Guide to the Virginia "Jimmie" Booth collection

NMAH.AC.0729
Anne Jones
2003
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: Virginia "Jimmie" Booth collection
Identifier: NMAH.AC.0729
Date: 1936 - 1998
Extent: 3 Cubic feet (6 boxes, 3 oversize folders)
Creator: Booth, Virginia
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
- Henry Booth Collection, 1948-1974, AC0726
- Dorothy Shaver Papers, circa 1922-1959, AC0631

Processing Information
Processed by Anne Jones (volunteer), 2003.

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

Restrictions
The collection is open for research use.
Virginia "Jimmie" Booth collection
NMAH.AC.0729

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning intellectual property rights. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical / Historical

Virginia Wagoner Booth, known as Jimmie Booth, 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 Bob Booth of Hillandale Weavers, 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, Bob, owned and operated.

Scope and Contents

The Virginia "Jimmie" Booth Collection, 1936-1998, focuses primarily on Booth's career as a buyer for Lord & Taylor. The collection includes correspondence, photographs, drawings, clippings, and a scrapbook, and is arranged into seven series.

Series 1: Personal Papers, Photos, and Memorabilia, 1936-1998, includes materials dating from Booth's college days and recent years.

Series 2: Hillandale Business, 1948, 1949, 1972, undated, consists of advertisements, articles, and correspondence. Hillandale Handweavers was the company founded by Booth's father-in-law, Henry Booth.

Series 3: Lord & Taylor Country Clothes Shop, 1952-1960s, contains photographs of the store, advertising, news articles, original illustrations and catalogues.

Series 4: Irish Materials, 1950s-1960s, is made up of articles and photographs of the weavers at work.

Series 6: American Designers, 1948, 1951-1957, undated  The bulk of this series consists of a large number of original sketches by Clare Potter, including fabric swatches. There is also a large scrapbook of Potter's featuring articles and advertisements.

Series 7: Miscellaneous, 1962, consists of an issue of the trade publication, The Ambassador.

Arrangement

Collection is organized into seven series:

Series 1: Personal Papers, Photos, and Memorabilia, 1936-1998
Series 3: Lord & Taylor Country Clothes Shop, 1952-1960s
Series 4: Irish Materials, 1950s-1960s
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, Photos, and Memorabilia, 1936 - 1998

| Box 1, Folder 1 | College-related materials and correspondence, 1999 January 28, 1944 January 26, 1944 September 14, 1947 April, 1944 September 26, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Syracuse University publications, 1942 February 1, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 3 | Souvenir theatre programs, 1930s |
| Box 1, Folder 4 | Horse show programs, 1953 |
| Box 1, Folder 5 | Photographs of Jimmie and Robert Booth and wedding announcement, 1956 November 1, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Newspaper articles, 1951 June 14, 1956 August 16, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 7 | Miscellaneous photographs of Jimmie, 1958, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 8 | Photographs of Jimmie modeling, undated |
| Box 2, Folder 4 | Photographs of Jimmie modeling, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 9 | *Glamour* magazine, 1959 July |
| Box 1, Folder 10 | Biography of Jimmie done as school project, 1997 |
| Box 1, Folder 11 | Gallery guide, "Designing Women" show, 1998 |
| Box 1, Folder 12 | Photographs: Jimmie at "Designing Women" show, 1998 |
| Box 2, Folder 1 | Articles from *This Week*, 1950 - 1952 |
| Box 2, Folder 2 | Article about Jimmie from *This Week*, 1952 June 15 |
| Box 2, Folder 3 | Jimmie in Sligo Ltd. advertisement in *Town & Country*, 1955 September |

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Box 1, Folder 13  PhotoMetriC article, *Time* magazine, 1958 June 7

Box 1, Folder 14  *New England Homestead*, 1949 October

Box 1, Folder 15  Article about Hillandale, undated

Box 1, Folder 16  *Yankee* magazine, 1972 September

Box 1, Folder 17  *Connecticut* magazine, 1972 October

Box 1, Folder 18  Hillandale Handweavers, correspondence, 1969, 1970 November 8, undated

Box 1, Folder 19  Hillandale advertising, undated

Box 1, Folder 20  Hillandale Barn/Golden Lamb Buttery, 1997 May 7, 1975 September 14, undated

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Series 3: Lord & Taylor Country Clothes Shop, 1952-1960s

