Marcella Spann Booth:

An Inventory of Her Collection of Ezra Pound in the Manuscript Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Booth, Marcella Spann, 1932-

Title: Marcella Spann Booth Collection of Ezra Pound

Dates: 1886-2007 (bulk 1956-1970)

Extent: 10 boxes, 3 oversize boxes (4.87 linear feet)

Abstract: The Marcella Spann Booth Collection of Ezra Pound consists of

journal entries, manuscript drafts, poem fragments and notes, proof

materials, correspondence, newspaper clippings, photographs,

published material, a scrapbook, and artifacts related to the poet Ezra

Pound and professor Marcella Spann Booth.

Call Number: Manuscript Collection MS-05105

Language: English, Italian, German, and Russian

Access: Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition: Purchase, 2008 (R17145) **Processed by:** Amy E. Armstrong, 2009

Repository: Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketches

Ezra Pound, 1885-1972

Ezra Pound was born on October 30, 1885, in Hailey, Idaho. In 1889, the Pound family moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and in 1891 to Wyncote, Pennsylvania. In 1901, Pound enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania, but two years later transferred to Hamilton College where he received a bachelor's degree in 1905. He returned to the University of Pennsylvania for graduate studies, which included studying abroad in Europe. After receiving a master of arts degree in Romance languages in 1907, Pound was appointed as a language instructor at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana.

In February 1908, Pound sailed to Europe to continue his study of medieval literature and to establish himself as a poet. After brief periods in Venice and France, Pound settled in London and published two collections of poetry, *A Lume Spento* (1908) and *A Quinzaine for this Yule* (1908). In London Pound met novelist Olivia Shakespear and was introduced to her daughter, Dorothy, whom he married on April 20, 1914. Influenced by Europe's artistic and cultural rejuvenation, as well as his beginning interest in Eastern languages and culture, Pound developed a poetical style he termed Imagism, which was rooted in a broader artistic movement he called Vorticism.

The First World War made a lasting impact on Pound, and the death of friend and sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska contributed to a strong anti-war sentiment within him. In 1916, Pound published "Three Cantos" in *Poetry*. Between 1921 and 1924, Pound lived in Paris where he immersed himself in the city's artistic milieu and continued working on the structure and style of his most ambitious, epic poem *The Cantos*, which he continued to revise and publish additional sequences for in various intervals for the remainder of his life. His relationship with American violinist Olga Rudge cultivated Pound's interest in music, and he began to compose musical pieces that Rudge performed.

In 1924, Pound and Dorothy moved to Rapallo, Italy, where despite the distance, he continued his relationship with Rudge. On July 9, 1925, Rudge gave birth to their daughter, Mary. On September 10, 1926, Dorothy and Pound had a son, Omar. During the 1930s, Pound became an admirer of Mussolini and grew interested in the social and economic policies of Fascism, often writing about politics and economics. When Mussolini declared war on Britain and France in June 1940, Pound, believing that he and Mussolini shared a general anti-war sentiment, broadcast a series of addresses on Italian radio blaming the war on America, Great Britain, and Jews.

As a result of his broadcasts, the United States government charged Pound with treason in July 1943. He was arrested on May 2, 1945, and held in austere conditions at a Disciplinary Training Center near Pisa, Italy. While confined, Pound composed *The Pisan Cantos* (New Directions, 1948), which despite great controversy, won him the Bollingen Prize in 1949. In 1945, he was returned to the United States where he was indicted for treason. On February 13, 1946, he was declared mentally incompetent to stand trial and was sentenced to confinement at St. Elizabeth's Hospital for the Insane in Washington, D.C. Over the course of Pound's 12-year confinement, the poet often

entertained friends and groups of poets, writers, and aspiring artists on the grounds of the hospital; one such visitor to "Ezuversity" was Marcella Spann. While at St. Elizabeth's Pound continued writing, including additional sequences of *The Cantos*, and published several works.

