William Cooper:

An Inventory of His Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Cooper, William, 1910-2002
Title:	William Cooper Collection
Dates:	1932-1991, undated
Extent:	28 boxes (11.55 linear feet), 1 oversize folder (osf)
Abstract:	Contains chiefly manuscripts by the British novelist Harry Summerfield Hoff, best known by his pseudonym, William Cooper. Included are *Disquiet and Peace*, *Memoirs of a New Man*, *Scenes from Provincial Life*, *Shall We Ever Know?*, and a number of other titles. Also present are notebooks containing drafts and notes of various stories, speeches and reviews.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-1973
Language:	English
Access:	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition	Purchases, 1963-1978; 1991 (R12423, R14294); 1999 (R14406)
Processed by:	Robert Kendrick, 1996; Joan Sibley and Apryl Voskamp, 2015 **Note:** For collection description previously available only in a card catalog, please see the explanatory note for information regarding the arrangement of the manuscripts as well as the abbreviations commonly used in descriptions.
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

---

Biographical Sketch

William Cooper was a British writer of novels, plays, and non-fiction, who was born Harry Summerfield Hoff on August 4, 1910, in Crewe, England. Cooper earned his M. A. degree from Christ's College at Cambridge University in 1933. The son of two teachers, Cooper taught in Leicester, England from 1933 to 1940. After serving in the Royal Air Force during World War II, Cooper held a variety of civil service positions, including assistant commissioner of the Civil Service Commission (1945-1958), part-time personnel consultant for the Atomic Energy Authority (1958-1971) and the Central Electricity Generating Board (1960-1971), and assistant director of the Civil Service Selection Board (1971-1975). From 1977 to 1988, Cooper held the position of adjunct professor at the London Center of Syracuse University. Cooper married Joyce Barbara Harris in 1951 with whom he had two daughters, Louisa and Catherine.

The majority of Cooper's published work has been fiction. Early in his career as H. S. Hoff, he published *Trina* (1934; published in the U. S. as *It Happened in PRK), Rhea* (1935), *Lisa* (1937), and *Three Marriages* (1946). Among the novels published under the pseudonym William Cooper are *The Struggles of Albert Woods* (1953), *The Ever-Interesting Topic* (1954), *Disquiet and Peace* (1956), *Young People* (1958), *You're Not Alone* (1976), *From Early Life* (1990), and *Immortality at Any Price* (1991). Forming the series "Scenes from Life" are the novels *Scenes from Provincial Life* (1950), *Scenes from Married Life* (1961), *Scenes from Metropolitan Life* (1982), and *Scenes from Later Life* (1983). Interestingly, *Scenes from Metropolitan Life,* the second novel in the series, languished unpublished in a bank vault for over thirty years because of threatened legal action for libel. Cooper also wrote a play, *Prince Genji* (1950), the non-fiction *Shall We Ever Know? The Trial of the Hosein Brothers for the Murder of Mrs. McKay* (1971), and a pamphlet on his friend C. P. Snow for the series "Writers and Their Work."

Scope and Contents

1963-1978 Acquisitions

This segment of materials was previously cataloged and available only via a card catalog and this description replicates and replaces that information.

1991 Acquisitions

The collection consists of holograph and typescript drafts, notebooks, page proofs, clippings, and a few items of correspondence. The collection is arranged in two series: I. Works, 1977-1989 (5.5 boxes, 1 oversize folder); II. Reviews and Articles re Cooper, 1937-1991 (0.5 boxes, 3 bound volumes). Both series are arranged chronologically.

The collection consists primarily of holograph and typescript drafts of works published 1982-1991. Among these are *Scenes from Metropolitan Life, Scenes from Later Life, From Early Life,* and *Immortality at Any Price. Scenes from Metropolitan Life* is represented only by a typescript printer's copy. *Scenes from Later Life* includes a holograph draft in four notebooks, notes, three typescript drafts with copious holograph revisions and revised sheets, and a typescript printer's copy. *From Early Life* includes a holograph draft in two notebooks and loose sheets, two typescripts with revisions and multiple revised sheets, and a typescript printer's copy. For *Immortality at Any Price,* there are eight notebooks containing a holograph draft with revisions and three typescript drafts with revisions and multiple revised sheets, including a final draft. In addition, there are corrected typescripts for the biographical essay, "A History," revised page proofs, and correspondence from Bill Buford concerning the essay's revision for publication in *Granta.* There are also revised typescripts of other essays.

