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AHVENUS (Martin) Papers

Dates: [192-]-2006

Extent: 31 boxes (4.5 metres)

Scope and Content: This collection of papers from the famed Toronto bookseller includes administrative records from his shop Village Books, including invoices, correspondence, book lists, as well as individual files related to the running of the store and the publishing arm of Village Books. It also contains material related to Ahvenus' work as an appraiser, correspondence with various Canadian authors, a travel diary from 1993-94, and books, many of them signed and inscribed by the authors.

Biographical sketch: Martin (aka Marty) Ahvenus, born in Toronto in 1928, was for over 30 years the proprietor of Village Books, which he first opened on Toronto's Gerrard Street in June 1961. At the time, Gerrard St. was akin to New York's Greenwich Village, and Ahvenus' shop became a favoured place for young writers and poets, including Al Purdy, bp Nichol (who used the store as his mailing address), Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje, Milton Acorn, Joe Rosenblatt and Gwendolyn MacEwen, among many others. Ahvenus was an early champion of contemporary Canadian poetry, and was one of only a handful of booksellers that stocked it in a serious way, including many small press imprints.

When the building that housed Village Books was sold to a developer in 1972, he moved his store, first to Yorkville and eventually to its final home, on Queen Street West. The 1980s, according to Ahvenus, were the heyday of the Village Book Store, as there was a vibrant community of new and used bookstores in the area. Gentrification, however, eventually led to rising rent costs in the late 1980s, and in the fall of 1991, at the age of 63, he sold the shop to two of his employees. He stayed on for two more years, before leaving for good in 1994. The store eventually closed in 2000.

Marty continued to remain active in the book trade for many years, haunting the antiques market and selling books at St. Lawrence. He died in the fall of 2011.

Box 1	Village Books
20 Folders	Consists of various administrative materials, including licenses, correspondence, invoices, etc.
Folder 1	Administration, general, Gerrard St. location, 1961-72
Folder 2	Business licences, 1962-91

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Folders 3-5	Misc. correspondence, [196-]-90
Folders 6-13	Invoices, [196-]-[9-]
Folders 14-18	Invoices, purchases from Catalogue of Contemporary Canadian Poetry, 1970-73
Folder 19	Catalogue of Contemporary Canadian Poetry, [1970]
Folder 18	Cancelled cheques (primarily to writers), 1965-73
Box 2	Village Books, Invoices, sent
11 Folders	Consists of invoices sent by Ahvenus and Village Books. Note: Arranged by year.
Folder 1	1993-94
Folders 2-3	1994
Folders 4-5	1995
Folder 6	1996
Folder 7	1997
Folder 8	1998
Folder 9	1999
Folder 10	2000-01
Folder 11	2002-06
Box 3	Village Books, Book lists
15 Folders	Consists of book lists of available stock distributed by Village Books.
Folders 1-12	Canadiana lists, #s 7-27, [1970s]
Folder 13	General lists, [197-]

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Folder 14	General lists, printing and typography, [197-?]
Folder 15	“Collection of Books and Materials Relating to Ben Hecht,” [197-?]
Box 4 4 Folders	Village Books, Publishing Consists of material related to Village Books Publishing, specifically the publication of On Target by John Holmes (pseudonym of Raymond Souster). It also contains copies of The Poetry Sheet, also published by Village Books.
Folder 1	Administration and publicity, 1973
Folders 2-4	Invoices, 1973-74
Folder 5	The Poetry Sheet, Nos. 1-4, 1973
Boxes 5-8	Village Books, Files Consists of files maintained by Ahvenus. Most of the material relates to Village Books business. Arranged alphabetically.
Box 5 42 Folders	A-G
Folder 1	John Abrahamson
Folder 2	American orders
Folder 3	Harry Barberian
Folder 4	Book Plates
Folder 5	Book Wants
Folder 6	Bob Bowen
Folder 7	Avi Boxer
Folder 8	California – Feb. 1987