Many influential supporters, T. S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, and Archibald MacLeish among them, petitioned the government for Pound's release, and due in large part to poet Robert Frost's successful campaign, Pound's case was dismissed on April 18, 1958. He was released from St. Elizabeth's on May 7, 1958, and after several days traveling in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Ezra and Dorothy Pound, accompanied by Marcella Spann, departed for Italy. The small entourage sailed from New York on June 30, 1958, aboard the ocean liner *Christoforo Colombo* and arrived in Italy amid great publicity. The final destination was his daughter Mary and son-in-law Prince Boris de Rachewiltz's Castle Brunnenburg near Merano, Italy. The climate and living arrangements at the castle proved difficult for Pound as tension among Dorothy, Rudge, Mary, and Spann grew. Spann returned to her native Texas in October 1959.

In his later years, Pound experienced declining health but continued writing and traveling until his death on November 1, 1972, in Venice, Italy.

Marcella Spann Booth, 1932-

Marcella Joyce Spann was born on June 21, 1932, in Aubrey, Texas. Three years after graduating from Frisco High School in 1949, she enrolled in East Texas State University in Commerce, Texas, where she received a B. A. in English in 1956 and an M. Ed. in personnel and guidance in August 1956. While Spann was in graduate school, Professor Vincent Miller introduced her to Ezra Pound's poetry. Following graduation Spann and a friend arranged to live in New York for a year, and Spann wrote to Pound at St. Elizabeth's Hospital and requested to meet him while on a stopover in Washington D.C. The poet, who often received young aspiring artists on the grounds of St. Elizabeth's, wrote back granting her access.

While she was living in New York, Spann and Pound continued their correspondence. He proceeded to enrich her life by imparting his philosophy of life and literature, often assigning Spann various readings and writing tasks in his letters. Pound frequently included fragments of poetry in his letters and increasingly asked Spann to complete various secretarial tasks on his behalf. In 1957, Spann was hired as an English instructor at Marjorie Webster Junior College located in Washington D.C., allowing her to have regular visits with Pound. During one of these visits, Spann confided to Pound her feelings of self-doubt about teaching, and he conjured the idea of the "Spannthology," an introductory poetry textbook for Spann's students. Pound selected the poets he thought necessary to include, and Spann selected the poems. The book was later published as Confucius to Cummings: An Anthology of Poetry (New Directions, 1964). During her frequent visits to St. Elizabeth's Hospital between 1957 and 1958, Spann often shared her students' work with Pound who provided comments and advice for her teaching. After Pound's release from St. Elizabeth's Hospital in 1958, Spann accompanied him and his wife, Dorothy, to Italy where she acted as Pound's secretary and continued work on the "Spannthology." Pound and Spann continued to correspond briefly after she returned to Texas in October 1959.

Between 1960 and 1965 Spann taught English at Seagoville Junior High School in Seagoville, Texas, and was a guidance counselor at Sam Houston Junior High School in Garland, Texas. She enrolled in the doctoral program at The University of Texas at Austin in 1965 and received a Ph. D. in English in August 1969. Her dissertation, entitled "An Analytical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts and Letters in the Louis Zukofsky Collection at The University of Texas at Austin," brought her into contact with the poet Louis Zukofsky. In 1969 she received an appointment to the English department at the University of Connecticut at Storrs, where she taught literature, including a course on Pound's *Cantos*. She married a colleague, economics professor E. J. R. (Ted) Booth, in June 1972. A scholar of modern literature, Spann Booth attended Pound symposia across the world and published two articles about Pound in *Paideuma*, a journal dedicated to the study of Ezra Pound and his works.

Sources:

In addition to material found within the collection, the following sources were used:

Booth, Marcella. "Through the Smoke Hole: Ezra Pound's Last Year at St. Elizabeth's." *Paideuma*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Winter 1974.

Booth, Marcella. "Ezrology: The Class of '57." Paideuma, Vol. 13, No. 3, Winter 1984.

"Ezra Pound." Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 45: American Poets, 1880-1945, First Series, http://galenet.galegroup.com (accessed 25 February 2009).

"Ezra (Weston Loomis) Pound." *Contemporary Authors Online*, http://galenet.galegroup.com (accessed 20 February 2009).

Wilhelm, J. J. *Ezra Pound: The Tragic Years, 1925-1972*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994.

Material found within the collection.