Box 1, Folder 21  Country Clothes Shop - interiors, undated

Box 1, Folder 22  Window displays, 1950s

Box 1, Folder 23  Window displays, 1960s

Box 1, Folder 24  Window displays, 1960s

Box 1, Folder 25  Fashion photographs, undated

Box 1, Folder 26  Lord & Taylor advertising, "Pride of Ireland", 1963 October 6

Box 1, Folder 27  News articles about the "Pride of Ireland" campaign, 1963 October 9, 1963 October 4

Box 2, Folder 5  Lord & Taylor/Clare Potter advertisement, 1955 April 15

Box 2, Folder 6  Vogue - Lord & Taylor dress shown, 1952 July

Box 2, Folder 7  Lord & Taylor Christmas catalogue - Country Clothes Shop featured, 1956

Box 2, Folder 8  Lord & Taylor "British Fortnight", 1958

Map-case 3, Drawer 19, Original Dorothy Hood illustrations for advertisements, 1957 - 1958
  Folder 1-3

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Series 4: Irish Materials, 1950s-1960s

Box 1, Folder 28  
*Time* magazine, 1963

Box 1, Folder 29  
*Ireland* magazine, 1960s

Box 1, Folder 30  

*Telefood Magazine*, Fine Foods from Ireland issue, 1966 September

*Cara: the travel magazine of Aer Lingus-Irish Airlines*, Volume 2, Number 1, 1969 January-March

*Village Life in Ireland*, Syracuse University Alumni Association, Inc., 1999 April 18-26

Irish edition catalog from Scottish Lion Import Shop, 1998 Fall/1999 Winter

*Sports Illustrated*, 1958 August 25

*Northeast: the Hartford Courant*, 1988 September 11

*Queen*, 1965 December 1

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: Blarney Castle, County Cork, and James Joyce's Tower, Dublin, undated

Box 3, Folder 4  
News articles about Irish crafts, 1960s

Box 3, Folder 5  
News articles about Ireland - general, 1960s

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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 4, Folder 5  Clare Potter: news article and Clare Potter obituary from the New York Times, 1999 January 11, undated

Box 4, Folder 6  Clare Potter: photographs - Clare Potter and her home, includes Halsman contact sheet, undated

[Fashion portraits of Clare Potter: photographs.]
1 Item (10 x 8 in.)
Halsman, Philippe, Photographer
Contact sheet of 11 exposures on #120 film, with one frame cut out.

When processing is completed, unrestricted research use on site by appointment. Photographs must be handled with cotton gloves unless protected by sleeves.

Silver gelatin on paper.

Names: Potter, Clare
Topic: Costume design
Genre/ Form: Contact sheets
Photographs -- 1950-2000 -- Black-and-white photoprints
-- Silver gelatin

Box 6  Clare Potter: scrapbook of articles and advertisements, 1955 - 1957

Box 4, Folder 7  Phelps Leather Goods (William and Elizabeth Phelps), 1944 - 1948, 1989, 1956 May 27

Box 4, Folder 8  Other American designers, 2000 February 5, 1959 - 1964

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Box 3, Folder 6  Subil Conally: article in Victoria magazine, 1997 March

Box 3, Folder 7  Donald Davies: advertising and promotion, 1965, 1967, undated

Box 3, Folder 8  Donald Davies: fabric swatches, undated

Box 3, Folder 9  Donald Davies: photographs of Davies' designs, 1963 September 20

Box 3, Folder 10  Davies shopping bag and photograph and drawing of store, undated

Box 3, Folder 11  Donald Davies: advertisements in American newspapers, 1966 - 1968

Box 5, Folder 2  Donald Davies: advertisement for Lord & Taylor, New York Times, 1967

Box 3, Folder 12  Donald Davies: articles in British newspapers, 1968 May 27, 1966 September 23

Box 3, Folder 13  Donald Davies: featured in magazines, 1962, 1968, undated

Box 3, Folder 14  Donald Davies: management consultants report, 1955

Box 5, Folder 1  Donald Davies: photograph of estate, Enmskerry, undated

Box 3, Folder 15  Donald Davies: miscellaneous photographs of Davies and others, 1958, undated

Box 3, Folder 16  Countess Von Eckermann and weavers, Ripsa, Sweden, undated

Box 3, Folder 17  Countess Von Eckermann: photographs of Von Eckermann designs, undated

Box 3, Folder 18  Countess Von Eckermann: newspaper articles, 1972 November 29, 1962 December 17

Box 3, Folder 19  Photographs of models in Irish fashions, undated

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Series 7: Miscellaneous, 1962

Box 4, Folder 9  
*The Ambassador*, British trade publication, number 9, 1962

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