



Guide to the Alexander Blackburn Papers, 1880-2021

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David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

411 Chapel Drive

Duke University

Durham 27708

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URL: <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

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Summary

Collection Title:

Alexander Blackburn papers, 1880-2021

Creator:

Blackburn, Alexander

Abstract:

Professor emeritus of English and Creative Writing at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs; novelist; son of Duke University faculty member William M. Blackburn. Writings and correspondence of Alexander Blackburn, including books, correspondence, postcards, drafts, and typescripts of unpublished works. Also includes Blackburn and Cheney family history materials, genealogical materials, photographs, and a scrapbook.

Extent:

26.5 Linear Feet

Language:

Material in English

Collection ID:

RL.00114

Permalink:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m17k56>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Alexander Blackburn Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University

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Background

Scope and Content

Collection consists primarily of writings by Alexander Blackburn, including books, articles, clippings, and typescripts of unpublished works between 1953 and 1998. The collection also includes correspondence with writer Frank Waters and some other letters, memorabilia, editorial files, and an almost complete run of the literary journal "Writer's Forum", which Blackburn edited. The collection

also includes documents dating from 1880 to 2021, such as writings, drafts, books, family history materials, and materials from Alexander Blackburn's mother, Elizabeth Cheney Blackburn, and the Cheney family.

Biographical/Historical

Alexander Blackburn (1929-2021) was the son of William Blackburn and Elizabeth Cheney Bayne Blackburn. He was a graduate of the University of North Carolina (M.A., 1956) and the University of Cambridge (Ph.D., 1963). He served in the U. S. Army during the Korean War before becoming a professor of English and literature at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs in 1973. His interests and writings centered on the American West; he also published a critical study on the writer-philosopher Frank Waters. Blackburn also founded and edited the Writers' Forum literary journal. He retired in 1995 and died in October, 2021. His books and novels include the following:

- 1 A Strange Joy
- 2 Remembering Time: Stories and Novellas
- 3 Creative Spirit: Toward a Better World
- 4 A Sunrise Brighter Still: The Visionary Novels of Frank Waters
- 5 The Cold War of Kitty Pentecost
- 6 The Myth of the Picaro: Continuity and Transformation of the Picaresque Novel, 1554-1954

More information on Alexander Blackburn can be found at his website, www.alexanderblackburn.com . His autobiography, Meeting the Professor (2008), details both his life and that of his father, William Blackburn.

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Arrangement

Arranged into series: Personal Correspondence, Works by Alexander Blackburn, Personal and Family Materials, General Materials, Books and Magazines, and Clippings.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Access Restrictions

Access note. Collection contains fragile audiovisual/photographic formats that may need to be reformatted before use. Contact Research Services for access.

Acquisition Information

The Alexander Blackburn Papers were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a gift in 1999, 2004, 2010, 2020, and 2023.

Processing Information

Accessioned by Meghan Lyon, January 2010 and Laurin Penland, January 2020.

Encoded by Meghan Lyon, January 2010

Materials may not have been ordered and described beyond their original condition.

Accession 2023-0171 processed and finding aid updated by Ofelia Lopez.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to Duke University. For more information, consult the copyright section of the Regulations and Procedures of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

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Related Materials

Related Material

Related collections include the William Blackburn Papers, 1859-1985 and undated.

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Names and Subjects

- Memorabilia
- Authors, American -- 20th century -- Correspondence
- American fiction -- 20th century
- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Blackburn, Elizabeth Cheney, 1898-1994
- Waters, Frank, 1902-1995
- Blackburn, Alexander

Collection Inventory

Personal Correspondence, approximately 1952-2021

Scope and Contents

Some correspondence is also in the General materials series

Letter to Prof. Maurice Cramer about The Cold War of Kitty Pentecost	Box 1
Frank Waters Correspondence, photos, etc. (1 black binder)	Box 1
Letters to William Blackburn and Elizabeth Blackburn (parents) when he was at Yale, 1947-1951	Box 5
Letters from well-known people	Box 6

