

Finding Aid to the Stan and Jan Berenstain Papers, 1949-2006

Summary Information

Title: Stan and Jan Berenstain papers

Creator: Stanley and Janice Berenstain (primary)

ID: 2013.berenstain

Date: 1949-2006 (inclusive); 1962-1983 (bulk)

Extent: 7.5 linear feet

Language: The materials in this collection are in English.

Abstract: The Stan and Jan Berenstain papers are a compilation of sketches, notes, storyboards, publisher proofs, advertisements, manuscripts, correspondence, and other artwork created by Stan and Jan Berenstain. The bulk of the materials are from between 1962 and 1983.

Repository:

Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong
One Manhattan Square
Rochester, New York 14607
585.263.2700
library@museumofplay.org

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Use: This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library and archives. Though the donor has not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, he has given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

Custodial History: The Stan and Jan Berenstain papers were donated to The Strong in November 2010 as a gift from Michael Berenstain. The papers were accessioned by The Strong under Object ID 110.13288. They were received from Michael Berenstain in eight linear feet of boxes, along with a significant donation containing toys, games, books, and other Berenstain-related merchandise.

Preferred citation for publication: Stan and Jan Berenstain papers, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong

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Controlled Access Terms

Personal Names

- Berenstain, Jan, 1923-2012
- Berenstain, Mike, 1951-
- Berenstain, Stan, 1923-2005

Corporate Names

- Good Housekeeping magazine.
- Hallmark Cards, Inc.
- McCall's magazine.

- Random House, Inc.

Subjects

- Berenstain Bears (Fictitious characters)
- Berenstain Bears (Fictitious characters)--Juvenile literature.
- Caricatures and cartoons--Juvenile fiction.
- Cartoons and comics
- Families--Juvenile fiction.
- It's all in the family (comic strip)
- Parenting--Humor.

Biographical Note

Stan and Jan Berenstain were American illustrators and writers, best known for their long-running children's book series, *The Berenstain Bears*.

Stanley Berenstain and Janice Grant were both born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They met at the Philadelphia Museum School for Industrial Art (now called the University of the Arts) on their first day of class in 1941. During World War II, Stanley served as a medical illustrator for the United States Army, while Janice worked as both an aircraft riveter and a draft artist for the Army Corps of Engineers. Stanley and Janice wed in 1946 and began their careers together as magazine cartoonists. Their artwork appeared in popular magazines such as *Collier's*, *McCall's*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*. They soon added drawing advertisements for major American companies to their repertoire. After the births of their two sons, the Berenstains published a humor book on parenting called *The Berenstains' Baby Book*. They went on to use family humor as the basis for dozens of other satirical advice books, as well as for their magazine cartoon feature *It's All in the Family*.

The Berenstain Bears first appeared in 1962's *The Big Honey Hunt*, under the editorship of Theodor Geisel. At that time, Geisel advised the Berenstains to shorten their byline to the now-familiar "Stan and Jan Berenstain." (Geisel also coined the term "The Berenstain Bears.") Over the next four decades, the duo authored more than 200 Berenstain Bears books, often based on real-life experiences of Berenstain family members. Other platforms for the Berenstain Bears have included animated television programs, video games, plush toys, and other merchandise. In the 1980s, Mike Berenstain joined his parents in drawing the series.

In 2002, the Berenstains released their joint memoir, entitled *Down a Sunny Dirt Road*. Stan passed away in November 2005, and Jan died in February 2012. The Berenstains' legacy lives on through their popular stories, distinctive illustrations, and memorable characters.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The Stan and Jan Berenstain papers contain materials from 1949 through 2006, with the bulk of the documents from 1962 to 1983. This collection comprises sketches, notes, scripts, storyboards, publisher proofs, advertisements, manuscripts, correspondence, and other artwork created by Stan and Jan Berenstain. Much of the content of this collection relates to the Berenstains' long-running magazine cartoon feature, *It's All in the Family*, as well as their enormously popular book series, *The Berenstain Bears*. Also significant are the published advertisements illustrated by the Berenstains during the early part of their careers together. Additional scope and content information is listed for each series or subseries under the "Contents List" section of this finding aid.

