

Finding Aid for William Penn “Bill” Frank Collection

Date range: 1871-2012

Bulk dates: 1932-1988

Finding aid created by: Elizabeth Jones-Minsinger, June 2017

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Extent: 0.3 linear feet

Abstract: The William Penn “Bill” Frank Collection consists of manuscripts, journals, research notes, correspondence, and newspaper articles created by Bill Frank, mostly from the 1930s to the 1980s. It also contains correspondence from Frank’s friends and newspaper articles regarding Bill Frank.

Accession number: 2017.00.016

Language: Materials entirely in English

Acquisition Information: Found in collection

Access Restrictions: The collection is open for research

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Cite as: [item], folder, William Penn “Bill” Frank Collection, Arden Craft Shop Museum

Biographical Note:

William Penn “Bill” Frank was born on October 16, 1905 in Brooklyn, New York. Following the death of his father, his mother remarried and the family moved to Wilmington, Delaware in 1911. He adopted the middle name “Penn” to cement his identity as a Delawarean. Frank was raised in an Orthodox Jewish household and remained a scholar of Judaica throughout his life. He frequently wrote for the Jewish Voice and helped found the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware.

Frank was a journalist and editor, and spent most of his career with the Wilmington Morning News, which later merged with the Wilmington News Journal. He graduated from Wilmington High School in 1923 and began working for the Morning News the same year. After a brief stint as the news director for the radio station WILM, Frank returned to the Wilmington Morning News in 1949. However, he continued to work as a radio commentator for the rest of his life. In his public and private life, he campaigned against the death penalty, poor treatment of the mentally ill, and segregation. At the time of his death in 1989, he was columnist emeritus at the Wilmington News Journal. That year, he received a lifetime award from the Delaware Council on Crime and Justice and the Delaware Bar Association's Liberty Award. The News Journal also named their conference center in his honor.

Frank first moved to the Ardens in the 1920s, and often wrote about the community in his newspaper columns. He was a lifelong Shakespeare enthusiast and frequently performed in local productions. He was first married to Miriam Hetzel in the 1930s. In 1938, he married Gladys Mann Frank, with whom he broadcast a morning radio show called "Coffee with the Franks." Following her death in 1958, Frank married his third wife, Edith (called "Winnie"). They remained married until Frank's death on August 21, 1989.

Scope and Content:

The William Penn "Bill" Frank collection consists of article manuscripts, journals, research notes, correspondence, and newspaper articles created by Bill Frank, mostly from the 1930s to the 1980s. It also contains correspondence from Frank's friends and newspaper articles regarding Bill Frank.

The collection consists primarily of manuscript materials created by Bill Frank. These items include a journal Frank kept from 1932 to 1935, shortly after he moved to a house in Ardentown, Delaware. In it, Frank described parties, theatrical performances, local gossip, and disputes over land rents. The journal consists of handwritten and typed materials as well as newspaper clippings. Also included are three article manuscripts about single tax theory and a speech about Arden Frank delivered in 1980.

The collection also includes Frank's undated research notes on the Ardens as single tax communities and disputes over land rents and assessments, covering the period between 1909 and the 1950s. Frank gathered information from town meeting records and various Arden newsletters, including *Arden Leaves*, *Town Crier*, and *The Arden Spirit*. The materials focus primarily on the ongoing conflict over land value assessments.

There are a few pieces of correspondence in this collection, including a letter Frank wrote to an unknown recipient while in Mexico. Letters written to Frank include materials on the Arden School and Arden Pool.

Finally, the collection contains numerous newspaper clippings, including Bill Frank's articles dated from 1954 to 1988, articles by Iain Milne in the 1930s, and clippings about Bill Frank, primarily from after his death in 1989.

Subjects:

- Frank, Bill, 1905-1989
 - Arden (Del.)
 - Ardentown (Del.)
 - Single Tax
- George, Henry, 1839-1897
- Stephens, Frank, 1859-1935
- Thaddeus, Victor, 1896-

Separated Materials:

A copy of *Almost Infinity*, a book of poetry by Gladys Mann Frank published in 1959, has been removed and housed separately as part of the Bill Frank Collection.

Container List:

William Penn "Bill" Frank Collection	
F1	Journal and scrapbook, 1871, 1932-1935
F2	Article manuscripts, undated
F3	Speech manuscript, 1980
F4	Research notes, undated
F5	Correspondence, ca. 1930s-1954
F6	Bill Frank columns, 1954-1988
F7	Iain Milne columns, 1934
F8	Newspaper clippings about Bill Frank, 1954-2012