Letters about his being named	Box 6
Letters, Writer's Forum	Box 6
Professional correspondence (scholarships, promotions)	Box 6
Letters, to and from Charles Adams in reply to ALB's first Waters essay (On Otowi), 1984-1985	Box 9
Letters, 1925-1942	Box 17
Letters from James M. Cain	Box 17
Letters concerning H. Phelps Putnam	Box 17
Letters, Donald Ogden Stewart, 1921	Box 17
Letters from Elizabeth Blackburn to Alexander Blackburn at Yale, 1947-1951	Box 18
Letters from Elizabeth Blackburn to Alexander Blackburn, 1952-1980	Box 18
Correspondence with John Nizalowski about the publication of "The Emergence of Frank Waters"	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 7
Correspondence with Clay Reynolds 1 of 2	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 8
Correspondence	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 9

Scope and Contents

Correspondents include: Myrial A. Holbrook; Joanne Greenberg; Rudolfo A. Anaya; David Blackburn; Philip Blackburn; Rufus Phillips; Phaedra Greenwood; William deBuys; Angela Davis-Gardner; John Nichols; Leigh Cross; Jeffrey Putnam; Gladys Swan; Betsy Packard; George Blackburn, Jr.; Waring Blackburn; Lawrence Gustafson; Joan Mellon; and Emily Haskett (for Alan Polsky).

Correspondence and Postcards, 1990-2007	Box 41
Physical Description: 2 folders	
Correspondence and Postcards, 2008-2012	Box 41

Correspondence with Joan Mellon, 2013-2021 Physical Description: 3 folders	Box 41
Correspondence with Clay Reynolds 2 of 2	Box 6
Correspondence with Jane Allison Blackburn	Box 6
Correspondence with Angela Davis-Gardner	Box 6
Correspondence with Gladys Swan	Box 6
Correspondence with Charles Adams	Box 6
Correspondence with Tom Filer	Box 6
Correspondence with Craig Lesley	Box 15
Correspondence with Paul Scott Malone	Box 15
Correspondence with Bret Lott	Box 15
Correspondence with Laura Hendrie	Box 15
Correspondence with Yusef Komunyakaa	Box 15
Correspondence with Lou Gonzalez Oller	Box 15
Correspondence with Jill Landem	Box 15
Correspondence with Michael Petit	Box 15

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Works by Alexander Blackburn, 1930s-2020

Scope and Contents

Works by Alexander Blackburn series includes books Blackburn wrote, edited, or to which Blackburn contributed.

Writings by Blackburn, detailed inventory, 1977-2020	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 1
Source materials for "Meeting the Professor"	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 13
"Gifts from the Heart"	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 14

Scope and Contents	
Clippings, reviews, award information	
"The Door of the Sad People"	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 15
Scope and Contents	
Sources, workshetes, queries	
"The Door of the Sad People"	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 16
Scope and Contents	
Research materials	
"The Voice of the Children in the Apple Tree"	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 17
Scope and Contents	
Research materials	
"Suddenly a Mortal Splendor"	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 18
Scope and Contents	
Sources and reviews	
"The Emergence of Frank Waters" , 2020	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 20
Scope and Contents	
Draft	
"The Myth of the Picaro"	Box 10
"Creative Spirit"	Box 10
"Splendor"	Box 13
Scope and Contents	
Signings, revisions, commentaries, etc.	
"Suddenly a Mortal Splendor"	Box 13
"Suddenly a Mortal Splendor"	Box 13
Scope and Contents	
Early attempts by ALB and Inés B. to find a publisher	

