James Scripps Booth (1888-1954)
and
John McLaughlin Booth (1913-1989) Papers

1907-1980
6 linear ft. plus 2 oversize boxes

Acquisition Number: 1990-14

Acquisition: This collection was a gift to the Cranbrook Archives by Ellen Norlen Booth, with several additions thereafter.

Access: Access to the collection is unrestricted.

Copyright: Copyright to this collection is held by the Cranbrook Educational Community.

Photographs: Photographs, negatives, and photograph albums were removed and housed with the Photograph Collection. The glass plate negatives are housed in the storage closet in the office of the Archivist (2002).

Index: Located at end of finding aid. Also included is an inventory of the artwork of James Scripps Booth.

Processing: In July 2002, additional artwork of James Scripps Booth’s was located in a portfolio. It was inventoried by Leslie S. Edwards and re-housed in an acid-free box. The finding aid was updated at that time.
Provenance

The personal papers, paintings, and drawings of James Scripps Booth (1888-1954) in the Cranbrook Archives were created and assembled by Mr. Booth during his lifetime. After his death on September 13, 1954 in Norwalk, Connecticut, the ownership of these materials passed to his widow, Ellen Norlen Booth. Mrs. Booth maintained custody of the materials for some time but, owing to the lack of proper storage facilities in her own home, decided to deposit the bulk of her husband's personal papers and many of his drawings, paintings, and sketches, with James' son, John M. Booth, who had ample climate-controlled space for preserving the collection in his residence.

Mrs. Booth also distributed additional drawings, paintings, and sundry personal items belonging to her husband to John and other members of the family, wishing to present them with mementos of James Scripps Booth. With Mrs. Ellen Booth's permission and the assistance of Mr. and Mrs. John M. Booth, Mark Coir transferred the body of the James Scripps Booth Collection from John and Carol Booth's home in Birmingham, Michigan to the Cranbrook Archives in the fall of 1989 and the spring of 1990. In addition to the materials that were given to Cranbrook Archives, documents relating to James Booth's automotive career were donated at the same time to the National Automotive History Collection of the Detroit Public Library.

History

James Scripps Booth

James Scripps Booth, an automobile designer, artist, and philosopher was the eldest son of George Gough Booth and Ellen Scripps Booth born May 31, 1888 in the Trumbull Avenue home of his grandfather James Edmund Scripps, founder and publisher of the Detroit Evening News. Educated briefly at Detroit University School and St. Luke's School for Boys in Wayne, Pennsylvania, Booth left school in the tenth grade and taught himself the basics of automobile mechanics by systematically dismantling and reassembling the family's 1904 Winston. By 1908 Booth had made the preliminary sketches of a two wheeled belt-driven vehicle, the Bi-Autogo.

While employed at the Detroit Evening News he developed his writing skills, broadened his automotive background, and refined his art techniques. In 1910 Hupp Motor Company hired Booth to write and illustrate their automotive catalogs and instruction manuals.

Following his 1910 marriage to Jean Alice McLaughlin, the Booth family-- with an entourage of nurse, chauffeur and two automobiles-- embarked on a Grand Tour of
Europe. The young couple returned to Paris, James to study painting with Myron Barlow, and Jean to write.

Returning to the United States James obtained $25,000 from his father and built a prototype of the Bi-Autogō. In 1913 Booth, uncle William J. Scripps and John Batterman formed the Scripps-Booth Cyclecar Company, manufacturers of small, belt-driven vehicles, the JB Rocket and the Packet. Reorganizing in 1914, the Scripps-Booth Company introduced a small luxurious car, the JSB, featuring such innovations as a spare wheel and tire, a horn button on the steering wheel, a removable top and an electrical locking system. Conflicting design ideas led to Booth's resignation in 1916. The company was eventually sold to General Motors.

Concentrating on his art, James, his wife Jean, his son John, (born May 28, 1913) and daughter Margaret, (born September 22, 1916) moved to Pasadena, California, where his third child, Ann, was born (December 20, 1917).

Returning to Detroit in 1923, Booth introduced his latest automobile design, the daVinci, an automobile with lowered floor board, hanging foot pedals and a parking brake in the transmission. The Stutz Company expressed interest, but declined to manufacture the car. However, at the New York Auto Show Stutz showed a car so similar to the daVinci that Booth filed a patent infringement suit, eventually winning in 1935.

