

# Guide to the Wesley Brown Papers

JWJ MSS 229



by Beinecke staff

March 2021

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** JWJ MSS 229

**CREATOR:** Brown, Wesley, 1945-

**TITLE:** Wesley Brown papers

**DATES:** 1967–2017

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 3 linear feet (7 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The Wesley Brown papers consists of original and photocopied material related to the writer Wesley Brown. The papers primarily contain the creative writing of Wesley Brown, including novels, plays, poems, short stories, film scripts, correspondence, and reviews related to these writings. The papers also include legal documents related to Wesley Brown's refusal to be inducted into the armed services in 1972.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.wesleybrown>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.wesleybrown>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box  
f. folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Ken Lopez Bookseller on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2018.

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## Conditions Governing Access

This material is open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Wesley Brown papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

Wesley Brown Papers. James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

These materials have been arranged and described according to national and local standards. For more information, please refer to the Beinecke Manuscript Unit Processing Manual.

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## Biographical / Historical

Wesley Brown, born 1945, received his M.A. in Literature and Creative Writing at The City College of the City University of New York and his B.A. in History and Political Science at State University of New York, Oswego. Wesley Brown is a novelist, playwright, and teacher. He worked with the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1965 and became a member of the Black Panther Party in 1968. In 1972, he was sentenced to three years in prison for refusing induction into the armed services and spent 18 months in Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary. Brown was a professor at Rutgers University (1979-2005). He has taught literature at Bard College at Simon's Rock since 2007.

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## Scope and Contents

The Wesley Brown papers consists of original and photocopied material related to the writer Wesley Brown. The papers primarily contain the creative writing of Wesley Brown, including novels, plays, poems, short stories, film scripts, correspondence, and reviews related to these writings. The papers also include legal documents related to Wesley Brown's refusal to be inducted into the armed services in 1972.

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## Arrangement

Organized into three series: I. Writings, 1960-2010. II. Legal Documents, 1970-1973. III. Guest Books, 2004-2005.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Writings, 1960–2017

2.5 linear feet : (6 boxes)

Series I contains the creative writings of Wesley Brown, including novels, plays, poems, short stories, film scripts, correspondence, and reviews related to these writings.

Series I is organized into seven subseries: Essays, Novels, Diaries, Plays, Poetry, Short Stories, Film Scripts, and Reviews

#### Essays

Materials roughly maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 1, f. 1	"Jes' Grew: Newsletter of the National Association of Third World Writers" This file contains two issues of the Jes' Grew Newsletter from Fall/Winter 1982 and March 1982.	1982
b. 1, f. 1	"Which Sound Are You On?"	
b. 1, f. 2	"The Mojo and the Sayso: Myth and Ritual in the work of Larry Neal" This file contains 2 typescripts and a photocopy of the essay "The Mojo and the Sayso". The file also contains the first volume of The Journal, in which "The Mojo and the Sayso" was initially published.	
b. 1, f. 3	Imagining America: Stories from the Promised Land, printed version Imagining America: Stories from the Promised Land is a multicultural anthology of American fiction from 1900 to 1991. It was edited by Wesley Brown and Amy Ling.	
b. 1, f. 4	Why magazine This file contains 7 issues of Why magazine from March 1970 to November 1971	1970–1971
b. 1, f. 4	"Famous People in Negro History, 1960 Calendar"	1960
b. 1, f. 5	"Vietnam Journal" and related writings This file contains 4 edited typescripts of "Vietnam Journal", a manuscript essay titled "What do Black People know about Vietnam?" and the article "Reflections on Vietnam" published in Essence in 1998	1998
b. 1, f. 5	"A Visit to Buchenwald" This file contains 4 edited typescripts of "A Visit to Buchenwald" and related correspondence.	
b. 1, f. 6	"Handwritten Essay re: Dick" (transcribed)	2017
b. 1, f. 6	Essays and interviews regarding adoptive son, Anthony This file contains a typescript essay, an interview with Wesley Brown regarding adopting a child as a single parent, and a photocopy of the essay "Say Brother".	1982–1993
b. 1, f. 6	Teachers & Writers magazine, printed version, Volume 7 Issue 2	1976
b. 1, f. 6	"A Profile of Adam Clayton Powell"	

