



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the William J. and
Jane Brown Papers, circa 1940-2014,
in the Archives of American Art

Sarah Mundy

2018/03/26

Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	William J. and Jane Brown papers
Identifier:	AAA.browwill
Date:	circa 1940-2014
Extent:	7.9 Linear feet 0.32 Gigabytes
Creator:	Brown, William J. (William Joseph), 1923-1992 Brown, Jane Brennan, 1931-
Language:	English
Summary:	The papers of William J. and Jane Brown date from circa 1940-2014 and measure 7.9 linear feet and 0.32 gigabytes. The collection is comprised of biographical material, correspondence, interviews, writings and notes, printed material and documentaries, photographs and moving images, and administrative records from the Penland School of Crafts where William served as director from 1962 to 1983.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The portions of the William J. and Jane Brown papers that were lent for microfilming in 1991 by Jane Brown were subsequently donated by Jane Brown 1995 and 2015 along with additional papers.

Related Materials

Also found at the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview with William J. Brown and his wife Jane Brown conducted on January 19, 1991 and March 2, 1991 by Jane Kessler.

Available Formats

Portions of the collection are available on microfilm reels 4516-4518. The microfilm is available for interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of material described in this finding aid does not reflect the order of the material on microfilm.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Sarah Mundy in 2018. Born-digital materials were processed by Kirsi Ritosalmi-Kisner in 2019 with funding provided by the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund.

Preferred Citation

William J. and Jane Brown papers, circa 1940-2014. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C., Research Center. Use of archival audiovisual recordings with no duplicate copies requires advance notice.

Biographical / Historical

William "Bill" J. Brown (1923-1992) was a designer and educator who was married to Jane Brown (1932-), an arts administrator. They lived in Bakersville, North Carolina.

Bill Brown was born in Flint, Michigan in 1923. He studied at the Cranbrook Academy of Art receiving a bachelor of fine art in 1949, a master of fine art in 1950, and was chosen to work at Corning Glass Works for a summer. After his studies, he taught at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts and at the University of Delaware. In 1962 Lucy Morgan, who founded the Penland School of Crafts in 1929 in North Carolina, retired and offered the position of director to Bill. At the time, the school focused on traditional mountain crafts. As director, Bill changed the emphasis of the school to the advancement of professional craftsmen and the expansion of media to include iron and glass. He began a resident artist program that allowed artists to develop their skills at a low cost. Together, Bill and Jane created a supportive community of craftsmen that attracted renowned artists to teach and work at Penland. Bill resigned as director in 1983 but remained a respected member of the arts community. He earned several awards including the North Carolina Award in the Fine Arts in 1991.

Jane Brown graduated from the University of Delaware with a bachelor of arts in education and a master's degree in special education. Jane studied the Alexander Technique, a technique that can be used to improve the performance of dancers and musicians.

Bill Brown died in 1992. After his death, Jane participated in the dedication of the Bill Brown Glass Studio at Penland during a Glass Arts Society conference in 1995. She continues to live in Bakersville, North Carolina.

Scope and Contents

The papers of William J. and Jane Brown date from circa 1940-2014 and measure 7.9 linear feet. The collection is comprised of biographical material, correspondence, interviews, writings and notes, printed material and documentaries, photographs and moving images, and administrative records from the Penland School of Crafts where William served as director from 1962 to 1983.

Biographical materials consists of awards, business cards, annotated calendars, consignment forms, material from Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, resumes, sketches, and student documents. Correspondence is with artists, former students, instructors, local residents, Paulus Berensohn, Robert Ebendorf, Theodore Hallman, Lucy Morgan, Toshiko Takaezu, and others.

Sound and video recordings are of interviews with Bill and Jane Brown, Lucy Morgan, and "Flossie" Perisho regarding personal and Penland history. One transcript of Marvin Lipofsky's conversation with Bill

is also included. Bill's writings are on industrial design, directing Penland, and mankind. Two notebooks contain daily logs, sketches, and other notes. Notes by Bill and Jane are on inventions, John Ehle, metal history, poems, and other topics. Other writings are about Bill and a manuscript on craftsman education by Harold J. Brennan.

Penland's administrative records contain files documenting the board of trustees, residents program, a special 2-week session, artwork, Bill Brown's Glass Studio dedication ceremony schedule, a certificate of incorporation, financial material, grant proposals, and maps. Also found are records of Penland's 50th birthday celebration, including a video recording of "A Quest" by Dan Bailey.

