

REGISTER OF THE ROBERT ADGER BOWEN PAPERS
1865-1981
MSS 119 5 cubic feet



Mss 119 Robert Adger Bowen Papers

Introduction

This collection was donated by Robert Adger Bowen over a period of years. Additional material was received from his nieces, Clarissa and Jean Taylor and from his friend, Mary Stevenson, former head cataloger at Cooper Library. Bowen's donation was presented to Clemson through the efforts of Mary Stevenson. MSS 119 was formerly accessioned as: 66-6; 68-1; 70-5; 70-9; 78-2; 78-3; 78-8; 90-98; 90-105 and 93-14. Arrangement of all accessions into MSS 119 was completed by Pauline Klein in November, 1990. James Cross added additional material to the collection and revised this finding aid in October 2008. During his lifetime, Bowen donated the originals of his unpublished poetry to Furman University, where they remain in Special Collections.

Robert Adger Bowen was the third son of O. A. and Clarissa Adger Bowen. He was born December 30, 1868 in Charleston, South Carolina. Prior to the Civil War, many family members lived on plantations near Pendleton, South Carolina; his parents lived at Rivoli, his maternal grandparents at Ashtabula and other maternal relatives lived at Woodburn. As a youth, he spent much time at the plantations, developing a love for historic homes, architecture and preservation which remained constant throughout his long life. He was educated at the College of Charleston, the University of Washington and Lee and Cornell University.

Between 1894 and 1916 (approximately) he worked as an editor and translator for D. Appleton Publishers, New York City and also worked free-lance as a writer, poet and editor. From 1917 to 1929 he served as director of the Bureau of Translations and Radical Publications, United States Justice Department. When the Federal Bureau of Investigation was formed, replacing the Bureau of Translations, Bowen became a special agent for the FBI. He was personally acquainted with J. Edgar Hoover and was influential in national anti-communist efforts during the 1920's. The collection contains copies of reports he submitted to Congress on "Communism and the Radical Press" and "Radicalism and Seditious Among the Negroes as Reflected in their Publications." He remained a strong supporter of J. Edgar Hoover, and the collection contains copies of his letters to the editor supporting Hoover during the 1960's when Hoover was criticized by some members of Congress and the presidential administrations of Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon. In addition there are several letters from Hoover to Bowen thanking him for his support of Hoover and the FBI.

In 1929 he retired to Greenville, SC where he lived until 1972, except for a few years spent in Macon Georgia during the late 1930's. During his retirement years, he wrote poetry, letters to the editor, had a regular column in the *Greenville News*, and carried on a wide correspondence. He spent the last three years of his life in a nursing home. Although his body was increasingly frail, his mind remained sharp and focused until his death in May, 1972.

In the last ten years of his life, he devoted much of his time and writings to the theme of local history and preservation. The Foundation for Historic Restoration in the Pendleton Area, through the leadership of Mary Stevenson and Lucille and David Watson published three books of Bowen's poetry to raise funds for the restoration of Woodburn and Ashtabula. Mary Stevenson sketched the illustrations, and after consultation with Mr. Bowen, planned the layouts of the books. Bowen's nephew and namesake, R. A. Bowen provided funds to begin restoration of

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Woodburn. After the death of R. A. Bowen (the nephew), his widow provided funding in 1969 for the third book of poetry in honor of her late husband and his uncle.

Scope and Content

The papers contain many of Bowen's early writings, both published and unpublished; scrapbooks of his letters to the editor and columns from his retirement years; reports and information from his position with the Bureau of Translations and Radical Publications and the FBI; hundreds of his poems organized by topic, clippings related to his interests in royalty, literary figures and politics.

Bowen's Poetry/Writings: Bowen wrote extensively from 1885 until his death at age 103 in 1972. His works are arranged alphabetically and by type of material, with his published short stories, essays, and college papers in Boxes 1-3. Box 4 contains files on the publication of the poetry books to benefit the Foundation for Historic Restoration in the Pendleton Area. Draft layouts, early sketches, hand-written notes, financial arrangements and correspondence about the process are included here. The bulk of Bowen's poetry is in Box 5. These are mostly unpublished and date primarily from his retirement in 1929 until his death. They are arranged alphabetically by dominant themes.