## Essays (continued)

b. 1, f. 7	"Some Notes on Love and Theft"	
b. 1, f. 7	Craft Talk: The Art of Not Knowing	
b. 1, f. 7	"The Film Fails...By Settling for Less"	
b. 1, f. 7	"Don't Just Sit There, Create!"	
b. 1, f. 7	"Victims of the Latest Dance Craze"	
b. 1, f. 7	Introduction to Paule Marshall and Toni Morrison reading	1978
b. 1, f. 7	Literature and the Social Consciousness	
b. 1, f. 7	The Mojo and the Sayso: Myth and Ritual in the Work of Larry Neale	
b. 1, f. 7	You Talk Like You Got Books in Your Jaws	
b. 1, f. 7	The Art of Getting to the Point	
b. 1, f. 7	Who to Blame	
b. 1, f. 7	"I'm Coming out of a Black Thing"	1967 September 29
b. 1, f. 7	"Where is Che Guevara"	1968 February 2
b. 1, f. 7	"We are at the Lip of the Grave"	1968 April 12
b. 1, f. 8	Blue Orpheus, book review	undated
b. 1, f. 8	Remembering Will Burgess, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 8	Interview with historian Nell Irvin Painter, typescript	2006 November 5
b. 1, f. 8	The Machiaveillian Impulse in Shakespeare's "The Tempest", typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 8	The Influence of Jazz on the 20th Century American Literature, edited typescripts	undated
b. 1, f. 8	Lecture: "Self Invention as Deception in Frederick Douglass' Narrative"	undated
b. 1, f. 9	Hamlet's 7 Soliloquies of the Story of a Man Who Couldn't Make Up His Mind	undated
b. 1, f. 9	Presentation of the 50th Anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery March and the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 9	Black Consciousness: the forms and structures developed in the sixties, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 9	The Art of the Craft Talk: The Value of Not-Knowing, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 9	The Poetry and Legacy of America Baraka	undated
b. 1, f. 10	Blurb for Mervyn Taylor, the Waving Gallery, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 10	Martin Luther King Jr. - The Man, not the Monument	undated

## Essays (continued)

b. 1, f. 10	Keetje Kuipers Introduction, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 10	Telling Stories that Should Not be Passed On, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 10	Introduction to Mervyn's Reading, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 10	Blurb for Dexter Calling: The Life and Legacy of Dexter Gordon, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 10	The Art of Getting to the Point, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 10	Rutgers Retirement Remarks 05/05, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 10	#220 1978: August Wilson writes 'Jitney', typescript	1978
b. 1, f. 10	Comment on "Near Andersonville", typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 10	Introduction to Mervyn's GONE AWAY, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 10	Remarks about Grace Paley, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 10	Remembering Amiri Baraka, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 10	Some Thoughts in Celebration of Karen Jahn, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 10	Remarks for the Celebration of Jerry Berger's Life, typescript	undated
b. 1, f. 10	Remarks for Rutgers Demonstration	1990 March 14

## Film Scripts

Materials roughly maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 2, f. 11	Treatment for the Amos 'n' Andy Film Script	undated
	Bolito King	undated
b. 2, f. 11	Bolito King Script	undated
b. 2, f. 11	Treatment for Bolito King Script	undated
	The Promised Land	undated
b. 2, f. 12	The Promised Land edited draft screenplay, edited	undated
b. 2, f. 13-14	The Promised Land edited draft screenplay	undated
b. 2, f. 15	The Promised Land screenplay, news clippings and related correspondence	undated
b. 2, f. 16	The Promised Land screenplay	undated

## Novels

Materials roughly maintain order found at time of acquisition.

## Push Comes to Shove

b. 3, f. 17	Push Comes to Shove typescript	undated
b. 3, f. 18	Push Comes to Shove synopsis, offprint, Washington Post review, and related correspondence	1969-1996

