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**University of Memphis Libraries
Special Collections Department**

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William R. Bittner manuscript

Title: William R. Bittner manuscript

Collection No: MSS.33

Extent: 0.25 cubic feet

Inclusive Dates: circa 1962

Abstract: The collection contains a copy of the manuscript of *Poe: A Biography* written by William Robert Bittner (1922-1977) and published in 1962.

Processed by: Gerald Chaudron, 2021.

Access: Open to all researchers.

Language: English

Preferred Citation: William R. Bittner manuscript, Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

Publication date: 2021 January

Biographical information

William Robert Bittner was born in Lock-Haven, Pennsylvania to John and Alice (Kane) Bittner. He grew up in Pennsylvania and attended the University of Pennsylvania. He enlisted in the army during WWII, and then returned to his studies at the University of Pennsylvania. He received a Masters in 1948 and a Doctorate in 1955 in Philosophy, both from the University of Pennsylvania.

In 1953, Bittner and his wife, Alice June (Holmer), moved to New York and resided there until 1959. While in New York, he professionally studied the civilization of the United States of America and worked on his novel *The Novels of Waldo Frank*. The novel was published in 1958 by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

From 1959 to 1960, Bittner worked as a Fulbright professor with two French universities. He followed this by teaching at the Free University of Berlin for two years. In 1962, he published *Poe A Biography*. This was published by Little Brown and Company.

In 1963 he was living in London while doing research and writing. Also in 1963, he tried to publish a manuscript called 'The Academic Racketeers' under the pen name "Liam de Cuipear". The book was rejected by the Atlantic Monthly Press, and later the Purdue University Department of England in Layette Indiana.

Between 1965 and 1967, Bittner was the head of the English Department at Memphis State University. Following his time at Memphis State, Bittner became a professor at Acadia University, teaching English from 1967 to 1977. There is a scholarship in his memory called the "Bittner Scholarship" that was created by his wife for a student who is interested in creative writing. While teaching at Acadia, Bittner asked for a sabbatical leave for the 1973/1974 academic year, to write a critical biography of James Stephens in Dublin. Other notable works by Bittner include: Articles in Atlantic Monthly, The Nation, Saturday Review, New York Post and other periodicals, Essays on William Bradford Huie, Hammond Innes, and Anthony C. West.

William Robert Bittner died on April 14, 1977, at the age of 55 in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

Scope and contents

The collection contains a typed and corrected 314-page manuscript of *Poe: A Biography*, written by William Bittner and published in 1962.

Subject terms

Bittner, William, 1921-1977.

Inventory

Box 1

Folder

Manuscript: Bittner, William R., *Poe: A Biography*, typed and corrected, 314 pages, circa 1962.

- 1 Title page-Chapter 13.
- 2 Chapters 14-23.
- 3 Chapter 24-Index.