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Creator: Butler, Hal
Title: Hal Butler papers.
Inclusive dates: 1939-2006
Extent: 5 linear feet
Call number: 2009042 Aa 2

Language: Material is in English
Acquisition: The collection was donated by Joyce Butler Musto (donor no. 10068) in June 2008.
Accruals: Periodic additions to the collection are not expected.
Access: The collection is open without restriction.
Photographs: Photographs are located in the Personal and Business series in Box 1.
A-V Material: An audiocassette is located in Box 5.
Copyright: Joyce Butler Musto, Butler's daughter, transferred her copyright to the Regents of the University of Michigan.
Processed By: Michael J. Shallcross, February 2009.

Abstract

Detroit-based editor, pulp fiction writer, novelist, nonfiction author, and freelance travel writer; collection contains background materials and extensive business files which include correspondence, contracts, copyrights, photographs, and a wide range of publications.

Biography

Harold Charles “Hal” Butler was a professional man of letters; over the course of his career, he was a reporter, editor, pulp fiction writer, novelist, nonfiction author, and freelance travel writer. He was born in St. Louis, MO on January 3, 1913 and in 1916 his family moved to Detroit where Butler embarked upon his career by creating ‘books’ of short stories as a precocious 10 year old. He was a reporter for the school paper at Detroit’s Central High School and after graduation he attended night school and took correspondence courses in writing and journalism. His first job was in the correspondence department of the Detroit City Gas Company after which he worked in the purchasing department of the Ford Motor Company. From this position, he advanced himself to write for various company publications, including the employee newspaper *Rouge News* (which became *Ford World*), *Ford Dealer Magazine*, and the leisure and travel magazine *Ford Times*. Butler served as managing editor of the latter publication for ten years until his retirement in 1974.

In addition to his professional obligations at Ford, Butler wrote assiduously in a variety of genres for a great many publications. In 1991, he estimated that he had written over one hundred magazine articles and a comparable number of newspaper features. He began his freelance career writing sports and detective stories for pulp magazines, the first of which was published in 1945 in *Thrilling Detective* magazine. As the market for pulp fiction dwindled in the fifties, Butler turned to nonfiction writing and found outlets in popular men’s magazines as well as such mainstream publications as the *Saturday Evening Post* and *American Mercury*. Through the late sixties and seventies Butler wrote twelve sports-related books for juvenile readers as well as four nonfiction works for adults. In 1981, he published an historical romance novel under the pen name “Beverly Butler.” Following his retirement, Butler traveled extensively and the majority of his work from the seventies and eighties consisted of freelance travel pieces. Near the end of his career, he returned to fiction and wrote two unpublished novels, *Copper Fever!* and *Murder in the Tropics*, of which only the former survives.

Butler was married to Eleanor Elizabeth (Davis) on August 20, 1938 at Mt. Hope Congregational Church in Detroit and they lived happily together until his death. The Butlers lived in the Detroit area with their two daughters, Beverly Alice (1940-1981) and Joyce Diane (Musto) (b. 1943) and summered at their family retreat in northwestern Michigan. Hal Butler passed away on June 16, 2002 in Southfield, MI.

Scope and Content Note

The Hal Butler papers reflect the versatility, industry, and imagination of their creator's mind. Throughout his career as a writer and editor for the Ford Motor Company, Butler never ceased to follow his passion for describing his travels and telling tales of sports, mystery, and adventure. This collection will be of value to those interested in travel writing, the Great Lakes region, and publishing genres such as pulp fiction and 1950's men's magazines.

The **Personal** series contains information about Hal Butler and his wife Eleanor. It includes biographical sketches, obituaries, clippings, and photographs.

The **Business** series documents the professional aspects of Hal Butler's career with publishing contracts, copyright records, correspondence, royalty statements, reviews, and a range of photographs (including shots of Butler with Baseball Hall of Fame members Harmon Killebrew and Al Kaline). It contains an index of articles written by Butler from 1939-1974 as well as a catalog of book profits tallied in the 1980s.

The **Writings** series documents Butler's output in six distinct subseries. "Manuscripts" includes the unpublished novel *Copper Fever!* as well as the drafts of various travel articles. "Books" includes 16 volumes published by Butler—four of which were for adults (*Al Kaline and the Detroit Tigers*, *Abandon Ship!*, *Inferno!*, and *Nature at War*), the rest for juvenile readers—as well as *Magnolia Plantation*, an historical romance written under the penname "Beverly Butler." The "Magazines" and "Newspapers" subseries contain a large albeit incomplete sampling of Butler's output in a variety of publications while the "Pulp Fiction" section highlights his contributions to detective and sports serials in the forties and fifties. Miscellaneous material is gathered in "Other."