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Folder 9	Canada Book Auction
Folder 10	Canadian Antiques
Folder 11	Canadian Art Books
Folder 12	Canadian Collector Magazine
Folder 13	Champlain Society
Folder 14	Agatha Christie
Folder 15	C.I.P. Victoria
Folder 16	City of Toronto – Taxes
Folders 17-18	Computer
Folder 19-20	Cookstown Antique Show
Folders 21	Customs
Folder 22	Delmar
Folders 23-24	Distillers Corp. Seagrams Ltd.
Folder 25	Dusseldorf
Folder 26	eBay
Folder 27	Electrohome
Folders 28-29	Elora Festival
Folder 30	FedEx
Folder 31	Fitzhenry & Whiteside
Folder 32	Martin Frost
Folder 33	Graham Garrett
Folder 34	George Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art
Folder 35	Glasfax Reference Library

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Folder 36	Robert Goldenberg
Folder 37	Gordon & Gotch
Folder 38	Edward Gorey
Folder 39	Gotham Book Market
Folders 40-41	Green Gate Books
Folder 42	Cam Grosjean
Box 6	H-J
17 Folders	
Folders 1-2	Jim Hennok
Folder 3	Heritage Antique Shows
Folders 4-5	Hertz
Folder 6	Insurance
Folders 7-8	Internet
Folder 9	Interlog
Folder 10	Inverarden
Folder 11	Invoices
Folder 12	Invoice Tax
Folder 13	Ann Ireland
Folder 14	Japan
Folders 15-16	Roy Jensen
Folder 17	John – Cleaning

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Box 7	M-O
31 Folders	
Folder 1	MacDonald Stewart Art Centre
Folder 2	Thoreau MacDonald
Folder 3	Gwendolyn MacEwen
Folder 4	Made in Sweden
Folders 5-6	Mastercard
Folder 7	May Antiques
Folder 8	George McCabe
Folder 9	McCready Lecture
Folder 10	Owen Ernest McGillicuddy
Folder 11	Hugh McMillan
Folder 12	Medicine – Wants
Folder 13	Metz Pattern Glass Books
Folder 14	Lucy Maud Montgomery/Fathers of Confederation Building Trust
Folder 15	Montreal Book Fair
Folder 16	Morris Gallery
Folder 17	John Newlove
Folder 18	Peter C. Newman
Folder 19	Peter Ohler
Folder 20	New York
Folder 21	Old Book Sale

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Folder 22	Old Church Trading
Folder 23	Ontario Showcase
Folder 24	E.P. Oppenheim
Folders 25-29	Orders
Folders 30-31	Ottawa Antiquarian Book Fair
Box 8	P-W
32 Folders	
Folder 1	Permanent Wants
Folder 2	Philadelphia
Folder 3	Phillips Ward-Price
Folder 4	Postal scale
Folder 5	Queen's University
Folder 6	Queen St. Store
Folder 7	Dr. J. Ritchie
Folder 8	Joe Rosenblatt
Folder 9	Rugs
Folder 10	Rutherford Book and Paper Restoration
Folder 11	St. Jacobs Antique Show
Folder 12	[Sentneer]
Folder 13	Serendipity Books
Folder 14	Mendy Sharf
Folder 15	Sir George Williams University

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Folder 16	Sotheby
Folder 17	Stratford Food Fair
Folder 18	Tanks
Folder 19	Tardy
Folder 20	Toronto Antiquarian Book Fair
Folder 21	Toronto Star
Folder 22	Fred Turner
Folder 23	UNICEF
Folder 24	University of Alberta
Folder 25	University Club
Folder 26	University of Guelph
Folder 27	University of Toronto
Folder 28	University of Western Ontario
Folder 29	Carmen Valentino
Folder 30	Hugh Verrier
Folder 31	Victoria University
Folders 32-33	Wimodausis Club
Box 9	Correspondence
22 Folders	
Folder 1	bill bissett, 1971-77
Folder 2	George Bowering, 19868-70
Folder 3	Kenny Carmichael, 1973-76

