



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Virginia "Jimmie" Booth collection

NMAH.AC.0729

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Virginia "Jimmie" Booth collection
Date:	1936-1999, undated
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0729
Creator:	Booth, Virginia
Extent:	3 Cubic feet (6 boxes, 3 oversize folders)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Papers relating to Virginia "Jimmie" Booth's career as a buyer for Lord and Taylor, where she worked for Dorothy Shaver. Papers include correspondence; photographs; original drawings by designer Clare Potter; printed material including articles, magazine advertising and catalogs; a scrapbook of clippings and memorabilia.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated by Virginia "Jimmie" Booth, in May 2000.

Related Materials

Materials in the Archives Center

Dorothy Shaver Papers NMAH.AC0631

Carolyn and Donald Grepke Paper Doll Collection NMAH.AC0752

Estelle Ellis Collection NMAH.AC0423

Joseph Magnin Poster Collection NMAH.AC0355

Ming-Ju Sun Garfinckel's Fashion Drawings NMAH.AC0897

Henry Booth Collection, NMAH.AC0726

Priscilla of Boston Collection NMAH.AC0557

California Shop Records NMAH.AC0572

National Cotton Council of America Photographs and Films NMAH.AC01177

Division of Costume Audiovisual Collection NMAH.AC0801

Warshaw Collection of Business Americana NMAH.AC0060

Processing Information

Processed by Anne Jones, volunteer, 2003; supervised by Vanessa Broussard-Simmons, archivist.

Preferred Citation

Virginia "Jimmie" Booth Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

The collection is open for research use.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Virginia Wagoner Booth, known as Jimmie Booth, was born June 20, 1922 in Bronxville, New York, the daughter of John and Josephine Wagoner. She studied printing and engineering at Syracuse University. An engineer with Pratt & Whitney during World War II, she entered the fashion world as a bridal consultant at G. Fox in Hartford in 1945.

In 1952 Dorothy Shaver, of Lord & Taylor, hired Booth for the Hartford store and asked her to develop and manage The Country Clothes Shop in the 5th Avenue store in New York. There, Booth collaborated with and promoted such American designers as Clare Potter, Bonnie Cashin, and Claire McCardell. Booth also worked extensively with European designers.

Married to H. Robert Booth (Bob) Booth of Hillandale Handweavers, Jimmie promoted the use of both American and European hand-loomed fabrics by her designers. She frequently modeled the fashions herself. Her casual, yet elegant, style is the epitome of "the American Look" still popular today.

In 1998, Jimmie Booth, Dorothy Shaver, and other creators of The American Look were saluted in the exhibition, "Designing Women: American Style 1940-1960" at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford.

In addition to her design work, Booth was a violinist with the Hartford Symphony in the 1940s, and later became the chef at the Brooklyn, Connecticut, Golden Lamb Buttery, which she and her husband, H. Robert Booth (Bob), owned and operated. She died January 2011 at the age of eighty-nine in Hartford, Connecticut.

Scope and Contents

Collection primarily documents Booth's career as a buyer for Lord & Taylor. It includes correspondence, photographs, drawings, clippings, and a scrapbook. There are materials relating to American born designers Claire McCardell (May 24, 1905- March 22, 1958) and Clare Potter (July 7, 1903- January 5, 1999). There is also information relating to European designers including Irish born Sybil Connolly (January 24, 1921- May 6, 1998) and Swedish born Countess Ebba Von Eckermann (April 19, 1921-February 2, 2018). In addition, materials relating to textile manufacturing and weaving, particularly in Ireland, can also be found among the materials. The collection is arranged in seven series: Series 1, Personal Papers, 1936-1999, undated; Series 2, Hillandale Handweavers, 1948-1949, 1972, undated; Series 3, Lord & Taylor Country Clothes Shop, 1950s-1960s, undated; Series 4, Irish Materials, 1958-1999, undated; Series 5, American Designers, 1944-2000, undated; Series 6, European Designers and Textile Manufacturers, 1955-1997, undated; and Series 7, Miscellaneous, 1962.

