Cranbrook Press and Photo Department
Records, 1929-c1975
1 linear ft.

Acquisition Number: 1990-42

Acquisition: The records were found among the collections of the Archives. The date of original accession is unknown.

Access: Access to the collection is unrestricted.

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

Index: See end of finding aid.

Processing: The collection was inventoried in Jul 1989, and refoldered and rearranged in Jun 1990. The finding aid was completed in November 2002 by Leslie S. Edwards.
History

In 1900, George Gough Booth established the Cranbrook Press at the Detroit Evening News building, an enterprise that lasted a short two years, but would later be revived at Cranbrook. In January 1930, George Howard of The Spiral Press in New York recommended Edward Alonzo Miller, a well-known typographer, to come to Cranbrook to establish a Print Shop primarily for the use of the various Cranbrook institutions. The department consisted of Miller (the master printer), and two male assistants who served as both pressmen and compositors. The stitching and binding was done by a female assistant.

Early equipment included the original Washington hand press Mr. Booth had used in his private venture in Detroit, and fonts of handsome type, one for each institution. In 1929, Booth had engaged Jean Eschmann, a bookbinder of high repute, to instruct students in bookbinding with traditional hand-binding tools, as well as to provide fine leather bindings for Booth and books in the Cranbrook collection. The first volume produced by Miller and Eschmann was a service book for the Festival of Gifts at Cranbrook Church.

Unfortunately, the Depression years caused severe financial strain on Cranbrook, and by April 1933, Cranbrook Press was closed along with the Museum, and the Silver, Pottery and Bindery Shops. By then, Miller had already left for a position with a print shop in the east, while Arthur Neville Kirk, Jean Eschmann, and Waylande Gregory were expected to leave by June 30th.

In the fall of 1937, the Cranbrook Press reopened in the basement of the museum building of the Art Academy, on a modest scale, in order to accommodate the printing needs of the institutions. In June 1939, the institutions were urged to patronize the Print Shop and not go outside for cheaper work, and by November 1940, the print shop had a staff of sixteen, headed by manager William L. Wood. The Cranbrook Press continued to grow, requiring more space and better accommodations. This led to expansion which enabled the Press to take over the entire basement area of the Administration Building, and help facilitate the photo department’s business by giving it more space as well. In 1946, the Academy expressed the desire to be relieved of operating the Cranbrook Press and it was assumed by the Cranbrook Foundation.

By 1975, financial concerns deemed that the Cranbrook Press was an unnecessary expense in spite of the fact it was one of George Booth’s prime interests in connection with the Academy. The equipment was dispersed: the Academy was given the hand press George Booth had used in Detroit from 1900-1902 and the type fonts which had been acquired for each Cranbrook institution. All other equipment was sold to Donald Meer, who had been the Press head from 1972-1974.

Over the years, both George and Henry Booth in particular encouraged the Boards of the institutions to patronize the Cranbrook Press for all printing jobs. Regular publications
printed by the Cranbrook Press included the Cranbrook Bulletin, The Crane, The Carillon, catalogs for the Academy of Art, Kingswood and Cranbrook Schools, scientific monographs for the Institute of Science, and school yearbooks. Additional printing jobs included brochures, tickets, letterhead and envelopes, as well as publications such as Kandinsky’s Point and Line to Plane (1947), Henry Scripps Booth’s The Cranbrook Booth Family of America (1955) and Cranbrook Boasts a Ghost (1963)

**Scope and Content of Collection**

The collection is arranged in two series: ADMINISTRATIVE and PUBLICATIONS. The first series, Administrative, is arranged alphabetically by subject heading. The records relate primarily to the operations of the Cranbrook Press (1930-1975) and consist of correspondence, a record of the types of orders that were filled (1932-1933) and examples of type styles used by the printers. In addition, some Cranbrook Photo Department records are contained in this collection, as it appears that at some point, the two departments were linked, at least structurally. These records include correspondence, end-of-year financial statements, and some invoices for materials purchased.

The second series, Publications (1915-c1968), is entirely composed of various publications printed by the Cranbrook Press. These consist primarily of newsletters and bulletins, informational booklets and guide books, some fictional works written by Booth family members, and several monographs. Also included is a series of booklets designed by Tamblyn and Tamblyn for a public relations campaign (1935-1936).

**Related Collections**

- Rare Book Collection (contains publications printed by the original Cranbrook Press)
- Cranbrook Academy of Art “Lost” Academy Records (1998-05)
- Cranbrook Academy of Art Publications (1998-05)
- Cranbrook Publications (1995-13)
- George Gough Booth Papers (1981-01)
Box Number--Description

Series I: **ADMINISTRATIVE**

**Box 1**

1. Cranbrook Photo Department – Correspondence, 1952-1970  
6. Cranbrook Press – Ad Hoc Committee, 1974-1975  
7. Cranbrook Press – Census of Manufacturers, 1947  
8. Cranbrook Press – Correspondence, 1930-1933  
9. Cranbrook Press – Correspondence, 1939-1940  
10. Cranbrook Press – Correspondence, 1946-1959  

Series I: **PUBLICATIONS-Booklets**

13. Cranbrook Press – Early Broadsides, c1900-1902  
15. “Cranbrook”, 1930-1956  

**Box 2**

4. Cranbrook “View Cards”, 1944  
5. “Evolution of a Pump House”, 1915, c1959  
10. Informal Talk by Carl Milles, 1945

**PUBLICATIONS-Monographs**

*Cranbrook Boasts a Ghost* – Henry Scripps Booth, 1963
The Cranbrook Booth Family of America, 1955
The Humanities: the Other Side of the River?, c1968
Point and Line to Plane – Wassily Kandinsky, 1947
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