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

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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.

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 granddaughter 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-Bellecourt, 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.

### 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)

### 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 Élèves 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    Geneology, after 1922
                   Image(s)

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

Box 1, Folder 5    Membership List, Société des Élèves 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.

Box 1, Folder 9    Bacon, Henry Sr., 1849
                  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 10  Bartholdi, 1892
                  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 11  Beaumont, 1879
                  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 12  Berne-Bellecour, Etienne Prosper, 1879
                  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 13  Boone, J. Allen, 1911
                  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 14  Borchard, Edmond, 1879
                  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 15  Cabanel, Pierre, 1892
                  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 16  Callias, Horace de, 1892
                  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 17  Carolus-Duran, Emile-August, 1879
Box 1, Folder 18  Chevilliard, Vincent, 1879
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 19  Chialivas, Luigi, circa 1880, 1879
Image(s)

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

Box 1, Folder 21  Constant, Benjamin, circa 1880
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 22  Courmont, Henri de, 1864
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 23  Cormon, Ferdinand, 1879
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 24  Dupain, Edmond-Louis, 1879
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 25  Gaudefroy, M. H., 1892
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 26  Girardet, Jules, 1892
Image(s)

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

Box 1, Folder 28  Gosselin, Charles, 1892
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 29  Haquette, Georges Jean Marie, 1892
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 30  Hamm, E., circa 1880
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 31  Heilbuth, Ferdinand, 1879
Image(s)

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 44</th>
<th>&quot;A Wonderfull [sic] Voyage for 4 Sons&quot;, 1894</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 45</td>
<td>&quot;Roman Models&quot;, 1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 46</td>
<td>&quot;The Artist in Pre-Cromo Days&quot;, circa 1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 47</td>
<td>&quot;The Black Sheep of Doxviller&quot;, circa 1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 48</td>
<td>&quot;In Venice&quot;, circa 1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 49</td>
<td>&quot;Je Ne Sais Pas&quot;, circa 1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 50</td>
<td>&quot;Monsieur, le Dauphin de France&quot;, circa 1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 51</td>
<td>&quot;Palace of the Louvre&quot;, circa 1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 52</td>
<td>&quot;Papa was Coming Home!&quot;, circa 1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 53</td>
<td>&quot;Siena&quot;, circa 1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 54</td>
<td>&quot;To Miss C&quot;, circa 1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 55</td>
<td>&quot;Widow Jones' Man&quot;, circa 1880</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
Box 1, Folder 56  Untitled Work, circa 1880
Image(s)
Pages 2-5 are missing
Oversized material housed in Box 5, F1

Box 1, Folder 57  "Great Temple of Abou Simnel: Nubia", circa 1890
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 1  "Meeting with Cecil Rhodes", circa 1902
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 2  Poetry Notebook, 1875-1891
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 3  Poems, 1875-1897
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 4  Notes and Fragments, circa 1900
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 5  "Henry Bacon- Figure and Landscape Painter, 1839-1912," by Lee Bacon, circa 1912
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 6  French Poetry, by Unknown, circa 1880
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 1  Oversized Writings, circa 1880
Material scanned with Box 1, F48

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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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2, Folder 7</th>
<th>Lease or Rental Agreement, 1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2, Folder 8</th>
<th>Sales Record Notebook, 1864-1867</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2, Folder 9</th>
<th>Expense Journal, 1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2, Folder 23</th>
<th>Exhibition Catalog, circa 1896</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 24</td>
<td>Exhibition Catalogs, 1925-1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 25</td>
<td>Reproductions of Works of Art, 1882, circa 1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 26</td>
<td><em>Etretat: Hamlet of the Setting Sun</em>, by Henry Bacon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 27</td>
<td><em>The Artists Guild</em>, Journal, 1913</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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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 Boubon, circa 1880
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 12-14  Travel and Reference Photos, Egypt, circa 1890-1900
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Oversized material housed in Box 5, F2

Box 4, Folder 1  Travel and Reference Photos, England, circa 1900
Box 4, Folder 2  Travel and Reference Photos, Unknown, circa 1890
   Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 3  Works of Art, circa 1930s
   Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 2  Oversized Photographs, circa 1890-1900
   Material scanned with Box 3, F14

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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
Box 4, Folder 13  Watercolor Sketches, 1891-1912
    Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 14  Pencil Sketch, circa 1890
    Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 15  Sketches of Henry Bacon by J. Carroll Bechwith and Unknown, 1864, 1874
    Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 3  Oversized Watercolor Sketches, circa 1900, 1904-1910
    Material scanned with Box 4, F11