Cooper's intense process of revision led him to retype and revise by hand multiple copies of single sheets. Each of the early drafts in this collection may have multiple copies of various pages. These materials were received without any apparent logical arrangement of revised sheets within each title; that is, revisions of a single sheet were not necessarily filed together. As this is apparently the author's original working order, no attempt has been made to collocate multiple revised sheets.

There are also four scrapbooks, containing clippings of book reviews of Cooper's work, articles on Cooper, and interviews, 1946-1991. The scrapbooks also contain two pieces of correspondence and an adaptation of the book *Shall We Ever Know?* published in the *Liverpool Daily Post.* In addition, there is a folder of early clippings (1937, nd) concerning the work of H. S. Hoff, which are mounted on sheets.

1999 Acquisition

Three letters written by Cooper to George Hall, John Hammond, Colin Huggett, 1974-1975, 1982.

Note to Researchers

The inventory for the William Cooper Collection is a conflation of one finding aid created in 1996 (for two 1991 additions) and a 2015 finding aid (for 1963-1978 acquisitions) with descriptions previously accessible only through a card catalog that were re-cataloged as part of a retrospective conversion project. The 1991 addition was appended to the end of the 2015 finding aid. Because both descriptions began the box numbering with Box 1, the 1991 addition is differentiated by adding the letter "a" to the original box number (e.g., Box 1a, Box 2a, etc.). The inventories were combined in 2025 to comply with a new content management system.

Index Terms

Subjects

English fiction -- 20th century

Document Types

First drafts

Works:

Unfinished and untitled novel, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, 69 pages bound in exercise book; carbon copy typescript with handwritten revisions, 45 pages; undated — **Container** 1.1

Unidentified blurb, handwritten manuscript / draft with revisions, 2 pages, undated. Included with this: typed biographical note. — **Container** 1.2

Untitled comment on complimentary remarks by Kenneth Young, 2 handwritten manuscripts / drafts with revisions, 4 pages, undated.

Untitled film script re the Bywaters-Thompson murder case, signed handwritten manuscript, 279 pages bound in 4 exercise books, undated. Included with this: handwritten title page. — **Container** 1.3-5

Untitled novel, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions / incomplete, 433 pages bound in 5 exercise books, undated. Lacking pages 1-56. Included in one exercise book are handwritten notes for Michael's Ark. — **Container** 1.6-7

Untitled play in three acts, handwritten manuscript with revisions, 78 pages bound in exercise book, undated. — **Container** 2.1

Untitled review of novels by C. P. Snow and Roy Jenkins, handwritten manuscript / draft with revisions, 8 pages, undated. — **Container** 1.2

About Dr. William Sheldon:

- Handwritten manuscript with emendations, 11 pages; carbon copy typescript, 12 pages; undated. — **Container** 2.3
- Signed typescript / unfinished with handwritten emendations, 11 pages, 7 February 1949. For radio talk. — **Container** 2.2
- One typescript, 12 pages; four carbon typescripts, 12 pages each; undated. For magazine article. — **Container** 2.4

The age of sensation, typescript with handwritten revisions, 29 pages, undated. — **Container** 2.2

Ball of paper, typescript with handwritten revisions, 22 pages; carbon copy typescript, 23 pages; carbon copy typescript, 22 pages; carbon copy typescript / incomplete, 21 pages; undated. — **Container** 2.5

Brothers!: The trial of the brothers Hosein for the murder of Mrs. McKay, carbon copy typescript with handwritten revisions and additions and printers notes, approximately 400 pages, undated. American version of Shall we ever know? — **Container** 2.6-7

C. P. Snow: new material, typed and carbon copy manuscript, 24 pages, undated. Contains duplicates. **Container** 2.2

Disillusions, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, 10 pages, 1932. **Container** 2.8

Disquiet and peace, signed handwritten manuscript with extensive revisions, 642 pages bound in 14 exercise books, undated. Includes loose handwritten title page. **Container** 2.9-3.3

The ever-interesting topic, signed handwritten manuscript, 214 pages bound in 5 exercise books, 1953. Includes loose handwritten title page. **Container** 3.4-5

Free from want, signed handwritten manuscript / incomplete, 43 pages bound in exercise book; signed handwritten manuscript including two typed pages with revisions, 125 pages bound in 3 exercise books; 1942. Includes loose handwritten title page. **Container** 4.1

High life, a comedy in three acts, handwritten, typed and carbon copy manuscript with handwritten revisions, 162 pages, undated. Original title: Strawberry leaves. **Container** 4.2

An honest woman, handwritten manuscript / unfinished with revisions, 4 pages, undated. **Container** 2.2

How to be interviewed, handwritten manuscript / draft with revisions, 15 pages, undated.

