

Learning Joined With Beauty at Cranbrook

Social Significance Of Booth Foundation Beyond Appraisal

WINS WORLD ACCLAIM

Impressive evidence of the fact that development along the path of Michigan's first commuter service is full-rounded is to be found in Bloomfield Hills. There, a scant five miles from thriving Pontiac and in the outer boundary of dynamic Detroit, is to be found a cultural center whose beauty is unsurpassed anywhere in America, and whose social significance is beyond appraisal.

It is "Cranbrook," benefaction of Mr. and Mrs. George G. Booth, who were pioneers in the establishment of Michigan's loveliest residential area, and have made their home in "the hills" for 25 years.

At the dawn of the century, when a trip from Detroit to Lone Pine road was an arduous task and often a high adventure, the area that became Cranbrook estate was an aesthetic delight for an artist but an economic problem for an agriculturist. The hills, some and impoverished hillside acres defied the efforts of farmers to make cultivation profitable; the lowlands through which a branch of the Rouge runs were a tangle of rank vegetation.

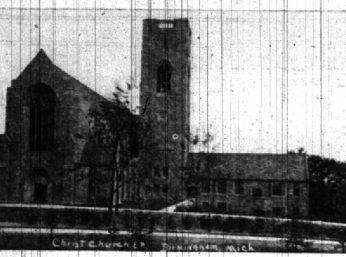
But the disobedient waters, the vexatious swamps and thickets, the oakland slopes and the steep hills that obstructed the husbandman, were what won the hearts of the pioneer commuters. Mr. and Mrs. Booth had an eye for the future, and a will to aid rather than oppose Nature.

Phoebes Realized

They saw in the rolling countryside much to remind them of the Kentish hills, where Mr. Booth's ancestors had lived for many generations. And so they named the homestead they then acquired "Cranbrook," after the English village which Henry Wood Booth left to come to America.

Then began long years of planning and toiling; of construction and reconstruction; of planting and tending of patient, devoted attention to growing things; all ways with a vision of the future. As the transformation was gradually wrought, others came, and

CHRIST CHURCH CRANBROOK



Christ Church Cranbrook

were charmed, and dared to undertake similar tasks. In a decade, the development was prophetic; in another decade, the prophecy was realized.

Today, if you are driving along Long Lake road by the Bloomfield Hills Country Club, and you allow your eyes to wander away to the south, you will be startled at the panoramas that swiftly unfold. From that vantage point you may see, far across the valleys on the crest of a hill, Cranbrook School, the Cranbrook Academy of Art, the "singing tower" and roof of Christ Church—Cranbrook, the tower of Bloomfield Hills School for Children, and "Cranbrook" itself, the residence of the Booths—all that remains to them, save for a few immediately adjacent acres, of the large estate they developed.

But you may wish a nearer view; so you swing down Woodward to Lone Pine, and turn west. There is no intimation, as you leave the great highway, of what is in store; though you are charmed by the rustic road and by the lovely estates that border it.

An Equivocal Setting

Half a mile from the concrete, you are suddenly awed by a great and beautiful mass of stone rises from a slope to hold dominion over the countryside. Were

it eventide, you might only see it outlined against a starry sky. But you might see the night pierced by the light in the tower, and catch the heavenly melodies of its carillon, drowning out for all except those near to its base the hurrying of a brook, the play of fountains, the spill of water over a dam. An exquisite setting for a church, cathedral, or in proportions, dignity, and adornment.

As the jewels of a madonna are not lost in her glory, so a lesser structure suffers nothing by the presence of Christ Church—Cranbrook. Across the corner of Lone Pine and Cranbrook roads lies a little architectural cameo, snugly in the valley of the stream that traverses all that was and is Cranbrook Estate. It was once the "meeting house," where Henry Wood Booth loved to lead his children and grandchildren and their neighbors in simple devotional exercises.

With the growth of population in the vicinity, it came to be needed for educational purposes, and housed on weekdays those children whose young to venture far from school. Out of the meeting house grew the church; out of the classroom grew the school. The building was expanded to meet the needs of the children, and as it grew, the reflector in the stream grew also, not merely larger but more exquisitely beautiful.

The meeting house, with its many additions served until 1929 when a beautiful and superbly equipped new building from plans by Henry S. Booth was ready. Brookside School—Cranbrook, ideally located on the headwaters of the River Rouge, now includes a play school or kindergarten for children between the ages of three and five, and the first six elementary grades for both boys and girls.

Vistas Open Wide

But on you must go, down past the gates of Cranbrook Estate, whose winding roads, lost in trees and shrubbery, entice the mind. Past the cedar-bordered Greek theater, whose presence is only hinted as you peer through the wrought metal gateway, and let your eye travel the ascending greenward ramp. On you go, wondering, since new fascination is to be disclosed.

