

Concordia University Libraries Special Collections

Finding Aid - Don Bell fonds (P235)

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Don Bell fonds

Table of contents

| | |
|--|---|
| Summary information | 3 |
| Administrative history / Biographical sketch | 3 |
| Scope and content | 4 |
| Notes | 4 |
| Access points | 5 |

Summary information

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| Repository: | Concordia University Libraries Special Collections |
| Title: | Don Bell fonds |
| ID: | P235 |
| Date: | 1936-2004 (date of creation) |
| Physical description: | 10.5 m of textual records ca. 700 photographs 16 compact cassettes. |
| Language: | English |
| Language: | French |
| Language: | Spanish |
| Dates of creation, revision and deletion: | |

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Donald Herbert Bell (known also as Don The Bookman Bell) was an author, dramatist, journalist-much of his writing was humorous-and a seller of used and rare books. He was born November 17, 1936 in Brooklyn, N.Y. In 1941 his family moved to Montreal. His parents were Sam Bell and Claire Bell (d. 1983). The family name at the time of Don Bell's birth was Belitzky. His brother was Arthur Bell (1932-1984), who worked in publishing in New York and then became a writer at the Village Voice. His sister was Doreen Bell (married name: Resnick). Don Bell studied at Baron Byng High School and Mount Royal High School and then at McGill University, graduating in 1957 with a degree in commerce with an English major. He married Céline Dubé in 1962. They had two children, Daniel and Valerie, and later divorced. In the 1980s he married Odile Perret and divided his time between Paris and Sutton, Quebec. He died in Montreal March 6, 2003, age 67.

In the 1960s he had a number of jobs as a journalist, working for a time at CBC International Services and then at newspapers including the Montreal Herald, the Calgary Herald, and the Montreal Gazette. From 1967 onward, he worked as a freelance writer of articles, fiction (short stories and novellas), and film and radio scripts for a wide variety of Canadian and American magazines, newspapers, and other media. He did photography to illustrate his articles. He wrote the Expo publicity booklet short book *Film at Expo 67* (published by Expo 67, 1967). A collection of his short stories was published as *Saturday Night at the Bagel Factory and Other Montreal Stories* (McClelland and Stewart, 1972). It won the Stephen Leacock Memorial Award for Humour for 1974. His book *Pocketman* was published by Dorset Publications in 1979. In 1976, he won the Canadian Authors Association Air Canada award for humour. In 1978 he won a Jewish Book Month award. In 1986 he won the Molson Silver Award for the Best Canadian Sports

Writing category of the National Magazine Awards. For a number of years he researched the life and death of magician Harry Houdini, creating a manuscript for a book that was published posthumously as *The Man Who Killed Houdini* by Véhicule Press in 2004. He wrote a number of other books, usually compilations and reworkings of his articles and stories, that were never published.

In the 1980s he opened a second-hand bookstore in Sutton, Quebec. During his travels he scouted books and in the summers he sold books at his store, La Librairie Founde Bookes in Sutton. He had a column, Founde Bookes, in *Books in Canada* magazine, dealing with his life as a book scout and dealer. *Bookspeak*, a chapbook based on his experience scouting and selling used and rare books, was published by Typographeum in 2000.

Custodial history

The fonds was transferred from Concordia University's Records Management and Archives Department to Concordia University Libraries' Special Collections April 12, 2016 and June 27, 2016.

Scope and content

The fonds documents the personal and professional life of Don Bell, his work as a magazine journalist and used and rare book dealer and many features of life in Montreal and elsewhere during his working life. It includes personal and family documents, correspondence, manuscripts, research materials, notebooks, and photographs.

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title based on the content of the fonds.

Immediate source of acquisition

The materials were donated to the Concordia University Archives by Valerie Bell, Don Bell's daughter, in 2010.

Conditions governing use

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Finding aids

Box listings available

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published

- **Level of detail:** Full
 - **Status description:** Final
 - **Rights:** Copyright belongs to the creator(s).
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Access points

- Textual record (documentary form)
 - Graphic material (documentary form)
 - Sound recording (documentary form)
 - Journalism (subject)
-

Series descriptions
