Guide to the Duncan and Fredrika Brent Collection

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Duncan and Fredrika Brent Collection, ca. 1669-1983 [bulk dates 1958-1983]

Collection number: Mss 9

Department of Special Collections  
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Duncan and Fredrika Brent Collection  
Dates: ca. 1669-1983  
Bulk Dates: 1958-1983  
Collection number: Mss 9  
Collection Size: 0.4 linear feet (1 document box).  
Repository: University of California, Santa Barbara. Library. Dept. of Special Collections  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106  
Abstract: Correspondence from Duncan Brent to Lawrence Clark Powell, as well as a typescript draft and other materials pertaining to Powell's publication of *Le monde passé* [a remembrance of Brent]. Also, a collection of the Brents' books, mainly 19th-20th century literature and Californiana. A highlight of this collection is the two volume *Hollinshed's Chronicles* [of England, Scotland, and Ireland] (London, 1587), one of William Shakespeare’s sources for his historical plays.  
Physical location: Del Sur.  
Languages: English  
Access Restrictions: None.  
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Biography:  
Joseph Duncan Kenner Brent (ca. 1907-1981) was born and reared in Baltimore, and was a graduate of the Gilman School and the University of Virginia. His grandfather was Joseph Lancaster Brent, who came to southern California before the Civil War and after whom Brentwood (in Los Angeles) is named.  
Fredrika (Freddie) Chase Brent (1904-1981) was a Connecticut native, graduate of St. Timothy's School and Bryn Mawr College. She was a painter.  
The Brents were married on October 21, 1929 and lived abroad for a number of years, where they pursued their studies. After returning to the U.S., Duncan worked for the Justice Department and served in the Army during World War II. Around 1949 the Brents moved to Malibu, California, where they were neighbors and became close friends with Lawrence Clark Powell, University Librarian at UCLA, and his wife.
In the 1960s Powell helped Duncan publish his manuscript *Of the Seer and the Vision* (Amsterdam, Menno Hertzberger, 1967) in a limited edition of 100 copies. As Powell described it in his *Le monde passé*, the book contained "...erudite discussions of Oriental and European philosophy, explicitly footnoted, and was apparently written years before when Brent was undertaking an unfinished Columbia University doctorate in philosophy. What was really unexpected is the inclusion of a short four-act play, a searching morality on adulterous love."

In the latter 1970s the Brents moved to Montecito, California (by Santa Barbara). Duncan served as a member of the executive board of the Santa Barbara Mission Archives and as a fellow of the Huntington Library, in San Marino. The Brents remained together until December 14, 1981, when they ended their lives in their Montecito home.

**Acquisition Information**

Donated by Lawrence Clark Powell, 1984.

**Scope and Content Notes**

These materials were donated by Lawrence Clark Powell in 1984. They include correspondence from Duncan Brent to Powell, as well as a typescript draft and other materials pertaining to Powell’s publication of *Le monde passe, la figure de ce monde passe: a remembrance of Duncan Brent in a memoir and commentary on his correspondence with Lawrence Clark Powell* (privately printed, 1983) [Spec Printers Z239.H4823 B74 1983].

Special Collections also has a collection of Duncan and Fredrika Brent’s books, donated by Duncan’s sister Hally Brent Dame in their memory and mainly containing 19th-20th century literature and Californiana. These have been cataloged separately and may be searched on Pegasus, the UCSB Libraries online catalog. One of the highlights of this collection is the two volume *Hollinshed’s Chronicles* [of England, Scotland, and Ireland] (London, 1587), one of William Shakespeare’s sources for his historical plays.

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.

Brent, Duncan.

Brent, Fredrika

Authors, American -- 20th century.

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| Box 1: 1 | Correspondence to Duncan Brent, 1958, 1977, n.d. |
| Box 1: 2 | Correspondence to Lawrence Clark Powell, ca. 1962-1981 |
| Box 1: 3 | Correspondence to Fredrika, 1959, n.d. |
| Box 1: 4 | Correspondence to Mr. and Mrs. Ray Billington (one with elaborate drawing), 1972, 1980 |
| Box 1: 5 | Notes and notebook (autobiographical notes, drawings, and poems, much of it apparently written at an early age) |
| Box 1: 6 | Correspondence to Powell re Brents' death, 1981 |
| Box 1: 7 | Correspondence to Powell, mainly re Powell’s memorial volume to Duncan Brent, 1981-1983 |
| Box 1: 8 | Transcriptions of Brent-Powell correspondence and notes for memorial volume *Le monde passé* (memorial volume) |
| Box 1: 9-10 | Typescript (2 copies, one annotated by Doyce Nunis and Mabel Billington) |
| Box 1: 11 | Final Proofs (also copies of photos for the book) |
| Box 1: 12 | Billington, Ray Allen (copy of "Selling the West" and typescript of "Cowboys, Indians, and the Land of Promise: The World Image of the American Frontier," inscribed by Billington, to the Brents), 1975 |
| Box 1: 13 | Sermons (bound vellum volume, with handwritten text, author unknown), ca. 1669-1671 |
| Box 1: 14 | Miscellany (includes notes, cards, clippings - much unidentified), ca. 1912-1976, n.d. |
| Box 1: 15 | Brent Dame, Hally (sister of Duncan) - Correspondence |