## Novels &gt; Push Comes to Shove (continued)

b. 3, f. 19-20	Push Comes to Shove, printed draft	undated
b. 3, f. 21	Push Comes to Shove, earlier draft ["Muriel (1970)"]	undated
Darktown Strutters		
b. 4, f. 22	Darktown Strutters – page proofs for Concord Free Press reprint	undated
b. 4, f. 23	Darktown Strutters typescript	undated
b. 4, f. 24	Darktown Strutters book proof, program for "Wesley Brown, A Celebration"	undated
Plays		
Materials roughly maintain order found at time of acquisition.		
Dark Meat on a Funny Mind		
b. 5, f. 25	Dark Meat on a Funny Mind, draft	undated
b. 5, f. 26	Dark Meat on a Funny Mind – drafts, correspondence, and news clippings	undated
b. 5, f. 27	Dark Meat on a Funny Mind, draft and synopsis	undated
b. 5, f. 28	Playwright's statement for Dark Meat on a Funny Mind, handbill for production at New Federal Theater, NYC, and related correspondence	undated
b. 5, f. 29	Boogie Woogie and Booker T – acting edition, typescript, production information from New Federal Theater 1987, photograph, review and handbill for Mazur Theater production	undated
b. 5, f. 30	Life During Wartime – two typescripts, handbill for production at Nuyorican Poets Café and additional promotional material	undated
b. 5, f. 31	Murderess – typescript	undated
b. 5, f. 32	And Now, Will the Real Bud Jones Please Stand Up – typescript	undated
Short Stories		
Materials roughly maintain order found at time of acquisition.		
"In the Land of Ooblah Dee"		
b. 6, f. 33	Grant proposal for In the Land of Ooblah Dee	
b. 6, f. 34	In the Land of Ooblah Dee, draft	undated
b. 6, f. 35	Brilliant Corners: A Journal of Jazz and Literature, typescript	undated
b. 6, f. 36	"Body and Soul", drafts, typescripts	undated
b. 6, f. 37	"I Was Here but I Disappeared" – drafts, typescripts, tearsheet from Essence and full Essence	undated
b. 6, f. 38	"Mother Wit Versus the Sleet Medallion Fleet"	undated
b. 6, f. 38	"Brother, Where are You?", draft and tearsheets	1972



## Short Stories (continued)

*"Zazz Zu Zazz"*

b. 6, f. 39	<i>"Zazz Zu Zazz"</i> , drafts	undated
b. 6, f. 40	<i>"Zazz Zu Zazz"</i> , drafts, handwritten notes, research materials	undated
b. 6, f. 41	Untitled short story	1980
b. 7, f. 42	<i>"Scraps"</i>	1980
b. 7, f. 43	<i>"Funk Em Up, Funky Man"</i>	undated
b. 7, f. 44	<i>"Out Dere"</i>	undated
b. 7, f. 45	<i>"What You Gon Do, Dribble or Shoot?"</i>	undated
b. 7, f. 46	<i>"Coming of Age in Lamar, South Carolina"</i>	undated
b. 7, f. 47	<i>"Too Good to be True"</i>	undated
b. 7, f. 48	Viewpoint, including short story <i>"Autopsy"</i> , printed	undated
b. 7, f. 48	Liberator, including short story <i>"The Unresolved Denouement"</i> , printed	1966 December
b. 7, f. 49	<i>"Dance of the Infidels"</i> , cover proof	undated

## Poetry

Materials roughly maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 7, f. 50	Printouts of poems and related correspondence	1974–2008
b. 7, f. 51	Collective Voices – Hunter College literary journal, printed	1977 June
b. 7, f. 51	Black Creation: A Quarterly Review of Black Arts and Letters, printed	1971
b. 7, f. 51	Amsterdam News, printed	1974 March 23

## Diaries

Materials roughly maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 7, f. 52	Southern Civil Rights Journey	2005 May
b. 7, f. 52	Trip to Israel	2010 February

b. 7, f. 53

## Reviews

*1 Folder*

Materials roughly maintain order found at time of acquisition.

## **Series II: Legal Documents, 2004-2005**

*1 Folder*

Series II contains legal documents related to Wesley Brown's refusal to be inducted into the armed services in 1972.

Materials roughly maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 7, f. 54	Defendant Appellant's Brief, Appendix on Appeal	1972
b. 7, f. 55	Supporting legal documents, letters of support	1972-1973

### **Series III: Guest Books, 2004-2005**

Series III contains two guest books from Wesley Brown's retirement.

Materials roughly maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 8

## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

African American authors  
African American dramatists  
African American educators  
African American poets  
Authors, American -- 20th Century  
Vietnam War, 1961-1975 -- Draft resisters.