Scope and Contents

The Marcella Spann Booth Collection of Ezra Pound, 1886–2007 (bulk 1956-1970) consists of journal entries, manuscript drafts, poem fragments and notes, proof materials, correspondence, newspaper clippings, photographs, published material, a scrapbook, and artifacts related to the poet Ezra Pound and professor Marcella Spann Booth. The bulk of the material documents the course of Booth's relationship with Pound which was active between 1956 and 1960; however, Booth's life was forever impacted by these years, as later correspondence and material in the collection often refers to Pound and this period in her life. This collection also documents Pound's last two years confined at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, as well as his release and return to Italy, providing insight into Pound during a particularly fascinating period of the poet's life. Due to the nature of their relationship and collaboration, Pound and Spann Booth co-created much of the material.

The collection is arranged into five series: I. Works, II. Correspondence, III. Pound-Personal, IV. About Pound, and V. Spann Booth-Personal and Professional.

Series I. includes works written by Pound, works written collaboratively by Pound and Spann Booth, and works written by Spann Booth related to Pound. The series is arranged alphabetically by the title of the work. *The Cantos* (compiled and published in 1948, 1970, 1972) are arranged by numeric title and contain typescript and typescript carbon drafts, many annotated and corrected, including number XLVI, a fragment from *The Pisan Cantos* (1948) typed on toilet paper, numbers XCVI-CIX (published as *Thrones 96-109 de los cantares* in 1959), and numbers CX-CXVII (published as *Drafts and Fragments of Cantos CX-CXVII* in 1969). Also included are many untitled fragments identified by particular lines from *Cantos* segments; however, not all have been identified. Of particular significance are two slightly differing incomplete typescripts of *Cantos Drafts and Fragments*. The version tied with a yellow string is Pound's then 'unpublished' version of these poems at the time Spann Booth left Italy in 1959. After Spann Booth returned to Texas, Pound requested that she retype and send him a clean draft of these poems because his own copies were no longer usable. The second version is Spann Booth's carbon copy of this 1960 retyped draft.

Of note is Spann Booth's personal published copy of *The Cantos* which she annotated based on Pound's comments during his readings to her. This volume also contains annotations in Pound's handwriting. Varying ink color reflects notes taken during Pound's different readings. These combined annotations translate the linguistic, cultural, and private references Pound used in *The Cantos*.

Also included in this series are manuscript drafts, notes, correspondence, and newspaper clippings documenting Pound's and Spann Booth's collaborative poetry anthology, *Confucius to Cummings* (1964). First conceived as a junior college introductory textbook, the book had the previous working titles: 'A Junior College Anthology' and 'From Kung to Cummings', in addition to the informal title 'Spannthology.' These materials also contain drafts of what appears to be an unpublished second poetry anthology.

The works series also includes front matter page proofs for Pound's *Pavanne and Divagations* (1958), articles written by Spann Booth for *Paideuma*, a journal devoted to Pound scholarship, and drafts of an unpublished manuscript about Pound and George Santayana written by Spann Booth and corrected by Pound.

Series II. Correspondence is arranged into two subseries: A. Outgoing and B. Incoming. The vast majority of correspondence is located in the outgoing subseries and consists of typed and journal-like letters with hand-corrected and occasional handwritten segments. These letters were sent from Pound to Spann Booth while he was confined at St. Elizabeth's Hospital. Pound wrote these letters almost daily and he frequently wrote several entries on one page indicating different hours throughout the day. Interspersed are more traditional-in-form letters from Pound to Spann Booth while she lived in New York and Washington D.C., and a voluminous segment of letters dating from after she returned to Texas from Italy in 1959. Pound often signed the letters "E. P." or with a sketch of his profile. Among other topics, the journal letters discuss Spann Booth's career, the Square Dollar Series, Noel Stock and *Edge*, David Wang, Vince Miller, the "Spannthology," and Pound's thoughts and observations about his daily existence at St.

Elizabeth's. The letters often contain poems or translations of poems, including references to and various fragments of *The Cantos*. Two items of note are the first letters Spann Booth and Pound exchanged granting her access to St. Elizabeth's and the permission slip he wrote allowing Spann Booth to enter his "Ezrologie" course. The letters are arranged following Spann Booth's filing system with folder title indicating the location where she lived upon receipt of the letter. Within folders, the letters are in reverse chronological order—though few letters have complete dates. Also included are several notes written by Pound and letters written by Spann Booth as Pound's secretary.