Scrapbooks: Bowen wrote many letters to the editor of the *Greenville News* and other regional papers. He also had a regular column during the 1930's and 1940's. These scrapbooks in Boxes 6, 7, and 8 contain clippings of his letters as well as responses by readers. Each book has been copied; they are in chronological order with the originals behind the copies. Loose papers which had been inserted into the scrapbooks have been copied and inserted into the copies in their original location.

General Correspondence: Bowen carried on a variety of correspondence over his lifetime, which is contained in Box 9. Letters regarding the publication of a book on local poets in which Bowen was featured is interesting and continues after his death, with Mary Stevenson writing to A. Reid about Bowen's works. The give-and-take between Bowen and Wayne Freeman, editor of the *Greenville News* provides insights into a relationship that was both respectful and full of conflict. Their mutual respect is apparent, even as Bowen attacked the paper and Freeman for their policies on letters to the editor. General correspondence with his friends and fans provide insight into his beliefs and interests. This group of letters also demonstrates the audience he had developed from his columns and editorials in the paper. While an editor at D. Appleton Co., Bowen received letters from aspiring authors which are included here along with the occasional editorial comment regarding the author or his book.

FBI related material-Boxes 10 and 10A: Between 1917 and 1929 Bowen was employed as director of the Bureau of Translations and Radical Publications of the United States Justice Department. The Bureau was later absorbed into the newly formed Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Bowen was the author of several studies on communists in the United States, the subversive/radical presses of the period and the relationship of communists with minority presses. These reports were presented before Congress and some appear in published Congressional records. His personal correspondence with FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover spans a

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50 year period and is included here along with letters from Melvin Purvis, a South Carolina native who was director of the FBI office in Chicago during the 1930's. An unusual collection of communist postcards are included here. Also included are two accounts of the Japanese occupation of Nanking, China during 1937-38 which Bowen received from friends who were U. S. Embassy employees during the occupation. Box 10A has a copy of *The FBI Story* (1956) by Don Whitehead with annotations by Bowen and inserts of clippings, letters and notes dating between 1924 and 1966.

Bowen's Clippings-Box 11: Bowen kept many news clippings on topics which interested him, including literary figures, European royalty, politics, local history/preservation and places he had lived. These clippings are arranged by topic and chronologically within folders.

Miscellaneous Materials: Materials in Box 12 include magazines which Bowen collected on a variety of topics, reviews of his novel *Uncharted Seas*, clippings which portray his life in later years, and genealogical information about the Bowen, Adger, and Smyth families in Pendleton and Charleston, South Carolina. Bowen's notes about the disposition of his books and papers are included here.

Legal-sized documents and publications-Box 13: these include correspondence received while an editor at D. Appleton Co., reduced photocopies of material from the scrapbooks, and bound volumes of his short stories and verses.

Oversize: Oversize materials are in the map case. Oversize materials include page proofs from Bowen's books, maps, and a work agreement between Bowen's father and his former slaves.

Photographs: Photos have been removed from the general collection. They include Charleston scenes, family photos from Rivoli, photos of the Bowen children, and Bowen as a young man in New York, along with several photos of Bowen's friends.

Related material can be found in Mss 220, the Foundation for Historic Restoration in Pendleton Area Records.

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Subjects

1. Adger Family
2. Afro-American Press
3. Charleston, (SC) History
4. Communism-U.S.—1917
5. Plantations--South Carolina
6. Poetry of Places--South Carolina
7. Press-United States-Communist
8. Royal Houses
9. South Carolina History
10. Spirituals (Songs)
11. United States. Department of Justice
12. United States. Federal Bureau of Investigation

NAME ADDED ENTRIES

- I. Bowen, O. A.
- II. Freeman, Wayne W.
- III. Glasgow, Ellen
- IV. Hoover, J. Edgar
- V. Pollock, Channing
- VI. Purvis, Melvin
- VII. Stevenson, Mary C.
- VIII. Whitman, Walt
- IX. Wilde, Oscar