Arrangement

Collection is organized into seven series.

Series 1: Personal Papers, 1936-1999, undated

Series 2: Hillandale Handweavers, 1948-1949, 1972, undated

Series 3: Lord & Taylor Country Clothes Shop, 1950s-1960s, undated

Series 4: Irish Materials, 1958-1999, undated

Series 5: American Designers, 1944-2000, undated

Series 6: European Designers and Textile Manufacturers, 1955-1997, undated

Series 7: Miscellaneous, 1962

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Costume design

Types of Materials:

Correspondence -- 20th century

Design drawings

Photographs -- 1940-1970

Scrapbooks -- 20th century

Names:

Davies, Donald

Lord & Taylor

McCardell, Claire

Potter, Clare

Container Listing

Series 1: Personal Papers, 1936-1999, undated

Scope and Contents: Consist of materials primarily relating to Booth's college days and her fashion career. Materials include correspondence, Syracuse University publications, newspaper and magazine articles, a biography, and photographs. There is little relating to her personal life other than photographs of her wedding announcement. In addition, there are theatre and horse show programs. Materials are arranged in chronological order.

Box 1, Folder 3	Souvenir theatre programs, 1936
Box 1, Folder 2	Syracuse University publications, 1942 February 1
Box 1, Folder 1	College materials and correspondence, 1944-1999, undated
Box 2, Folder 1	Articles from This Week, 1950-1952
Box 1, Folder 6	Newspaper articles, 1951 June 14, 1956 August 16, undated
Box 2, Folder 2	Article about Jimmie Booth from This Week, 1952 June 15
Box 1, Folder 4	Horse show programs, 1953
Box 2, Folder 3	Jimmie Booth in Sligo Ltd. advertisement in Town & Country, 1955 September
Box 1, Folder 5	Photographs of Virginia Wagoner and Robert Booth and wedding announcement, 1956 November 1
Box 1, Folder 7	Photographs of Jimmie Booth, 1958, undated
Box 1, Folder 9	Glamour magazine, 1959 July
Box 1, Folder 10	Biography of Jimmie Booth, school project, 1997
Box 1, Folder 11	Gallery guide, "Designing Women" show, 1998
Box 1, Folder 12	Photographs of Jimmie Booth at "Designing Women" show, 1998
Box 1, Folder 8	Photographs of Jimmie Booth modeling, undated
Box 2, Folder 4	Photographs of Jimmie Booth modeling, undated

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Series 2: Hillandale Handweavers, 1949-1997, undated

Scope and Contents: Consists of advertisements, articles, and correspondence relating to the company founded by Booth's father-in-law, Henry Booth. Hillandale Handweavers was a textile manufacturing company that operated out of an old carriage barn in Brooklyn, Connecticut. It produced hand woven wool fabrics used by PhotoMetriC (a custom tailoring system) retail outlets. H. Robert (Bob) Booth Sr. opened a retail outlet on the premises which featured a PhotoMetriC fitting room that operated until the mid-1970s. In addition, there is information relating to the Golden Lamb Buttery Restaurant operated by Jimmie and Bob Booth. Materials are arranged in chronological order.

Box 1, Folder 14	New England Homestead, 1949 October
Box 1, Folder 13	PhotoMetriC article, Time magazine, 1958 June 7
Box 1, Folder 18	Hillandale Handweavers, correspondence, 1969-1970, undated
Box 1, Folder 16	Yankee magazine, 1972 September
Box 1, Folder 17	Connecticut magazine, 1972 October
Box 1, Folder 20	Hillandale Barn, Golden Lamb Buttery, 1975-1997, undated
Box 1, Folder 15	Magazine article, undated
Box 1, Folder 19	Advertisements, undated

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Series 3: Lord & Taylor Country Clothes Shop, 1950s-1960s, undated

Scope and Contents: Consists primarily of photographs, advertisements, original illustrations, and a catalogue. The photographs are images of the store interior and document window displays dating from the 1950s-1960s. Advertisements relate to the "Pride of Ireland" and "British Fortnight" campaigns. There are also Clare Potter designs and original illustrations created by Dorothy Hood for printed advertisements. In addition, there is a Christmas catalogue featuring the Country Clothes Shop. Materials are arranged in chronological order.

