconsistent practice of making a second master of a given interview (in either the same or a different format), whose contents may or may not exactly match those of the first master. In almost every instance, the task of exhaustively comparing the contents of two masters proved too unwieldy and time-consuming and had to be abandoned; all that could be done was to copy each master tape unless duplicate masters could be readily identified. Moreover, Brazeau would group interviews on tapes in the most economical manner possible, and these would not be grouped similarly for duplicate master tapes, e.g., groups of interviews on a reel-to-reel tape would not then be retained as a group on Brazeau's own second (cassette) master but would be dispersed to several cassette tapes. This made the identification of duplicate interviews especially difficult. A third difficulty was Brazeau's frequent habit of beginning an interview too early on the tape (with far too little leader tape) or with the volume initially too low, so that his verbal identification of the interviewee and date of the interview are unintelligible. In short, the tapes were made, not by a professional oral historian, but by a Stevens scholar who used the craft as a means to pursue his own research, so the quality of recordings is highly uneven.

2. Transcriptions. The transcriptions have been xeroxed, and the xeroxes will be used for research purposes. Both the originals and the xeroxes are difficult to read, for Brazeau wrote the transcriptions by hand, often in pencil. Moreover, his transcriptions are not complete but are selective; he omitted segments that were not of interest for his own research.

3. Correspondence. The correspondence consists of originals, most in good condition.

Arrangement of the Collection

Boxes 1-4: Cassette tapes (copies).

Boxes 5-8: Transcriptions (copies).

Boxes 9-15: Correspondence.

Boxes 16-19: Transcriptions (masters -- not to be circulated).

Boxes 20-26: Cassette and reel-to-reel tapes (masters -- not to be circulated).

The following pages of this report consists of a complete list of the people represented in the collection. Each individual's name is followed by columns in which appear call number(s) for his/her tape(s), transcription(s), and correspondence. For each individual listed, there will be one or more items in any one or two formats, or in all three. A blank in any of the columns means that there is nothing in the designated format for that individual. The specific items desired can be called out using the call numbers provided, each beginning with the prefix "HM". In no instance will the master tapes or the originals of the transcriptions be provided for research.

Adams, Leonie Fuller HM 53813HM 53759-53761HM 54239-40

Aiken, Mary Augusta (Hoover) HM 53814HM 53680HM 53917-8

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Anderson, Gwendolyn Gardner HM 53815HM 53773

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