"The Interior Country"	Box 14
"Higher Elevations"	Box 14
"A Sunrise Brighter Still"	Box 9
Creative Spirit: Essays on Literature, Imagination, and the New World of Consciousness, 1998	Box 2
Scope and Contents	
Typescript	
The Cold War of Kitty Pentecost	Box 7
Agents involved with "Suddenly a Mortal Splendor"	Box 13
Draft of Kitty Pentecost	Box 7
Dossier to 1994, letters, commentaries on books together with some clippings about, Suddenly a Mortal Splendor.	Box 1
Published essays and stories by Blackburn and Inés Dolz-Blackburn, 1997-2017	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 2
Early poems, stories, and 2 essays	Box 5
James Oliver Brown, literary agent, re first novel (The Cold War of Kitty Pentecost)	Box 7
Events, 2004-2005	Box 41
Scope and Contents	
Invitations and programs from events related to Blackburn's work.	
Posters for 20th century quartet and cover proofs for Age of Atoms, approximately 2021	Box 43

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Personal and Family Materials, approximately 1880s-1994

Scope and Contents

Personal and Family Materials series includes genealogical materials as well as photographs, and personal papers.

Personal Papers	Box 1
Photo wallet with Ednah Cheney and her 11 children, 1880s	Box 17
Cheney family trees	Box 17
Harvey Allen family	Box 6
Elizabeth Blackburn's family	Box 17
Journey to Chile, 1996	Box 6
Concerning his cousin Emily's death	Box 6
Concerning the atomic test and his experience in Nevada,, 1951-10-29T00:00:00+00:00	Box 6
Scrapbook: Alex's baby book	Box 8
Faculty Book Award, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, 1993	Box 1
Chancellor's Award, 1994	Box 1
Holiday greetings with family photos, 2012-2015	Box 41
Family Materials	Box 41
Physical Description: 5 folders	
Family materials, 1800s-2000s	Box 42
Physical Description: 3 folders	
Scope and Contents	
Genealogical information, correspondence, and other documents related to Blackburn's genealogy and family history.	
Genealogy	Box 41
Photographs	Box 41

Glass plate photograph and hair	Box 41
Scope and Contents	
This folder contains a glass photographic plate and an envelope with a lock of hair, labeled "mother's hair" and dated 1868.	
Family and friends album	Box 43
Physical Description: 5 folders	
Partial bound volume of family correspondence and materials, approximately 1819-1889	Box 44
Bound volume of family correspondence and materials, approximately 1890s-1910s	Box 45
Family and genealogical materials	Oversize-folder 1

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General Materials, approximately 1928-2020

Scope and Contents

General Materials series includes writings, drafts, books, and family history materials. Included are materials from Alexander Blackburn's mother, Elizabeth Cheney Blackburn, and the Cheney family. This series includes correspondence, although most correspondence is in the Correspondence series.

Miscellaneous, 1985-2020	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 5
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Scope and Contents

Inlcudes clippings and photographs; printout of Blackburn's website; sketchbook; tributes to Blackburn.

Miscellaneous	Box 6
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Miscellaneous notes and correspondence	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 19
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Scope and Contents

Includes correspondence with Yusef Komunyakaa and John Nizalowski; a notebook on Harvey Allen's poetry; and a typescript of Remembering Time.

Miscellaneous documents: birth certificate, army records, Cambridge University, etc.	Box 12
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Miscellaneous Materials, approximately 1990s Physical Description: 2 folders	Box 41
Frank Waters miscellaneous	Box 9
Reviews, draft essay, miscellaneous	Box 12
Essays, letters, clippings, photographs, family history	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 3
Correspondence, clippings, awards, writings, and photographs relating to Blackburn's education and career, 1946-2019	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 4
Nominations and awards, reviews, correspondence, 1994-2015	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 6
Correspondence, awards, biographical materials Scope and Contents Includes materials relating to Alexander Blackburn and other family members including William Blackburn, Elizabeth Cheney Blackburn, and Roma Blackburn.	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 10
Vita, commentaries, recognition	Box 12
Essays, reviews, and some activities	Box 12
Course materials about Frank Waters Scope and Contents Materials relating to course on Waters; Faculty course questionnaires; evaluations of Blackburn's teaching at UCCS.	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 11
Course materials about western literature	Box Acc. 2020/099: Box 12
Elementary schoolwork, 1937-1941	Box 8
Elizabeth Blackburn, "The Noble Profession" (a novel) , 1928	Box 16
Elizabeth Blackburn's manuscripts and publications (3 folders)	Box 16