In the 1930's Booth settled his family in Detroit, established an industrial design/art studio in Indian Village, and assumed responsibilities as a trustee of Brookside School, Cranbrook Foundation and a director of the Cranbrook Academy of Art.


James Scripps Booth died September 13, 1954 at his home in Norwalk, Connecticut.

**John McLaughlin Booth**

John McLaughlin Booth, first child of Jean McLaughlin and James Scripps Booth, was born May 28, 1913 in Highland Park, Michigan. A member of the first class (September 1927) of Cranbrook School for Boys, John graduated in June 1933, then attended Wayne State University and the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts.

Between 1941 and 1943 Booth married Carol Lawson, enlisted in the United States Army Air Force, graduated from Officers' Candidate School in Miami, Florida, became the
father of his first child, a son, Thomas (1943), and moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado. Booth left the U.S. Army Air Force in 1945 as First Lieutenant. Booth and his wife remained in Colorado after the war and had two more children - Carol (1945) and Nancy (1947). In 1960, the Booth family returned to Birmingham, MI where Booth was associated with various financial institutions, retiring in 1972 from Paine-Webber.

Always interested in art, as a private collector Booth focused on local contemporary artists. Aware of his civic responsibilities he served (1967-1989) as a trustee and governor of the Cranbrook Academy of Art. At the Detroit Institute of Arts he served as both a board member of the Friends of Modern Art and an honorary board member of the Graphic Arts Council. Other memberships included the Detroit Historical Society, the Florida Moorings Club and the Center for the Arts in Vero Beach, Florida. Booth was also a member of Christ Church Cranbrook, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan and Trinity Episcopal Church of Vero Beach, Vero Beach, Florida.


**Scope and Content of the Collection**

The collection is divided into two sections: the collection of James Scripps Booth and the collection of his son, John M. Booth. The collection of James Scripps Booth contains an autobiographical manuscript, an edited biographical manuscript of George Gough Booth, manuscripts of Jean McLaughlin Booth's works, correspondence, clippings, designs, blueprints, sketches, photographs, photographic prints and negatives, catalogs, diaries and books.

The collection of John McLaughlin Booth, a Cranbrook Art Academy trustee, contains correspondence, meeting minutes, reports and printed materials of the Cranbrook Art Academy, 1966-1973.

The papers of James Scripps Booth and John McLaughlin Booth are arranged into the following series: I. James Scripps Booth; II. John McLaughlin Booth; III. Publications; IV. Paintings, Sketches and Memorabilia.

**Related Collections**

- The archives has a collection of four paintings by James S. Booth donated by Marion Bunt (#2000-14)
- The Detroit Public Library, Automotive History Archives, has a collection of James Scripps Booth's blueprints, sketches, scrapbooks and paintings.

**Important subjects covered in this collection:**

Automobiles, Bi-Autogo
Automobiles, daVinci
Some books and blueprints have been removed and placed in other Booth family and Cranbrook collections and locations:

- Martin Luther Catechism and the Gagnier Family Bible, into the Henry Wood Booth Collection.
- Cranbrook yearbooks and catalogs in the Cranbrook Schools Collection.
- Blueprints of Alura II and Greenwood Cemetery in the reading room flat-file.
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10. Artist Models, 1920
11. Automobiles, Bi-Autogo, 1911, 1959 (car care manual kept in car itself)
13. Automobiles, daVinci Pup, 1930
14. Automobiles, JSB, c.1914
15. Automobiles, Scripps-Booth, 1913
16. Booth, George Gough, 1887-1949
17. Booth, George Gough, Biography, pp.1-100
18. Booth, George Gough, Biography, pp.101-206
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22. Booth, George Gough, Biography, pp.511-601

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1. Booth, George Gough, Biography, pp.602-710
2. Booth, George Gough, Biography, pp.711-739
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4. Booth, James Scripps, 1888-1954
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15. Booth, Jean McLaughlin, 1906-1992
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1. Booth, John McLaughlin, 1941
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4. California, 1918, 1983
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6. Clippings, Architecture, ca.1920
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2. Fishermens' Calvary, 1911
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5. Motor Mechanics, 1942
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7. St.Luke's School, Wayne, Pa., 1907
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Series II  John McLaughlin Booth
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11. Booth, John M. Biographical Data, ca.1989
13. Booth Newspapers, Correspondence, 1933-1966
15. Christ Church Cranbrook, Jun 1976 - May 1979
17. Cranbrook Art Academy Art Auction, Nov 1971 - Feb 1972
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19. Cranbrook Art Academy Art Auction Clippings, 1972
22. Cranbrook Art Academy Board of Governors Minutes, Feb 1980 - Feb 1981