Box 1, Folder 22	Window displays, 1950s
Box 2, Folder 6	Vogue and Lord & Taylor dress, 1952 July
Box 2, Folder 5	Clare Potter advertisement, 1955 April 15
Box 2, Folder 7	Lord & Taylor Christmas catalogue featuring Country Clothes Shop, 1956
Map-case 3, Drawer 19, Folder 1-3	Dorothy Hood illustrations for advertisements, original, 1957-1958
Box 2, Folder 8	Lord & Taylor, "British Fortnight," campaign, 1958
Box 1, Folder 23	Window displays, 1960s
Box 1, Folder 24	Window displays, 1960s
Box 1, Folder 26	Lord & Taylor advertisements, "Pride of Ireland," campaign, 1963 October 6
Box 1, Folder 27	Newspaper articles, "Pride of Ireland" campaign, 1963 October
Box 1, Folder 21	Country Clothes Shop, images of interiors, undated
Box 1, Folder 25	Fashion photographs, undated

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Series 4: Irish Materials, 1958-1999, undated

Scope and Contents: Contain articles and photographs primarily relating to the clothing manufacturing and textile weaving trades in Ireland. In addition, there are photographs of Ireland including Blarney Castle in County Cork and James Joyce's Tower in Dublin. Materials are arranged in chronological order.

Box 1, Folder 30	General interest magazines, 1958-1999 Notes: <i>Telefood Magazine</i> , Fine Foods from Ireland issue, 1966 September <i>Cara: the travel magazine of Aer Lingus-Irish Airlines</i> , Volume 2, Number 1, 1969 January-March <i>Village Life in Ireland</i> , Syracuse University Alumni Association, Inc., 1999 April 18-26 Irish edition catalog from Scottish Lion Import Shop, 1998 Fall/1999 Winter <i>Sports Illustrated</i> , 1958 August 25 <i>Northeast: the Hartford Courant</i> , 1988 September 11 <i>Queen</i> , 1965 December 1
Box 1, Folder 29	Ireland magazine, 1960s
Box 3, Folder 4	Newspaper articles about Irish crafts, 1960s
Box 3, Folder 5	Newspaper articles about Ireland, 1960s
Box 1, Folder 28	Time magazine, 1963
Box 2, Folder 9	Photographs, clothing manufacturing, Shannon, Ireland [probably Sligo, Ltd.], undated
Box 2, Folder 10	Photographs, clothing manufacturing, Ireland, undated
Box 2, Folder 11	Photographs, Edward Doughty & Sons (Drogheda, Ltd.), handweavers, Donegal, undated
Box 2, Folder 12	Photographs, handweavers, Enniskerry, County Wicklow, undated
Box 2, Folder 13	Photographs, Irish linen workers, undated
Box 3, Folder 1	Photographs, Irish craftsmen, undated
Box 3, Folder 2	Photographs, Irish women in Woolshop, Irish village, undated
Box 3, Folder 3	Photographs, Irish scenes of Blarney Castle, County Cork, and James Joyce's Tower, Dublin, undated

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Series 5: American Designers, 1944-2000, undated

Scope and Contents: Materials primarily consist of advertisements, original sketches, fabric swatches, a scrapbook, newspaper articles, obituary, and photographs relating to Clare Potter (July 7, 1903- January 5, 1999) who is credited as being one of the inventors of American sportswear. In addition, there is an article relating to Claire McCardell (May 24, 1905- March 22, 1958) designer of ready-to-wear clothing and a small number of materials relating to other designers. Materials are arranged first in alphabetical order and then in chronological order within each person.

