



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the James Carroll Beckwith Papers, 1871-circa 1991, bulk 1875-1917, in the Archives of American Art

Rihoko Ueno

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The Walton Family Foundation and the Terra Foundation for American Art.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	James Carroll Beckwith papers
Date:	1871-circa 1991 (bulk 1875-1917)
Identifier:	AAA.beckjcar
Creator:	Beckwith, J. Carroll (James Carroll), 1852-1917
Extent:	3.2 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of New York painter James Carroll Beckwith measure 3.2 linear feet and date from 1871 to circa 1991, bulk 1875-1917. The collection includes biographical material, correspondence, numerous diaries, writings, printed material, photograph albums, and photographs.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection, except for the estate related material, was initially lent for microfilming by the National Academy of Design in 1993. The National Academy of Design received Beckwith's papers as a gift in 1926 from the Bertha H. Beckwith estate. Beckwith related National Academy of Design correspondence and photographs were combined with the papers by the Academy. In 2018, the James Carroll Beckwith papers were donated to the Archives of American Art by the National Academy of Design via Maura Reilly, Executive Director. Papers on reels 1418, 1454 were lent for microfilming in 1978 by J. Carter Courtney, Beckwith's great-niece.

Separated Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds microfilm of material lent for microfilming (reels 1418 and 1454) including letters from John Singer Sargent, Clyde Fitch, Edwin Howland Blashfield, Jacob Schiff, Richard Mansfield, and others, 4 cartoon sketches; a sketchbook which also includes a list of works, 1878-1892, and a few writings; 5 photograph albums and photographs, 1902-1917, of European travels, studios, homes, paintings, family, and friends, among them Samuel Clemens, Worthington Whittredge, and Robert Reid; Bertha Beckwith's diary, 1904; and printed material. Other material available only on microfilm includes a sketchbook, "Amsterdam August 10, 1887" (reel 4802) containing sketches for portraits, notes of Monet's composition at Giverny, a watercolor, and studies of hands; and photographs of portraits of Beckwith, Beckwith in his studio, and Beckwith with his Art Students League classes, 1888-1892 (reel 4803). The sketchbook and photographs were returned to the National Academy of Design after microfilming.

Related Materials

The Archives of American Art also has microfilm (reel 800) of a 1895 James Carroll Beckwith diary. The original is located at the New York Historical Society.

Available Formats

The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2018 and is available on the Archives of American Art website. Materials which have not been digitized include blank pages, blank versos of photographs, and duplicates. In some cases, exhibition catalogs and other publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages digitized. Some of the legal records regarding the Beckwith estate have not been digitized.

Material lent for microfilming is available on 35mm microfilm reels 1418, 1454, 4802 and 4803 at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

Processing Information

The collection was processed, prepared for digitization, and described in a finding aid by Rihoko Ueno in 2018 with funding provided by the Walton Family Foundation and the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Preferred Citation

James Carroll Beckwith papers, 1871-circa 1991, bulk 1875-1917. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C., Research Center.

Biographical / Historical

James Carroll Beckwith (1852-1917) was a portrait and landscape painter in New York, New York and a member of the National Academy of Design.

James Carroll Beckwith, often referred to as Carroll Beckwith, was born in 1852 in Hannibal, Missouri. He was raised in Chicago, Illinois. After the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, Beckwith moved to New York City and studied art at the National Academy of Design until 1873, when he moved to France. In Paris, he studied at the École des Beaux-Arts and under Carolus-Duran. Painter John Singer Sargent was also one of Carolus-Duran's students and Beckwith shared a Paris studio with him until 1878.

When Beckwith returned to New York in 1878, he started teaching as a professor in the Art Students League departments of painting and drawing. He continued to teach there until 1882 and then for a second span of time from 1886 to 1887. He married Bertha Hall in 1887. Beckwith gained widespread recognition for his portraits and among his subjects are the artist William Merritt Chase and President Theodore Roosevelt. Beckwith is also known for created skillful copies of Old Masters paintings which he saw in galleries across Europe during his time abroad.

In 1894, Beckwith was elected as a member of the National Academy of Design. From 1910 to roughly 1912, he lived in Italy and France. He then returned to New York City and had a studio at 57 West 45th Street until his death in 1917.

