A Finding Aid to the Henry Bacon Papers, 1849-1931, in the Archives of American Art

Jayna M. Josefson

Processing and digitization of this collection was funded by the Terra Foundation for American Art

2013 May 7
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives of American Art
Title: Henry Bacon papers
Identifier: AAA.bacohenr
Date: 1849-1931
Extent: 1.9 Linear feet
Creator: Bacon, Henry, 1839-1912
Language: Multiple languages

The collection is in English and French.

English; French

Summary: The papers of painter and writer Henry Bacon date from 1849-1931 and measure 1.9 linear feet. The collection documents Bacon's career and travels through France and Egypt. Included are biographical materials, correspondence, writings by Bacon and others, scattered business records, printed material, scrapbooks, photographs, eight sketchbooks and additional sketches.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated in 1987 by Nancy N. Brecht, the grandniece of Henry Bacon and granddaughter of Bacon's brother, Earle.

Separated Materials

Also found in the Archives are three sketchbooks lent by Nancy C. Brecht for microfilming on reels 4040-4041. The scrapbooks are not described in the container listing of this finding aid but are available for viewing in Archives of American Art offices and via interlibrary loan.

Available Formats

The bulk of this collection was digitized in 2013 and is available via the Archives of American Art's website.

Processing Information

The Henry Bacon papers were arranged and microfilmed upon receipt on reels 4040 and 4041. In 2013, the collection was fully processed, arranged and described by Jayna Josefson and digitized with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.
Preferred Citation


Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

The Henry Bacon papers are owned by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Literary rights as possessed by the donor have been dedicated to public use for research, study, and scholarship. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

Biographical / Historical

Painter and writer, Henry Bacon (1839-1912) spent much of his career and life in France and Egypt. He is best known for his watercolor depictions of Egyptian desert scenes.

Henry Bacon was born in Haverhill, Massachusetts in 1839. During the Civil War, he enlisted in the Union Army and served as corporal in Company D, 4th Battalion of Rifles of the 13th Massachusetts Regiment. Also during the war, he worked as a field artist for Leslie's Weekly. He suffered an injury at the Second Battle of Bull Run and was discharged in 1864. That same year, he married Lizzie Lord and moved to France. The couple settled in Paris where Bacon studied at the École des Beaux-Arts under Alexandre Cabanel. He spent many summers in Étretat, France—a subject he painted and wrote about in his book Étretat: Hamlet of the Setting Sun.

After the death of Lizzie Lord, Bacon married Louisa Lee Andrews. In the 1890s, Henry and Louisa spent their time split between London and Egypt. It was during this time that Bacon produced his many watercolor scenes of the desert, the Nile River, and of the Egyptian people. Henry Bacon died in Cairo in 1912.

Scope and Contents

The papers of painter and writer Henry Bacon date from 1849-1931 and measure 1.9 linear feet. The collection documents Bacon's career and travels through France and Egypt. Included are biographical materials, correspondence, writings by Bacon and others, scattered business records, printed material, scrapbooks, photographs, eight sketchbooks and additional sketches.

Scattered biographical materials include an address book, a photo identification card, genealogical material, and autobiographical notes and resumes. The bulk of correspondence is in French written by French artists included in Bacon's book Parisian Art and Artists, including Beaumont, E. Berne-Bellecour, Vincent Chevillard, Luigi Chialiva, Georges Clairin, Edmond Dupain, Carolus Duran, Antonio Gonzalez, Ferdinand Heilbuth, Madeleine Lemaire, Luc Oliver Merson, and Leon Olivie. Also found is correspondence between Louisa Lee Bacon with museums and institutions concerning her husband's art.

Writings and notes contain short stories, personal accounts, and poems by Henry Bacon, as well as a biographical work on Bacon by Louisa Bacon, and unsigned poems in French. Manuscripts of Bacon's books are not found.
Scattered personal business records include a sales record notebook, an expense journal, and a lease. Printed materials consist primarily of clippings, a few exhibition catalogs, a copy of Bacon's book *Étretat: Hamlet of the Setting Sun*, and printed images of works of art. Two scrapbooks document Bacon's career as an artist through clippings, photos, exhibition catalogs, and announcements.

Photographs include portraits and snapshots of Bacon and his wife, travel photos used as reference, and photos of works of art. Artwork by Bacon includes eight sketchbooks, watercolor sketches, and pen and ink sketches.