Books, booklets, four documentary video recordings, exhibition catalogs and announcements, flyers, pamphlets, periodicals, postcards, posters, and stickers and patches designed by Bill are in printed materials. Photographs and slides are of Bill and Jane; family and friends; works of art; and of Penland's grounds, students, and faculty along with photographs and video recordings documenting Penland's history.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as seven series.

- Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1948-2011 (0.6 linear feet; Boxes 1, 9)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1949-2014 (1.8 linear feet; Boxes 1-3, 9)
- Series 3: Interviews, 1968-1991 (0.4 linear feet; Box 3)
- Series 4: Writings and Notes, circa 1950-2005 (0.2 linear feet; Box 3)
- Series 5: Penland School of Crafts Administrative Records, 1954-1995 (1.1 linear feet; Boxes 3-4, 9)
- Series 6: Printed Materials and Documentaries, 1942-2005 (1.8 linear feet, 0.32 GB; Boxes 4-6, 9; ER01)
- Series 7: Photographic Materials and Moving Images, circa 1940-2011 (2.0 linear feet; Boxes 6-10, RD 11)

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Art -- Study and teaching
Art schools--North Carolina
Artisans--North Carolina
Arts administrators--North Carolina
Design, Industrial
Handicraft--Study and teaching--United States
Handicraft--United States

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Photographs
Sketches
Sound recordings

Video recordings

Names:

Bailey, Dan
Berensohn, Paulus
Brennan, Harold James, 1903-1989
Ebendorf, Robert, 1938-
Ehle, John, 1925-
Hallman, Ted, 1933-
Haystack Mountain School of Crafts
Lipofsky, Marvin, 1938-
Morgan, Lucy, 1889-1981
Penland School of Crafts
Perisho, Flossie
Takaezu, Toshiko

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1948-2011

0.6 Linear feet (Boxes 1, 9)

This series consists of awards for Bill and Jane Brown, including the prestigious North Carolina Award in the Fine Arts awarded to Bill in 1991, business cards, annotated calendars, consignment paperwork for Bill's artwork, material from Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, resumes, sketches, and a couple of student documents. Letters from friends and colleagues of Bill supporting his nomination for the North Carolina Award in the Fine Arts are also found in this series.

Box 1, Folder 1	Award, Glass Art Society Honorary Life Member, 1974
Box 1, Folder 2	Award, North Carolina Award in the Fine Arts, 1991
Box 1, Folder 3	Award, North Carolina Award in the Fine Arts, Ceremony, 1991 <i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i> Recording is from the University of North Carolina Center for Public TV.
Box 1, Folder 4-5	Award, North Carolina Award in the Fine Arts, Ceremony Preparations and Programs, 1991
Box 1, Folder 6-8	Award, North Carolina Award in the Fine Arts, Congratulation and Nomination Letters, 1990-1991
Box 1, Folder 9	Award, North Carolina Award in the Fine Arts, Publicity, 1991
Box 1, Folder 10	Business Cards for William J. Brown, Sr., undated
Box 1, Folder 11	Calendar, 1985
Box 1, Folder 12	Consignment Form for Bill Brown's Artwork, 1992
Box 1, Folder 13	Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Bill Brown Scholarship Fund, 1985-1994
Box 1, Folder 14	Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Legal Agreement, 1977
Box 1, Folder 15	Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Production Seminar Group Photo, 1976 The picture appears to be a digital print of the original photograph.
Box 1, Folder 16	Resumes for Bill Brown, 1984-1986
Box 1, Folder 17	Sketches by Bill Brown, circa 1980-circa 1985 Oversized material housed in Box 9, Folder 2.
Box 1, Folder 18	Student Documents for Bill Brown, 1948, undated
Box 9, Folder 1	Oversized Award, National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts , 1983

- Box 9, Folder 2 Oversized Award, National Craft Council and State of North Carolina , 1979,
2011
- Box 9, Folder 2 Oversized Sketches by Bill from Box 1, Folder 17, circa 1980

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1949-2014

1.8 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3, 9)

Correspondence is with artists, former students, instructors, and local residents and typically relates to Penland activities. Personal correspondence includes colorfully, illustrated cards and letters from Paulus Berensohn, as well as, letters with Robert Ebendorf, Theodore Hallman, Lucy Morgan, Toshiko Takaezu, and sympathy cards to Jane after Bill's death.