Scope and Contents

The papers of New York painter James Carroll Beckwith measure 3.2 linear feet and date from 1871 to circa 1991, bulk 1875-1917. The collection includes biographical material, correspondence, numerous diaries, writings, printed material, photograph albums, and photographs.

Biographical material mostly consists of estate papers related to disputes between the Beckwith Estate and the National Academy of Design. There is also one art inventory notebook titled "Record of Pictures."

Correspondence includes letters by Beckwith, his wife, and researchers concerning Beckwith's paintings and career. Notable correspondents include artists such as Carolus-Duran and William Anderson Coffin, the art dealer Roland Knoedler, as well as other colleagues.

The collection includes 38 of James Carroll Beckwith's diaries and one diary that belonged to his wife Bertha Beckwith. The artist's diaries contain sporadic entries describing teaching, traveling, and daily events.

Writings include Beckwith's autobiography *Souvenirs and Reminiscences*, a notebook that chronicles his time in Paris, notes, essays on art and architecture, lists of artwork, and one essay about Beckwith by an unidentified writer.

Printed materials consist of a sales catalog of Beckwith's work, clippings about Beckwith and John Singer Sargent, and a few exhibition catalogs and announcements.

Photographs include 2 albums and many board-backed prints. One album mostly contains travel photographs, the other is mostly dedicated to paintings by other artists in Europe. There are many photographs of Beckwith's paintings, mostly portraits. A few photographs of exhibition installations are also included.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 6 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1878-circa 1991 (Box 1; 0.3 linear feet)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1883-1940 (Box 1; 10 folders)
- Series 3: Diaries, 1871-1917 (Boxes 1-2; 1.3 linear feet)
- Series 4: Writings, 1875-circa 1920 (Box 2; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 5: Printed Material, circa 1900-1956, bulk 1910-1918 (Box 2; 4 folders)
- Series 6: Photographs, 1875-1915 (Boxes 2-6; 1.4 linear feet)

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1878-circa 1991

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Biographical material mostly consists of James Carroll Beckwith estate papers. There are extensive legal records and some correspondence regarding settlements and disputes between the Beckwith Estate and the National Academy of Design, especially related to the management of the estate. In addition, there is an art inventory notebook titled "Record of Pictures" that lists titles, dimensions, and expenses of Beckwith's works in chronological order.

Arrangement: This series is in chronological order.

Available Formats: Most of the legal records documenting the disputes and settlements between the Beckwith Estate and the National Academy of Design have not been digitized. Blank pages of the notebook have not been digitized.

Box 1, Folder 1	"Record of Pictures" Art Inventory Notebook, 1878-1918
Box 1, Folder 2	Estate Papers - General, 1926-1935
Box 1, Folder 3	Estate Papers - Legal Disputes and Settlements with the National Academy of Design, 1940-1941 April
Box 1, Folder 4	Estate Papers - Legal Disputes and Settlements with the National Academy of Design, 1941 May-June
Box 1, Folder 5	Estate Papers - Legal Disputes and Settlements with the National Academy of Design, 1941 June-July
Box 1, Folder 6	Estate Papers - Legal Disputes and Settlements with the National Academy of Design, 1966-1967
Box 1, Folder 7	Estate Papers - General, circa 1991

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1883-1940

10 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents:	Correspondence includes letters by Beckwith, his wife, and researchers concerning Beckwith's selection into the National Academy of Design, his paintings, and career. Notable correspondents include Carolus-Duran, William Anderson Coffin, Roland Knoedler (art dealer), Frederick Dielman, Will Hicok Low, and the National Academy of Design. Some of the letters are photocopies.
Arrangement:	The material in this series is divided into correspondence with James Carroll Beckwith and correspondence with his wife Bertha Beckwith. The correspondents are arranged alphabetically within these two groupings.
Available Formats:	This series has been digitized in its entirety.