An informal lecture given at The University of Texas, typescript / photocopy / incomplete, 22 pages, 26 May 1965. Lacking page 3.

The life and work of six educators, signed handwritten manuscript with emendations, 38 pages; carbon copy typescript with handwritten revisions, 63 pages; undated. First draft entitled The psychology of the educator. **Container** 4.3

Love Field, handwritten manuscript / draft with revisions, 5 pages, undated. **Container** 2.2

Love on the coast:

- Signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, approximately 245 pages bound in 6 notebooks, 1971. Titled On the west coast. Written in first notebook: drafts of reviews; 2 pages carbon typescript tipped into second notebook. **Container** 4.4-5
- Typescript / discarded drafts with handwritten revisions and notes, 65 pages, undated. **Container** 4.6
- Carbon copy typescript with handwritten emendations, 348 pages, circa 1972. **Container** 4.7
- Page proofs, 256 pages, 1973. **Container** 5.1

Memoirs of a new man:

Signed handwritten manuscript with revisions and notes, approximately 430 pages bound in 10 notebooks, 1962-1964. Titled He who climbs, strives. Written in one notebook: Notes for and draft of review of Corridors of power by C. P. Snow; draft of lecture Experimental writing. **Container** 5.3-5

Typed and carbon copy typescript / discarded pages from various drafts with extensive handwritten revisions, approximately 500 pages, undated. Titled He who climbs, strives. **Container** 5.6-6.2

Handwritten and typed notes and drafts, 30 pages, undated. **Container** 6.3

Carbon copy typescript / incomplete, 226 pages, undated. **Container** 6.4

Carbon copy typescript with handwritten revisions and printer's markings, 396 pages, 1965. **Container** 6.5-7.1

Memorandum on S Factor and P Factor in research officers, handwritten manuscript / draft with revisions, 8 pages, undated. **Container** 5.2

Michael's ark, handwritten manuscript with revisions / incomplete, 285 pages; handwritten and carbon copy typed manuscript / miscellaneous pages and chapter fragments, 714 pages; undated. **Container** 7.2-8.1

Mr. Peto, signed handwritten manuscript / fragment with revisions, 38 pages, undated. **Container** 8.2

A modern problem, typescript with handwritten revisions, 35 pages; 2 carbon copy typescripts, 35 pages each; undated. **Container** 8.3

Notebooks:

The critics, handwritten manuscript / notes, 22 pages bound, 1965. Includes notes for BBC broadcast and reading notes. **Container** 5.2

Hotel Tashkent, handwritten manuscript / notes for report on Civil Service Conference, 53 pages bound, October 1969.

Notebook 1, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, 28 pages bound, undated. Contains drafts of reviews and brief autobiographical note. **Container** 8.4

Notebook 2, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions and pages loosely laid in, 39 pages bound, undated. Contains drafts of story, article, letter and reviews.

Notebook 3, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, 74 pages bound, undated. Contains notes and drafts for Tashkent paper on civil service and one letter draft.

Notebook 4, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, 64 pages bound, undated. Contains drafts of reviews and speeches titled The practicing novelist and Science and literature.

Notebook 5, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions and pages loosely laid in, 34 pages bound, undated. Contains drafts of autobiographical sketch, article on work of C. P. Snow, and speech Age of sensation. **Container** 8.5

Notebook 6, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions and pages loosely laid in, 35 pages bound, undated. Contains draft of speech Age of sensation.

Notebook 7, handwritten manuscript with revisions, 48 pages bound, undated. Contains drafts of reviews, speech Age of sensation, and blurb for Memoirs of a new man.

Notebook 8, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, 33 pages bound, undated. Contains drafts of reviews and speech Galsworthy and Wells.

Reviews 1, signed handwritten manuscript / draft with revisions, 88 pages bound in three notebooks, 1971-1975. Includes some non-literary notes. **Container** 8.6

Reviews 2, signed handwritten manuscript / drafts with revisions, approximately 124 pages bound in 3 notebooks, 1972-1974. Loosely laid in: typescript / drafts with handwritten revisions and photocopy of review of The Romeo error by Lyall Watson. **Container** 8.7

Personal summary, handwritten manuscript / draft with revisions, 7 pages, undated. **Container** 5.2

Play no. 2, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, 32 pages bound in notebook, undated. **Container** 9.1

Prince Genji, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, 111 pages bound in 4 exercise books, undated. Includes loose handwritten title page. **Container** 9.2-3

Prince Genji; a play adapted for broadcasting:

Signed handwritten and typed manuscript with handwritten revisions, 93 pages, undated. **Container** 9.4

