

Collection #
M 1507
OM 0766

**HEATH BOWMAN-STIRLING DICKINSON
COLLECTION, 1929-1939**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 half-sized manuscript box, 2 oversized folders, 3 graphics folders

COLLECTION DATES: 1929 - ca.1939

PROVENANCE: Swann Auction Galleries, New York

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Heath Bowman, *Hoosier* (1941), F526 .B785 1941

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2022.0084

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The author Heath Bowman was born Frederick Heath Bowman, Jr. in Muncie, Indiana in 1910. He later moved to Evanston, Illinois and became interested in writing. As a 17-year-old attending country day school in nearby Winnetka, he completed a novel titled “Don’t Shoot, Mister,” illustrated with ink sketches of his own. Bowman then attended Princeton University, and it was there he met painter and printmaker Stirling Dickinson. Bowman and Dickinson both graduated from Princeton in 1931. After graduation, Bowman dabbled in magazine editing and advertising while Dickinson attended the Art Institute of Chicago.

In late 1934, the pair set out from Chicago to make an automobile tour of Mexico. In their 1929 Model A Ford roadster affectionately named “Daisy,” Bowman and Dickinson spent six months exploring the cities, towns, and hamlets of Mexico. The landscapes, people, and cultures they encountered had a profound effect on both. Along the way, Bowman wrote about the experience while Dickinson produced relief prints depicting the people and places they saw. The result of their documentation was the book *Mexican Odyssey*, published in 1935.

Mexican Odyssey sold well, and inspired the two to repeat the process, this time travelling across South America. *Westward from Rio*, also written by Bowman with prints by Dickinson, was published in 1936. The collaborators followed this up with a historical novel set during the Mexican Revolution, titled *Death is Incidental*, published in 1937.

After their travels, Bowman returned to the Chicago area and continued writing. Three additional books, *All Your Born Days* (1939), *Crusoe’s Island in the Caribbean* (1939), and *Hoosier* (1941), were all published by Bobbs-Merrill in Indianapolis. Dickinson remained in Mexico, where he helped establish an artists’ colony in the town of San Miguel de Allende.

Beginning in 1942, Bowman began a twenty-year career as a public affairs officer for the US Federal Government. He spent his final years in Rome, Italy, submitting photographs and writing small pieces for English language newspaper the *Rome Daily American*.

Sources:

Ancestry.com

Auction catalogue, Swann Auction Galleries

“Book by Former Muncie Boy Wins Praise...” *Muncie Evening Press*, 8 Nov. 1935

Donald Eugene Thompson et al., *Indiana Authors and their Books, 1917-1966*

Materials in the collection

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The material in this collection falls within the years of the Great Depression. Fittingly, the collection begins with the Business & Finance section of TIME Magazine, 28 October 1929, four days after the stock market crash on “Black Thursday.” Beyond that, the collection ranges from the time of Bowman and Dickinson’s graduation from Princeton in 1931 to Bowman’s research for his post-Dickinson books in the late 1930s.

The Heath Bowman material includes his personal writings, which he calls “Notes and Reflections” (dated 23 June 1931 to 28 January 1936). These are handwritten, diary-like, introspective, and sometimes philosophical. From Bowman’s work toward writing *All Your Born Days* are a typed partial outline, descriptions of people and places he encountered in his travels, and reflections on human nature. Also included in the Bowman material is research into the island nation of Tobago, including typed sections of an 1866 history written by Henry Iles Woodcock, this likely research for *Crusoe’s Island in the Caribbean*. Finally, several drafts of other short pieces, possibly written for magazines.

The Stirling Dickinson material includes 52 impressions from linoleum-cut relief prints. The majority of these appeared in *Mexican Odyssey*, with a few from *Westward from Rio*. Several are small ornaments which appear throughout the books. The prints are not signed or numbered, and some are printed on scrap paper. They should therefore be considered experimental “artist’s proofs.”

The balance of the collection contains items collected by the pair during their travels that is not explicitly associated with either individual. This includes broadsides for movie theaters in Mexico, a typed account from a Padre Francisco Hernández (likely research for *Death is Incidental*), and promotional posters for the books *Mexican Odyssey* and *Westward from Rio*.

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October, 1929

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Heath Bowman, "Delaware Water Gap to Princeton,"
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Heath Bowman "Notes and Reflections," 23 June-2
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Heath Bowman "Notes and Reflections," 23 Aug.-29
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Heath Bowman "Notes and Reflections," 30 May-21
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Heath Bowman [?] essay on modern domestic
architecture, 1932

Heath Bowman "Notes and Reflections," 5 April 1934

"Showboat Dixiana" theater program, Chicago, 1934

Heath Bowman list of Mexico guidebooks, 1935

Mexican cinema broadsides and lottery tickets, ca.
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Mexican cinema broadsides, ca. 1935

Stirling Dickinson *Mexican Odyssey* prints, ca. 1935

Cocktail party invitation with Dickinson print, 1935

Brazilian cinema broadside, "Mulheres Do Mundo,"
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Heath Bowman "Notes and Reflections," 18 Oct.
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