

**The New York Public Library
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Manuscripts and Archives Division**

**William Pène du Bois papers
1940s - 1970s**

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Summary

Main entry:	Du Bois, William Pène, 1916-.
Title:	William Pène du Bois papers, 1940s - 1970s
Size:	3.25 linear feet (8 boxes, 5 map case folders)
Source:	Donated by Willa Kim (Mrs. William Pène du Bois), 1996.
Abstract:	William Pène Du Bois (1919-1993) was an illustrator and award winning children's author. His collection includes correspondence, manuscripts, mock-ups, posters, and original artwork for several of the books he illustrated, including his own works <i>Otto at Sea</i> and <i>Otto in Texas</i> .
Access:	Apply in the Special Collections Office for admission to the Manuscripts and Archives Division.
Copyright information:	
Preferred citation:	William Pène du Bois papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.
Special formats	Illustrations, Photographs, Manuscripts, Galley proofs, Diaries.
Alternate formats:	

Provenance note

Related materials note

The May Massee Collection. William Allen White Library, Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas. Collection guide available in the reading room.

Biographical note

William Sherman Pène du Bois was an illustrator and award-winning children's author. He was born May 9, 1916 in Nutley, New Jersey, into a family of distinguished painters, stage designers, and architects dating back to the 1700s. His father, Guy Pène du Bois, was an art critic and artist known for his landscapes and portraits. His mother, Florence Sherman, was a successful children's clothing designer. His younger sister, Yvonne, also became a landscape painter.

When "Billy" was eight, his family moved to France where he attended the Lycée Hoche at Versailles and the Lycée de Nice. Pène du Bois excelled in sports, especially tennis, and mathematics. He particularly enjoyed spending time at the French circus, the subject of several of his books. Although he wasn't an avid reader, Pène du Bois was captivated by book illustrations, which he studied.

The Pène du Bois family returned to New Jersey when William was fourteen. After finishing high school, he was accepted, with a scholarship, to the Carnegie Technical School of Architecture. But his college plans dissolved when he sold a book he wrote to pass time during a vacation. *The Great Guppy* was published before Pène du Bois' nineteenth birthday. College was passed over for career writing and illustrating children's books. By the time he entered the armed forces at age twenty-five, he had written and illustrated five more children's books.

He spent his army years (1941-1945) with the coast artillery stationed in Bermuda, where he worked as a correspondent for *Yank*, edited the camp newspaper and illustrated strategic maps and calendars for Bermuda (copies included in the collection).

Over his five-decade career, Pène du Bois wrote and illustrated over twenty-five of his own books and provided illustrations for numerous others, notably works of Jules Verne, Isaac Bashevis Singer and John Steinbeck. He also illustrated many magazine articles and advertisements, including two covers for *Town and Country*.

He was awarded the American Library Association's 1948 John Newberry Medal (most distinguished American children's book published the previous year) for his book, *Twenty-One Balloons*, and two Caldecott Honor Awards, for *Bear Party* and *Lion*.

Pène du Bois was the founding editor of the *Paris Review*. He married debutante Jane Bouche in 1943 (divorced) and theatrical designer Willa Kim in 1955. In the 1960s he developed an interest in vintage cars, going to great pains and expense to refurbish a 1931 Brewster Croydon Coupe Rolls-Royce P11. Pène du Bois died of a stroke on February 5, 1993 in Nice, France.

Sources:

Contemporary Author Online, Gale, 2003. Retrieved October 10, 2003:
<http://galenet.galegroup.com/BioRC>

Daly, Josette Guevara. Sketches. *The Royal Gazette and Colonist Daily* (Bermuda), 1944 May 10.

Scope and content note

The William Pène du Bois papers (1940s-1970s) document his career as an author and illustrator. The bulk of the collection consists of materials for twenty-two of the children's books he wrote and illustrated. The file for each book includes one or more of the following: manuscripts, typescripts (edited or unedited), galley proofs, author's notes, mock-ups (text only or illustrated), dust jackets, original artwork, photostats of illustrations, or newspaper reviews. The collection also includes his original art work for books by other authors.

In addition, the collection includes a small amount of correspondence with friends, his publisher, and with the company restoring his vintage Rolls-Royce. His personal files include a scrapbook containing clippings of his artwork published in magazines, and the articles he wrote as an Army newspaper editor/reporter during World War II; citations and awards; photographs; a recording of radio interview made during the early 1970s; files of information on his father, art critic and painter Guy Pène du Bois, and his cousin, stage designer Raoul Pène du Bois; and a mock-up book sent to him by fellow children's book author Mary Chalmers.

Arrangement note

The William Pène du Bois papers are organized in the following series:

- Series I. Correspondence, 1940s - 1970s
- Series II. Book Materials, 1940s - 1970s
- Series III. Illustrations, 1945 - 1970s
- Series IV. Personal Files, 1940s - 1980s