2.1: James Carroll Beckwith Correspondence, 1883-1940

Box 1, Folder 8	Beckwith, Bertha, 1883
Box 1, Folder 9	Carolus-Duran, 1916
Box 1, Folder 10	Dielman, Frederick, circa 1900-circa 1910
Box 1, Folder 11	Knoedler, Roland, 1914-1917
Box 1, Folder 12	Low, Will Hicok, circa 1900-circa 1917
Box 1, Folder 13	National Academy of Design, 1894-1895, 1940
Box 1, Folder 14	Unidentified Correspondents, 1914-1916

2.2: Bertha Beckwith Correspondence, 1914-1921

Box 1, Folder 15	Coffin, William Anderson, 1921
Box 1, Folder 16	Gerrity, (Mr.), 1914, 1918-1920 Notes: Includes one letter from James Carroll Beckwith
Box 1, Folder 17	Shleppy, Leon, 1919

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Series 3: Diaries, 1871-1917

1.3 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Scope and Contents: This series consists of 38 of James Carroll Beckwith's diaries and one diary that belonged to his wife Bertha Beckwith. The artist's diaries contain sporadic entries describing studies and travel in Paris and Europe, teaching at the Art Students League, financial transactions, and other events. Clippings, calling cards, photographs are inserted in some volumes. Bertha Beckwith's 1911-1912 diary contains references to her Paris tour, entertainment, and acquaintances.

Arrangement: James Carroll Beckwith's diaries are arranged in the chronological order. Bertha Beckwith's diary is at the end of the series.

Available Formats: The bulk of this series has been digitized, except for blank pages.

Box 1, Folder 18	Diary, 1871-1874
Box 1, Folder 19	Diaries, 1873-1878 Notes: The main diary covers 1874-1878 and includes 2 pocket diaries in envelopes pasted onto the last page. The 2 pocket diaries cover 1873-1875 and 1876. Also included is a typed transcript of some entries from 1874-1875.
Box 1, Folder 20	Diaries, 1878-1879
Box 1, Folder 21	Diary, 1880
Box 1, Folder 22	Diaries, 1881-1882
Box 1, Folder 23	Diaries, 1883-1884
Box 1, Folder 24	Diaries, 1885-1886
Box 1, Folder 25	Diaries, 1887-1888
Box 1, Folder 26	Diaries, 1889-1890
Box 1, Folder 27	Diaries, 1891-1892
Box 1, Folder 28	Diaries, 1893-1894
Box 1, Folder 29	Diaries, 1896-1897
Box 1, Folder 30	Diaries, 1898-1899
Box 2, Folder 1	Diaries, 1900-1901
Box 2, Folder 2	Diaries, 1903, 1905
Box 2, Folder 3	Diaries, 1906-1907

Box 2, Folder 4	Diaries, 1908-1909
Box 2, Folder 5	Diaries, 1910-1911
Box 2, Folder 6	Diaries, 1912-1913
Box 2, Folder 7	Diaries, 1915-1916
Box 2, Folder 8	Diary, 1917
Box 2, Folder 9	Bertha Beckwith Diary, 1911-1912

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Series 4: Writings, 1875-circa 1920

0.2 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Writings include 2 notebooks of Beckwith's autobiography, *Souvenirs and Reminiscences*, as well as a typescript draft. There is also a notebook titled "Quotations, Scraps, Etc. – Student Days" that chronicle his time in Paris in 1875 and include a few sketches. Also in this series are notes, a few essays on art and architecture, and lists of artwork. Most of the writings are by Beckwith except for one biographical essay about Beckwith by an unidentified writer.

Arrangement: Notebooks are at the beginning of the series, followed by the rest of the writings arranged by document type such as essays, lists, and notes. Writings by others are at the end of the series.

Available Formats: The bulk of this series has been digitized, except for blank pages.

Box 2, Folder 10	Souvenirs and Reminiscences Notebook 1, 1917 February-March
Box 2, Folder 11	Souvenirs and Reminiscences Notebook 2, 1917 September
Box 2, Folder 12	Souvenirs and Reminiscences Typescript Draft, 1917
Box 2, Folder 13	"Quotations, Scraps, Etc. - Student Days" Paris Notebook, 1875
Box 2, Folder 14	Essay on Florence Portrait Exhibition Published in The Art World, 1917
Box 2, Folder 15	Essays on Architecture, circa 1890-circa 1915
Box 2, Folder 16	Lists of Artwork, circa 1910-circa 1917
Box 2, Folder 17	Notes, circa 1877
Box 2, Folder 18	Essay about James Carroll Beckwith by "L. F.", circa 1920

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Series 5: Printed Material, circa 1900-1956 (bulk circa 1910-1918)

4 Folders (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Printed materials include an annotated catalog of a 1918 sale of Beckwith's work at the American Art Galleries, clippings about Beckwith as well as clippings about John Singer Sargent, and a few exhibition catalogs and announcements.