Drafts, edits, and correspondence regarding "The Golden River" and "A Little Pain and You Get a Result" , 1960s and no date (3 folders)	Box 7
The Beams of Love. A Novel , Typescript , 1998	Box 2
Writings	Box 2
Frank Waters Foundation	Box 9
Tapes and videos, mostly involving presentations on Frank Waters	Box 11
Scope and Contents	
9 VHS tapes, 23 cassettes	
<hr/>	
Benjamin S. Lawson, "The Men Who Killed the Deer: Faulkner and Frank Waters" , Faulkner Journal . , Fall 2002 Spring 2003	Box 9
Writers West books file	Box 7
Remarks on the short story today, 1994	Box 4
"Life in New Orleans 1870-1898"	Box 20
"Life in New York 1898-1917"	Box 20
"Life in Paris 1919-1928"	Box 20
John Wain	Box 7
Scope and Contents	
John Wain encouraged ALB's first novel	

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Books and Magazines, approximately 1941-1999

Scope and Contents

Books and Magazines series includes final publications by authors other than Alexander Blackburn

Books

The Myth of the Picaro: Continuity and Transformation of the Picaresque Novel, 1554-1994 Box 2

Scope and Contents

First edition. Cloth.

The Cold War of Kitty Pentecost Box 2

Scope and Contents

First edition. Cloth.

Suddenly a Mortal Splendor Box 2

Scope and Contents

First edition. Cloth.

Higher Elevations: Stories from the West, & 'Writers' Forum' Anthology Box 2

Scope and Contents

First edition. Cloth.

A Sunrise Brighter Still: The Vision Novels of Frank Waters Box 2

Scope and Contents

First edition. Cloth.

A Sunrise Brighter Still: The Visionary Novels of Frank Waters Box 2

Scope and Contents

Limited edition. Leather spine-autographed by Frank Waters and Tal Luther.

The Interior Country: Stories of the Modern West Box 2

Scope and Contents

First edition. Cloth.

The Interior Country: Stories of the Modern West Box 2

Scope and Contents

First edition. Paper.

"Flaubert and the Realism of Henry James" " Box 2

Scope and Contents

M.A. thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Bound typescript.

"The Picaresque Novel: A Literary Idea,
1554-1954" Box 2

Scope and Contents

Ph. D. dissertation, University of Cambridge. Bound typescript.

Faulkner and the Southern Renaissance Box 2

Scope and Contents

First edition, Cloth. Contains an essay by A. B.

Conflict and Arms Control Box 2

Scope and Contents

First edition, Cloth. Contains an essay by A. B.

American Vanguard 1956 Box 2

Scope and Contents

First edition. Cloth. Missing dust jacket. Contains A. B.'s first published story.

Dictionary of Literacy Themes and Motifs Box 3

Scope and Contents

2 vols. First edition. Cloth Vol. 2 contains an essay by A. B.

Sundays in Tutt Library with Frank Waters Box 3

Scope and Contents

First edition. Paper. Contains an essay by A. B.

Frank Waters: Man and Mystic Box 3

Scope and Contents

First edition. Cloth. Contains an essay by A. B.