Typescript / incomplete with handwritten corrections and insert pages, 52 pages; signed typescript / mimeo with handwritten revisions, 40 pages; 1950, undated. Included with this: handwritten note to typist and loose handwritten title page. **Container** 9.5

Prince Genji, a play based on Arthur Waley's translation of The tale of Genji, adapted for broadcasting by William Cooper and Mary Hope Allen, 2 mimeo scripts, 40 pages each, 6 March 1950. **Container** 9.6

Review drafts, handwritten and typed manuscript / drafts with handwritten revisions, 30 pages, undated. **Container** 9.7

Rhéa / titled Réa: Chapters 1-4, signed handwritten manuscript / incomplete with revisions, 51 pages, 1935. **Container** 9.8

Romantic afternoons, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, 137 pages in 5 exercise books, undated. Includes loose handwritten title page. **Container** 10.1

Romantic afternoons, typescript with handwritten revisions, 181 pages; 2 carbon copy typescripts with handwritten revisions, 181 pages; undated. **Container** 10.2-3

Scenes from married life, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, 435 pages bound in 9 exercise books, undated. Includes loose handwritten title page. **Container** 10.5-11.1

Scenes from metropolitan life, signed handwritten and carbon copy manuscript with handwritten revisions, 302 pages bound in 6 exercise books, undated. Included with this: handwritten note re Scenes from metropolitan life by C. P. Snow, 3 pages. **Container** 11.2-3

Scenes from provincial life, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions and insert pages, 233 pages bound in 6 exercise books, undated. Includes loose handwritten title page. **Container** 11.4-5

Shall we ever know?:

- Signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, approximately 190 pages bound in 6 notebooks, undated. Early titles: Put them up! and The McKay trial. **Container** 11.6-12.1
- Handwritten, typed and carbon copy manuscript / discarded pages and notes with handwritten revisions, 551 pages, undated. **Container** 12.2-3
- Carbon copy typescript with handwritten revisions and printer's notes and markings, approximately 400 pages, circa 1970. Included with this: TLS Hutchinson Publishing Group to Cooper; TccL Cooper to Hutchinson. **Container** 12.4-5
- Galley proofs with handwritten, typed and typed carbon copy manuscript for final chapter, 169 pages, 1971. **Container** 13.1

Short stories, handwritten manuscript with revisions, 60 pages bound in exercise book, undated. Titles: Ball of paper; A modern problem; A sound outside the door; and two untitled. Includes loose handwritten title page. **Container** 10.4

Simon's Caff, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, 338 pages bound in 4 exercise books, undated. Includes loose handwritten title page with title Simon's cafe. **Container** 13.2-3

A sound outside the door, typescript with handwritten revisions and signed handwritten title page, 8 pages; 2 carbon copy typescripts, 7 pages each; undated. **Container** 13.4

A story about love, a television play, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, approximately 46 pages bound in notebook, undated. **Container** 13.5

A story about love, a television play, 2 carbon copy typescripts, 36 pages each, undated. Included with these: TLS unidentified author Pam to Cooper. **Container** 13.6

Strawberry leaves, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, 152 pages bound in 4 exercise books, undated. Includes loose handwritten title page. **Container** 13.7-8

The struggles of Albert Woods:

Handwritten and carbon copy typed manuscript with handwritten revisions, 334 pages bound in 6 exercise books with loose pages, 1952. Included with these: handwritten manuscript and notes re Scenes from metropolitan life by C.P. Snow, 3 pages. **Container** 14.1-2

Signed handwritten manuscript, 346 pages bound in 3 notebooks with loose pages, 1952. Originally titled Success; first version of Albert Woods. **Container** 14.3-5

Handwritten and typed manuscript / revision pages, 76 pages bound in exercise book with loose pages, 1952. Originally titled Success. **Container** 15.1

Three marriages, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, 293 pages bound in 6 exercise books, 1946. Includes loose handwritten title page. Final notebook contains handwritten poems, 9 pages. **Container** 15.2-3

Trinia: Chapter 23, handwritten manuscript with revisions, 10 pages, 1934. **Container** 10.4

Twelve poems, signed and initialed typescript, 21 pages, undated. Initialed H. S. H; signed William Cooper. **Container** 15.4

Two in a bush, an original screenplay, signed carbon copy typescript with handwritten emendations, 23 pages, undated. **Container** 10.4

A view of the McKay trial, carbon copy typescript with handwritten emendations, 15 pages, undated.

What it means to be the father of two girls in junior school, handwritten manuscript / draft with handwritten revisions, 4 pages, undated.