Box 1, Folder 19	Chronological, undated
Box 1, Folder 20-23	Chronological, 1949-1979
Box 1, Folder 24-29	Chronological, 1980-1983
Box 2, Folder 1-3	Chronological, 1984-1991 Includes letter from Penland to Bill regarding payment after his dismissal in folder 2.
Box 2, Folder 4-18	Personal, 1954-2014 Oversized material housed in Box 9, Folder 3.
Box 2, Folder 19-22	Professional, 1961-2012 Includes correspondence with Philis Alvic and various correspondents regarding the Bill Brown Glass Studio dedication.
Box 9, Folder 3	Oversized Personal Correspondence from Box 2, 1968

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Series 3: Interviews, 1968-1991

0.4 Linear feet (Box 3)

A majority of the interviews are sound and video recordings of Bill, Jane, Lucy Morgan, and "Flossie" Perisho regarding Penland and their personal histories. A transcript, including drafts, of "A Conversation with Bill Brown" with Marvin Lipofsky is also in this series.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Box 3, Folder 1 | Bill and Jane Brown Interviewed by Chris Felver, 1986
<i>3 videocassettes (vhs) (Duplicates)</i>
Includes a clip from the North Carolina Awards Ceremony from 1991. |
| Box 3, Folder 2 | Bill and Jane Brown with Toshiko Takaezu Discussing Penland History, 1991
<i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i> |
| Box 3, Folder 3 | "A Conversation with Bill Brown" with Marvin Lipofsky, 1979
Includes an annotated draft and two copies of a final transcript. |
| Box 3, Folder 4 | Jane Brown Interviewed by Philip Alvic, July 18, 1993
<i>2 sound cassettes (Includes release forms and note from Alvic.)</i> |
| Box 3, Folder 5 | Jane Brown Talking About Memories in Studio, undated
<i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i> |
| Box 3, Folder 6 | Lucy Morgan, 1968, 1970
<i>6 sound cassettes (Includes notes; duplicates)</i>
<i>2 sound tape reels (duplicates)</i> |
| Box 3, Folder 7 | "Flossie" Perisho (Sister of Bonnie Ford), circa 1972
<i>1 sound cassette</i> |

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Series 4: Writings and Notes, circa 1950-2005

0.2 Linear feet (Box 3)

Found in this series are a few writings by Bill Brown including a student paper titled "Industrial Design," his philosophy of directing Penland, and a draft for an article on mankind. Two notebooks contain a mixture of daily logs, sketches, and miscellaneous notes. Notes are on inventions by Bill, the ideas of John Ehle, the history of metals, poems, and other topics by Bill and Jane. Other writings include a manuscript for an article in *Penland Line* about Bill after his death and a manuscript titled "The Craftsman: His Expanding Educational Needs" by Harold J. Brennan.

Box 3, Folder 8	Bill Brown, "Industrial Design" Student Paper, circa 1950
Box 3, Folder 9	Bill Brown, Philosophy of Directing Penland, Dictated by Bill and Written by Jane, 1984
Box 3, Folder 10	Bill Brown, Draft on Mankind for Arts Journal, 1983
Box 3, Folder 11	Bill and Jane Brown, Notebooks, 1985-1986 Includes two notebooks.
Box 3, Folder 13-18	Bill and Jane Brown, Notes, 1970-2005
Box 3, Folder 19	About Bill Brown, <i>Penland Line</i> Article About Bill, Manuscript, 1992
Box 3, Folder 20	Others, "The Craftsman: His Expanding Educational Needs" by Harold J. Brennan, 1959

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Series 5: Penland School of Crafts Administrative Records, 1954-1995

1.1 Linear feet (Boxes 3-4, 9)

0.32 Gigabytes (ER01)

The administrative records for Penland contain material for Penland's 50th birthday celebration that includes plans, a video recording of the performance "A Quest" by Dan Bailey, photographs, and a scrapbook. The board of trustees files contain correspondence regarding funding and activities, meeting minutes, and letters of support for Bill when the board dismissed him as director of Penland in 1983. Files for the residents program and the special 2-week session include an autograph book, exhibition material, Bill Brown's memorial fund, scrapbooks, and questionnaires with responses from participants about the programs. Other files are of artwork, Bill Brown's glass studio dedication ceremony schedule, a photocopy of Penland's certificate of incorporation, financial material, grant proposals written by Bill and Jane, and maps.