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Folder 4	Martha Fleming, [199-?]
Folder 5	Elizabeth Forrest, 1990-91
Folders 6-8	Norman Storey, 1977-2005
Folder 9	Misc. authors, [196-]-89 Includes correspondence from Earle Birney, Fraser Sutherland, James Reaney, Ralph Gustafson, George Fetherling and Raymond Souster)
Folder 10	Misc. correspondence (and invoices), 1963-79
Folders 10-19	Correspondence, general and misc., [196-]-2005
Folders 20-22	Holiday cards, [197-?]- [200-?]
Box 10 21 Folders, 1 book	Atwood, Howith, Purdy material Consists of various material – including correspondence, appraisals and invoices – related to Ahvenus’ work with Margaret Atwood, Harry Howith and Al Purdy.
Folders 1-6	Margaret Atwood
Folders 1-3	Appraisals, 1985-99
Folder 4	Atwood Papers, 1977-87
Folder 5	Correspondence, 1974 2 TLS
Folder 6	re: Double Persephone, 1974
Folders 7-10	Harry Howith, <i>Fragments of the Dance</i> (published by Village Books)
Folder 7	Correspondence, 1968-75
Folders 8-10	Invoices, 1969-73
Folders 11-21	Al Purdy

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Folder 11	Letters for poetry anthology, 1970
Folders 12-13	Correspondence, 1966-73 8 TNS, 4 TLS, 2 ANS
Folders 14-17	Writings, 1971 Onion-skin copies of typescript
Folder 18	[Writings?], 1970
Folder 19	Galleys, Wild Grape Wine, [1968] Note: signed by Purdy
Folder 20	Broadside, "The D.H. Lawrence House at Chapala," 1979 Note: signed by Purdy
Folder 21	Copy of The Canadian magazine (with article on Purdy), 1965 Note: signed by Purdy
Book	Purdy, Al. Morning And It's Summer: A Memoir. Dunvegan, Ont.: Quadrant Editions, 1983. Note: Signed and inscribed to Martin Ahvenus by Purdy.
Box 11	Atwood, Purdy and MacEwen material
10 Folders	
Folders 1-3	Margaret Atwood, xerox letters to Ted Hopkins
Folders 4-9	Al Purdy
Folder 4	Writings, [197-?] Onion-skin copies
Folder 5	Poems, [197-?]
Folder 6	Galleys, Love is a Burning Building, 1970
Folder 7	[List for Purdy papers?], [197-]
Folders 8-9	Script, "Dormez Vous?" 1964
Folder 10	Gwen MacEwen, script, Terror and Erebus, [196-]

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Box 12 18 Folders	Appraisals
Folders 1-4	University of Toronto, 1985-2005
Folders 5-18	McMichael Gallery, 1988-2006
Box 13 13 Folders	Appraisals (cont'd), Toronto Book Fair, Antiquarian Bookseller's Association of Canada
Folders 1-3	Appraisals, Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2004
Folder 4	Appraisals, MacDonald Stewart Art Centre, 1988
Folder 5	Appraisals, misc., 1985-2005
Folders 6-9	Toronto Antiquarian Book Fair, misc., [197-]-78
Folder 10	Photographs, [197-]
Folders 11-12	Antiquarian Bookseller's Association of Canada, 1967-77
Folder 13	Arts & Letters Club, misc., 1969-73
Box 14	Book Fair materials Consists of programs, catalogues, lists and other materials associated with book fairs attended by Ahvenus.
Box 15 14 Folders	Misc. material Includes manuscripts, both of Ahvenus (primarily for talks/speeches) and others, as well as other materials related to both Ahvenus and Village Books.
Folder 1	Village Book Store, misc., 1963-[7-]

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Folder 2	Manuscript, Speech for the Women's Auxiliary Society for Crippled Civilians, 1973 Typescript
Folder 3	Manuscript, speeches, [197-?] Typescript with holograph revisions
Folder 4	"Falling Livres: The Toronto Antiquarian Booktrade through the Nineties," 2000
Folder 5	Poems/correspondence, material for book on 15 th anniversary of Village Books, 1976
Folder 6	Broadsheets, Bill Brads, [197-?]
Folder 7	Writings, "How books go together and how they come apart," Martha Fleming, 2002
Folder 8	Writings, "Notes on Martin Ahvenus and the Village Book Store," Don McLeod, 2005
Folder 9	[Manuscripts], Pdraig O' Broin, 1969-70
Folder 10	Holograph poems, [unknown author], [date unknown]
Folder 11	London ILAB materials, 1983
Folder 12	Palavar (literary magazine), [1992]
Folder 13	Photographs, [196-?]
Folder 14	Ephemera, Gerrard St. Village, [196-?] (Note: additional ephemera can be found in Boxes 28-30.)
Box 16	Diary Consists of Ahvenus' travel diary from 1993-94, contained in four separate spiral notebooks.
Box 17	Family Consists of materials from Martin Ahvenus' family, including passports, immigration papers and photographs.