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**Arrangement**

This collection is arranged as 8 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1864-circa 1930 (Box 1; 0.1 linear feet)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1849-1931 (Box 1; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 3: Writings and Notes, 1875-circa 1912 (Box 1-2, 5; 0.3 linear feet)
- Series 4: Personal Business and Financial records, 1864-1871 (Box 2; 2 folders)
- Series 5: Printed Material, 1882-1931 (Box 2; 0.3 linear feet)
- Series 6: Scrapbooks, 1866-1923 (Box 3; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 7: Photographs, circa 1862-circa 1930 (Box 3-5; 0.4 linear feet)
- Series 8: Artwork and Sketchbooks, 1864-1912 (Box 4-5; 0.4 linear feet)

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**Names and Subject Terms**

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

**Subjects:**
- Landscape painters
- Painters -- United States

**Types of Materials:**
- Photographs
- Scrapbooks
- Sketchbooks
- Sketches

**Names:**
- Bacon, Lee Andrews, 1861-
- Beaumont
- Berne-Bellecourt, E.
- Carolus-Duran, 1837 or 8-1917
- Chevillard, Vincent
- Chialiva, Luigi, 1841-1914
- Clairin, Georges, 1843-1919
- Dupain, Edmond-Louis, 1847-1933
- Gonzales, Antonio
- Heilbuth, Ferdinand
- Lemaire, Madeleine-Jeanne Coll, 1845-1928
- Merson, Luc Olivier, 1846-1920
Olivie, Leon

Occupations:
   Artists -- France -- Paris
   Authors -- France -- Paris

Geographic Names:
   Egypt -- description and travel
Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1864-circa 1930

0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Found is an address book, a declaration for American artists signed by Louisa Lee and Henry Bacon, genealogical material of the Munro-Bacon family, an identification card with Bacon's photo for the 1889 exposition in Paris, a list of founding members of the Société des Elèves de l'Atelier Cabanel, an engraved menu for a dinner held at the Palais d'Abdine in Cairo, a form granted by the Louvre giving Bacon permission to copy a painting, and autobiographical notes and resumes.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 1
Address Book, circa 1890
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 2
Declaration of American Artists, 1911
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 3
Genealogy, after 1922
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 4
Identification Card, Exposition Universelle, 1889
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 5
Membership List, Société des Elèves de l'Atelier Cabanel, 1889
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 6
Menu, 1909
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 7
Permission Form, Musée du Louvre, 1864
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 8
Resumes and Autobiographical Notes, circa 1910-circa 1930
Image(s)
Series 2: Correspondence, 1849-1931

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

The bulk of this series consists of scattered letters written in French by artists featured in a book by Bacon and from Bacon's fellow students of Alexandre Cabanel. Researchers should note that some of the signatures are illegible. A letter from Henri de Courmont is an acceptance letter to the École des Beaux-Arts. A letter from Charles Insley Pardee grants honorary membership to the Lotus Club in New York City. Also found is a letter from Henry Bacon Sr., and two letters from American school children writing to Bacon to request snapshots of Egypt. There is correspondence between Louisa Lee Bacon Eldrich to museums and institutions concerning her husband's works of art and donations. A letter written in French to Mr. Romuu from Mr. Henry Vigrand (?) is likely a letter of introduction from the French government to that of Andorra for Henry Bacon.


This series has been scanned in its entirety.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 9</th>
<th>Bacon, Henry Sr., 1849</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 10</td>
<td>Bartholdi, 1892</td>
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<td>Image(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 11</td>
<td>Beaumont, 1879</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 12</td>
<td>Berne-Bellecour, Etienne Prosper, 1879</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 13</td>
<td>Boone, J. Allen, 1911</td>
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<td>Image(s)</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 14</td>
<td>Borchard, Edmond, 1879</td>
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<td>Image(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 15</td>
<td>Cabanel, Pierre, 1892</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 16</td>
<td>Callias, Horace de, 1892</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 17</td>
<td>Carolus-Duran, Emile-August, 1879</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 1, Folder 18  Chevilliard, Vincent, 1879

Box 1, Folder 19  Chialivas, Luigi, circa 1880, 1879

Box 1, Folder 20  Clairin, Georges (?), 1879

Box 1, Folder 21  Constant, Benjamin, circa 1880

Box 1, Folder 22  Courmont, Henri de, 1864

Box 1, Folder 23  Cormon, Ferdinand, 1879

Box 1, Folder 24  Dupain, Edmond-Louis, 1879

Box 1, Folder 25  Gaudefroy, M. H., 1892

Box 1, Folder 26  Girardet, Jules, 1892

Box 1, Folder 27  Gonzalez, Antonio (?), 1879

Box 1, Folder 28  Gosselin, Charles, 1892

Box 1, Folder 29  Haquette, Georges Jean Marie, 1892

Box 1, Folder 30  Hamm, E., circa 1880

Box 1, Folder 31  Heilbuth, Ferdinand, 1879

Box 1, Folder 32  LeMarie, Madeline, circa 1890
Box 1, Folder 33  Merson, Luc Oliver, circa 1880