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1. Cranbrook Art Academy Board of Trustees Minutes, Nov 1966 - May 1967
2. Cranbrook Art Academy Board of Trustees Minutes, Jun 1967 - Sep 1967
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13. Cranbrook Art Academy Board of Trustees Minutes, Apr 1971 - Jun 1971
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17. Cranbrook Art Academy Board of Trustees Minutes, Mar 1973 - Jun 1973
18. Cranbrook Art Academy Budget and Finance Reports, 1974

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1. Cranbrook Art Academy Budget and Finance Reports, 1975, 1976
2. Cranbrook Art Academy Bylaws, 1973
4. Cranbrook Art Academy Ford Foundation Grant, 1974
6. Cranbrook Art Academy Fund Raising, 1972
12. Cranbrook Art Academy Organization Documents, 1942

Series III  Publications

Box 7

Automobile Quarterly, 13, Third Quarter, 1975
Cahill, Holger and Alfred H. Barr, Jr., editors, *Art in America*, New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1934

*Detroit Free Press*, 77 Nov 1960

*Detroit News*, 7 Nov 1960


McRae, Milton A. *Forty Years in Newspaperdom*. New York: Brentano's, 1924


**Series IV Artwork**

**Box 8-9**

Contained in this series are matted and unmatted drawings, oil paintings, graphic designs for posters, paintings, theatrical set designs and illustrations. An inventory of the artwork follows the index.

**Series V Memorabilia**

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Inventory of Artwork of James Scripps Booth
Pastel on paper, mounted
Seated F nude by fireplace
Drawing signed and dated: JSB 8-40
Back: signed and dated JSB 7-1-40
Other assignments (on back): #26, also 102

Pastel on paper
Reclining F nude with foliage
Drawing signed and dated: JSB 7-17-20
Other assignment (on back): 374

Pastel on paper, mounted and framed with glassine
Landscape with M seated next to reclining F, breast exposed.
Drawing signed and dated: JSB 2-19-20
Written on bottom of drawing: Annabelle Lee
Other assignment (on back): 381
Also: on the mount board 301, however the artwork does not properly fit the frame

Pastel on paper, mounted and framed with glassine
Floating F nude with long blonde hair. Holds box to breast, other hand holds sprig of?
Drawing signed and dated: JSB 4-22-20
Written on drawing: Study for a “character” in “A Soul in Flight”

Pastel on paper
Floating F nude holding piece of drapery(?) (Backside view)
Signed and dated: JSB 4-23-20
Written on drawing: Study for “Hereditary personality” in “A Soul in Flight”
Other assignment (on back): 404

Pastel on paper, framed
Landscape with F crossing bridge
Signed and dated: JSB 12/17
Written on front of frame: Merry Christmas to Mother and Dad From James 1917
Also on front of frame: No I
Other assignment (on back): 211; CEC 692

Charcoal on paper
Landscape: entrance facade
Signed and dated: JSB 1922
Other assignment (inside frame): CEC 684

Pencil on paper, mounted
Floating F nude hanging upside down, backside view
Signed and dated: JSB 4-5-1920
Noted on frame: Study-Floating Figure, James S Booth ‘19
Other assignment (on back): CEC 690a

Watercolor on paper
Colorful landscape
Signed and dated: JSB ‘08

Watercolor on paper
Poster Design for Art Exhibition June 10-11, 1902 with abstract landscape
Signed and dated: JSB ‘02
Noted for Detroit University School

Ink and watercolor on paper
Poster Design for Art Exhibition June 8-9, 1903 with Gibson Girl profile
Signed and dated: JSB ‘03
Noted for Detroit University School 1903

Oil on mounted canvas
Outdoors: seated brunette F wearing gold, holds single yellow bloom
Painting unsigned and undated
Back of frame: Started 5-13-1920

Oil on mounted canvas
Partially nude F seated on floor before painting(?)
Painting unsigned and undated
Back of Frame: Started 10-11-18, signed 11-12-18

