



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Dwight Blaney Papers,  
circa 1883-1944, 1993, bulk circa 1883-  
circa 1920s, in the Archives of American Art

Stephanie Ashley

Glass plate negatives in this collection were digitized in 2019  
with funding provided by the Smithsonian Women's Committee.

2018 November 8

Archives of American Art  
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<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Dwight Blaney papers
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1883-1944 circa 1993 (bulk circa 1883-1920s)
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.blandwig
<b>Creator:</b>	Blaney, Dwight, 1865-1944
<b>Extent:</b>	3.3 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	<p>The papers of Boston and Ironbound Island, Maine, painter Dwight Blaney measure 3.3 linear feet and date from circa 1883-1944, with twenty slides of a family album dated circa 1993. The bulk of the material dates from circa 1883 to the 1920s. The collection includes scattered personal papers including pencil and pen sketches by Blaney and his brother Henry Blaney; three of Blaney's notebooks on art history; printed material including exhibition catalogs for Blaney and others; a scrapbook of news clippings about John Singer Sargent and photographs of artwork by Sargent; photographs including images of Blaney and his home, John Breck and his studio, and a portrait of John Singer Sargent; and one hundred and ninety-nine glass plate negatives, primarily of Blaney's artwork and interiors of his homes. Also found are three glass plate negatives of paintings by John Singer Sargent, and one glass plate of Sargent seated on Blaney's boat painting Blaney, who is painting on the shore.</p>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The collection was donated by Benjamin Blaney, Blaney's grandson, in 1990. In 1993, slides from a family photo album depicting the Blaney family on a trip to Bermuda were donated by Jeffrey Brown, who purchased the original album from the David Blaney estate.

### Separated Materials

Benjamin Blaney loaned materials for microfilming in 1990. Originals of loaned material, including letters from artists such as John Singer Sargent and Frank Benson, twenty one volumes of sketchbooks, a notebook, a journal, and a scrapbook, were returned to Blaney after microfilming and were not subsequently donated. Loaned material is available on reels 4405-4407 but is not described in the container listing of this finding aid.

## Processing Information

The glass plate negatives were re-housed in 2015 with a grant from the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund. The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Stephanie Ashley in 2018.

## Preferred Citation

Dwight Blaney papers, circa 1883-1944, circa 1993. 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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Boston and Ironbound Island, Maine, painter Dwight Blaney (1865-1944), studied at the Boston Art School from 1886 to 1888, and in 1891 traveled to Europe where he met his future wife, Edith Hill, and spent two years sketching and working as a tour guide. Blaney married Hill on his return to the United States and the couple settled in Boston, but also had a home on Ironbound Island in Maine's Frenchman Bay. Over time the family acquired the entire island and John Singer Sargent and other painters came to visit and paint there in the summer months.

Blaney was known for his Impressionist paintings in oil and watercolor, including landscapes, snow scenes, genre, and city views. He often visited Bermuda and was artistically inspired by the houses and the landscape there. Blaney was also an art collector and owned one of Monet's *Haystacks* series, in addition to being an active member of the Walpole Society which collected Americana. Blaney filled his homes with antique furniture, silver, pewter, and other decorative objects.

John Singer Sargent was a guest of the Blaneys on Ironbound Island in the early 1920s, and painted Blaney in *The Artist Sketching* (1922). He also painted *Woods in Maine* on the island the same year.

In addition to painting and collecting, Blaney was a malacologist with a serious interest in documenting marine mollusk species.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of Boston and Ironbound Island, Maine, painter Dwight Blaney measure 3.3 linear feet and date from circa 1883-1944, with twenty slides of a family album dated circa 1993. The bulk of the material dates from circa 1883 to the 1920s. The collection includes scattered personal papers including pencil and pen sketches by Blaney and his brother Henry Blaney; three of Blaney's notebooks on art history; printed material including exhibition catalogs for Blaney and others; a scrapbook of news clippings about John Singer Sargent and photographs of artwork by Sargent; photographs including images of Blaney and his home, John Breck and his studio, and a portrait of John Singer Sargent; and one hundred and ninety-nine glass plate negatives, primarily of Blaney's artwork and interiors of his homes. Also found are three glass

plate negatives of paintings by John Singer Sargent, and one glass plate of Sargent seated on Blaney's boat painting Blaney, who is painting on the shore.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as five series.

- Series 1: Personal Papers, circa 1883-circa 1920s (0.3 linear feet; Box 1, OV 4)
  - Series 2: Notebooks, circa 1920s (0.4 linear feet; Box 2)
  - Series 3: Printed Material, 1883-1927, 1944 (0.2 linear feet; Box 3)
  - Series 4: Scrapbook on John Singer Sargent, 1920s (0.2 linear feet; BV 5)
  - Series 5: Photographic Material, circa 1880s-1920s, circa 1993 (Boxes 3, 6-10)
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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Types of Materials:

Photographs  
Prints  
Sketchbooks  
Sketches  
Works of art

Names:

Benson, Frank Weston, 1862-1951  
Sargent, John Singer, 1856-1925

Occupations:

Painters -- Maine  
Painters -- Massachusetts

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Personal Papers, circa 1883-circa 1920s

#### 0.3 Linear feet (Box 1, OV 4)

**Scope and Contents:** Personal papers include Blaney's Arts Club membership document, a copy of the Guild of Boston Artists by-laws, and two letters to Blaney from Andrew J. Lloyd Co. and from Mrs. F. A. Saunderson regarding two glass plate negatives being sent to Blaney. Also found is a draft list for a catalog of Blaney's watercolors; a list of catalogues on Boston Art Club letterhead; a lithograph by J. S. Schweinfurth; twenty-eight small pencil and pen sketches by Dwight Blaney, possibly Henry Blaney, and unidentified artists; seven architectural sketches by Dwight Blaney; and three menus from a dinner in honor of Alexander Agassiz at the Tavern Club, Boston, with drawings on the back. One of the drawings is signed "C. W.," who is possibly friend, and marine artist, George Canning Wales.