Box 1, Folder 34  Olivie, Leon, circa 1890

Box 1, Folder 35  Pardee, Charles Insley, 1874

Box 1, Folder 36  Renard, E., 1892

Box 1, Folder 37  Survillez, 1864

Box 1, Folder 38  Wadleigh, Levi C., 1899

Box 1, Folder 39  Illegible, French Artists, 1879

Box 1, Folder 40  Illegible, French Artists, 1892

Box 1, Folder 41  Wedding Invitation, 1875

Box 1, Folder 42  Louisa Lee Bacon Eldrich Correspondence, 1914-1931

Box 1, Folder 43  Mr. Henry Vigrand (?) to Mr. Romuu, 1894

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Series 3: Writings and Notes, 1875-circa 1912

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1-2, 5)

Found are short stories and personal accounts concerning art, museums, and travel. There is a written account of a meeting with Cecil Rhodes shortly before his death entitled "Meeting with Cecil Rhodes," and "The Artist in Pre-Cromo Days," an account of Bacon's experiences as an art student, his first visit to Ecouen, and encounters with Edouard Frère, J.F. Millet, and Corot. There is a twenty-two page biographical work by Louisa Lee Bacon about her husband. Also found are poems and a poetry notebook by Bacon and scattered poems written in French by unknown authors.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 44  "A Wonderfull [sic] Voyage for 4 Sons", 1894
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 45  "Roman Models", 1896
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 46  "The Artist in Pre-Cromo Days", circa 1880
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 47  "The Black Sheep of Doxviller", circa 1880
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 48  "In Venice", circa 1880
Image(s)
Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 49  "Je Ne Sais Pas", circa 1880
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 50  "Monsieur, le Dauphin de France", circa 1880
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 51  "Palace of the Louvre", circa 1880
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 52  "Papa was Coming Home!", circa 1880
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 53  "Siena", circa 1880
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 54  "To Miss C", circa 1880
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 55  "Widow Jones' Man", circa 1880
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 56</th>
<th>Untitled Work, circa 1880</th>
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</table>

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<th>Box 1, Folder 57</th>
<th>&quot;Great Temple of Abou Simnel: Nubia&quot;, circa 1890</th>
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<table>
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<th>Box 2, Folder 1</th>
<th>&quot;Meeting with Cecil Rhodes&quot;, circa 1902</th>
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<th>Box 2, Folder 2</th>
<th>Poetry Notebook, 1875-1891</th>
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<th>Box 2, Folder 3</th>
<th>Poems, 1875-1897</th>
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<th>Box 2, Folder 4</th>
<th>Notes and Fragments, circa 1900</th>
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<td>Image(s)</td>
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<thead>
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<th>Box 2, Folder 5</th>
<th>&quot;Henry Bacon- Figure and Landscape Painter, 1839-1912,&quot; by Lee Bacon, circa 1912</th>
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<tbody>
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<th>Box 2, Folder 6</th>
<th>French Poetry, by Unknown, circa 1880</th>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 5, Folder 1</th>
<th>Oversized Writings, circa 1880</th>
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<td>Material scanned with Box 1, F48</td>
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</table>

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Series 4: Personal Business and Financial Records, 1864-1871

2 Folders (Box 2)

Found is a notebook documenting the sale of Bacon's paintings from 1864-1867, an expense journal detailing expenses from a European trip in 1911, and a French document concerning Bacon's occupation of an apartment.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 2, Folder 7  Lease or Rental Agreement, 1871
  Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 8  Sales Record Notebook, 1864-1867
  Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 9  Expense Journal, 1911
  Image(s)
Series 5: Printed Material, 1882-1931

0.3 Linear feet (Box 2)

Found are clippings, exhibition catalogs, a copy of Étretat: Hamlet of the Setting Sun by Bacon, reproductions of works of art, and a copy of The Artists Guild journal. One exhibition catalog from 1931 is a handmade mock-up created by Louisa Lee Bacon Eldrich with both typed and handwritten names of works. Some materials are in French.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 2, Folder 10  Clippings, 1883  Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 11  Clippings, 1884  Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 12  Clippings, 1885  Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 13  Clippings, 1888  Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 14  Clippings, 1890  Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 15  Clippings, 1891  Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 16  Clippings, 1893  Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 17  Clippings, 1894  Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 18  Clippings, 1911  Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 19  Clippings, 1912  Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 20  Clippings, 1913  Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 21  Clippings, circa 1880-circa 1895  Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 22  Exhibition Catalog, 1889
Box 2, Folder 23  Exhibition Catalog, circa 1896
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 24  Exhibition Catalogs, 1925-1931
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 25  Reproductions of Works of Art, 1882, circa 1890
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 26  *Etretat: Hamlet of the Setting Sun*, by Henry Bacon
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 27  *The Artists Guild*, Journal, 1913
Image(s)