Published Writings, Essays and Books

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
1	1	"America for Herself," <i>League of Nations Magazine</i> , July 1919.
	2	<i>Architecture Among the Poets</i> , a book review for the <i>New York Times</i> , c. 1890-1900.
	3	"The Art of Letter Writing," <i>Guton's Magazine</i> , Sept. 1903.
	4	Articles on Luckling, Limrod, and Prior, c. 1885-1895.
	5	Articles on Radcliffe, Sage, and Wither, c. 1885-1895
	6	"Before Calais," <i>Appleton's</i> , November 1908.
	7	Blue Bound Copy of Bowen's Writings, Various Subjects, c. 1903-04
	8	Book Reviews, Dec. 1896, pages 223-229.
	9	Collection of "Negro Songs ...," August 1893
	10	Copy and Original of Scrapbook of Bowen's articles, c. 1896-1904.
	11	"Eccentricities of a Literary Underworld," undated.
2	12	"In Nora's Absence," <i>Redbook</i> , January 1910.
	13	"In The Earth Flame," <i>Ainslee's</i> , April 1905
	14	"The Great Query," 1912
	15	"He Loved and Rode Away," 1890.
	16	"The House at the Crossroads," <i>Redbook</i> , March 1942
	17	"Loyal Treason," <i>Top Notch Magazine</i> , Oct. 1, 1915.
	18	"Miss Angela—A Story," 1889.
	19	"Miss Emily," <i>Cornell Magazine</i> , October 1892.
2	20	Thesis on "Nathaniel Hawthorne." Also shorter papers derived from Thesis, June 1893
	21	Original of Thesis on Hawthorne.

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<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
3	22	"Northern Sentiment Toward the South," <i>The Southern States</i> , August, 1893
	23	The Reveille of the PMA (Peekskill Military Academy), November 1893 and January 1894.
	24	"The Short Story," c. 1919-1925.
	25	"Twisted Oaks," <i>The Cavalier</i> , August 9, 1913.
	26	"Verses on Rivoli," Bowen's early plans for a book of poems about Pendleton/Rivoli, c. 1960.
	27	"Verses on Rivoli," c. 1960 (Photos removed from bound copy).
	28	Verses, undated. Bowen's Poetry/Writings
	29	Vigilantes Writing, c. 1917-1919
	30	Vignettes in Verse by Robert Adger Bowen. (copied as arranged in original) [not dated-probably 1930-1960].
	31	"The World Tomorrow," c. 1919

Books Published to Benefit the Fountain for Historic Restoration in the Pendleton Area

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
3	32	<i>Footfalls and Echoes</i> , early drafts of layouts by Mary Stevenson and R. A. Bowen, c. 1964.
	33	Sketches for <i>Footfalls and Echoes</i> , drawings by Mary Stevenson, 1964
	34	<i>The Call of the Sea</i> , correspondence.
	35	<i>The Call of the Sea</i> , copy of first draft, layout by Mary Stevenson and R. A. Bowen, 1968.
4	36	<i>The Call of the Sea</i> , original of first draft, layout by Mary Stevenson and R. A. Bowen, 1968.
	37	<i>The Call of the Sea</i> , draft layout by Mary Stevenson, 1969.
	38	<i>The Call of the Sea</i> , draft layout by Mary Stevenson, 1969.
	39	<i>The Call of the Sea</i> , production plans and financial details, 1969-70.

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<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
4	40	<i>The Call of the Sea</i> , sketches and paper samples during design phase, originals and photocopies by Mary Stevenson, c. 1968-69.
5	41	Aging, Dying, Life's Passages, c. 1929-1979
	42	Late, Oakmont Nursery. Maxims, verses written by Mr. Bowen, 103 yrs. old, c. 1971.
	43	Late poems, c. 1968-1971.
	44	Late, written in Oakmont Nursing Home arranged by Nos. 1-53, c. 1970-71
	45	Literary Figures and Performing Arts, c. 1929-69.
	46	Memorials, c. 1929-1969.
	47	Miscellaneous Topics, c. 1929-69.
	48	Modern Life-Social Changes, etc., c. 1929-1969
	49	Nature and Animals, c. 1929-69.
	50	Old Houses, Preservation and Architecture, c. 1929-69.
	51	Places-New York, Charleston, etc., c. 1929-1969.
	52	Politics-Civil Rights-Supreme Court, c. 1929-1969.
	53	Religion-Faith-God, c. 1929-1969.
	54	Seasons, Time of Day/Year, c. 1929-69.