The Stan and Jan Berenstain papers are arranged into seven series, two of which are further divided into subseries. The materials are housed in eight archival document boxes and two oversized flat folders.

Related Collections

The Strong holds a large collection of Berenstain Bear-related toys, games, and books within both the National Museum of Play and the Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play. *Berenstain Bears: Down a Sunny Dirt Road* has been a permanent exhibit at The Strong since 2008.

System of Arrangement

Series I: *It's All in the Family*, 1958-1987

Subseries A: Sketches

Subseries B: Storyboards

Subseries C: Published cartoon features

Subseries D: Merchandise

Series II: *The Berenstain Bears*, 1977-2006

Subseries A: Sketches

Subseries B: Storyboards and scripts

Subseries C: Proofs

Subseries D: Advertisements

Subseries E: Merchandise

Series III: Advertisements, 1949-1960s

Series IV: Other illustrations/publications, 1949-1971

Series V: Manuscripts, c. 1960s-1970s

Series VI: Correspondence, 1965-1995

Series VII: Publicity, c. 1950s-1964

Contents List

Series I: *It's All in the Family*, 1958-1987

Subseries A: Sketches

Scope and Content Note: The Berenstains created and illustrated the cartoon feature *It's All in the Family*, which ran in *McCall's* and then *Good Housekeeping* magazine from 1956 through 1989. This subseries contains original draft sketches and notes from 1969-1970.

Box 1

[no folder] Twenty-one 11" x 14" mounted sketches and notes, n.d.

Box 2

Folder 1 Draft sketches and notes for *Good Housekeeping* features, 1969-1970

Subseries B: Storyboards

Scope and Content Note: This subseries includes seven large mounted storyboards with original layouts of *It's All in the Family* page spreads for *Good Housekeeping* magazine.

Box 1

[no folder] Seven 16" x 20" storyboards, *It's All in the Family*, *Good Housekeeping* magazine, 1979-1981

Subseries C: Published cartoon features

Scope and Content Note: This subseries is a compilation of published *It's All in the Family* cartoon clippings from both *McCall's* and *Good Housekeeping* magazines, between 1962 and 1987. The Berenstains also pasted many of these clippings into portfolios and bound albums.

Box 1

[no folder] Twenty-seven mounted page spreads, *It's All in the Family*, *McCall's* magazine, 1962-1968 and n.d.

[no folder] Portfolio, *It's All in the Family* by Stanley and Janice Berenstain, "Title Uses: Books, Published by E.P. Dalton - 1958, 1961; Dell Books - 1963; Bantam Books - 1970"

[no folder] Portfolio, *It's All in the Family* by Stanley and Janice Berenstain, "Title Uses: Hallmark Engagement Calendars, 1969, 1970, 1971"

[no folder] Portfolio, *It's All in the Family* by Stanley and Janice Berenstain, "Title Uses: Good Housekeeping Magazine, 1970, 1971"

[no folder] Draft portfolio, *It's All in the Family* by Stanley and Janice Berenstain, "Title Uses in *McCall's* Magazine From..."

[no folder] Album, *It's All in the Family* Album, by Stanley and Janice Berenstain (clippings of page spreads from *McCall's* magazine), 1961-1967

Box 2

Folder 2 *It's All in the Family* clippings, *McCall's*, 1967

Folder 3 *It's All in the Family* clippings, *McCall's*, 1968

Folder 4 *It's All in the Family* clippings, *McCall's*, 1969

- Folder 5 *It's All in the Family* clippings, *Good Housekeeping*, 1970-1974
Folder 6 *It's All in the Family* clippings, *Good Housekeeping*, 1975-1979
Folder 7 *It's All in the Family* clippings, *Good Housekeeping*, 1980-1987
Folder 8 *It's All in the Family* clippings, n.d.

