

About the William James Roué Collection

The William James Roué Collection comprises three-dimensional artifacts and archival material created or acquired by Roué. The collection contributes substantially to our knowledge of Roué's diverse skills as a naval architect. Moreover, it is of significant regional and national importance as it furthers our knowledge of the history of wooden ship and boat building in Atlantic Canada, presents the region's multi-faceted relationship with the ocean and helps highlight the place that *Bluenose* occupies in the popular imagery and identity of both Nova Scotia and Canada.

The Objects

There are approximately 30 three-dimensional artifacts in this collection, including drafting tools and furnishings from Roué's office, such as his drawing table and drawing and measuring tools. Other artifacts include tools used during his frequent visits to shipyards to review construction, half-hull models of vessels he designed, one of the first model hulls he built as a boy, his home office sign, a stopwatch used to time sailboats or to consult when racing and an engraved pocket watch presented to him by the citizens of Dartmouth after *Bluenose's* historic victory in the 1921 International Fishermen's Trophy race.

The Plans

The archival material includes 791 plans and drawings of vessels. In addition to the plans for *Bluenose*, there are approximately 150 other designs by Roué, ranging from his first boat — launched in 1909 — to work undertaken in the late 1950s. They demonstrate the wide range of the naval architect's designs, from pleasure and racing craft to more utilitarian vessels like ferries, fishing boats and barges. The collection also contains textual material, such as specifications for a number of designs, correspondence with clients and personal records.

The Significance of the Collection

This collection not only reveals a tremendous amount about Roué's remarkable career and diverse skills; it also discloses a great deal about 20th century naval architecture and wooden boat building in general. The drawing tools, office furniture and equipment are typical of the items naval architects of the time would have used. The plans and drawings are also characteristic of the era, as is the correspondence between Roué, his clients and boat builders or suppliers.

This collection is intimately linked to the history of the design, building and use of wooden vessels in Atlantic Canada and to that area's relationship with the ocean. The wide range of Roué's designs reveals the many ways in which Canadians have interacted with the water, be it for transportation, commerce or recreation. Finally, the collection also tells stories about regional and national identity, as one of its key elements — *Bluenose* — continues to hold a place in the history and popular imagery of both Nova Scotia and Canada.