Unpublished Essays

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
5	55	"The Art of Versification." Read to the Poetry Society of S.C., undated.
	56	The Beach at Rockaway, undated.
	57	The Glory that was Rockaway, undated.
	58	"The Great Query: Who Is Responsible for the Superfluity of Novels?"

Scrapbooks

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
6	59	Copy of Scrapbook of Bowen's writings, c. 1912-1940's.
	60	Original of 1912-1940's Scrapbook
	61	Copy of Scrapbook of Bowen's writings, c. Feb. 1937-Oct. 1940.
	62	Original of 1937-40 Scrapbook
7	63	Copy of Scrapbook of Bowen's writings, c. Oct. 1940-Dec. 1948.
	64	Original of 1940-48 Scrapbook
	65	Copy of Scrapbook of Bowen's writings, c. 1953-1961.
8	66	Original of 1953-61 Scrapbook
	67	Copy of Scrapbook of Bowen's writings, c. 1962-1969.
	68	Original of 1962-69 Scrapbook

Correspondence

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
9	69	Authors with D. Appleton and Co., Mar. 4, 1905-Mar. 25, 1907.
	70	Authors with D. Appleton and Co., Apr. 8, 1907-Dec. 28, 1908.
	71	Authors with D. Appleton and Co., March 26, 1909-[undated].
	72	Wayne Freeman, Editor, <i>Greenville News</i> , c. 1961-1971.
	73	<i>Furman Studies</i> , November, 1963, Reid. "Poets of Greenville" [c. Oct. 1961-Dec. 1963].
	74	Old friends, fans of his writings, etc. c. 1890's-1949.
	75	Old friends, fans of his writings, etc. c. 1950-1960.
	76	Old friends, fans of his writings, etc. c. 1961-1965.
	77	Old friends, fans of his writings, etc. c. 1966-1971.
	78	Writers who sent their works to Bowen. c. 1892-1948.

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<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
9	79	Writers who sent their works to Bowen. c. 1950-1970, and [undated].

FBI Materials, Clippings

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
10	80	FBI, Hoover and Purvis
	81	Newspaper articles c. 1919 Re: Communists in U.S. Some written by Bowen

FBI Materials, Correspondence

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
10	82	1921-1964.
	83	Pulled from <i>American Journalist and Author's Blue Book</i> , c. 1923.

FBI Materials, Reports

10	84	Congressional Records: Hearings on Communism and The Radical Press, Bureau of Translations and Radical Publications, June 1, 1920, Aug. 22, 1958.
	85	Investigation activities: Radicalism and Sedition Among the Negroes As Reflected in Their Publications, Bureau of Translations and Radical Publications, November 17, 1919.
	86	Reports on the Negro Press, Bureau of Translations and Radical Publications.
	87	Reports on the Radical Press, Bureau of Translations and Radical Publications. [Folder 1 of 2].
	88	Reports on the Radical Press, Bureau of Translations and Radical Publications, [Folder 2 of 2].
	89	Communist Postcards
	90	<i>International Conciliation</i> , Jan.-Feb., 1921
	91	Accounts of the Occupation of Nanking

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<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
10A	91A	<i>FBI Story</i> (1956) by Don Whitehead with annotations by Robert Adger Bowen and inserts of clippings, letters, and notes, 1924-1966 and undated.

News Clippings

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
11	92	Literary figures, c. 1872-1960 and [undated].
	93	Miscellaneous Subjects c. 1893-1966, and [undated].
	94	New York City, c. 1910-1960's.
	95	Political Leaders, c. 1900's-1950's.
	96	Royalty, c. 1901-January 1925.
	97	Royalty, c. February 1925-1952.
	98	Royalty-especially the death of George VI. c. 1953-1959.
	99	Royalty, 1960-1967.
	100	Royalty, [n.d.].
	101	South Carolina, Charleston, Pendleton, and local history, c. 1860-1965, and undated.

