

CRANBROOK

ARCHIVES

George Gough Booth Papers

1864-1949 (bulk, 1887-1946)

13.25 linear ft.

- Acquisition Number: 1981-01
- Acquisition: The George Gough Booth Papers are a gift of the Booth Family. In June 2003, photocopies of correspondence with Jacques Seligmann & Co. were added to the collection.
- Access: Access to the collection is unrestricted.
- Copyright: Copyright to this collection is held by the Cranbrook Educational Community.
- Preferred Citation: George G. Booth Papers, Cranbrook Archives, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.
- Photographs: A commemorative photograph album was given to George G. Booth on his 80th birthday by the Cranbrook Central Committee. The album (Box 29) is stored with the Photograph Album collection.
- Index: See end of finding aid.
- Processing: Beverly Hoffman, 1981 (inventory)
Mary Beth Kreiner, September 1991



History

George Gough Booth was a renowned advocate of the arts, and a great philanthropist whose crowning achievement was the establishment of Cranbrook Educational Community. He was also one of the nation's leading newspapermen in the first half of this century.

Born into a modest household in Toronto, Ontario on September 24, 1864, Booth received only a limited formal education. His youthful interest in art and architecture deepened with age, and after his family moved to Detroit in 1881 he put his artistic talents to use by purchasing a half-interest in an ornamental ironworks firm in Windsor. The business prospered, turning out products of Booth's design.

On June 1, 1887, Booth wed Ellen Warren Scripps, daughter of *The Detroit News* founder James Scripps. The following year Booth sold his business and, at the urging of his father-in-law, joined *The News* staff as the paper's business manager. Entrusted with increasing responsibility, Booth eventually succeeded Scripps as president in 1906. Under his direction, the *News* blossomed into one of the great metropolitan dailies in the nation. Booth stepped down as president of the paper in 1929, but remained a director of the company until his death.

Booth began to purchase privately small Michigan newspapers in the 1890s. He combined these with others belonging to his brother Ralph to form Booth Publishing Company in 1914, the forerunner of Booth Newspapers, Inc. As chairman, and later as president, George Booth successfully guided the chain of papers through decades of sustained profitability and growth, thus securing his personal fortune. He retired from his administrative positions with Booth Newspapers in 1946, but continued to sit on the board.

Although weighed by the demands of his many business ventures, Booth's contributions to the cultural life of his adopted country increased markedly in the years after 1900. He established a private press, helped to found the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts, and began to donate a considerable number of decorative arts objects to the Detroit Institute of Arts. He encouraged the study of architecture by endowing a travelling scholarship in that field at the University of Michigan and worked on behalf of many national organizations to advance opportunities for American craftsmen and artists.

The crowning achievement of George Booth's life was, however, the creation of the great educational and cultural community on the grounds of his estate at Cranbrook. With the generous support of his wife Ellen, Booth established six institutions - Christ Church Cranbrook, Cranbrook School (for boys), Kingswood School (for girls), Brookside School Cranbrook, Cranbrook Institute of Science and Cranbrook Academy of Art. He was still engaged in the process of refining Cranbrook when he died at the age of 84 on April 11, 1949.

Scope and Content of Collection

The George Gough Booth Papers are organized into the following series: BIOGRAPHICAL; NEWSPAPER; GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE; HOUSE AND PROPERTY; CRANBROOK ACADEMY OF ART; CHRIST CHURCH CRANBROOK; CRANBROOK SCHOOLS; CRANBROOK INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE; TRUST AGREEMENTS; PURCHASES; and REALIA. The folders are arranged alphabetically within each series; the documents in the folders are organized chronologically and/or alphabetically.

BIOGRAPHICAL (Boxes 1-6): The series contains materials related to the life of George Gough Booth and includes personal legal documents, typescripts of talks by Booth and several typescripts of Cyril Players' *George Gough Booth of Cranbrook*.

NEWSPAPER (Boxes 6-10): The series contains documents relating to George G. Booth's tenure at *The Detroit News*, and his role, as chairman and later president of the Booth Publishing Co.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (Boxes 10-14, 28): The series contains family correspondence, personal correspondence, and correspondence documenting George G. Booth's affiliation with various cultural, charitable and arts organizations, and business interests other than newspapers.

