

Robert B. Betts Papers

Inclusive Dates:

1950-1998

Name and Location of Repository:

William P. Sherman Library and Archives Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Great Falls, MT

Collection Processed by:

Dick Smith, 2007

Finding aid prepared by:

Jill Jackson, January 2003. Revised by Shelly Kath, May 2016.

Collection Number:

AR 001

Name of Creator:

Robert B. Betts (1923-1989)

Extent:

1 linear foot

Biographical Note:

Robert B. Betts was born in Easton, PA. He was a quiet, dedicated Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation (LCTHF) member, benefactor and scholar. He was the president and creative director of the William Esty Advertising Agency in New York. After retirement as Chairman of the Board of Etsy Advertising Bob turned to historical research. He wrote *Among the Ramparts of the Tetons* (1978), and the book for which he is best known among Lewis and Clark enthusiasts *In Search of York: The Slave Who Went to the Pacific with Lewis and Clark* (1885).

The royalties from *In Search of York* were donated to the LCTHF. The contract for LCTHF to receive the royalties was signed May 23, 1984. An additional financial contribution from Betts in 1989 enabled LCTHF to purchase computer equipment and software for the publication of *We Proceeded On*. When Gary Moulton secured a grant to publish a completely reedited version of the Lewis and Clark journals in the early 1980's, Robert Betts contributed generously to that project as well. His collection of Lewis and Clark books (279 items) formed the core of the William P. Sherman Library and Archives library.

At the July 1998 LCTHF Convention awards banquet the Distinguished Service Award was presented posthumously to Mr. Betts by Wilbur P. Werner. Werner said "His gifts to worthy causes were most generous and made without publicity."

Scope and Contents:

This is a collection of some of the research worksheets, notes, correspondence and publishing agreements of Robert B. Betts. Formats include notecards, photocopies and manuscripts. The primary material is paper. The materials span from 1950 to 1998. In his detailed research on the journals of Lewis and Clark as well as other members of the expedition Betts came up with an estimate of the amount of time spent writing in the journals. His detailed research leaves no question as to the accuracy of his work. He also studied the spelling and grammar of Lewis and Clark. His study of York seems to be equally as detailed.

Arrangement:

The collection is arranged in three series, one for Betts research processes for his publications, one for his general correspondence (including his wife's correspondence), and one for the library that he built while working on his research projects. Series one is split into four subseries highlighting his work and correspondence by publication. Series two is correspondence not related to specific books or articles authored by Betts. It is split into two sub series: sub series one is correspondence between Betts and other authors and scholars interested in Lewis and Clark; subseries two is his wife Emilie's correspondence. Series three is split into two subseries: sub series one is note cards detailing book purchases and receipts for those books; sub series two is materials Betts gathered through his research.

Subject Terms:

Along the Rampant Tetons
Clark, Jonathan
Clark, William
Chuniard, Eldon G. "Frenchy"
Cutright, Paul Allen
Gass, Patrick
Grossman, Jack
In Search of York
Jackson, Donald
Lange, Robert
Robert Betts's Library
Sherman, William P.
Slavery
Peace, William
Wrightingest Explorers of Their Time
York

Date Acquired:

May 1998. Accession number 1998.001.

Acquisition Source:

This collection was donated to the LCTHF by Robert Betts's family.

Access Restrictions:

The collection is open for use.

Use Restrictions:

LCTHF does not own copyright to all of the materials in the collection. In some cases permission for use may require seeking additional authorization from the copyright owners.

Preferred Citation:

Item description and date. *Robert B. Betts Papers*. AR 001. Box and Folder numbers. William P. Sherman Library and Archives, Great Falls, MT.

Robert B. Betts Papers, 1950-1998

AR 001

Box Listing:

Series 1: Betts publications including books and articles (Box 1)

Sub-Series 1: In Search of York (1980, 1983-4) 11 folders

- Folder 1: Research (1980)
- Folder 2: Notes from Manuscript
- Folder 3: Manuscript as sent to William Peace
- Folder 4: Peace/Betts Correspondence (1983)
- Folder 5: Manuscript as sent to William Peace
- Folder 6: Peace/Betts Correspondence (1983)
- Folder 7: Manuscript
- Folder 8: Publishing Agreements/Royalties (1983-1984)
- Folder 9: Book Reviews and Letters about the book
- Folder 10: Book Reviews and Letters about the book
- Folder 11: Book Reviews and Letters about the book

Sub-Series 2: The Writingest Explorers of Their Time, 4 folders

- Folder 12: Writingest Explorers Article
- Folder 13: Notes
- Folder 14: Betts/Grossman Correspondence (1981)
- Folder 15: Measurements of Text Notecards

Sub-Series 3: Other articles and Publications by Robert Betts, 2 folders

- Folder 16: Along the Rampant Tetons Publishing Agreement (1977)
- Folder 17: We Commenced Writing

Series 2: General Correspondence (Box 2)

Sub-Series 1: General Correspondence (1978-1984), 7 folders

- Folder 1: Betts Correspondence Misc. (1982)
- Folder 2: Betts/Cutright Correspondence (1980, 1981)
- Folder 3: Betts/Jackson Correspondence (1981, 1984)
- Folder 4: Betts/Chuinard Correspondence (1980-1981)
- Folder 5: Betts/Lange (1980-1982)
- Folder 6: Betts/Lange (Spring 1981)
- Folder 7: Betts/Sherman (1978-1983)

Sub-Series 2: General Correspondence Emilie Betts (1989-1993), 1 folder

- Folder 8: Emilie Betts Correspondence

Series 3: Robert B. Betts Library (Box 2)

Sub-Series 1: Book Purchases Note Cards (1950 - 1998), 7 folders

- Folder 9: Notecards
- Folder 10: Notecards/receipts
- Folder 11: Notecards/receipts
- Folder 12: Notecards/receipts
- Folder 13: Notecards/receipts
- Folder 14: Notecards/receipts
- Folder 15: Notecards/receipts

Sub-Series 2: Materials gathered for Research (1951 - 1995), 8 folders

- Folder 16: Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation Annual Meeting Materials (1978, 1985-1986)
- Folder 17: Bibliography on Notecards
- Folder 18: Article Photocopies and Correspondence Missouri Historical Society (1981)
- Folder 19: William Clark's Will
- Folder 20: Jonathan Clark's Will
- Folder 21: Manuscript: "The Life and Times of Patrick Gass" by John G. Jacobs
- Folder 22: Manuscript: "Louisville: Starting Point for Lewis and Clark" by Robert Emmet McDowell
- Folder 23: "Search for a Black Past" Photocopy