Suddenly, when the speedometer indicates that you are almost a mile from Woodward avenue, the vistas open wide and you behold an impressive group of buildings all of brick, with stone and wood trim, so unified in conception and execution that their identities seem merged and lost in a common beauty and purposefulness.

They are Cranbrook Academy of Art and Cranbrook School for Boys; major parts of a project that has captured world-wide attention of artists and educators. The fifth and final unit of the completed project, is the Kingswood School—Cranbrook for Girls, which since 1928 had been temporarily located in a section of Brookside School, but which has been organized under a special trust and will move this fall into permanent buildings on a 10-acre site of great beauty on the north side of Cranbrook Lake.

Meant For Public Service

The astonishing, the unbelievable is that of the five great religious and educational institutions only one, the School for Children (and, indeed, the lesser part of that) existed five years ago; and yet that all should seem so native to the landscape. Perhaps that is because the project is so many years of contemplation, and spring so truly from the spirit of "Cranbrook."

For almost from the day when the original acres of the estate were purchased, Mr. Booth pondered how he might, before the end of his days, dispose of the fortune he was accumulating as a publisher. And in all of his pondering, there seems never to have been a moment but that all which remained after he had adequately provided for his children should somehow be put to the service of the public.

The pleasures he found in laying out useful roads and woodland paths; in building rustic bridges and rocky cascades; in planting trees and transplanting and creating, were mingled with the subtler pleasures of creating for those who were to come.

Whatever lofty projects he may have contemplated, the needs of the community which grew up around "Cranbrook" ultimately dictated in large measure the direction of the philanthropy. The expansion of the institutions beyond those apparent needs evidenced the donors' oft-expressed sense of indebtedness to the State

of Michigan, in which they have prospered, and their purpose "to add to and strengthen the educational and cultural facilities" within its boundaries.

See Need For Beauty

If, to some, the Academy of Art seems a step beyond the actual needs of either community or state, it is only because they do not share the long-held, deep-seated conviction of Mr. Booth with respect to the place of art in life. To him the making of good citizens, which is the primary purpose of the schools, requires that the student be thoroughly trained, morally, spiritually and intellectually, in surroundings that awaken and enlarge appreciation of beauty.

He has always approached art with spiritual exaltation and a crusader's zeal; perhaps with a conviction of the oneness of Beauty and the Divine. At any rate through his life there has been a purpose to spread acquaintance with and appreciation of art.

It was in 1928 that the School for Children first began to function, Mr. and Mrs. Booth joining hands in its creation and fur-

crance. Theirs too, the joint benefaction by which Christ Church—Cranbrook and Cranbrook School came into being. Modest enterprises in their first conception, they grew with the expanding enthusiasm of their donors.

The unorganized mission that set out under the spiritual guidance of Dr. S. S. Marquis finds itself housed, not in a country-side chapel but in one of the great Episcopal edifices of the country, and an example of the architectural skill of the Goodhue Associates.

Wins Wide Recognition

The children's school, while still serving only the immediate vicinity, wins recognition afar for its utility, and lends distinction to the donors' son, Henry Scripps Booth, on whose drawing table its notable addition first came into being. And Cranbrook School, which was to have been but an alteration of the quaint and charming farm buildings, rural English in pattern, becomes instead the masterpiece of one of the world's greatest architects, Prof. Eliel Saarinen.

This vast and swift develop-

ment would have exhausted a less dynamic person than Mr. Booth, and made him content to let his work stand as completed. But instead, Mr. Booth resolved at the end of 1927 to bring into being The Cranbrook Foundation, to which he gave virtually his entire personal fortune, and to which he committed the task of accomplishing all the things for which he had made plans but which he realized were beyond his power to complete in his lifetime.

The endowment of the foundation was at the time of its establishment, \$6,520,000; and this, combined with the joint gifts of Mr. and Mrs. Booth, brought the total investment to approximately \$12,000,000.

Three projects fell to the trustees of the foundation: the completion of undertakings in connection with existing institutions; the development of the Academy of Art and the School of Arts and Crafts (the latter as an integral part of the Academy); and the construction of the school for girls.

Medieval Spirit

The spring of 1929 saw the first units of the Academy of Art put

to use, and construction progressed rapidly during the summer. Studio after studio opened as artists and artisans were drawn from near and far to create works of art; and in the process of creation, to instruct and inspire those who

came to work by these sides. Here you catch something of the spirit of medieval times, when the arts were taught not in a formal and theoretical way but by a blending of precept and example. (Continued on next page.)

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