Series descriptions and container list

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
		Series I. Correspondence, 1940s - 1970s
1	1-3	1940s - 1969
	4	Rolls-Royce, 1960s For additional correspondence regarding the car, see his personal journal entitled, "The Rolls-Royce Saga" (b.3, f.12).
	5	1970s
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
		Series II. Book Materials, 1940s - 1970s
	6	<i>The Alligator Case</i> , 1965 (clippings) <i>Bear Party</i>
	7	Illustrations (Photostatic copies)
	8	Dust jacket
	4	Oversize illustration sheet
<u>Map Case</u>	<u>Drawer</u>	
	D4	Oversize photostatic copy
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
1	9-10	<i>The Blue Boat</i> (typescript) <i>Elizabeth the Ghost Cow</i>
	11	Manuscript
	12	Typescript, edited
	13	Galley proofs
	14	Clippings
<u>Map Case</u>	<u>Drawer</u>	
	D4	Illustrations
	D4	Galley proof
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
5	5	<i>The Flying Locomotive</i>
		<i>The Horse in the Camel Suit</i>
1	15	Typescript
	16	Galley Proofs
	17	Notebooks
	18	Mock-up book
2	1	Clippings
	2	Illustrations (photostatic)
	3-5	<i>The Land of the Robbers</i> (typescript)
5	6	<i>In France</i> (by Marguerite Clement)
	2	<i>Kaola Party</i> (illustration - photostat)
		<i>Lazy Tommy Pumkinhead</i>
2	6	Typescript
	7	Clippings
		<i>Lion</i>
	8	Typescript
	9	Mock-up book, hand-bound (Very delicate, handle with care!)
	10	Dust jacket
5	4	<i>My Brother Bird</i>
7	14	The "Adventures of Otto" (series illustration)
4	1	<i>Otto in Africa</i> (single page from the story; two illustrations)
2	11	<i>Otto and the Magic Potatoes</i> (typescript)

		<i>Otto in Space</i>
7	1	Story synopsis
	2	Story board
		<i>Otto at Sea</i> (Copy of published volume included in box)
4	2-4	Color illustrations
7	9-12	Matted larger illustrations
	13	Photostats
		<i>Otto in Texas</i>
4	5-6	Illustrations - color with black outline cover sheet
	7-8	Illustrations - black and white with black outlines added
	9	Illustrations - black half-tone drawings
7	3	Uncut book pages (full color)
	4-8	Illustrations - matted
2	12	<i>The Owl and the Pussycat</i> , 1965 (clippings)
		<i>Porko von Popbutton</i>
	13	Typescript
	14	Clippings
<u>Map</u>	<u>Drawer</u>	
<u>Case</u>	D4	Illustration - on poster
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
		<i>Pretty, Pretty Peggy Moffitt</i>
2	15	Typescript - misc. loose pages
	16	Mock-up book
	17	Clippings
	18	Dust Jacket
	19	<i>The Quiet Fair</i> (mock-up book)
	20	<i>Santa Claus</i> (typescript signed by author, March 7, 1944)
4	--	<i>Twenty and Ten</i> (by Claire Huchet Bishop; 15 matted illustrations)
2	21	<i>The Three Who Asked, "Why?"</i> (typescript)
		<i>The Tiger in the Teapot</i>
	22	Mock-up book
	23	Clippings
		<i>Twenty-one Balloons</i>
	24	Clippings
	25	Illustrations
<u>Map</u>	D4	Illustration - on poster
<u>Case</u>		Poster for the Newberry Medal winning books features the cover of <i>Twenty-One Balloons</i> and a photo of Pène du Bois holding a tiger cub
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	<i>The Tortoise and the Hare</i> (mock-up book - English/Spanish Version)
2	26	
		<i>The Witch of Scrapfaggot Green</i> (by Patricia Gordon)
6	1	Photostats (2)
	2	Smaller images
	3	Proofs
	4-7	Matted illustrations
2	27	Miscellaneous book reviews (clippings)
	28	Miscellaneous loose typescript pages

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	Series III. Illustrations, 1945 - 1970s
3	1	Bermuda Contains illustrations for an article and calendars (2 copies) depicting scenes of Bermuda.
	2	Dust jackets
	3	Magazine articles
5	7	Magazine articles - oversized
3	4	Miscellaneous
	5	Miscellaneous (color)
<u>Map Case</u>	D4	Posters Four posters: Summer Reading Poster designed by Pène du Bois (see also box 3, folder 6); <i>Porko von Popbutton</i> illustration with author interview text; Gallery Poster; Newberry Metal Award Poster featuring <i>Twenty-One Balloons</i> cover illustration and picture of Pène du Bois holding tiger cub.
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
3	6	Summer Library Reading Program materials, 1970 Includes a poster, bookmarks, and certificates with illustrations designed by Pène du Bois
	7	Town and Country magazine covers
<u>Map Case</u>	D4	WBBM 2-page spread advertisement
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	Unidentified images - oversized
5	1	
<u>Map Case</u>	<u>Drawer</u>	
	D4	Unidentified road sign illustrations
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	Series IV. Personal Files, 1940s - 1980s
3	8	Chalmers, Mary -- <i>Pieces of Blue and White</i> (Mock-up book (2 copies))
	9	Citations of Merit
5	3	Citation of Merit - oversized
3	10	Clippings about William Pène du Bois
	11	Contracts and royalty reports, 1968 - 1969
	12	Journal - "The Rolls-Royce Saga" A journal documenting the restoration work done on Pène du Bois' Rolls Royce; includes correspondence and post cards.
	13	Lecture announcements, c.1980s
	14	Notebook (Notes and research on Guy Pène du Bois.)
	15	Pène du Bois, Guy (Articles and clippings)
	16	Pène du Bois, Raoul (Designs and clippings)
	17	Photographs
5	--	Scrapbook Includes clippings and illustrations by and about Pène du Bois. Scrapbook in delicate condition. Please use carefully.
3	18	Speech: "Animal History Will Bear This Out," 1957 Apr (two copies)
<u>Box</u>	<u>Unit ID</u>	
8	03651	Radio interview Radio interview conducted by Mary Louise Hilas of WBOE, Cleveland: William Pène du Bois discusses how he develops his story lines, what he draws upon for plot lines, and what his work day is like. He answers questions about himself posed by children.

Box 8 closed. Request service copy number 03651.