

**McLean County Museum of History**

**James W. Bennett Collection**

Processed by  
Jill Barth  
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**Collection Information**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	2010-2022
RESTRICTIONS:	None
PROVENANCE:	Donated by James Bennett
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	

## Brief History

James W. Bennett was born in 1942 and lived in Canton, Monticello, and Bloomington, Illinois as a child. He studied at Illinois Wesleyan and Illinois State universities before becoming a teacher at several community colleges, an aide to high school students, and a successful author.

His works are mainly for young adult and teen audiences, and often deal with challenging themes. Many of his books revolve around sports and other topics such as mental health. Several of his novels have been integrated into high school English and Literature curriculum. His better-known published works include *The Squared Circle*, *Dakota Dream*, *I Can Hear the Mourning Dove*, *The Flex of the Thumb*, *Blue Star Rapture*, and *Plunking Reggie Jackson*.

## Scope

The collection includes three unpublished novels written by James W. Bennett, an unpublished novel cowritten by Bennett and Donald Raycraft, and an unpublished children's story, with illustrations by Richard Becker.

## Box and Folder Inventory

### **Folder 1: Background Information**

- 1.1 "Overmatched," by Jim Bennett, *The Normalite*, April 21, 2022, newspaper article
- 1.2 James W. Bennett flyer detailing various published works.
- 1.3 Email correspondence from James Bennett to Bill Kemp regarding delivery of unpublished manuscripts, January 20, 2025.
- 1.4 Email correspondence from James Bennett to Bill Kemp regarding synopsis of unpublished manuscripts, January 27, 2025.

### **Folder 2: Double Team**

- 2.1 "Double Team" by James W. Bennett, pp 1-100.

### **Folder 3: Double Team**

- 3.1 "Double Team" by James W. Bennett, pp 101-215

### **Folder 4: Fresh Killed**

- 4.1 "Fresh Killed" By James W. Bennett, pp 1-102

### **Folder 5: Fresh Killed**

- 5.1 "Fresh Killed" by James W. Bennett, pp 103-209

### **Folder 6: Connie and Clyde**

- 6.1 "Connie and Clyde" by James W. Bennett, pp 1-114

**Folder 7: Connie and Clyde**

7.1 "Connie and Clyde" by James W. Bennet, pp 115-234  
7.2

**Folder 8: The Oswald Letter**

8.1 "The Oswald Letter" by James W. Bennett and Donald Raycraft

**Folder 9: The King's Flower Garden**

9.1 "The King's Flower Garden" by James W. Bennett, illustrations by Richard Becker, 13 pp.

**Folder 10: The King's Flower Garden, 2025**

10.1 "The King's Flower Garden" by James W. Bennett, illustrations by Richard Becker, 13 pp. (with color added to original black-and-white illustrations by original artist).

**Bennett works available in the Museum Library Stacks**

Bennett, James W. *Blue Star Rapture*. Aladdin Paperbacks, 2001.

*Dakota Dream*. Scholastic Inc, 1994.

*I Can Hear the Mourning Dove*. Houghton Mifflin, 1990.

*I Can Hear the Mourning Dove*. Scholastic, 1990.

*Loopey to Beau : A Troubled Author's Journey with Dogs*. Page Publishing, Inc, 2018.

*The Flex of the Thumb*. Pin Oak Press, 1996.

*The Squared Circle*. Scholastic, 1995.

**Bennett with coauthors:**

Bennett, James W., and Donald Raycraft. *Old Hoss : A Fictional Baseball Biography of Charles Radbourn*. McFarland & Co., 2002.

Smith, Charles Merrill, and James W. Bennett. *How the Bible Was Built*. W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2005.