"If All Great Men" , by Margreta Swenson Cheney	Box 19
"Paintings" , by Russell Cheney	Box 19
"Parents and Children: A Family Vignette" , by Antoinette Cheney Crocker	Box 19
Writers' Forum , Volume 25 , 1999	Box 19
The Bridge of San Luis Rey , by Thornton Wilder	Box 19
Blue Notes: Essays, Interviews, and Commentaries , by Yusef Komunyakaa	Box 19
Neurosis and Human Growth: The Struggle Toward Self-Realization , by Karen Horney, M.D.	Box 19
Sarah Orne Jewett , by Francis Otto Matthiessen	Box 19
Sites of Insight: A Guide to Colorado Sacred Places , edited by James Lough	Box 19
War, Literature, & The Arts , Volume 15, Numbers 1-2	Box 19
A Selected, Annotated Bibliography of Books about Taos and New Mexico , by Arthur J. Bachrach	Box 19
Tributes to Frank Waters , by T.N. Luther	Box 19
Books from T.N. Luther	Box 19
"A Few Reminiscences of my Exeter Life" , by Elizabeth Dow Leonard	Box 19
How to Stay Married , by Norman M. Lobsenz and Clark W. Blackburn	Box 19

By a Stroke of Luck! An Autobiography , by Donald Ogden Stewart	Box 19
The Abnormal Personality , by Robert W. White, Ph.D.	Box 19
The Neurotic Personality of Our Time , by Karen Horney, M.D.	Box 19
"Frank Waters and Charles: Eighty Years of Memories with a Friend" , by Charles Elbert Hathaway	Box 20
"Some Memories of the K.Ds. An Old Fashioned Family" , by Helen Cheney Bayne	Box 20
Meeting the Professor: Growing up in the William Blackburn Family , by Alexander Blackburn	Box 20
Collected Poems of Harvey Allen , edited by Alexander Blackburn	Box 20
Monographie de la Cathedrale de Chartres	Box 20
"Outline Sketches of the Lives of Six Generations of Cheneys with some Letters" , by Helen Cheney Bayne	Box 20
Phillips Academy Andover Class of 1947 50th Reunion Book, 1997	Box 1
Dictionary of Literary Biography Yearbook, 1985	Box 1
A Few Reminiscences of My Exeter Life	Box 41
Memories by Dorothy Cheney	Box 41
Old Manchester... A Picture Book	Box 41
Magazines	
Writers' Forum	Box 4
Writers' Forum , the early years , 1974-1980s	Box 15

Writers' Forum logo	Box 15
Writers' Forum Volume 21	Box 15
Writers' Forum, 1970s-1980s	Box 4
Physical Description: 16 folders	
Scope and Contents	
Editorial correspondence with writers and other material relevant (especially) to founding the magazine in 1974-75. There are some letters, too, from such well-known writers as Yusef Komunyakaa. See also Box 1.	
Writers' Forum	Box 1
Scope and Contents	
Editorial files (4 tapes) See also Box 4	
Writers' Forum Magazine Volumes	
Scope and Contents	
Volumes 1 and 3 are missing. The bound copy of Vol. 5 is damaged, but an unbound complete text is attached. Vol. 11, the Frank Waters Issue, is an extremely rare book. Vol. 17, with Index to Vols. 1-16, has some cover damage. Vol. 22 was edited by A.B.'s successor, C. Kenneth Pellow	
Volume 2, 1975	Box 3
Volume 4, 1977	Box 3
Volume 5, 1978	Box 3
Volume 6, 1979	Box 3
Volume 7, 1981	Box 3
Volume 8, 1982	Box 3
Volume 8, 1982	Box 3
Volume 9, 1983	Box 3
Volume 10, 1984	Box 3
Volume 11, 1985	Box 3
Volume 12, 1986	Box 3