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Boxes 18-19	Photographs Consists of photographs, both of Martin Ahvenus and photos taken by him. They cover a large time frame, from the early 1960s up until the early 2000s. They are primarily personal photos not related to Village Books.
Box 20	Address books Consists of two of Martin Ahvenus' address books.
Box 21	Printing, oversize publications Consists of material for Village Books printing jobs (including letterhead, cards, etc.) as well as oversize publications (noted below).
	Bissett, bill. <i>fires in th [sic] temple</i> . Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1984. Broadsheet: "The Post-Modern Man" by Milton Acorn. 1985 Poster: Allen Ginsburg reading at Harvard Law School, March 27, 1959.

Box 22	Books/Publications
	Birney, Earl. <i>Rags & Boneshop</i> . Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971. (Inscribed and signed by author.) Birney, Earle. <i>The Poems of Earle Birney</i> . Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969. (Inscribed and signed by author.) Alcorn, Douglas and Raymond Souster. <i>From Hell to Breakfast</i> . Toronto: Intruder Press, 1980. (Inscribed and signed by Souster.) <i>Sumac: An Active Anthology</i> . Vol. 3, No. 11 (Winter 1971). (Signed by Al Purdy.) [Unknown Japanese title.] (Given to Al Purdy.)

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	<p>Lucas, I.B. <i>The Footloose Gardener</i>. [Markdale, Ont.]: Parthenon Press, [1970]. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>MacEwen, Gwendolyn. <i>Magic Animals: Selected Poems Old and New</i>. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Alecs the Holy. <i>God's Wand: The Origin of the Alphabet</i>. [Toronto]: Outlands Five, 2002.</p>
Box 23	Books/Publications
	<p>Ondaatje, Michael. <i>The English Patient</i>. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Purdy, Al. <i>Sundance at Dusk</i>. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Sheard, Sarah. <i>Almost Japanese</i>. Toronto: Coach House Press, 1985. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Mappin, John N. <i>The Goblin: A Brief History of Canada's Humour Magazine of the 1920s</i>. Montreal: Printed for John N. Mappin by the Porcupine's Quill, Erin, Ont., 1988. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Rushton, Alfred. <i>Mind Maps</i>. Toronto: Poseidon Press, 1970. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Farrell, James T. <i>The Collected Poems of James T. Farrell</i>. New York: Fleet Publishing, 1965. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Mappin, John N. <i>Tribute to a Thoroughbred: Letters to Northern Dancer</i>. Montreal: Printed for John N. Mappin by The Porcupine's Quill, 1992.</p>
Box 24	Books/Imprints
	<p>Consists primarily of small press imprints.</p>
	<p>Mappin, John and John Archer. <i>Bernard Amtmann, 1907-1979: A Personal Memoir</i>. [Toronto?]: Amtmann Circle, 1987. (Signed by authors.)</p>

