



Guide to the John E. Browning Papers, 1930-1999

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David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

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Summary

Collection Title:

John E. Browning papers, 1930-1999

Source:

John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History

Creator:

Browning, John E., 1915-2000

Abstract:

John E. Browning (1915-2000) was a commercial artist, designer, and naval architect who worked in the outdoor advertising and maritime industries in New Jersey. This collection spans the years 1930-1999 and includes billboard designs, photographs and digitized negatives, sketches, correspondence, and printed materials relating to commercial art and typography. Acquired as part of the John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History.

Extent:

0.4 Linear Feet
120 Items

Language:

Material in English

Collection ID:

RL.00162

Permalink:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m1r605>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], John E. Browning Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University

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Background

Scope and Content

The John E. Browning Papers span the years 1930-1999 and include billboard designs, photographs and digitized negatives, sketches, correspondence, and printed materials relating to commercial art and typography.

Biographical/Historical

John E. Browning (1915-2000) was a commercial artist, designer, and naval architect who worked in the outdoor advertising and maritime industries in New Jersey. He graduated from the Pratt Institute in 1938 with a degree in advertising design, then worked briefly as a layout artist for O'Mealia Outdoor (Jersey City) before joining J. C. Williams Co. (Asbury Park) as a designer in 1939. In 1942, Browning worked as a civilian designer for the U. S. Army Signal Corps, and in 1943, he enlisted in the U. S. Army. Browning was a designer for Welin Davit and Boat Corporation from 1943 until 1965, when he joined the Marine Safety Equipment Corporation of Farmington, New Jersey. He retired in 1987 as vice president of the company.

In addition to his formal employment, Browning worked as a free-lance artist and poster designer for various civic groups, including Women's Clubs and Library Clubs; illustrator for a cook book; and exhibited his artwork on several occasions.

Browning died on October 31, 2000, in Neptune, New Jersey.

Chronology List

Date	Description
1915	Born, South Amboy, N.J.
1938	Graduated, Pratt Institute, degree in Advertising Design
Circa 1938	Layout artist, O'Mealia Outdoor, Jersey City, N.J.
1939-1942	Artist, J. C. Williams Co., Asbury Park, N.J.

Date	Description
1942	Civilian designer, U.S. Army Signal Corps
1943	U.S. Army, Fort Sill, Okla.
1943-1965	Designer, Welin Davit and Boat Corp., Perth Amboy, N.J.
1965-1987	Designer, then supervisory positions, Marine Safety Equipment Corp., Farmington, N.J.
1987 Mar. 31	Retired as Vice President, Marine Safety Equipment Corp.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Access Restrictions

Access note. Some materials are digital files that require special equipment. Contact Research Services with questions.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to Duke University. For more information, consult the copyright section of

the Regulations and Procedures of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

Acquisition Information

The John E. Browning Papers were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a gift in 1998 and 2004.

Processing Information

Processed by Noelle Suaifan, February 2011.

Encoded by Richard Collier, February 2011.

Six nitrate negatives were digitized and deaccessioned in February 2026 and only exist in digitized form.

Accessions described in this collection guide: 1998-0011, 2004-0141

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Related Materials

Related Material

Related material may be found in the following Hartman Center collections:

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/robbinsburr/>

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/orrgarrett/>

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/scotthoward/>

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/oshaughnessy/>

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/paverjohn/>

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/hamerrobort/>

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/naegeleoutdoor/>

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/ohiooutdoor/>

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/oaaaarchives/>

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Names and Subjects

- Advertising -- New Jersey
- Advertising -- United States
- Advertising, Outdoor -- New Jersey
- Advertising, Outdoor -- United States
- Advertising layout and typography
- Billboards -- New Jersey
- Commercial art -- United States
- Commercial artists -- United States
- Graphic artists -- United States
- Graphic design (Typography) -- United States
- Naval architects -- United States
- New Jersey
- Photographs
- Photographic prints
- digitized images
- John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History
- Browning, John E., 1915-2000

Collection Inventory

Billboard designs, 1940-1941	Box 1
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Book and Booklet, 1930	Box 1
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Scope and Contents note

Includes Cobb Shinn's Type Warmers catalog, undated, and C.B. Falls Modern ABC Book, 1930.

Correspondence, 1942, 1997-1999	Box 1
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Flyers and brochures for Browning's art exhibits, 1994-1999	Box 1
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Negatives: "Signs erected 1940-1941", circa

1940-1942

Physical Description: 6 items ; digitized nitrate negatives

Processing Information:

Original nitrate negatives were digitized and deaccessioned in February 2026.
Digital access copies are available.

Newspaper clippings, 1920, 1992-1998 Box 1

Photographs, 1939-1942 Box 1

Sketches, 1935-1999 Box 1

Physical Description: 2 folders