Oil on mounted canvas
Man seated in large, dark room adjacent to fireplace
Painting unsigned and undated
Typed label on back of frame: “The Raven. Received second prize at Michigan Artists Show at the old Detroit Museum of Art 1915. Ralph H Booth as president of the Museum gave me inside information that if my name hadn’t been Booth, the picture would have taken first prize!”
Label on back of frame for the Annual Exhibition of Michigan Artists
Other assignment: 13903 on back of frame

Pencil on paper
Design for Veranda for J.E. Scripps, façade of an arcade
Signed and dated: James S Booth, Detroit MI c. 1900
Reverse side: Sketch of space, from above and Sketch of 3D space, arcaded veranda

Red and black ink on paper
Plate VI: 6 geometric studies
Signed and dated: JSB 2-9-04
Red and black ink on paper  
Plate XI: 2 geometric studies  
Signed and dated: JSB 5-10-04

Ink on paper (looseleaf w/type-reverse side)  
Design logo: St. Luke’s Baseball, player  
Signed and dated: JSB ’07  
Front assignment: 9/18x125/8  
Other assignment (on back): 10242/18

Ink on paper (looseleaf w/type-reverse side)  
Design logo: Gun Club, hunter poised w/shotgun  
Signed and dated: JSB ’07  
Front assignment: 9/16x125/8  
Other assignment (on back): 10242/18

Ink on paper (looseleaf w/type-reverse side)  
Design logo: Athlete, student on step looks out on distant field  
Signed and dated: JSB ’07  
Front assignment: 91/2x129/8  
Other assignment (on back): 10242/18

Ink on paper (looseleaf w/type-reverse side)  
Design logo: Fourth Form, man w/Speller in back pocket  
Signed and dated: JSB ’07  
Front assignment: 91/8x125/8  
Other assignment (on back): 10242/18

Ink on paper  
Design logo: Grind lemons Etc. Apply WICS, bearded man at lemon grinder (what?)  
Signed and dated: JSB ’07  
Other assignment (on back): cut off… 10/18

Ink on paper  
Design logo: Football, punter  
Signed and dated: JSB ’07  
Front assignment: cut off… 8A 21/2full ??  
Other assignment (on back): cut off… 10/18

Ink on paper (looseleaf w/type-reverse side)  
Design logo: Lower School 1910-11-12 etc., family in car  
Signed and dated: JSB ’07  
Front assignment: 91/16x125/8  
Other assignment (on back): 10242/18
Ink on paper (looseleaf w/type-reverse side)
Design logo: Crawford House, Express horse and wagon
Signed and dated: JB ’07
Front assignment: 91/8x125/8
Other assignment (on back): 10242/18

Ink on paper
Design logo: Sixth Form, St. Lukes 1907, student studying at desk
Signed and dated: JSB ’07

Ink on paper (looseleaf w/type-reverse side)
Design logo: Camera Club, photographer poised to shoot, SLCC logo
Signed and dated: JSB ’07

Ink on paper (looseleaf w/type-reverse side)
Design logo: Tennis, player with racket
Signed and dated: JSB ’07
Front assignment: 91/16x125/8
Other assignment (on back): 10242/18

Ink on paper (looseleaf w/type-reverse side)
Design logo: Track, starter and runner ready to race
Signed and dated: JSB ’07
Front assignment: 9x125/8
Other assignment (on back): cut off… 8

Ink on paper (looseleaf w/type-reverse side)
Design logo: Basketball, 2 players w/ball and hoop
Signed and dated: JSB ’07
Front assignment: 91/8x125/8
Other assignment (on back): 10242/18

Ink on paper
Design logo: Faculty, list of faculty and their subjects, alma mater
Signed and dated: JSB ’07
Front assignment: cut off
Other assignment (on back): cut off… 18

Ink on paper
Design logo: Fifth Form, Virgil the horse and rider
Signed and dated: Jas S Booth ’07
Front assignment: cut off… 125/8

Ink on paper (looseleaf w/type-reverse side)
Design logo: Pool Club, 2 players at pool table
Signed and dated: JSB ’07
Front assignment: 91/8x125/8
Other assignment (on back): 10242/18

Ink on paper (looseleaf w/type-reverse side)
Design logo: Garrick Club, view of stage during performance
Signed and dated: JSB ’07
Front assignment: 91/8x129/16
Other assignment (on back): 10242/18