	<p>Smith, Goldwin. <i>Keeping Christmas</i>. Montreal: Printed for John N. Mappin by William Poole at the Poole Hall Press, Grimsby, Ont., 1987. (Inscribed and signed by John Mappin.)</p> <p>Run, Wolf. <i>The Collected Letters of Wolf Run</i>. Eugene, Ore.: [Self published?], 1976.</p> <p>Singleton, Becky. <i>4 Dials</i>. [Self published?], 1984, 1989.</p> <p>Lowry, Robert. <i>A Fantasy Session of my Four Lost Wives</i>. Toronto: Letters, 1989.</p> <p>Copithorne, Judith. <i>A Light Character</i>. Toronto: Coach House Press, 1985. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>MacEwen, Gwendolyn. <i>The T.E. Lawrence Poems</i>. Oakville, Ont.: Mosaic Press, 1982. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Fetherling, Doug. <i>Four Corners</i>. [Self published], 1986.</p> <p>Colombo, John Robert. <i>The Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire</i>. [Fredericton, NB]: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, [1971]. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Bowering, George. <i>Al Purdy</i>. Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1970.</p> <p>Ball, Nelson. <i>Round Table</i>. [Self published?], 1996.</p> <p>Jewinski, Hans. <i>Poet Cop</i>. Markham, Ont.: Simon & Schuster of Canada, 1975. (Note: two copies, both inscribed and signed by author. Also contains "Encyclopedia Salesman, March 16, 1971," a Dreadnaught broadsheet.)</p> <p>MacEwen, Gwendolyn. <i>Julian the Magician</i>. New York: Corinth Books, 1963. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Fisher, David Lincoln. <i>Death of my Sons</i>. Cupertino, CA: Omega Cat Press, 1993.</p> <p>Ball, Nelson. <i>Beaufort's Scale</i>. Kitchener, Ont.: Weed/flower Press, 1967. (Note: two copies. One review copy, the other inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Kruchenykh, A. 3A UM: 3 Transrational Poems. [Toronto]:</p>
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	<p>imprimerie dromadaire, 1977. (Note: two copies.)</p> <p>Weed #12. Nov/Dec 1967. (Final issue.)</p> <p><i>The Circle Press</i>. No. 1 (Spring 1982). (Inscribed and signed.)</p> <p>McKnight, David. <i>New Wave Canada: Coach House Pres and the Small Press Movement in English Canada in the 1960s</i>. Ottawa: [National Library of Canada], 1996.</p>
Box 25	Books/Imprints
	<p>Jonas, George. <i>The Happy Hungry Man</i>. Toronto: House of Anansi, 1970. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Macpherson, Duncan. <i>1970 Editorial Cartoons</i>. Toronto: Toronto Star, 1970.</p> <p>Bradd, William. <i>Kingdom of Old Men</i>. Fort Bragg, Cal.: Ten Mile River Press, 1979. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Bradd, William. <i>Dialogue a Three-Cornered Hat</i>. Fort Bragg, Cal.: Ten Mile River Press, 1982. (Signed by author.)</p> <p>Nichol, bp. <i>You Too, Nicky</i>. [Self published], 1989. (Printed as a Christmas gift.)</p> <p>Lowry, Robert. <i>An American Writer at the End of His Life</i>. Toronto: Letters, 1988.</p> <p>Patchen, Kenneth. <i>Eight Pieces for Kryssmess</i>. Toronto: Letters, 1989.</p> <p>Wilson, William D. <i>The Ballad of the Election Doll</i>. [Self published?], 1981. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Woollatt, Richard and Raymond Souter, eds. <i>Generation Now</i>. Don Mills, Ont.: Longman Canada, 1970. (Signed by Al Purdy.)</p> <p>Siebrasse, Glen. <i>Jerusalem</i>. Montreal: Delta, 1971. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Coleman, Victor. <i>One Eye Love</i>. Toronto: Coach House Press, 1967. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Leacock, Stephen. <i>Xmas Convivial and Pleasant at No. 19</i></p>

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	<p><i>Redpath Crescent</i>. Montreal: Printed for John N. Mappin by William Poole at the Poole Hall Press, Grimsby, Ontario for Christmas, 1990. (Inscribed and signed by John Mappin.)</p> <p>Abrahamson, Hilary. <i>Victorians at Table: Dining Traditions in Nineteenth-Century Ontario</i>. Toronto: Ministry of Culture and Recreation, 1981. (Inscribed and signed by author.)</p> <p>Carroll, Lewis. <i>Advice from a Caterpillar</i>. Grimsby, Ont.: Poole Hall Press, [1985].</p>
Box 26	<p>bpNichol</p> <p>Consists of small press materials related to bpNichol.</p>
Box 27	<p>Antiquarian Booksellers material, oversize ephemera</p> <p>Consists of material related to the Antiquarian Book Sellers, as well as oversize ephemera. (Note: the bulk of the ephemera can be found in boxes 28-30.)</p>
Boxes 28-30	<p>Ephemera</p> <p>Consists of a wide array of ephemera, including art gallery initiations, newspaper clippings, printed material (including promotional material for Village Books), and other assorted material.</p>
Box 31	<p>Glenn and Ann Goluska</p> <p>Consists of material printed by the Goluskas.</p>