Subseries D: Merchandise

Scope and Content Note: This subseries holds a hardbound album of mounted *It's All in the Family* sample merchandise, including a line of greeting cards from Hallmark, paper photograph albums, and wall hang-up décor.

Box 4

- [no folder] Album of mounted *It's All in the Family* merchandise, 1960s

Series II: The Berenstain Bears, 1977-2006**Subseries A: Sketches**

Scope and Content Note: The Berenstain Bears series began in 1962 with the publication of *The Big Honey Hunt*. Stan and Jan Berenstain wrote and illustrated more than 200 books in the series, with son Mike Berenstain joining their team in the 1980s. This subseries contains original sketches by the Berenstains, including large sketches of Berenstain Bear characters, cartoon panels, and a full-color animation cell. Of interest is the three-ring binder labeled "Dear Uncle Phil," which holds a sequence of collage pages on a potential Berenstain Bears weekly television show.

Box 2

- Folder 9 Certificates of Authenticity, Berenstain Bear art, 2006

Box 3

- [no folder] Six large sketches of Berenstain Bear family members, n.d.
[no folder] Animation cell from "The Berenstain Bears' Easter Surprise" animated television special, 1981

Box 6

- [no folder] Red three-ring binder, "Dear Uncle Phil," containing loose-leaf collage pages about Berenstain Bears' television show [c. 1975-1976]

Box 7

- [no folder] Eleven large sketches of Berenstain Bear characters, 1979-1987

Oversized

- Folder 1 Two large cartoon panel sketches, Berenstain Bears, n.d.

Subseries B: Storyboards and scripts

Scope and Content Note: Between 1979 and 1983, NBC aired five animated television specials starring the Berenstain Bears. This subseries includes storyboards, scripts, and diskettes of cartoon art for those television shows. Also held within this subseries is a script for the 1983 *Berenstain Bears* video game produced by Coleco. (For additional information on the Kid Vid system for Coleco, see also the Ralph H. Baer papers in the Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong.)

Box 2

- Folder 10 “The Berenstain Bears’ Comic Valentine” animated television special, recording schedule and script, 1980
- Folder 11 “The Berenstain Bears Play Ball/’Littlest Leaguer” animated television special, script, 1983
- Folder 12 *Berenstain Bears* video game, sound script, Coleco, 1983
- Folder 13 Berenstain Bears animated television specials, art on five diskettes, c. 1983

Box 3

- [no folder] Album, “The Berenstain Bears’ Comic Valentine” animated television special, storyboard, 1981
- Folder 1 “The Berenstains Bears’ Littlest Leaguer” animated television special, storyboard, 1983
- Folder 2 “The Berenstain Bears’ Easter Surprise” animated television special, storyboard, 1980
- Folder 3 “The Berenstain Bears’ Easter Surprise” animated television special, revised storyboard, 1980
- Folder 4 “The Berenstain Bears Meet Big Paw” animated television special storyboard, 1980
- Folder 5 “The Berenstain Bears’ Christmas Tree” animated television special storyboard, 1979

Subseries C: Proofs

Scope and Content Note: This subseries holds complete publisher page proofs for six Berenstain Bears books, along with book cover proofs.

For published Berenstain Bears books, please see the library [catalog](#) for holdings in the Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong. The [Berenstain Bears: Down a Sunny Dirt Road](#) exhibit in the National Museum of Play at The Strong also displays information on the book series.

