



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Carl Oscar Borg Scrapbooks,  
1903-1955, in the Archives of American Art

Rosa M. Fernández

June 25, 2000

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>	Carl Oscar Borg scrapbooks
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.borgcarl
<b>Date:</b>	1903-1955
<b>Extent:</b>	0.3 linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Borg, Carl Oscar, 1879-1947
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Summary:</b>	This collection consists of three scrapbooks dating from 1903 to 1955 containing mostly newspaper clippings which document the career of California artist Carl Oscar Borg, particularly his work as art director for Hollywood films.

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## Administrative Information

### Provenance

The collection was donated in 1998 by Helen Laird, who received the papers from Borg's widow, Lily Borg Elmberg in preparation for a biography on Carl Oscar Borg.

### Alternative Forms Available

The collection is available on microfilm reel number 5671. The microfilm is available for interlibrary loan.

### Processing Information

Processing of the collection was completed June 26, 2000 by Rosa M. Fernández at the Archives of American Art, Washington, DC.

### Preferred Citation

Carl Oscar Borg scrapbooks, 1903-1955. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions on Access

The collection is open for research. Patrons must use microfilm copy.

### Ownership and Literary Rights

The Carl Oscar Borg scrapbooks 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.

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## Biographical Note

Self taught Swedish-American artist Carl Oscar Borg (1879-1947) began his career as a sign painter in New York. He emigrated to the United States from Stockholm, Sweden in 1901, settling in Los Angeles in 1903 where he became active in the emerging Los Angeles art community. He became the protégé of Phoebe Apperson Hearst (mother of William Randolph Hearst) whose support and endorsement enabled him to study in Europe. He established himself as a serious artist after World War II working in the fields of print, film and painting, enabling him to secure a place among the Los Angeles artistic elite. Borg specialized in painting the Southwestern Hopi and Navajo Indians. He also painted mariners and the seal hunting scenes which took place in Channel Island near Santa Barbara. He was a member of the National Academy of Design, the National Academy of Arts, the Société Internationale des Beaux Arts (Paris) and the prestigious Salmagundi Club. He traveled to Sweden in 1939, remaining there until the end of World War II. Upon his return to California, he settled in Santa Barbara where he remained until his death in 1947.

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## Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of three scrapbooks compiled by Borg, and after his death by his widow, Lily Borg Elmberg. These contain newspaper clippings from the U.S. and Sweden, documenting Borg's lifelong career as a painter and printmaker since his arrival in Los Angeles in 1903. One scrapbook, 1925-1938, highlights his role as supervising art director for the 1926 silent film, *The Black Pirate* starring actor Douglas Fairbanks. Also included are articles about his years working in the silent movie industry (1925-1928) as the art director of films, *Black Pirate*, *The Gaucho*, *The Night of Love*, *The Magic Flame*, *Two Lovers*, and *The Iron Mask*.

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## Arrangement

Volumes are divided into three main categories: I. Los Angeles Years (1903-1935), II. Silent movies and trip to Sweden (1925-1938), and III. Sweden and Santa Barbara years (1935-1955). The dates of a number of the newspaper clippings and exhibition catalogs found in the scrapbooks overlap. In addition, Scrapbook I, 1903-1935, is in fragile condition and should be handled with care.

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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:

Artists -- Sweden  
Motion picture art directors -- California  
Motion picture industry  
Painters -- California -- Los Angeles  
Painters -- California -- Santa Barbara  
Silent films

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Scrapbooks, 1903-1955

*0.3 linear feet (Box 1)*

Box 1, Folder 1	Scrapbook I: The Los Angeles Years, 1903-1935
Box 1, Folder 2	Scrapbook II: Silent Movies and Trip to Sweden, 1925-1938
Box 1, Folder 3	Scrapbook III: Sweden and Santa Barbara Years, 1935-1955

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