Subseries B. consists of incoming correspondence—largely postcards, with occasional letters and Christmas cards—sent to Pound in France, Italy, and at St. Elizabeth's Hospital by associates including William Cookson, T. S. Eliot, James Laughlin, Sheri Martinelli, Henry Miller, Homer Pound, and Vanni Scheiwiller. These letters date from 1925 to 1959. Other correspondence in the collection is listed in Partial Index of Correspondents located at the end of this finding aid.

Series III. contains items associated with Ezra Pound and includes art by Sheri Martinelli, artifacts, two diaries containing brief notes and fragments written by Spann Booth and Pound, Pound-related ephemera including his calling card and several versions of his personal stationery, photographs of Pound at various ages, of Spann Booth, and of friends and family, as well as printed material including magazines, leaflets, and brochures.

The bulk of Series IV. is comprised of Pound-related material collected by Spann Booth including newspaper clippings, correspondence with Pound scholars and other professional associates, and literature received at Pound symposia. The most significant item is a scrapbook Spann Booth created that documents Pound's 1958 release from St. Elizabeth's Hospital and his journey to and arrival in Italy. The scrapbook contains Spann Booth's passport, photographs, ephemera, the ship's passenger list, and numerous newspaper clippings.

Series V. is arranged into two subseries: A. Correspondence and B. Works. The series documents Spann Booth's academic career as a doctoral student at the University of Texas and as faculty at the University of Connecticut at Storrs. The correspondence is in alphabetical order by last name of the correspondent. The largest and most significant material in the Works subseries is related to Spann Booth's dissertation project, a catalogue of the Louis Zukofsky Collection at the University of Texas Humanities Research Center, now named the Harry Ransom Center. These materials include correspondence with the Zukofskys, research, edited drafts, newspaper clippings, and two unlabeled open-reel audio tapes. Two files document Spann Booth's research and drafts for the preface she authored for a reprinting of the book *Poor Little Rich Girl* (1976) by Eleanor Gates.

The majority of the material in the collection is in English; however, Pound frequently used French and Italian phrases or Greek and Chinese characters in his writing. In addition, the collection contains a small amount of printed material and correspondence in Italian, German, and Russian. The collection is in good condition.

Related Material

The following collections at the Ransom Center contain additional Pound-related material: James Agee, Richard Aldington, Julian Beck, Carol Bergé, Ronald Bottrall, William A. Bradley Literary Agency, Christine Brooke-Rose, Alfred Chester, Jean Cocteau, *Contempo*, Helen Corke, Alec Craig, Nancy Cunard, Edward Dahlberg, R. F. H. Duncan, Thomas Stearns Eliot, J. G. Fletcher, Frank Stewart Flint, George Sutherland Fraser, J. L. Garvin, Alice Corbin Henderson, Rayner Heppenstall, Katharine Tynan Hinkson, Robert Guy Howarth, H. Huddleston, Glenn Arthur Hughes, Mary Hutchinson, Samuel Lynn Hynes, Hugh Kenner, Oliver La Farge, Carlton Lake, John Lane Company, Wyndham Lewis, Richard LeGalliene, Literary Files, Robert Lowell, Christopher Darlington Morley, Ottoline Morrell, Edward Nehls, Charles Norman, Peter Owen Ltd., Derek Patmore, Leonidas Warren Payne, Robert Payne, Ezra Pound, Grant Richards, William Robert Rodgers, John Rodker, George Santayana, Dame Edith Sitwell, Sir Osbert Sitwell, Idella Purnell Stone Personal Papers and Records of *Palms* Magazine, Parker Tyler, Sir Hugh Walpole, William Carlos Williams, and Louis Zukofsky.

Other repositories with material related to Ezra Pound include the Beinecke Library, Yale University; the Berg Collection, New York Public Library; the Houghton Library, Harvard University; the Newberry Library; Hamilton College; Cornell University; the University of Pennsylvania; and the Lilly Library, Indiana University.

Separated Material

A small decorative plate, a red clay ornament with Pound's profile, two chess sets, a scarf, a letter seal with red sealing wax, a stickpin, a walking stick, and a lock of Pound's hair have been separated from the collection and are housed in the Ransom Center's Personal Effects Collection. Three books related to Ezra Pound have been separated from the collection and are housed in the Ransom Center's Book Collection. Two unlabeled open-reel audio tapes of a Zukofsky lecture have been separated from the collection and are housed in the Ransom Center's Sound Recordings Collection.