Box 2

- Folder 14 *The Berenstain Bears’ Science Fair*, page proofs, 1977
- Folder 15 *The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree*, page proofs, 1978
- Folder 16 *The Berenstain Bears’ Christmas Tree*, page proofs, 1980
- Folder 17 *The Berenstain Bears Get in a Fight*, page proofs, 1982
- Folder 18 *The Berenstain Bears Go to Camp*, page proofs, 1982

Box 3

Folder 6 *The Bears' Activity Book*, page proofs, 1979
[no folder] Book cover proofs for *The Berenstain Bears Get in a Fight*, *The Berenstain Bears Go to Camp*, and *The Berenstain Bears and the Missing Dinosaur Bone*

Subseries D: Advertisements

Scope and Content Note: This subseries contains advertisements featuring Berenstain Bears books and products for Random House, Fisher-Price, and the Fairfield Collectors' Group. Two-page spread ads for various Berenstain Bears animated television specials are also included. The Berenstains also designed the oversized poster for the Philadelphia College of Art, the institution where they first met in 1941.

Box 2

Folder 19 Berenstain Bears advertisements, 1979-1985

Box 4

[no folder] Oversized Berenstain Bears advertisement for Philadelphia College of Art, 1979

Subseries E: Merchandise

Scope and Content Note: This subseries holds sketches and photographs of the subsequent prototypes for Berenstain Bears' merchandise, including a flashlight, reading light, binoculars, play telephone, and more.

Box 2

Folder 20 Berenstain Bears' merchandise prototypes, photographs, 1980s

Box 4

[no folder] Album, drawings of Berenstain Bears merchandise, 1980s

Series III: Advertisements, 1949-1960s

Scope and Content Note: The Berenstains began their art careers as magazine cartoonists and advertisement illustrators. This series houses various full-color advertisements for companies such as Vi-Daylin, Kraft, Alcoa, Westinghouse, Keds, among others.

Box 5

Folder 1 "Use-Tested" comic, advertisements for *McCall's*, 1959
Folder 2 Various advertisements drawn by the Berenstains, 1949-1960s

Box 6

[no folder] United Fruit Company [c. 1957]
[no folder] Vi-Daylin [c. 1950s]
[no folder] Alcoa Wrap Aluminum Foil, 1961
[no folder] Westinghouse Light Bulbs [c. 1952]
[no folder] The Shell Companies [c. 1950s]
[no folder] Kraft Cheese Spreads [c. 1950s]
[no folder] Post Grape-Nuts Flakes, 1955

- [no folder] Various advertisements [c. 1950s-1960s]
- [no folder] Vi-Daylin (larger advertisements) [c. 1950s]
- [no folder] Keds [c. 1950s]
- [no folder] Bosco [c. 1950s]

Series IV: Other illustrations/publications, 1949-1971

Scope and Content Note: This series contains various sketches, proofs, notes, clippings, and storyboards for cartoons and books created by the Berenstains. (Besides those appearing in the Berenstain Bears series, the Berenstains wrote and illustrated over two dozen books.) The materials within this series showcase the Berenstains' family humor books, as well as published cartoon strip "Sister."

Box 5

- Folder 3 Early Stan Berenstain sketches, 1951-1952
- Folder 4 Early Stan Berenstain published illustrations, n.d.
- Folder 5 "The Fan," Stan Berenstain, n.d.
- Folder 6 "Driver's Test," The Berenstains, n.d.
- Folder 7 "Misty" sketches, The Berenstains, n.d.
- Folder 8 Untitled illustrations by the Berenstains, n.d.
- Folder 9 *Recreation* magazine, cover by the Berenstains, 1949
- Folder 10 "Sister," The Berenstains, 1954-1956
- Folder 11 *Baby Makes Four*, book jacket, 1956
- Folder 12 *And Beat Him When He Sneezes*, proofs, 1960
- Folder 13 *Flipsville/Squaresville*, reproduction page proofs, 1965
- Folder 14 *The Secret Life of Mr. Dirty* and *The Secret Life of Mrs. Clean* reproduction page proofs, 1967
- Folder 15 *You Could Diet Laughing*, reproduction page proofs, 1969
- Folder 16 *The Berenstains' B Book*, notes [c. 1970-1971]

