

**Bette Arnold Collection of Bette's
Rolls Royce Restaurant Materials
circa 1960s-1980s**

MS.2012.009

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Archives and Manuscripts Department

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Summary Information

Library Unit	Archives and Manuscripts Department
Creator	Arnold, Bette, 1921-2011
Title	Bette Arnold collection of Bette's Rolls Royce restaurant materials
Date [inclusive]	circa 1960s-1980
Extent	10.25 Linear feet (5 boxes and 1 oversize item)
Language	English
Abstract	The Bette Arnold collection of Bette's Rolls Royce restaurant materials consists of memorabilia related to the popular Bette's Rolls Royce restaurant near Faneuil Hall in Boston. The collection, which dates from the late 1960s to 1980, contains artifacts, artwork, audiovisual material, clippings, photographs, and two scrapbooks.

Preferred Citation note

Identification of item, Box number, Folder number, Bette Arnold Collection of Bette's Rolls Royce Restaurant Materials, MS.2012.009, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

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Restrictions on access

Collection is open for research.

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Provenance

Donated by Judith Cowin September 2011.

Biographical/Historical note

Bette Arnold was the proprietor of the popular Bette's Rolls Royce restaurant near Faneuil Hall in Boston. Born Bette Jeanne Berman on October 25, 1920, she first began her career in entertainment in her late teens as a singer in the Chappie Arnold Orchestra, a big band led by her first husband, which she helped manage. In 1941, she graduated from Simmons College where she majored in psychology and helped found the school of pre-professional studies. Bette and Chappie later started a bus company, and branched out into real estate before opening their famous restaurant in 1971. Bette was actively involved in the daily operation of her restaurant, and would entertain patrons on weekend evenings with her own renditions of popular songs. Bette's Rolls Royce quickly became renowned for its flamboyant owner. Bette often illegally parked her yellow Rolls Royce outside of her restaurant, accumulating over five thousand dollars in parking fines. The car appeared, with Bette perched on the hood, in many city parades throughout the 1970s. Bette sold the restaurant in 1980 and retired to travel with her second husband, Robert Charles. She died in May of 2011.

Sources

"Bette Arnold, at 90; flamboyant owner of Bette's Rolls Royce." *Boston Globe*. Boston.com (accessed September 28, 2011).

"Alumna Spotlight: Restaurant Business a Natural for Bette and her Rolls." *Simmons College Bulletin*. June 1971.

Scope and Contents note

The Bette Arnold collection of Bette's Rolls Royce restaurant materials consists of artifacts, artwork, audiovisual materials, clippings, photographs, and two scrapbooks. Artifacts include restaurant memorabilia, such as matchbooks and shirts, as well as Rolls Royce branded items, including playing cards and a toy car. Artwork consists of two charcoal portraits of Bette and her first husband, Chappie. Audiovisual materials consist of a LP record of one of Bette's many singing performances at the restaurant, entitled *Sunday Night at Bette's*, and a Sony Umatic videocassette entitled *Here's Bette*. Playback devices may not be available for all media; please contact the Archivist for more information.

The clippings and the photograph series are small, though many more clippings and photos can be found in the scrapbooks compiled by Bette during the restaurant's operation. The scrapbooks are unbound and contain a variety of documents including menus, recipes, flyers, caricatures, articles about Bette's Rolls Royce, articles written by Bette regarding Boston society, and invitations to social events in Boston. Numerous objects, such as the license plate of the famous Rolls Royce, have been attached to scrapbook pages.

Arrangement note

This collection is arranged alphabetically in six series: I. Artifacts; II. Artwork; III. Audiovisual materials; IV. Clippings; V. Photographs; and VI. Scrapbooks.

Collection Inventory

Series I: Artifacts, circa 1960s-1980

Bette Arnold and Bob Charles photograph pinback button, circa 1971-1980	Box 1	Object 1
Bette and Chappie Arnold photograph pinback button, circa 1971-1980	Box 1	Object 2
Bette's Rolls Royce restaurant matchbooks, circa 1971-1980	Box 1	Object 3-7
Bette's Rolls Royce restaurant nametag, circa 1971-1980	Box 1	Object 8
Bette's Rolls Royce restaurant shirts, circa 1971-1980	Box 2	Object 1-2
Menu board, circa 1971-1980	Object 1	
Rolls Royce pillow, circa 1960s-1980	Box 2	Object 3
Rolls Royce plaque, circa 1960s-1980	Box 1	Object 9
Rolls Royce playing cards, circa 1960s-1980	Box 1	Object 10
Rolls Royce toy car, circa 1960s-1980	Box 2	Object 4

Series II: Artwork, 1974

Portraits of Bette and Chappie Arnold, charcoal on paper, 1974	Box 4	Folder 1
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Series III: Audiovisual materials, circa 1971-1980

<i>Here's Bette</i> Sony Umatic videocassette, circa 1971-1980	Box 2	Cassette 5
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Sunday Night at Bette's phonograph records, circa
1971-1980

Box 3

Folder 1-2

Series IV: Clippings, 1971-1976

Photocopies of clippings on Bette's Rolls Royce
restaurant, 1971-1976

Box 3

Folder 3

Series V: Photographs, circa 1969-1974

Bette Arnold with Rolls Royce in front of restaurant, circa
1974

Box 3

Folder 4

Bette and Chappie Arnold with Governor Frank and
Jessie Sargent, circa 1969-1971

Box 3

Folder 5

Series VI: Scrapbooks, 1970-1980

1970-1979

Box 4

Volume 2

1976-1980

Box 5

Volume 1