Miscellaneous Materials

12	102	Adger Family History, Pendleton, S.C.
	103	Books given to Historic Pendleton Foundation, 1974. Book Deposition List, February 1970. Bowen's notes re: disposition of his papers. Books moved from Ashtabula to Woodburn, 1978
	104	Book reviews of <i>Uncharted Seas</i> , [c. 1913].
	105	"Books with a Purpose," [undated].
	106	Bookplate designed for Robert Adger Bowen, 1910.
	107	Charleston, S.C. Photo/Scrapbook. (photos removed to Mss 119 photo box)

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<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
12	108	Clippings of Bowen's later years, c. 1961-1971. Obituary May 1972.
	109	Eugene Field Society Honorary Membership, Sept. 5, 1946.
	110	<i>The Forensic Quarterly</i> , November, 1909.
	111	Inserts Pulled from Green Photo/Scrapbook.
	112	<i>The International Monthly</i> , May 1900.
	113	"The New Function of Modern Language Teachings", MLA, 1901.
	114	<i>100 New York Years</i> , 1948.
	115	Photograph folio; photos removed to MSS 119 Photo Box.
	116	<i>Poetry: A Magazine of Verse</i> , August, September, 1931.
	117	Reviews/Clippings of Bowen's later works, [c. 1955-1981].
	118	<i>The Stratford Magazine</i> , Apr., 1902.
	119	<i>Vatican Policy in WWII</i> , 1946.
	120	<i>Washington and Lee University Bulletin</i> , Dec. 1958.

Publications and Legal-size Documents, Documents

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
13	121	Correspondence: Authors with D. Appleton Co., 1907-1910-oversize.
	122	"Nance", <i>The American Woman</i> , April, 1911.
	123	Clippings and Copies of oversize material from Bowen's Scrapbook, c. Feb. 1937-Oct. 1940.
	124	Original of Book Disposition List (reduced size copy in Box 12, Folder 103. February, 1970.

Publications and Legal-size Documents, Publications

Bound Volume of Bowen's Short Stories, [c. 1908-1917].

Bound Volume of Bowen's Short Stories, [c. 1910-1929].

American Journalist and Author Blue Book, [c. 1923].

Verses By Robert Adger Bowen, undated.

Photos Box

- 1 Negatives of Robert Adger Bowen, New York, c. 1890-1900.
- 2 R. A. Bowen as a child, with older brother Allan and with nephew and namesake R. A. Bowen (Allan's son).
- 3 Robert Adger Bowen, New York, c. 1890-1900.
- 4 Robert Adger Bowen, N.Y., c. 1917-1929; South Carolina 1960, 1962, 1964-1965, 1967.
- 5 Louis Joseph Vance, N.Y. 1907.
- 6 Louis Joseph Vance, N.Y. 1908.
- 7 Believed to be Louis Joseph Vance, N.Y. 1909.
- 8 Louis Joseph Vance, London, 1912.
- 9 Unidentified photo from Bowen Collection.
- 10 Rivoli-Side and Back view
Rivoli-Front Views
Rivoli-Gate and Fence views.
- 11 Rivoli-view from the garden
- 12 Rivoli-view of Slave Quarters
View of Slave Cemetery.
- 13 Unidentified Charleston Scenes.
Unidentified Landscape Scenes.

Photos Box, cont.

- 14 Smythe House, Meeting St., Charleston.
James and R.A. Bowen Home, Meeting St., Charleston.
O.A. Bowen Home, corner of Waters and Meeting Sts., Charleston. c. 1890-1910.
- 15 Midway-Stoney Place, 1910.
- 16 Howard Chandler Christy with his photo of Neil Talbot in the background.
- 17 Howard Chandler Christy house and pets, [c. 1910].

Oversize Photographs

Clemson College Cadets group photograph which includes T. A. Bowen, [c.1900]

Portrait of Louis Joseph Vance, 1915.

Portrait of Mrs. Louis Joseph Vance, [undated].

Oversize

located in Map case.

The American Woman, April, 1911-Original.

Certificates of Distinction, 1887 from Kenmore University High School, c. 1886-1887.

Work agreement between O. A. Bowen and his former slaves, July 1865 - original.

Work agreement between O. A. Bowen and his former slaves, July 1865, negative photostatic copy.

Oversize map of Charleston, S.C., c. 1955.

Page proofs from *The Call of the Sea*, 1968.