Index Terms

People

Pound, Ezra, 1885-1972. Spann, Marcella.

Organizations

New Directions Publishing Corp.

Subjects

Cookson, William, 1939-

Laughlin, James, 1914-1997

MacGregor, Robert M.

Martinelli, Sheri

Miller, Vince

Pound, Dorothy

Rachewiltz, Mary de

Stock, Noel

Zukofsky, Celia Thaew

Zukofsky, Louis, 1904-1978

Poets, American--20th century.

Places

Saint Elizabeths Hospital (Washington, D.C.)

Document Types

Clippings.

Correspondence.

Manuscripts.

Pamphlets.

Photographs.

Poems.

Postcards.

Publications.

Scrapbooks.

Sound recordings.

Series I. Pound and Spann Booth Works, 1937-1996, undated

The Cantos

XVII, typed dictated explanation of Canto, undated

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The Fifth Decad of the Cantos XLII–LI (1937), XLVI, typescript draft with handwritten note, 6 sheets, undated

Container 1.2

The Pisan Cantos (1948), typescript fragment, undated

Container 1.3

Thrones 96-109 de los cantares (1959)

[XCVII], typescript fragment with handwritten corrections, 1 sheet, undated

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C, typescript draft with handwritten corrections and annotations, 6 sheets, 1 January 1958

C, carbon typescript with handwritten corrections, 6 sheets, 1 January 1958

105, typescript draft with handwritten corrections, 5 sheets, undated

[CVI], typescript fragments with handwritten corrections, 3 sheets, August 1957

[CVI], typescript fragments with handwritten corrections, 5 sheets, 21 and 23 August 1957, undated

CVI, carbon typescript draft with handwritten corrections, 3 sheets, undated

[CVII], typescript fragments, 2 sheets, 5 November, undated

[CVII], typescript fragment with handwritten corrections, 1 sheet, 24 November

107, carbon typescript draft with handwritten corrections, 1 sheet, undated

107, carbon typescript draft with handwritten annotations, 5 sheets, undated

[CVIII], typescript fragments with handwritten corrections, 3 sheets, undated, 3 December

108, carbon typescript draft with handwritten corrections, 5 sheets, undated

[CIX], typescript fragments with handwritten corrections, 3 sheets, 6 December, undated

[CIX], typescript fragment with handwritten corrections, 1 sheet, 2 January 1958

Page proofs with handwritten corrections, inscribed, 124 sheets, 21 June 1959 Container

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Drafts and Fragments of Cantos CX-CXVII (1969)

CX, carbon typescript draft with handwritten corrections, 4 sheets, undated

Container 1.6

CXI, carbon typescript draft with handwritten corrections, 2 sheets, undated

CXI, composite manuscript fragments, 4 sheets [11-12 January 1958]

'Unpublished Cantos'

CX, CXII, CXIII, 114, 115, 116, 117, not cantos, typescript draft with handwritten annotations and corrections, 26 sheets, 1959

Container 1.7

CXII, CXIII, 114, 115, 116, 117, carbon typescript draft with handwritten annotations and corrections, 21 sheets, 30 August 1960

Unidentified, typescript with handwritten corrections, 1 sheet, 13 November

107, carbon typescript draft with handwritten corrections, 1 sheet, undated

Unidentified

Typescript fragment, 1 sheet, undated

Container 1.8

Typescript fragment, 1 sheet, 19 August

Typescript fragments with handwritten annotations, 3 sheets, 13 August, undated

Typescript fragment, 1 sheet, 14 December 1957

Typescript fragments with handwritten corrections, 7 sheets, 17-18 December; 4 and 16 January 1958; undated

Typescript and handwritten fragments with handwritten annotations and corrections, 21 sheets, undated

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Correspondence, 1974-1996	ntainer 2.11
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'Marjorie Webster Junior College,' 1957-1958 Container 3.8

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'After Return from Italy'

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Britons Publishing Co.; catalogs and advertisements

Current, 1955

Delta: Poetry and Criticism, January 1958

Edge; advertisements

Laurentian, Vol. 65, No. 2, February 1958

The New Times, 1956

Poetry, Vol. 91, No.3, December 1957

RES, 1956

Square Dollar Series; advertisements and pamphlet, "History of the Netherlands [sic] Monetary Systems," 1938, undated

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 Epoca, August 1959
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