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Series 6: Scrapbooks, 1866-1923

0.2 Linear feet (Box 3)

Found are two scrapbooks which relate to Henry Bacon’s career as an artist. One scrapbook dates from 1866-1882 and contains mostly clippings, however one photograph is included. A second scrapbook dates from 1912-1923 and was created by Louisa Lee Bacon. It contains clippings, exhibition catalogs, notices, photographs, and a poem. Many of the clippings are in French.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 3, Folder 1  Scrapbook 1, 1866-1882
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 2  Scrapbook 2, 1912-1923
Image(s)

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Series 7: Photographs, circa 1862-circa 1930

0.4 Linear feet (Box 3-5)

Found are portraits of the artist, snapshots, photos of works of art, and reference photos. Portraits are of Bacon, his wife Louisa Lee Bacon, and of Marie Therese de Bourbon. Portraits of Bacon are mostly in his later years, however there is a daguerreotype of the artist in his Civil War uniform. Snapshots are of the couple during their travels through France, Egypt, and Italy some of which depict Bacon painting outside in France. There are travel photos of Egypt and England used by Bacon as reference for his art.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 3, Folder 3  Henry Bacon, Portrait in Civil War Uniform, circa 1862  Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 4  Henry Bacon, Portraits, circa 1890-1910  Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 5  Henry Bacon, Painting Outside, circa 1880  Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 6  Henry Bacon, in Paris, 1896  Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 7  Henry and Louisa Lee Bacon, in Venice, circa 1880  Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 8  Henry and Louisa Lee Bacon, in Egypt, circa 1900  Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 9  Louisa Lee Bacon, Portrait, circa 1870  Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 10  Grave Monument, after 1912  Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 11  Marie Therese de Bourbon, circa 1880  Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 12-14  Travel and Reference Photos, Egypt, circa 1890-1900  Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 1  Travel and Reference Photos, England, circa 1900
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 2</th>
<th>Travel and Reference Photos, Unknown, circa 1890</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 3</td>
<td>Works of Art, circa 1930s</td>
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<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 2</td>
<td>Oversized Photographs, circa 1890-1900</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Material scanned with Box 3, F14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Series 8: Artwork and Sketchbooks, 1864-1912

*0.4 Linear feet (Box 4-5)*

This series consists of eight sketchbooks, pen and ink illustrations, and watercolor sketches. The majority of the works depict scenes of Bacon's travels through France and Egypt and include figures in costume, desert landscapes, and seascapes. Also found are two sketches of Bacon, one by J. Carroll Beckwith and one unsigned.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

- **Box 4, Folder 4**    Sketchbook, 1873
  Image(s)
  Alcase-Lorraine and Bouxwiller, France

- **Box 4, Folder 5**    Sketchbook, 1884-1887
  Image(s)
  Ship scenes

- **Box 4, Folder 6**    Sketchbook, 1889
  Image(s)
  Corsica

- **Box 4, Folder 7**    Sketchbook, 1894
  Image(s)
  Andorra

- **Box 4, Folder 8**    Sketchbook, 1897
  Image(s)
  Egypt, Athens, and Venice

- **Box 4, Folder 9**    Sketchbook, circa 1880
  Image(s)
  Venice

- **Box 4, Folder 10**    Sketchbook, circa 1881
  Image(s)
  Shipboard Scenes

- **Box 4, Folder 11**    Sketchbook, circa 1888
  Image(s)
  Possibly Étretat, France; oversized material housed in Box 5, F3

- **Box 4, Folder 12**    Drawings and Watercolors, circa 1870-circa 1900
  Image(s)
  Possibly illustrations for a book
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 13</th>
<th>Watercolor Sketches, 1891-1912</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Image(s)</td>
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<td>Box 4, Folder 14</td>
<td>Pencil Sketch, circa 1890</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
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<td>Box 4, Folder 15</td>
<td>Sketches of Henry Bacon by J. Carroll Bechwith and Unknown, 1864, 1874</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 3</td>
<td>Oversized Watercolor Sketches, circa 1900, 1904-1910</td>
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