HOUSE AND PROPERTY (Boxes 14-18): The series includes documents relating to the designing, building and furnishing of George G. Booth's residence, Cranbrook House. It also contains materials relating to the development and maintenance of the Cranbrook Estate, the Greek Theatre and the *Cranbrook Masque*.

CRANBROOK ACADEMY OF ART (Box 19): Materials documenting the development and early growth of the Cranbrook Academy of Art are contained in this series.

CHRIST CHURCH CRANBROOK (Boxes 20-22): The series contains information pertaining to the planning, construction and decoration of Christ Church Cranbrook.

CRANBROOK SCHOOLS (Box 22): This series contains correspondence regarding the building, furnishing and staffing of Brookside School, Kingswood School and Cranbrook School.

CRANBROOK INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE (Box 22): This series contains correspondence and newsclippings about the Cranbrook Institute of Science, and information regarding purchases for exhibits.

TRUST AGREEMENTS (Box 23): The series consists of four volumes containing the trust agreements of George and Ellen Scripps Booth.

PURCHASES (Boxes 24-26): The series contains notebooks and correspondence which documents George Booth's purchases of artifacts, in both foreign and domestic locations, for Cranbrook House and the various Cranbrook Institutions.

REALIA (Box 27): The series contains some personal possessions of George G. Booth.

IMAGES (Boxes 29-31): The photo album is stored in the Photograph Special Collection and the slides are housed with the rest of the collection.

Related Collections

- Ellen Scripps Booth Papers (1981-03)
- George Gough and Henry Scripps Booth Architectural Drawings (1982-01)
- George Gough and Ellen Scripps Booth Financial Papers (1981-02)
- Cranbrook Foundation Records (1981-05)

Box Number--Description

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BIOGRAPHICAL

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2. Birthday greetings on GGB's eightieth birthday, 1944
3. Biographical summaries, 1926-1958
4. Codicils to last will and testament, 1916, 1945, 1949
5. Cranbrook, Kent - View Book
6. "Desiderata" by Max Ehrmann, 1927
7. Documents - passports, visas, naturalization certificate, power of attorney, 1887-1940
8. Gratuities (donations, loans), 1925-1947
- 9-11. Honors, 1900-1963
12. Newsclippings about GGB (photocopies), 1924-1960
13. Portrait by Zoltan Sepeshy - newsclippings (photocopies), 1951
- 14-15. Obituaries and memorials, 1949-1950
16. Personal data, 1900, 1930; lock of Florence Booth's hair, 1902
17. Testimonials and recommendations, 1883-1885
- 18-20. Talks, 1902-1942
21. Trip Itineraries

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- 2-3. Wedding and anniversaries, 1887, 1937, 1947
4. Writings - "The Cranbrook Idea", 1924-1939
5. Writings - "History", 1924
6. Writings - "The Life and Adventures of George G. Booth", 1938
7. Writings - "Memories", 1925-1940
8. Writings - "Memories - Toronto, St. Thomas, Detroit", [n.d.]
9. Writings - "Mexico", 1900
10. Writings - "My Mother", [n.d.]
- 11-12. Writings - autobiographical material prepared for Cyril Player, [n.d.]
13. Cyril Player - Letters to GGB, 1938-1953
- 14-16. Cyril Player, *George Gough Booth of Cranbrook*, manuscript (incomplete), 1941

Box 3

- 1-11. Cyril Player, *George Gough Booth of Cranbrook*, manuscript (incomplete), 1941
- 12-20. Cyril Player, *George Gough Booth of Cranbrook*, manuscript, [ca. 1941]

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- 1-2. Cyril Player, *George Gough Booth of Cranbrook*, manuscript, [ca. 1941]
- 3-19. Cyril Player, *George Gough Booth of Cranbrook*, final manuscript, 1941