Arrangement: The material in this series is in alphabetical order.

Available Formats: The bulk of this series has been digitized, except for the versos of clippings.

Box 2, Folder 19	Clippings about James Carroll Beckwith, circa 1910-1956
Box 2, Folder 20	Clippings about John S. Sargent, circa 1900-1916
Box 2, Folder 21	Exhibition Catalogs and Announcement, circa 1912-1914
Box 2, Folder 22	James Carroll Beckwith Art Sales Catalog with Annotations, 1918

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Series 6: Photographs, 1875-1915

1.4 Linear feet (Boxes 2-6)

Scope and Contents:	There are two photograph albums in this series: one mostly containing artwork from various museums in Europe, and the second album containing photographs taken during Beckwith's travels in Egypt as well as Greece, Italy and Holland. The travel photograph album also includes photographs of artist's models and artists Leon Bonnat, William-Adolphe Bougereau, Frank Holl, and others in their studios.
	There are many board-backed photographs of Beckwith's paintings, mostly portraits of men and women. A few photographs of exhibition installations, such as a 1914 Beckwith exhibition at the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, and photographs of artwork by other artists from various museums in Europe are also included.
Arrangement:	The photograph albums are at the beginning of the series, followed by a few exhibition installation photographs, artwork by Beckwith, and finally artwork by other artists and miscellaneous photographs.
Available Formats:	The bulk of this series has been digitized, except for duplicates and blank versos of photographs.

Box 2, Folder 23	Album of Artwork by Others in European Museums, circa 1875 Notes: Oversized album housed in Box 5, Folder 1.
Box 2, Folder 24	Album of Travel Photographs, circa 1893 Notes: Oversized album housed in Box 6, Folder 1.
Box 2, Folder 25	Exhibition Installation at Buffalo Fine Arts Academy 9th Annual Exhibition of Selected Paintings by American Artists, 1914
Box 2, Folder 26	Exhibition Installation at Powell's, 1913
Box 2, Folder 27	Paintings of Women, 1887-1904
Box 2, Folder 28	Paintings of Women - Undated (1 of 2), circa 1885-circa 1910
Box 2, Folder 29	Paintings of Women - Undated (2 of 2), circa 1885-circa 1910
Box 2, Folder 30	Portraits of Children, circa 1895-circa 1911
Box 2, Folder 31	Portraits of Men, 1881-1893 Notes: Oversized photograph housed in Box 5, Folder 2.
Box 2, Folder 32	Portraits of Men, 1895-1899
Box 3, Folder 1	Portraits of Men, 1900-1903
Box 3, Folder 2	Portraits of Men, 1904-1905
Box 3, Folder 3	Portraits of Men, 1906-1915
Box 3, Folder 4	Portraits of Men - Undated, circa 1880-circa 1915

Box 3, Folder 5	Portraits of Women, 1891-1899
Box 3, Folder 6	Portraits of Women, 1901-1903
Box 3, Folder 7	Portraits of Women, 1904-1910
Box 3, Folder 8	Portraits of Women - Undated (1 of 2), circa 1890-circa 1910
Box 4, Folder 1	Portraits of Women - Undated (2 of 2), circa 1890-circa 1910
Box 4, Folder 2	Paintings for Projects and Commissions, circa 1880-circa 1915
Box 4, Folder 3	Photograph of Young Woman Inscribed to J. C. Beckwith, circa 1880-circa 1910
Box 4, Folder 4	Other Artists' Paintings (1 of 2), circa 1870-circa 1915 Notes: Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 3.
Box 4, Folder 5	Other Artists' Paintings (2 of 2), circa 1870-circa 1915
Box 4, Folder 6	Other Artists' Sculptures, circa 1870-circa 1915
Box 5, Folder 1	Oversized Album of Artwork from Box 2, Folder 23, circa 1875
Box 5, Folder 2	Oversized Portrait of a Man from Box 2, Folder 31, 1883
Box 5, Folder 3	Oversized Photographs of Other Artists' Paintings from Box 4, Folder 4, 1874-1911
Box 6, Folder 1	Oversized Travel Album from Box 2, Folder 24, circa 1893

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