Box 3, Folder 21	50th Birthday Celebration of Penland, Photographs, 1979
Box 3, Folder 22	50th Birthday Celebration of Penland, Plans, 1979
Box 3, Folder 23	50th Birthday Celebration of Penland, Scrapbook of Ceremony, 1979
Box 3, Folder 24	50th Birthday Celebration of Penland, "A Quest" by Dan Bailey Films, 1979 1 videocassettes (vhs)
Box 9, Folder 2	Artwork, 1968, 1994 Includes artwork by Francis Merritt and an artist's proof of drawing of Penland grounds by W.P. Jennerjahn.
Box 3, Folder 25	Bill Brown Glass Studio Dedication Ceremony Schedule, 1995
Box 3, Folder 26	Board of Trustees, Correspondence and Notes, 1966-1983
Box 4, Folder 1-2	Board of Trustees, Correspondence and Notes, 1979-1983
Box 4, Folder 3	Board of Trustees, Correspondence Regarding Funding, 1983
Box 4, Folder 4-5	Board of Trustees, Dismissal of Bill Brown, Letters of Support, 1983-1988
Box 4, Folder 6	Board of Trustees, Meeting Minutes, 1962-1985
Box 4, Folder 7	Certificate of Incorporation, undated Certificate is a photocopy of the original 1929 document and includes only the first two pages.
Box 4, Folder 8	Exhibition, <i>Penland Overlook Exhibition</i> , 1992-1995
Box 4, Folder 9-16	Financial Materials and Reports, 1954-1982
Box 4, Folder 17	Financial Materials, Grants, 1979-1980
Box 4, Folder 18-19	Grant Proposals, 1970-1992
Box 4, Folder 20	Maps, circa 1970s

Box 4, Folder 21	Residents Program, Exhibition, 1981 <i>2 sound cassettes</i>
Box 4, Folder 22-23	Residents Program, Exhibition Statements and Resumes, circa 1990
Box 4, Folder 24	Residents Program, Memorial Fund for Bill Brown, 1992
Box 4, Folder 25-26	Residents Program, Questionnaires, 1981-1983
Box 4, Folder 27-28	Residents Program, Scrapbooks, circa 1979
Box 4, Folder 29	Special 2-Week Session, Autograph Book of Participants, 1971
Box 4, Folder 30	Special 2-Week Session, Questionnaire, 1971

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Series 6: Printed Materials and Documentaries, 1942-2005

1.8 Linear feet (Boxes 4-6, 9; ER01)

0.32 Gigabytes (ER01)

Found here are books, booklets, four video recordings of documentaries about crafts, a digitized music recording, exhibition catalogs and announcements, flyers, pamphlets, periodicals, postcards, posters, and stickers and patches with Penland's logo designed by Bill Brown. Almost all publications relate to Penland or are annotated by Jane Brown.

Box 4, Folder 31-32	Books, 1969-1979 Includes "The Penland Book of Practical Kites," "The Craftsman's Cookbook," and a few other books signed to Bill and Jane.
Box 5, Folder 1-4	Booklets, 1942-1998 Includes the Penland publications <i>Vegetable Dyeing</i> by Emma Conley, <i>The Story of the Penland Weavers</i> by Bonnie Willis Ford, Penland program catalogs, and program for the Glass Art Society's conference at Penland.
Box 5, Folder 5-12	Clippings, 1949-1998 Oversized material housed in Box 9, Folder 2.
Box 5, Folder 13-14	Documentaries, 1991 4 videocassettes (vhs) Includes "A Penland Summer," "Patterns of Rural Art" and "Old Crafts and New Horizons" by Allen Eaton, and "Penland School of Handicraft" by Thor Behrens.
Box 5, Folder 15-16	Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements, 1954-1997 Many of the catalogs are signed to Bill and Jane.
Box 5, Folder 17	Flyers, circa 1983-1993
Folder ER01	"Jane and Ireland at Penland" (1979), Digitized Audio Recording, 2017 0.32 Gigabytes (One computer file)
Box 5, Folder 19	Pamphlets, circa 1953-2004 Includes pamphlets from Haystack and Penland.
Box 5, Folder 20	Periodicals, <i>Penland Line</i> , 1991-1997 Includes articles on Bill and his glass studio.
Box 6, Folder 1-8	Periodicals, 1966-1998 Oversized material housed in Box 9, Folder 2.
Box 6, Folder 9	Postcards, circa 2005
Box 6, Folder 10	Posters, 1971-1980
Box 6, Folder 11	Stickers and Patches with Penland Logo Designed by Bill Brown, 1962-1979
Box 9, Folder 2	Oversized Clippings from Box 5, 1968
Box 9, Folder 2	Oversized Periodicals from Box 6, 1983