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- 1. Cranbrook Press - GGB's business journal, 1900-1902
- 2. Cranbrook Press - correspondence, check register, 1900-1969
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- 6. Articles about Cranbrook Press, 1902, 1941
- 7-8. Legal documents - personal, 1910-1934
- 9-10. Legal documents - original Cranbrook property purchases, 1877-1942

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- 1. Legal documents - property and trusts, Cranbrook, 1920-1926
- 2. Legal documents - property and trusts, Cranbrook, 1880-1912

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- 6. Legal correspondence, 1906, 1916, 1919
- 7-9. Billson, C.J., 1890 - 1911
- 10. Booth, Edmund Wood, 1902-1926
- 11. Booth, George G., letter to James E. Scripps, [n.d.]
- 12-13. Booth, George G., editorials and articles, 1903-1936
- 14. Booth, George G., newspaper creed, 1940
- 15. Booth, George G., memorandum notebook, 1910-1924

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- 1. Booth, George G., organizational schemes, ca.1897
- 2. History of Booth Newspapers, ca. 1937
- 3. History of the *Saginaw News*, [ca.1937]
- 4-7. Booth, Ralph H., correspondence, 1900-1940
- 8. Booth, Ralph H., newsclippings
- 9-20. *Chicago Journal*, correspondence, 1895-1902

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- 1-3. *Chicago Journal*, correspondence, 1902-1906
- 4-6. *Detroit Free Press*, correspondence, 1903-1906
- 7. *Detroit News*, publications regarding the *Detroit (Evening) News*
- 8-9. Detroit Urban Railway (DUR), correspondence and photocopies of clippings, 1912
- 10. Evening News Association, history, 1892-1893

11. Evening News Association - Board of Directors, meeting minutes, 1923-1924
- 12-22. *Grand Rapids Press*, correspondence, 1892-1923

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- 1-3. Grand Rapids Press, correspondence, 1923-1931
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5. Kellogg, F.W., correspondence, 1890-1930
6. McRae, Milton, correspondence, 1890, Nov 1923 - Jun 1928
7. "A Newspaper Career," 1938
- 8-12. *Quadrupartite*, correspondence, 1886-1910
13. *Quadrupartite*, transcripts of Michigan Supreme Court proceedings, 1909-1910
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15. Scripps, Edward Wyllis, correspondence, 1902-1916
16. Scripps, William Edmund, correspondence, 1921-1937
17. Scripps, Ellen Browning, correspondence- biographical material, 1901-1959
18. Scripps, James E., biographical sketch, n.d.
- 19-20. Scripps, James E., correspondence, 1902-1905
21. Scripps, James E. and Harriet J., correspondence, 1898-1912
22. Scripps, James E., financial agreements with GGB, 1903, 1910
23. Scripps, James E., legal documents - Trinity Episcopal Church, Detroit, 1905
24. Scripps, James E., copies of Power of Attorney, 1906
25. Scripps, James E., transcripts - Court Proceedings, Estate of George H. Scripps, 1902
26. Scripps, James E., articles, [n.d.]

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1. Scripps, James E., Last Will and Testament, 1897
2. Scripps, James E., writings about newspapers, 1902, 1905
3. Scripps, James E., writings about newspapers, [ca.1875] 1899 and undated
4. Scripps, James E. and Booth, George G.; Religious writings, [n.d.]
5. James E. Scripps Estate, correspondence, 1907-1923
6. James E. Scripps Estate; Grace S. and Rex B. Clark vs.- Legal Documents, transcripts, 1906
7. James E. Scripps Trust; Documents concerning Edgar B. Whitcomb and George G. Booth, ca. 1910
8. Scripps, James E., correspondence, 1906-1907
9. Scripps, William E., correspondence, 1918
10. Stevenson, Elliot G.; Typescript of speech on Detroit Urban Railway Controversy, 23 Mar 1920
11. Sweeney, John S., correspondence, Jul 1904 - Jan 1920

12. Sweeney, John S., Litigation documents; statements concerning litigation, 1907-1909
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CHRIST CHURCH CRANBROOK

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- 1-2. Purchases - architectural fragments - Gustaf Strengell, 1926
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2. Seligmann, Jacques & Co., 1928-1941
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