Volume 13, 1987	Box 3
Volume 14, 1988	Box 3
Volume 15, 1989	Box 3
Volume 16, 1990	Box 3
Volume 17, 1991	Box 3
Volume 18, 1992	Box 3
Volume 19, 1993	Box 3
Volume 20, 1994	Box 3
Volume 21, 1995	Box 3
Volume 22, 1996	Box 3
Studies in Frank Waters.	Box 3
Scope and Contents	
Vol. 5 (1982) through Vol. 19 (1997), missing Vol. 17 (1995). A.B. frequently wrote essays for this periodical containing papers submitted for the annual conjoint meeting of The Frank Waters Society and the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association. Edited by Charles Adams.	
The Carolina Quarterly Vol. 8, No. 1 , 1955	Box 3
Crosscurrents Vol. 4. No. 3 , 1984	Box 3
South Dakota Review Vol. 25, No. 3 , 1987	Box 3
South Dakota Review Vol. 28, No. 1 , 1990	Box 3
South Dakota Review Vol. 33, Nos. 3 & 4 , 1995	Box 3
High Plains Literary Review Vol. 10, No. 2 , 1995	Box 3
Sonora Review Vol. 31 , 1996	Box 3
New Mexico Humanities Review Vol. 5, No. 1 , 1982	Box 3

The Colorado Quarterly Vol. 24, No. 1 , 1975	Box 3
Journal of the Southwest Vol. 30, No. 4 , 1988	Box 3
Western American Literature Vol. 23, No. 2 , 1988	Box 3
Western American Literature Vol. 24, No. 2 , 1989	Box 3
Western American Literature Vol. 29, No. 1 , 1994	Box 3
South Central Review Vol. 6, No. 4 , 1989	Box 3
The Denver Quarterly Vol. 14, No. 2 , 1979	Box 3
Journals, 1799-1805, Mary B. Howell	Box 20
"Cheney Hall"	Box 20
Studies in Frank Waters-XXII	Box 20
Studies in Frank Waters-XX	Box 20
Studies in Frank Waters-XI	Box 20
Sight: The Magazine of Psychological Warfare	Box 4

Scope and Contents

Only extant copy of this Army publication edited by A.B.

High school stories and magazines, 1941-1945	Box 8
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Physical Description: 3 folders

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Clippings, approximately 1950-1998

Review of Frank Waters' Of Time & Change in The Bloomsbury Review Vol. 18, No. 5. Sept-Oct 558, and in The Gazette (Colorado Springs). , 1998-09-06T00:00:00+00:00	Box 4
Review of Robert Fiore's Lazarillo de Tormes in Hispania , Vol. 68, No. 1. , 1985	Box 4

Reviews in Western American Literature of The Best of the West 2 , Vol. 25, No. 4, and of New Writers of the Purple Sage , Vol. 28, No. 3.	Box 4
Reviews in Cambridge Review , Vol. 81, No. 1979 , 1950-05-07T00:00:00+00:00	Box 4
Reviews of Clay Reynolds' novels	Box 6
Letter to the editor of University of Colorado Silver & Gold Record, 1985-12-19T00:00:00+00:00	Box 4
Letter to Taos News, 1996	Box 4
"Frank Waters." Dictionary of Literary Biography 1986 ,	Box 4
Scope and Contents Includes manuscript and correspondence	
"Frank Waters and the Peak of Western Consciousness." Springs Magazine, 1985	Box 4
"William Blackburn." Dictionary of North Carolina Biography.	Box 4
"Waste-Land to Heart-Land: The Quest of Frank Waters" in la Tertulia (Southwest Studies, The Colorado College), Vol. 1, No Spring, and in Leviathan (student paper, The Colorado College), Vol. 13, No. 3. , 1985-1987	Box 4
"Secret Research Violates Academic Spirit"	Box 4
Articles about Blackburn, circa 1978, 2005	Box 41
Scope and Contents "Connoisseur: Blackburn points readers toward peaks of West's literature" from The Denver Post (circa 1978) and "'Meeting the professor'" from The Herald-Sun (2005).	
Articles about William and Alex Blackburn, 2004-2016	Box 42

Scope and Contents

Includes Duke Magazine and The Bloomsbury Review.

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