Box No. Description

Personal

Background Information

Box 1

Butler, Eleanor Elizabeth (Davis), 2006

Butler, Hal, 1990-2002

Clippings, 1964-2002

Photographs

Butler Family, ca. 1960

Butler, Hal, ca. 1940s, 1963

Butler, Hal aboard U.S. Freedom Train, ca. 1947-1948

Butler, Hal receiving Baltimore city key, ca. 1967-1971

Chicago Bike Hike, 1971

Business

Book Profits, ca. 1980s

Contracts, 1965-1981

Copyright Records, 1966-1980

Correspondence, 1965-1992 (2 folders)

Index of Articles, 1939-1974

Reviews and Related Materials

Abandon Ship! 1974*Baseball's Champion Pitchers*, 1975*The Harmon Killebrew Story*, 1965*Inferno!* 1975-1976*Magnolia Plantation*, ca. 1980, 1981*Stormin' Norman Cash*, 1966

Other, 1968-1976

Royalty Statements, 1966-1984 (2 folders)

Photographs

Abandon Ship! ca. 1974

Acapulco, undated

Allison, Bob, ca. 1967

Cash, Norman, ca. 1967

Detroit Zoo, ca. 1950s

European Sites, undated

Ford Train (with Hal Butler), ca. 1950s

Horton, Willie, ca. 1970

Kaline, Al, ca. 1950s

Kaline, Al, ca. 1973

Killebrew, Harmon, ca. 1965

The MacArthur Memorial, undated

Nature at War, ca. 1976

Norfolk, VA, 1978

Showgirls (unidentified), undated

Springfield, IL (Lincoln Heritage Trail), undated

Stunyo, Jeanne, ca. 1956 (1956 Olympic silver medallist on the three-meter springboard)

"Texas" (musical drama), undated

There's Nothing New in Sports, ca. 1967

Box No. Description

Writings

Manuscripts

Box 1 (cont.)*Copper Fever!* ca. 1985

Articles

"Al Kaline: Is He a Superstar?" 1973

"The Girls You See on Vacation," undated

"The Historical Charms of Bardstown," ca. 1991

"How to Get Sick in Mexico Without Even Trying," undated

Lincoln Heritage Trail article, 1977

"Mackinac Island: Bermuda of the North," ca. 1980

"Michigan's Mysterious Copper Mines," undated

Outline of proposed article on Dayton AFB, undated

"Take a Tour of Tropical Texas," 1976

"Tequila: the Town and the Liquor," undated

"The Town that Sees Red," ca. 1990

"100 Years and Counting: Michigan's Grand Hotel," ca. 1987

Other, ca. 1967

Books

Box 2*Abandon Ship!* 1974*Al Kaline and the Detroit Tigers*, 1973*Baseball's All-Star Game Thrills*, 1968*Baseball's Champion Pitchers*, 1974*Baseball's Most Valuable Players*, 1977*The Bob Allison Story*, 1967*The Harmon Killebrew Story*, 1966*Inferno!* 1975*Magnolia Plantation*, 1981 (written as Beverly Butler)*Millions of Cars*, 1972*Nature at War*, 1976*Roar of the Road*, 1969*Sports Heroes Who Wouldn't Quit*, 1973*Stormin' Norman Cash*, 1968**Box 3***There's Nothing New in Sports*, 1967*Underdogs of Sport*, 1969*The Willie Horton Story*, 1970

Magazines

Adventure Road, 1986-1992*Argosy*, 1959-1963*Carte Blanche*, 1977-1979*Chevron USA*, 1984*Climax*, 1962*Coronet*, 1958-1965*Discovery*, 1976-1978*Ford Times*, 1959-1987*Home & Away*, 1981-1990

Box No. Description

Writings (cont.)

Magazine (cont.)

Box 3 (cont.)

Man to Man, 1950
Michigan Living, 1979-1988
Panorama, 1971
Pro Football Stars, 1962
Saga, 1960
Saturday Evening Post, 1955
See, 1960
Sport, 1956-1958
Travel/Holiday, 1979-1987

Box 4

Travel & Leisure, 1976-1982
True, 1959-1974
 Other, 1952-1987

Newspapers

Boston Globe, 1987-1990
Chicago Tribune, 1976-1983
Dallas Morning News, 1986-1990
Detroit News, 1975
Kansas City Star, 1978
San Diego Union, 1981-1986
South Bend Tribune, 1981-1990
 Other, 1989-1991

Pulp Fiction

Best Sports, 1948
Black Book Detective, 1948
Black Book Detective, 1951
Complete Sports, 1951
Complete Sports, Mar. 1954
Complete Sports, Oct. 1954
Crack Detective and Mystery Stories, 1956
Detective Novel Magazine, 1947
Exciting Sports, 1947

Box 5

Famous Detective Stories, 1956
FBI Detective Stories, 1949
FBI Detective Stories, 1950
Popular Sports Magazine, 1947
Private Detective Stories, May 1948
Private Detective Stories, Nov. 1948
Private Detective Stories, Feb. 1949
Private Detective Stories, Apr. 1949
Private Detective Stories, 1950
Smashing Detective Stories, 1956
Super Detective, 1948
Super Detective, Mar. 1949
Super Detective, Dec. 1949
Street and Smith's Detective Story Magazine, 1947

Box No. Description

Writings (cont.)

Pulp Fiction (cont.)

Box 5 (cont.)

Super Sports, 1952

Thrilling Detective, July 1946

Thrilling Detective, Oct. 1946

Other

"The Gertrude Ederle Story," 1975 (audiocassette)

"Jackie Robinson," 2001 (excerpt from *Journeys of Faith*)

"The Mt. Hope Story: 1889-1989," ca. 1989

Page Proofs, 1962-1986

Rand McNally Vacation and Travel Guide, 1977