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Series 7: Photographic Materials and Moving Images, circa 1940-2011

2 Linear feet (Boxes 6-10, RD 11)

Photographs of Bill and Jane Brown include portraits and candid photographs of Jane, the Browns together and with family and friends. Photographs of Bill include portraits, his early life at Cranbrook and in the Army, at Penland, and a scrapbook titled "Bill and Friends." Penland photographs are of faculty and students, Penland grounds, Lucy Morgan, and Bonnie Ford. One of the two photo albums of Penland events include photographs of Joan Mondale visiting Penland in "Event 77." Other material consists of slide shows of artists and artwork, works of art from the Brown's craft collection, and works of art by Bill and others. Copies of historical photographs originating in the 1930s-1940s show Penland's early classrooms, buildings, and students, as well as Lucy Morgan's mobile log cabin. Three video recordings appear to be a history of Penland recorded by Chris Felver.

Box 6, Folder 12	Bill and Jane Brown, circa 1960-1992 Oversized material housed in Box 10, Folder 1.
Box 6, Folder 13-14	Bill and Jane Brown, Family and Friends, circa 1965-1992
Box 6, Folder 15-16	Bill Brown, Early Photographs, circa 1949-1962
Box 6, Folder 17	Bill Brown, Portraits, circa 1940-1960s
Box 6, Folder 18	Bill Brown, Penland, circa 1970s
Box 6, Folder 19	Bill Brown, "Bill and Friends" Scrapbook, 1991
Box 6, Folder 20-27	Penland, Faculty and Students, 1954-1980s Includes photographs of faculty members' children, Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn during a visit to Penland, a class taught by Tom Cox, and the "National Endowment Snow Job" project. Oversized material housed in Box 9, Folders 4-6 and Box 10, Folders 2-3.
Box 7, Folder 1-3	Penland, Faculty and Students, 1970s
Box 7, Folder 4	Penland, Faculty and Students - Lucy Morgan and Director's House, circa 1970s
Box 7, Folder 5	Penland, Faculty and Students - Bonnie Willis Ford, 1965-circa 1978
Box 7, Folder 6	Penland, Faculty and Students - Group Photo, 75th Anniversary, 2004 Oversized group photos housed in RD 11.
Box 7, Folder 7-9	Penland, Grounds, circa 1960-circa 1990 Includes photographs of the construction of the glass studio, Penland buildings, and landscapes. Oversized material housed in Box 10, Folder 4.
Box 8, Folder 1	Penland, History - "Penland Offline" by Chris Felver, 1986-1987 <i>3 videocassettes (vhs) (Duplicates)</i> Oversized material housed in Box 10, Folder 5.
Box 8, Folder 2	Penland, Photo Album - "Penland 1965", 1965
Box 8, Folder 3	Penland, Slide Shows - Notes, 1995

Box 8, Folder 4	Penland, Slide Shows #1, 1981
Box 8, Folder 5	Penland, Slide Shows #6, circa 1980s
Box 8, Folder 6	Penland, Slide Shows #7, circa 1980s
Box 8, Folder 7	Works of Art, Bill and Jane Brown's Craft Collection, 1984-2011
Box 8, Folder 8-9	Works of Art, circa 1953-circa 1980 Includes artwork by Bill Brown. Oversized material housed in Box 10, Folder 6.
Box 9, Folder 4-6	Oversized Penland, Faculty and Students from Box 6, 1954-1980s
Box 9, Folder 7	Oversized Photo Album - "Event 77", 1977
Box 10, Folder 1	Oversized Bill and Jane Brown from Box 6, Folder 12, circa 1960-1992
Box 10, Folder 2-3	Oversized Penland, Faculty and Students, 1970s-1980s
Box 10, Folder 4	Oversized Penland, Grounds from Box 7, Folders 7-9, 1969-1980s
Box 10, Folder 5	Oversized Penland, History from Box 8, Folder 1, circa 1980s Photographs are copies of historic photographs of Penland taken in 1930s-1940s.
Box 10, Folder 6	Oversized Works of Art, 1983
Box RD 11	Oversized Penland, Faculty and Students - Group Photos, circa 1970-1980s Includes five panoramic group photographs.

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