James Edmund Scripps (1835-1906)
Papers, 1907-1980
5 linear ft.

Acquisition Number: 1987-01

Acquisition: This collection was donated to the Cranbrook Archives in several lots; the Cyril Player material by Henry Scripps Booth; the research collection by Warren Wilkinson as well as by John Beresford.

Access: Access to the collection is unrestricted.

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Preferred Citation: James Edmund Scripps Papers, Cranbrook Archives, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

Index: Located at end of finding aid.

Biography


After receiving primary school education, James E. worked on the family farm until he traveled to Chicago in 1857 and was engaged as a reporter for the *Chicago Democratic Press* which was co-founded by his uncle, John Locke Scripps. In 1858, James determined to make a business of buying and selling pelts and hides, which he did until Apr 1859, when he relocated to Detroit to take charge of the commercial department of the *Detroit Daily Advertiser*. In 1862, the *Advertiser* consolidated with the *Detroit Tribune* and James remained with the paper until 1873. On 16 Sept 1862, he married Harriet Josephine Messinger (1838-1933) and they had six children: Ellen Warren (1863-1948), Anna Virginia (1866-1953), James Francis (1870-1882), Harriet Mary (1873-1875), Grace Messinger (1878-1971), and William Edmund (1882-1952).

On 23 Aug 1873, James sold the *Tribune* and founded *The Evening News* (later renamed *The Detroit News*). He subsequently acquired or founded newspapers in Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland and St. Louis. He was also one of the major founders of the Detroit Museum of Art (now known as the Detroit Institute of Arts), and in 1889, donated his personal art collection to help form the museum’s core collection of paintings by the old masters. From 1891-1893, James built the Trinity Reformed Episcopal Church in Detroit.

In 1902, James became interested in radio after listening to a Detroit experimental wireless operator, Thomas E. Clark. James E. Scripps and his only son, William Edmund Scripps, attended a private demonstration of Clark's system of wireless transmission of Morse code and then helped finance Mr. Clark's work.

James also served as a member of the Michigan State Senate, 3rd District from 1903-1904. He died on 29 May 1906 in Detroit leaving a large estate in trust.
Scope and Content

This collection is comprised of several small collections of Scripps family material and is arranged in series. SERIES I: Research Materials consists of material collected by Cyril Player, who was employed by the children of James Scripps to write his biography. The result was an unpublished manuscript. The collection consists chiefly of Player’s notes and portions of the book, with comments and correspondence from others. It contains biographical and genealogical research notes, correspondence, a few small publications and a small number of news clippings. This series also contains James Scripps’ travel diary, his smaller sketches of European churches and architectural details, and some miscellaneous Scripps’ correspondence. A spreadsheet was created to index the drawings and is attached to this finding aid.

SERIES II: WILKINSON SCRAPBOOKS is a series of photocopies of materials compiled from various sources by Warren S. Wilkinson, a Scripps descendant, who ultimately donated the collection to the Bentley Historical Collection. Volume I contains the preface in which Warren lists the various collections he utilized in compiling the scrapbooks. Box 6 contains transparencies of Warren’s scrapbooks photographed by John Beresford and donated by him to the Archives. Also included here is James Scripps’s 1905 autobiography, transcribed by Wilkinson.

SERIES III: NEWSPAPERS is a collection of historic newspapers relating to the Scripps family. It is not known if these were collected by family members or by Cyril Player.

Related Collections

• George Gough Booth Papers (1981-01)
• Ellen Warren Scripps Booth Papers (1981-03)
• Harriet J. Messinger Scripps diary (1995-21)
• The Bentley Historical Collection at the University of Michigan, the James E. Scripps Papers (a collection of original and research materials compiled by Warren Wilkinson)
• E.W. Scripps Papers (1990-18) is a collection of photocopies pertaining to George Booth, James Scripps and related newspaper businesses. The original collection is located at the Robert E. and Jean R. Mahn Center for Archives and Special Collections at Ohio University - MS Collection #117. For a complete finding aid to this collection, see: [http://www.library.ohiou.edu/archives/mss/mss117.html](http://www.library.ohiou.edu/archives/mss/mss117.html). The University also has the Vance H. Trimble Collection (original material generated for the Scripps Biography).
• Mason & Rice architectural drawings of Trinity Church, commissioned by J.E. Scripps
Box Number--Description

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Box 1
1. Scripps family history, n.d.
2. Scripps, James E. – Cultural interests, 1881-1903
3. Scripps, James E. – General, 1889-1909
4. Scripps, James E. – State senate, 1903
5. Scripps, James E. – Estate, 1895-1943
6. Scripps, George H. – Legal, 1895-1904
7. Scripps, George H. – Legal – McRae testimony, 1897-1899
10. Booth, George Gough – Cranbrook notes, 1902-1936
11. Booth, George Gough – General notes, 1887-1940

Box 2
1. Newspaper business – History, 1883-1930
2. Newspaper business – Detroit News, 1873-1942
4. Newspaper business – Agreements, 1887-1898
5. Newspaper business – Agreements, 1903-1936
7. Newspaper business – Correspondence, 1887-1904
8. Newspaper business – Personnel, 1879-1942
9. Newspaper business – General, 1883-1905
10. General notes & excerpts, 1859-1940
11. Player, Cyril – Correspondence, 1938-1943

Box 3
1. Player, Cyril – JES manuscript Book 1, 1943
2. Player, Cyril – JES manuscript Book 2, 1943
3. Publications, 1892-1903
5. Travel diary, 1887-1888
6. General correspondence & notes, 1850-1967
7. Photographs, n.d.
8. Sketches, 1887-1890
Box 4
1. Photographs – Harriet Messinger Scripps, 1892-1926
2. Photographs- Scripps and Messingers, 1855-1872
3. Sketches, large, 1889-1890
4. Newspapers, 1873-1973

SERIES II: Photocopies: “James E. Scripps—a Scrapbook”

Box 5
1. Autobiography transcribed by Wilkinson, 1905
4. Vol. 3 Personal life, 1892-1901
5. Vol. 4 Personal life, 1902-1906
7. Vol. 6a Dramatis personae – William A., George H., Julia Anne, Frederick Tudor, 1858-1936
10. Vol. 9 Art & architecture – Trinity Church & Scripps home, 1889-1979

Box 6 Transparencies of “JES- A Scrapbook”

SERIES III: NEWSPAPERS

Box 7 Oversize
The Venezuelan Herald, Oct 1896
The Sunday-News Tribune, Aug 1898
The Bristol Times and Mirror, Aug 1902
The Mirror (Trinidad), Jan 1902
Bay City Times-Press, Jun 1903
Buffalo Courier, Sep 1901
The Detroit Times, Aug 1890
Evening News, May 1898
Evening News, Aug 1898
Evening News, Jul 1903
Detroit Free Press, Dec 1902
The Bulletin- San Francisco, Sep 1901
The Commercial Advertiser, Oct 1902
The Libel News, Apr 1894
The Journal Junior, Dec 1902
National Intelligencer, Apr 1832
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