Box 1, Folder 1	Arts Club Membership, undated
Box 1, Folder 2	Guild of Boston Artists, Copy of By-Laws, 1914
Box 1, Folder 3	Henry Blaney Material, circa 1883-1893
Box 1, Folder 4	Letters to Dwight Blaney, circa 1920s
Box 1, Folder 5	Notes and Lists, circa 1890-circa 1927
Box 1, Folder 6	Lithograph of Ornamental Ironwork by J. S. Schweinfurth, undated Notes: Oversized material housed in OV 4
Box 1, Folder 7	Sketches, Architectural, circa 1892 Notes: Oversized material housed in OV 4
Box 1, Folder 8	Sketches by Dwight Blaney and Henry Blaney, circa 1883-circa 1900s
Box 1, Folder 9	Sketches by "C. W.", undated
Box 1, Folder 10	Sketches, Unidentified, undated
Oversize 4	Oversized Lithograph and Sketches, Architectural from Box 1, Folders 6 and 7

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## Series 2: Notebooks, circa 1920s

### 0.4 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Notebooks comprise three loose-leaf binders containing a draft of writings on "The History of Art," illustrated with reproductions of artwork. The notebooks contain notes on technical forms, Dutch, English, Flemish, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and American artists, and the history of sculpture.

Box 2, Folder 1          Notebook, Technical Terms and European Painters, circa 1910

Box 2, Folder 2          Notebook, European and American Painters, circa 1910

Box 2, Folder 3          Notebook, Sculpture, circa 1910

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## Series 3: Printed Material, 1883-1927, 1944

### 0.2 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: Printed material includes exhibition catalogs from 1883-1927 of group exhibitions and solo exhibitions for artists including John Breck, Claude Monet, John Pyle, and James McNeill Whistler. Also found are announcements and seven catalogs for Blaney exhibitions, and catalogs for five exhibitions which included artwork owned by Blaney.

Box 3, Folder 1	Exhibition Catalogs, 1883-1889
Box 3, Folder 2	Exhibition Catalogs, 1890-1897
Box 3, Folder 3	Exhibition Catalogs, 1900-1921
Box 3, Folder 4	Exhibition Catalogs, 1922-1927
Box 3, Folder 5	Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements for Blaney Exhibitions, circa 1892-circa 1924
Box 3, Folder 6	Exhibition Catalogs Featuring Artwork owned by Blaney, 1896-1927
Box 3, Folder 7	Exhibition Invitation, circa 1883-1928
Box 3, Folder 8	News Clippings About Blaney, 1924-1925
Box 3, Folder 9	Miscellaneous About Others, 1883-1923

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## Series 4: Scrapbook on John Singer Sargent, 1920s

*0.2 Linear feet (BV 5)*

Scope and Contents: The scrapbook contains photographs of artwork by John Singer Sargent and clippings about Sargent from the 1920s.

Volume 5 Scrapbook on John Singer Sargent, 1920s

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## Series 5: Photographic Material, circa 1883-circa 1920, circa 1993

### 2.2 Linear feet (Boxes 3, 6-10 )

**Scope and Contents:** Photographs include two of Dwight Blaney, one of John Breck and two of his studio, and one portrait of John Singer Sargent. Also found are a photo of artwork by Blaney, one of the music room at his home in Boston, and two negatives of silver and other ornaments in a cabinet. Also found are twenty circa 1993 slides which represent copies of photographs from an album documenting a family trip to Bermuda.

Glass plate negatives are of artwork by Blaney; rooms and furniture in homes belonging to the Blaneys; photographs of artwork by John Singer Sargent; and a circa 1924 image of Sargent painting on the deck of Blaney's boat on Ironbound Island, painting Blaney, who is painting on the shore.

**Available Formats:** Glass plate negatives have been digitized.

Box 3, Folder 10	<a href="#">Of Dwight Blaney, circa 1905</a>
Box 3, Folder 11	Of John Breck and his Studio, circa 1896
Box 3, Folder 12	Of John Singer Sargent, circa 1920s
Box 3, Folder 13	Of Artwork, Music Room, and Silverware, circa 1880s-circa 1900
Box 3, Folder 14	Slides of Photos from Blaney Family Album, circa 1993
Box 3, Folder 15	Photocopies of Photographs of Glass Plate Negative Boxes, circa 1900-circa 1920s
Box 3, Folder 16	Glass Plate Negative Original Enclosures for Sargent Paintings, circa 1922
Box 3, Folder 17	Glass Plate Negative Original Enclosures, circa 1917-1927
Box 3, Folder 18	Glass Plate Negative Original Enclosures, Furniture, 1912-1926
Box 6	<a href="#">Glass Plate Negatives, circa 1920s</a>
Box 7	<a href="#">Glass Plate Negatives, circa 1920s</a>
Box 8	<a href="#">Glass Plate Negatives, circa 1920s</a>
Box 9	<a href="#">Glass Plate Negatives, circa 1920s</a>
Box 10	<a href="#">Glass Plate Negatives, circa 1920s</a>

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