You want the right frame of reference:

Signed handwritten manuscript with revisions and notes, approximately 390 pages bound in 10 notebooks, 1969. Originally titled Edward and Jeremy. Last notebook contains also notes for and drafts of reviews. **Container** 15.5-7

Typed and carbon copy typed manuscript with handwritten revisions and printer's notes and markings, approximately 400 pages, circa 1971. **Container** 16.1-4

Typed and carbon copy typed manuscript / discarded drafts with handwritten revisions, approximately 1780 pages, undated. Two earlier titles used with these drafts. Included with these: handwritten notes, ALS, and AL / draft. **Container** 16.5-17.4

Young people: two versions, signed handwritten and typed manuscript with handwritten and typed revisions, 835 pages bound in 14 exercise books with loose pages, 1958. Originally written before 1940 and extensively revised and rewritten in the 1950s. **Container** 17.5-18.4

You're not alone, signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, approximately 280 pages bound in 6 notebooks, 1973-1975. **Container** 18.5-6

You're not alone, typed and carbon copy manuscript / draft worksheets with handwritten revisions, 510 pages, undated. **Container** 19.1-2

Letters:

AL / draft to unidentified recipient Tom, undated. Concerning Dictionary of the novel in English.	**Container** 19.3

Recipient:

Unidentified author Derk. 2 TLS to Cooper, William "Harry," 18 March and 8 July 1965. **Container** 19.4

Unidentified author Mick or Mike. ALS to Cooper, William "Harry," 10 September 1963.

Miscellaneous:

Miscellaneous notes, 4 pages, undated. **Container** 19.5

Notes on the trial of Arthur and Nizamodeed Hosein at the Old Bailey 1970, typescript, 46 pages; carbon copy typescript, 46 pages; 1970. **Container** 19.6

Shall we ever know?, trial books, signed handwritten manuscript / notes, approximately 330 pages bound in 7 notebooks, 1970. Also in book 7: material relating to manuscript of novel and Observer article; draft of review. **Container** 19.7-8

Miscellaneous original envelopes. **Container** 20.1

Addition (R12423, R14294), 1991

Series I. Works, 1977-1989

Essays. Typescripts with revisions, undated — **box** 1a **folder** 1

Scenes from Metropolitan Life [novel, 1982]. Typescript, printer's copy, undated — **folder** 2-3

Scenes from Later Life [novel, 1983]

Four notebooks containing holograph draft, 1977-1979, undated — **box** 1a **folder** 4-5

Notes and typescript with holograph revisions and typed revised sheets, undated — **folder** 6

Notes and typescript with holograph revisions and typed revised sheets, undated — **box** 2a **folder** 1-4

Typescript 2, with typed revised sheets, Dec. 1982 — **folder** 5-6

Typescript 3, with revisions, Dec. 1982 — **folder** 7

Typescript 3, with revisions, Dec. 1982 — **box** 3a **folder** 1

Typescript, printer's copy, undated — **folder** 2-4

"A History" [biographical essay, 1989]

Typescripts with revisions, and correspondence, 1989 — **box** 3a **folder** 5

Two sets of page proofs with revisions, 1989 — **box** osf

From Early Life [autobiographical novel, 1990]

Two notebooks and single sheets containing holograph draft, March 1987, undated — **box** 3a **folder** 6

Typescripts, with revisions, undated — **folder** 7-8

Typescript, printer's copy, undated — **box** 4a **folder** 1

Typescript, called "Top copy," with revisions, undated — **folder** 2

Immortality at Any Price [novel, 1991]

Eight notebooks containing holograph draft with revisions, undated — **box** 4a **folder** 3-7

Typescript, with revised sheets, 1983-1989 — **box** 5a **folder** 1-3

Typescript, with revised sheets, 1988-1989 — **folder** 4-6

Typescript final draft, undated — **box** 6a **folder** 1-2

Series II. Reviews and Articles re Cooper, 1937-1991

Clippings mounted on sheets, 1937, undated — **box** 6a **folder** 3

Scrapbooks

1946-1953 — **box** 7a **folder** 1

1953-1964 — **folder** 2

1961-1989 — **box** 8a **folder** 1

1990-1991 — **box** 6a **folder** 4

Addition (R14406), 1999

ALS to Hall, George, 12 December 1982. **Container** 19.9

ALS to Hammond, John, 21 November 1975.

ALS to Huggett, Colin, 8 February 1974.

William Cooper--Index of Correspondents

Only includes 1991 Additions.

- Allen, Mary (BBC)--7a.1 (Scrapbook, 1946-1953)
- Buford, Bill (*Granta*)--6a.1
- Herbert, Roy (*New Scientist*)--8a.1 (Scrapbook, 1961-1989)