Ink and color on heavy blue paper
Calligraphy and design for the cover of The Blue and White Calendar, 1907
St. Luke’s School, a Student’s Symphony
To take cheerfully the hard along with the easy and defeat along with victory; to be satisfied with my surroundings, but never content with that which may be improved; to enter into both study and athletics with a determination to get the best out of each; to set my mark high and then to go after it; to study hard to master the subject, not merely to pass the examinations; to keep busy; never to waste time; to act frankly and do fearlessly; to do now and do it well, knowing that the morrow will reward the labors of today; to give everyone, both teacher and student, a square deal in the classroom and on the field; to make friends and keep them by being worthy of friendship; to be a leader, not a follower, but first to make myself fit to lead; this is to be my guide through school. Selected. James Scripps Booth
Inside a 2 page calendar for the year 1907
Features B&W photos of the football team, the captain and coach
Noted in pencil on calendar: Cover designed by JSB, 1906
(Also 1 additional calendar cover, only)

Pastel on paper
Seated F nude
Written on bottom of drawing: Paris 1911
Reverse side: Charcoal sketch, outline of back of a F nude

Pastel on paper
Seated F reading, mostly nude, wearing a hat, open robe, and heels
Written on top of drawing: Jean M.B. Etaples 1911

Pastel on paper
Reclining F nude outside under tree
Signed and dated: JSB 1932

{ALSO FOUND: 2 B&W photos, both mounted on board}
{ St. Luke’s Track Team }
{ ID for JSB, lower right }
Addendum to Inventory. The following are works of James’ art found in an old black portfolio located in the vault. They were removed from the portfolio 18 Jul 2002 and stored in Box 9, interleaved with acid-free tissue. (Inventoried by Leslie S. Edwards)

“Angels of Light
Singing to Welcome
The Pilgrims of the Night”
Signed: JSB, 11/14
Pencil and pastel, mounted
10 ¾ x12 ¾
NOTE: Lower edge of painting states: “Painting for “The Pilgrims of the Night”, Highland Park Pres Church”

“Lilac Pruned”
Signed: JSB 8.7.17
Charcoal
14 ¾ x11

“Study of Adam”
Dated: 1914
Charcoal
7 ¾ x11 ½

“Study Blessed Damozel drapery”
Signed: JSB 5/4 20
Pastel
9 ¾ x17 ½

“Study for a ‘Soul in Flight’”
Dated: 4.1920
Charcoal
10x12

Untitled (single leaf)
Dated: 1899
Charcoal
9 ¾ x 16

Untitled  (lion head – probably of a plaster cast)
Signed: DUS 1902, JBooth  (NOTE: “DUS” is Detroit University School)
Charcoal
12 ¼ x 16 ½

Untitled (cross)
Dated: 1899
Charcoal
6 x 7 ¾ 

Untitled (plant study)
Dated: 1899
Charcoal
8 x 9 ¼ 

Untitled (oak leaf)
Dated: 1899
Charcoal
7 ¼ x 10 ¼

Untitled (design element)
Dated: Dec 1898
Charcoal

Untitled (double leaf)
Signed: JSB 1899
Charcoal
7 ½ x 8 ¾

Untitled (leaf and berry)
Dated: 1899
Charcoal
12 ½ x 8 ¼

Untitled (star)
Dated: 1899
Charcoal
6 ¾ x 9

Untitled (cubist bust)
Dated: 1899
Charcoal
9 ¼ x 13 ¼

Untitled (fruit and leaf branches)
Signed: JSB Feb 1899
Charcoal
12 x 19 ¾
Untitled (industrial river scene)
Signed: Jas S Booth 1905
Charcoal over watercolor
14 x 18 ½

“Bruges” (farm workers)
Dated: 1911
Pencil
9 x 5 ½
Untitled (standing nude with water jug)
Signed: JSB 1.28.20
Pencil and pastel
24 x 37 ½
NOTE: Notes on edge of art read “Painting full size in hitch on outer wall of old Pasadena Studio. Painted direct on outside plaster with oil colors treated afterward with coating of hot wax.”

“What of the Future” (image of war with worker, nurse, planes, industry)
Signed: JSB 1918
Charcoal and pastel
NOTE: There are many notes around the edge of the piece describing each scene

Untitled (bridge over river with cathedral in background)
Signed: James S Booth May 7th 1907
Watercolor
18 x 22 ¾

Included, but not inventoried separately, is a series of “drops.” James signed one “All scenery made and painted by JSB 1900.” One piece is dated 1902.