Box 3, Folder 20	Claire McCardell, article in Life magazine, page 103, 1948 June 7
Box 4, Folder 1	Clare Potter, sketches, resort, 1951-1952
Box 4, Folder 2	Clare Potter, sketches, resort and holiday, 1953
Box 4, Folder 3	Clare Potter, sketches, 1954 Fall
Box 4, Folder 4	Clare Potter, Lord & Taylor advertisement, 1955 April 15
Box 6	Clare Potter, scrapbook of articles and advertisements, 1955-1957
Box 4, Folder 5	Clare Potter, newspaper article and obituary from the New York Times, 1999 January 11, undated
Box 4, Folder 6	Clare Potter, photographs in her home, includes Halsman contact sheet, undated
	<p>[Fashion portraits of Clare Potter : photographs.] 1 Item (10 x 8 in.) Photographer: Halsman, Philippe Language: English. Notes: Silver gelatin on paper. When processing is completed, unrestricted research use on site by appointment. Photographs must be handled with cotton gloves unless protected by sleeves. Contact sheet of 11 exposures on #120 film, with one frame cut out.</p> <p>Names: Potter, Clare Topic: Costume design Genre/Form: Contact sheets Photographs -- 1950-2000 -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin</p>
Box 4, Folder 7	Phelps Leather Goods, William and Elizabeth Phelps, 1944-1989
Box 4, Folder 8	Other American designers, 1959-2000

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Series 6: European Designers and Textile Manufacturers, 1955-1997, undated

Scope and Contents: Consist of materials primarily relating to Donald Brook Davies the Welsh clothing manufacturer headquartered in Enniskerry, County Wicklow, Ireland. His company created clothing designed by his wife Mary Davies. Materials include magazine articles, photographs, printed advertisements, promotional literature, fabric swatches, photographs, a shopping bag, store drawing, newspaper articles, and a management consultants report. There are also photographs of designs and newspaper articles relating to Countess Ebba Von Eckermann (April 19, 1921-February 2, 2018) Swedish fashion designer and owner of Ebba von Eckermann Textilier a company that created woven fabrics for the retail trade. An article printed in Victoria magazine relates to Sybil Connally (January 24, 1921- May 6, 1998), a Dublin-based fashion designer who was known for creating clothing using traditional Irish textiles and styles. In addition, there are photographs of models in Irish fashions. Materials are arranged first in alphabetical order and then in chronological order within each person.

Box 3, Folder 6	Sybil Connally, article in Victoria magazine, 1997 March
Box 3, Folder 14	Donald Davies, management consultants report, 1955
Box 3, Folder 15	Donald Davies, photographs of Davies and others, 1958, undated
Box 3, Folder 13	Donald Davies, magazine articles, 1962, 1968, undated
Box 3, Folder 9	Donald Davies, photographs of designs, 1963 September 20
Box 3, Folder 7	Donald Davies, advertising and promotional materials, 1965-1967, undated
Box 3, Folder 11	Donald Davies, advertisements in American newspapers, 1966-1968
Box 3, Folder 12	Donald Davies, articles in British newspapers, 1966-1968
Box 5, Folder 2	Donald Davies, advertisement for Lord & Taylor, New York Times, 1967
Box 3, Folder 8	Donald Davies, fabric swatches, undated
Box 3, Folder 10	Donald Davies, shopping bag, photograph, and drawing of store, undated
Box 5, Folder 1	Donald Davies, photograph of estate, Enniskerry, County Wicklow, Ireland, undated
Box 3, Folder 16	Countess Von Eckermann and weavers, Ripsa, Sweden, undated
Box 3, Folder 18	Countess Von Eckermann, newspaper articles, 1962-1972
Box 3, Folder 17	Countess Von Eckermann, photographs of designs, undated
Box 3, Folder 19	Photographs of models in Irish fashions, undated

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Series 7: Miscellaneous, 1962

Scope and Contents: Contains an issue of the trade publication The Ambassador a British magazine that promoted textiles and fashion.

Box 4, Folder 9 The Ambassador, number 9, 1962

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