

Collection #
P 0422

JAMES DEAN COLLECTION CA. 1947–1954, 1989

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Processed by

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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
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Indiana Historical Society
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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 box OVB photographs, 1 oil painting
COLLECTION DATES:	ca. 1947–1954, 1989
PROVENANCE:	
RESTRICTIONS:	None
COPYRIGHT:	The Indiana Historical Society does not hold copyright to the

materials in this collection.

REPRODUCTION
RIGHTS:

The Indiana Historical Society cannot make copies of items in this collection.

ALTERNATE
FORMATS:

RELATED
HOLDINGS:

Schatt, Roy. *James Dean: A Portrait*. New York: Ruggles de Latour, 1982. Call Number: PN2287.D33 S33 1990

ACCESSION
NUMBER:

1998.0525, 1998.0795, 1999.0277, 2003.0097, 2004.0234X

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

James Byron Dean was born on 8 February 1931 in Marion, Indiana, the son of Winton and Mildred Wilson Dean. When Dean was six, his father, a dental mechanic, moved the family to Los Angeles, California. Soon after, Mildred Dean became ill with cancer. She struggled to conquer the disease but she eventually lost her battle in 1937. Mildred Dean's medical bills and funeral costs bankrupted the family. Unable to support his son, and at the advice of his mother, Winton Dean sent James back to Fairmont, Indiana, to live with his aunt and uncle, Ortense and Marcus Winslow.

Dean attended Fairmont High School, where he was described as a good but unmotivated student. He was active in sports, drama, and debate. He had a reckless streak and loved cars, motorcycles, and racing. He graduated in 1949 and moved back to California to live with his father. He enrolled at Santa Monica City College to study pre-law and physical education. While there he joined several drama clubs.

Eventually, Dean moved out of his father's home and rented an apartment with his friend Bill Bast. He quit Santa Monica City College and decided instead to attend the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). Dean never attended classes there, but did perform in several of the school's plays, including *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. He also joined the Sigma Nu fraternity for a short while.

In 1951, he left UCLA and joined an informal acting group under the direction of James Whitmore. It was during this time that Dean auditioned for and won a part in a Pepsi commercial. His work impressed Isabel Draesemer, a local talent agent. She helped Dean to win a small part in his first television play, *Hill Number One*. During this period he also had a job parking cars on the CBS studio lot, which helped to get him noticed and win other small parts on television and in films.

One year later, Dean moved to New York City, where he hoped to have more luck finding roles. He joined the Actor's Studio and earned money by trying out stunts for a TV game show. Dean auditioned for and won a role in the play, *See the Jaguar*. The play opened on 3 December 1952, but it only lasted six performances. Dean's work, however, was praised by critics and helped to launch his career. Soon after he was receiving requests to audition and was given more parts in television and movies.

In 1955, Dean starred in three movies, *East of Eden*, followed by *Rebel without a Cause*, and *Giant*, which premiered in 1956. On 30 September 1955, Dean was driving his Porsche Spyder to a race in Salinas, California, when it collided with an oncoming car. Dean died in the ambulance on the way to the hospital.

Roy Schatt was born in New York City, in 1909. He began his career as an artist and illustrator for the Roosevelt administration in the 1930s. Earlier, Schatt had taken up photography as a hobby, but, influenced by photographer Eric Saloman, Schatt decided to turn his hobby into a career.

During World War II Schatt served with the Army Special Services in India. He also wrote columns and drew illustrations for military publications. After the war he returned to New York, and studied at the Actor's Studio. There he was able to photograph celebrities such as Paul Newman, Grace Kelly, and James Dean. Schatt died 5 May 2002.

Sources:

Howlett, John. *James Dean: A Biography*. London: Plexus, 1997.

Pyle, Richard. "Photographer Roy Schatt dead at 92," *Tallahassee Democrat*. 5 May 2002.

<http://www.tallahassee.com/mld/tallahassee/entertainment/3203805.htm>

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Photograph 1 is an 8"x10" black-and-white photo made from an original negative. The picture was taken by Richard Ware and is an enlarged image of James Dean posing with his high school basketball team.

Photograph 2 is an 8" x 10" black-and-white photograph of James Dean taken in 1954 by Roy Schatt. On the verso of the image, the photographer wrote "J.D. 1954 in my place [crossed out] studio."

Photograph 3 is a 9 ½"x6" black-and-white photograph taken by Roy Schatt ca. 1954. The photograph shows James Dean with a lit cigarette in his right hand.

Photograph 4 is a silver print portrait of James Dean taken in 1954. It measures 10 ½" x 13 ½" and was done by Roy Schatt and is hand stamped by the photographer. The photograph is part of Schatt's "Torn Sweater Series."

Photograph 5 is a silver print portrait of James Dean taken in 1954. It measures 13 ½" x 16 ½" and was done by Roy Schatt and is hand stamped by the photographer. The photograph is part of Schatt's "Torn Sweater Series."

The painting is an 18" x 14" oil on canvas portrait of James Dean done by Indianapolis artist, Mark Dillman in 1989. The work was commissioned by the Indiana Historical Society Press editors for the fall 1989 issue of *Traces*. The painting is based on a photograph taken by Fred Wood when James Dean attended a dance at Fairmont High School in February 1955. The painting is shown on the cover of *Traces* and the original photograph is featured on page 22.

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Photograph 1: [James Dean posing with basketball team], ca. 1947

Photograph 2: [James Dean in Roy Schatt's studio], 1954

Photograph 3: [James Dean with cigarette], ca. 1954

Photograph 4: [10 ½" x 13 ½" portrait of James

CONTAINER

Visual Collections:
OVB Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 1

Visual Collections:
OVB Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 2

Visual Collections:
OVB Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 3

Visual Collections:

Dean from the Torn Sweater Series], 1954

OVB Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 4

Photograph 5: [13 ½" x 16 ½" portrait of James
Dean from the Torn Sweater Series], 1954

Visual Collections:
OVB Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 5

Painting: [portrait of James Dean copied from an
original photograph], 1989.

Visual Collections:
OVB Graphics,
Box 1

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://157.91.92.2/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, P 0422).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.