Box 6

- [no folder] Ring-bound, mounted clippings of "Sister" comic strip, 1954-1956

Box 7

- [no folder] "Fun Ideas for Little Children," illustrations for articles in *McCall's*, 1957
- [no folder] Twelve 11" x 14" layout mock-ups with pasted sketches, n.d.
- Folder 1 *How to Teach Your Children About Sex Without Making a Complete Fool of Yourself*, original sketches and draft text [c. 1969-1970]
- Folder 2 *How to Teach Your Children About Sex Without Making a Complete Fool of Yourself*, photocopied revised sketches and draft text [c. 1969-1970]
- [no folder] "I [Heart] Dinosaurs" merchandise ideas, 1993
- [no folder] *Berenstains' Baby Book*, scanned and printed pages, originally 1951
- [no folder] Six 11" x 14" proofs, *And Beat Him When He Sneezes*, reproduction page proofs, 1960
- [no folder] Twelve 16" x 20" polyester sleeves containing "Misty" sketches, n.d.
- [no folder] Six 10" x 13" proofs, *You Could Diet Laughing*, reproduction page proofs [c. 1968-1969]

- [no folder] Illustrated page borders for *Mr. Dirty vs. Mrs. Clean*, 1967
- [no folder] One 14" x 17" album page with mounted page photocopies from *Berenstains' Baby Book*, originally 1951
- [no folder] One 14" x 17" album page with cover and page proofs for *Tax-Wise*, 1952
- [no folder] Twenty-four 16" x 20" polyester sleeves containing *Baby Makes Four* reproduction page proofs [c. 1955-1956]

Oversized

- Folder 1 Large illustrated page borders for *Mr. Dirty vs. Mrs. Clean*, 1967
- Folder 1 Large "Misty" sketch, n.d.
- Folder 1 Various full-color published comic strip clippings/pages of "Sister" by Berenstains, 1954-1956
- Folder 1 Large "Little Debbie" cartoon panel, n.d.
- Folder 2 *Flipsville/Squaresville* proofs and notes, 1965-1966
- Folder 2 Twenty large *Flipsville/Squaresville* page proofs, 1965
- Folder 2 One 20" x 27" storyboard panel for "Off the Record," 1956
- Folder 2 One 24" x 24" group scene sketch [c. 1950s]

Series V: Manuscripts, c. 1960s-1970s

Scope and Content Note: This series holds manuscripts written by Stan Berenstain, likely during the 1960s-1970s. These documents have notes, revisions, and sketches.

Box 8

- Folder 1 "Coming of Age in South Jersey: A Novel," Stan Berenstain [c. 1977]
- Folder 2 "The Bear Detectives and the Circus Mystery," Stan Berenstain, n.d.
- Folder 3 "The Bird," Stan Berenstain, n.d.
- Folder 4 "Bunny Eat Bunny: A Comedy," Stan Berenstain, n.d.
- Folder 5 "Cecilia Rassmussen," Stan Berenstain, n.d.
- Folder 6 "The Diary of a Mad Robin: An Absolutely True Story," Stan Berenstain, n.d.
- Folder 7 "The Reproduction Process," Stan Berenstain, n.d.
- Folder 8 "The Ride," Stan Berenstain, n.d.
- Folder 9 "Settlement School," Stan Berenstain, n.d.
- Folder 10 Untitled [office humor] book draft text, Stan Berenstain, n.d.
- Folder 11 Miscellaneous manuscript fragments, n.d.

Series VI: Correspondence, 1967-1995

Scope and Content Note: This series houses business correspondence and photocopies of fan mail to the Berenstains.

Box 8

- Folder 12 Business correspondence, 1967-1970
- Folder 13 Fan mail (photocopies), 1986-1994
- Folder 14 David Michel (Kidquest), to Stan Berenstain, 1995

Series VII: Publicity, c. 1950s-1964

Scope and Content Note: This series includes early publicity articles on the Berenstains, along with a portfolio sheet of examples of their work.

Box 8

Folder 15 Publicity, *CARDS* magazine, Spring 1963 and Summer 1964

Box 7

[no folder] Stanley and Janice Berenstain portfolio sheet of published illustrations [c. 1950s]