



Finding Aid for

**GORDON ELIOT WHITE LEO GOOSSEN PAPERS COLLECTION,
1918-1934**

Accession 2012.120

DRAFT Finding Aid Published: May 2016



Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
20900 Oakwood Boulevard · Dearborn, MI 48124-5029 USA
research.center@thehenryford.org · www.thehenryford.org

OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center
The Henry Ford
20900 Oakwood Blvd
Dearborn, MI 48124-5029
www.thehenryford.org
research.center@thehenryford.org

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2012.120

CREATOR: White, Gordon Eliot (Collector)

TITLE: Gordon Eliot White Leo Goossen Papers Collection

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1918-1934

QUANTITY: 1.25 cubic ft.

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English.

ABSTRACT: The Gordon Eliot White Leo Goossen Papers Collection is an assembled collection containing correspondence, personal financial records, other documents, and ephemera relating to draftsman Leo Goossen, who worked for the Buick Motor Division of General Motors and Harry A. Miller.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS:** The papers are open for research.
- COPYRIGHT:** Copyright has been transferred to The Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the collection may still be held by their respective creator(s).
- ACQUISITION:** Donation, 2012.
- RELATED MATERIAL:** Related material held by The Henry Ford
- Gordon Eliot White Auto Racing Reference Collection, 1834-2002. Accession 2013.143
- Gordon Eliot White Leo Goossen Drawings Collection, Accession 2013.142
- PREFERRED CITATION:** Item, folder, box, accession 2012.120, Gordon Eliot White Leo Goossen Papers Collection, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
- PROCESSING INFORMATION:** Collection processed by Janice Unger, May, 2015
- DESCRIPTION INFORMATION:** Original collection inventory list prepared by Staff of the Henry Ford, circa 2012, and published circa 2013.
- Finding aid written by Janice Unger, May, 2015, and published in October 2015.
- Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and local guidelines.

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Gordon Eliot White grew up in New Jersey, and became a lifelong racing fan from a young age. White bought an antique Kurtis midget car with an Offenhauser engine in 1978, and through research and restoration, learned more of the history of Harry A. Miller and the companies that produced the Offenhauser engines. In the 1980s, White began collecting documents relating to the history of automobile racing, including thousands of blueprints created by Leo Goossen, and making the information available to researchers. After retiring from journalism, White worked as the Auto Racing Advisor to the Smithsonian Institution and penned several books on the history of automobile racing.

Leo W. Goossen (1892-1974) was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan, to Isaac and Katherine Goossen. By 1908, he was working in the blueprint room of the Buick Motor Division of General Motors Corporation in Flint, Michigan. After a diagnosis of tuberculosis in 1917 and eventual recovery, Goossen moved to Silver City, New Mexico in the winter of 1918-1919, and then on to California. He was hired on at the Harry Miller plant 1919, producing the necessary engineering drawings for projects including the T-4 racing engine, a 16-valve twin-cam head for Ford's Model T, and the 183-cubic-inch straight eight engine. Goossen's work allowed him to develop world-class racing engines, and he stayed on with the company after it was taken over by Offenhauser and later, Meyer & Drake.

Note content adapted from the following sources:

- "A Visit with Gordon Eliot White." Hot Rod Online website.
<http://www.hotrodhotline.com/feature/guestcolumnists/richardscorner/09gordonwhite/>
Accessed 27 May 2015.
- *Offenhauser: The Legendary Racing and the Men Who Built It* by Gordon Eliot White.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The papers are comprised of correspondence, financial records, other documents, photographic prints and negatives, and ephemera. The correspondence is arranged alphabetically by the other party's last name, and includes letters to and from his family and others. There are also a few letters from Abe Goossen written in 1919 to other family members during his WWI military service. Represented in the financial records are bank statements, cancelled checks, income tax returns, and information on Goossen's Palos Verdes investments. Other documents included in the collection pertain to Goossen's bout with tuberculosis, newspaper clippings, and one engineering drawing. The majority of the photographs and negatives are not identified. The ephemera contained in the collection is greeting cards, three drafting tools, and a piece of a piston (with no further identifying information).

ARRANGEMENT

Correspondence
Financial Records
Other Documents
Photographic Prints and Negatives
Ephemera

SUBJECT TERMS

Names, Personal and Corporate
White, Gordon Eliot
Goossen, Leo W., 1892-1974
Miller, Harry A. (Harry Armenius), 1875-1943
General Motors Corporation. Buick Motor Division

Subjects
Automobile racing
Automobiles—Design and construction
Automobile--Motors
Buick automobile
Real estate development
Ranching
Tuberculosis
World War I

Geographic
California
Michigan
Southwestern States

Genre and Form
Bank statements
Clippings (information artifacts)
Drafting equipment
Drawings (visual works)
Financial records
Greeting cards
Negatives (photographic)
Photographic prints
Postcards

CONTAINER LIST

Box no. **Description**

CORRESPONDENCE

Box 1

Brooks, H.A., 1920
Chamber of Commerce
 Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1919
 Prescott, Arizona, 1919
Clarke, Frank, undated
de Waters, E.A., 1918
Edeson, William, 1919
Engman, A., 1920
Foster, Clyde
 1919
 1920 (2 folders)
Goossen, Abe
 1920
 1931
 Undated
 Letters written by Abe to other Goossen family members, 1919 and undated
 (includes references to Abe's military service and wedding)
Goossen, B., 1920
Goossen, Harold, 1919 (2 folders)
Goossen, Isaac, 1920
Goossen, Katherine
 1919 (7 folders)
 1920
 1926
 Undated
Goossen, Lester
 1925
 1926
Goossen, Nelva, 1919
Goossen, Vera (Babbs)
 1925-1926
 1927
 1931 (15 folders)
 1932 (7 folders)
 1934 (5 folders)
Kools, W.C., 1920
Struble, Peggy
 1918 (2 folders)
 1920
 1921
 Undated

Williams, H.B., 1918 (engineer for Buick)

Other Correspondents

1918

1919

1920 (2 folders)

1926

1927 (one empty envelope)

1928 (one empty envelope)

1932 (one empty envelope)

1934

Undated (2 folders)

Empty envelopes and postcards

FINANCIAL RECORDS

Box 2

Bank Statements, 1919-1929

Cancelled Checks

1919-1922

1923-1925

1928-1929

Income Tax Returns, 1925-1928

Palos Verdes Investments, 1923-1926

Miscellaneous

OTHER DOCUMENTS

Background Information (pages copied from *Offenhauser* by Gordon Eliot White)

Catalog, The Eugenics Publishing Company, Inc., 1929

Medical Papers, 1917

Newspaper Clippings

1929

1931

Undated

Engineering Drawing, Super Charged Gas Saver, undated

Pamphlet, "Talks to Men"

Postcard, Pit, Santa Rita, N.M., undated (blank)

Publications, undated

PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINTS AND NEGATIVES

Negatives (unknown subject, includes envelope for Miss Babbs)

Photographic print, "View of Palos Verdes, California"

Photographic prints, unidentified (3 prints)

EPHEMERA

Greeting Cards

1920-1929

Undated

Box 3 (oversize)

Piston piece (no other information included with the piece)

Tools (These may have belonged to Leo Goossen, but there is no documentation to indicate ownership.)

12" Ruler (Universal Drafting Machine Co.)

Sterling Slide Rule

Trammel of Archimedes