



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Buehr Family Papers, 1880-1984, in the Archives of American Art

Jetta Samulski

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Buehr family papers
Date:	1880-1984
Identifier:	AAA.buehfami
Creator:	Buehr family
Extent:	0.7 Linear feet
Language:	The collection is in English.
Summary:	The Buehr family papers date from 1880-1984 and measure 0.7 linear feet. The collection documents the lives and careers of a prominent Chicago family of artists, which included Karl Albert Buehr, his wife Mary Hess Buehr, their children Kathleen Buehr Granger and George F. Buehr, and Karl Buehr's brother-in-law, Will Hess. Found among the papers are biographical accounts, family histories, Karl Buehr's personal and professional correspondence, love letters between Karl and Mary Hess, writing by various family members, printed materials, artwork in the form of drawings by Kathleen Buehr Granger, and family and travel photographs, including two photo albums.

Administrative Information

Provenance

George Buehr's wife, Margo Hoff, donated the family papers in April, 1986, as part of the Archives' Chicago survey project. George Granger, son of Kathleen Buehr Granger, donated the remaining material in June, 1986.

Available Formats

The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2016 and is available on the Archives of American Art's website. Materials which have not been scanned include duplicates of printed material, photographs, and writings; blank pages and versoes of printed materials. In some cases, printed materials have had relevant pages scanned.

Processing Information

The papers were processed in 1989 by Jean Fitzgerald and a finding aid prepared in July 2004 by Jetta Samulski. The collection was prepared for digitization by Megan Bean and digitized in 2016 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Preferred Citation

Buehr family papers, 1880-1984. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center. Contact Reference Services for more information.

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Biographical Note

The Buehr family was a prominent Chicago family of artists, which included Karl Albert Buehr, his wife Mary Hess Buehr, their children Kathleen Buehr Granger and George F. Buehr, and Karl Buehr's brother-in-law, Will Hess.

Born in 1866 in Germany, Karl Albert Buehr was a painter of genre scenes, portraits, and Impressionist landscapes. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Julian Academy in France and the London School of Art. From 1899 to 1902 he lived in Holland, and then spent the first decade of the twentieth century at Giverny, France. A member of the Giverny artists, Buehr exhibited widely in Europe. Buehr became a U.S. citizen and served in the U.S. Cavalry during the Spanish-American War. In Chicago he became a highly respected teacher at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and one of the city's most popular painters. Buehr died in Chicago in 1952.

Karl's wife, Mary Hess Buehr, was born in Chicago in 1871. She was a painter who studied in Holland and France, and held three exhibitions at the Paris Salon. Mary specialized in miniatures and decorative paintings. She was also a lithographer, lecturer, and teacher active in Chicago. She died in Orwell, Vermont, in 1962.

Their children, Kathleen and George F. Buehr, were both artists as well. George, known for his watercolors and collages, was director of museum education and a lecturer at the Art Institute of Chicago. He died in Chicago in 1983 at age 78. Kathleen was born in Chicago in 1902. A graduate of the Art Institute of Chicago, Kathleen was painter and author. Several of her articles are found in the papers, including "My Most Unforgettable Character," published in 1969 in *The Reader's Digest*.

Scope and Content Note

The Buehr family papers date from 1880-1984 and measure 0.7 linear feet. The collection documents the lives and careers of a prominent Chicago family of artists, which included Karl Albert Buehr, his wife Mary Hess Buehr, their children Kathleen Buehr Granger and George F. Buehr, and Karl Buehr's brother-in-law, Will Hess. Found among the papers are biographical accounts, family histories, Karl Buehr's personal and professional correspondence, love letters between Karl and Mary Hess, writing by various family members, printed materials, artwork in the form of drawings by Kathleen Buehr Granger, and family and travel photographs, including two photo albums.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as six series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1880-1976 (5 folders; Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1898-1980 (8 folders; Box 1)

- Series 3: Writings, circa 1915-1970 (4 folders; Box 1)
 - Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1899-1984 (12 folders; Box 1-2, OV 3)
 - Series 5: Artwork, circa 1940-circa 1975 (6 folders; Box 2)
 - Series 6: Photographs, circa 1886-1947 (0.2 linear feet; Box 2)
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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:

Art, American -- French influences
Expatriate painters -- France -- Giverny
Impressionism (Art)
Miniature painters
Painters -- Illinois -- Chicago
Watercolorists

Types of Materials:

Drawings
Photographs

Names:

Buehr, George Frederick, 1905-1983
Buehr, Karl Albert, 1866-1952
Buehr, Mary Guion Hess, 1871-1962
Granger, Kathleen Buehr
Hess, William, 1838-1964

Occupations:

Art teachers
Landscape painters
Portrait painters

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1880-1976

5 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: This series contains biographical material about all the members of the Buehr family. There are biographical sketches about Karl Buehr from five printed sources, as well as one written by Kathleen Buehr Granger. There are certificates to Karl Buehr from the National Academy of Design, the Royal Scottish Academy, and the Lycee Montaigne. Included in the series is a George Buehr resume. Mary Hess Buehr wrote a family history, "The Hess Family," and her brother Will Hess wrote a history of his family's business, the Hess Warming and Ventilating Company.

Arrangement: The series is arranged by material type.

Available: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Formats:

Box 1, Folder 1 [Karl and Mary Buehr Biographical Material, 1880-1976](#)

Box 1, Folder 2 [Buehr Family Biographical Sketches, 1950-1968](#)

Box 1, Folder 3 ["The Hess Family" typescript by Mary Hess Buehr, 1942](#)

Box 1, Folder 4 ["A Half Century of Hot Air" typescript cover, 1929](#)

Box 1, Folder 5 ["A Half Century of Hot Air" typescript by Will Hess, 1929](#)

Notes: Typescript contains two cyanotypes and one photographic negative.

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1898-1980

8 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: The bulk of the series consists of letters addressed to Karl Buehr concerning art-related matters such as exhibitions, awards, and sales of artwork. Letters addressed to Karl Buehr also include personal letters from Mary Hess Buehr before their marriage, as well as letters dating from early in their marriage. Letters written to Karl while he served in the U.S. Cavalry during the Spanish-American War are present. The series also contains letters addressed to Mary Hess Buehr, and the correspondence of Kathleen Buehr Granger and George Buehr.

Available Formats: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Arrangement: The series is arranged by correspondent. Miscellaneous letters from various correspondents outside of the Buehr family are housed in the General Correspondence folder.

Box 1, Folder 6	Buehr, Karl, 1898-circa 1899
Box 1, Folder 7	Buehr, Karl, 1912-1913
Box 1, Folder 8	Buehr, Karl, 1913-1929
Box 1, Folder 9	Buehr, Karl, 1931-1947
Box 1, Folder 10	Buehr, George, 1977-1980
Box 1, Folder 11	Buehr, Mary Hess, 1906-1926
Box 1, Folder 12	Granger, Kathleen Buehr, 1912-1980
Box 1, Folder 13	General Correspondence, 1912-1927

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Series 3: Writings, circa 1915-1970

4 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: This series includes Karl Buehr's handwritten essays, lectures, and notebooks on art technique. The series contains magazine articles by Mary Hess Buehr, as well as Kathleen's manuscript, "California Notes."

Arrangement: The series is arranged by family member.

Available: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Formats:

Box 1, Folder 14	Essays and Lectures by Karl Buehr, circa 1915
Box 1, Folder 15	Notebooks by Karl Buehr, circa 1925-circa 1935
Box 1, Folder 16	Writings by Karl Buehr and Mary Hess Buehr, circa 1925-circa 1930
Box 1, Folder 17	"California Notes" by Kathleen Buehr Granger, pages 1-18, circa 1948
Box 1, Folder 18	"California Notes" by Kathleen Buehr Granger, pages 19-51, circa 1948
Box 1, Folder 19	"California Notes" by Kathleen Buehr Granger, pages 52-70, circa 1948

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Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1899-1984

12 Folders (Box 1-2, OV 3)

Scope and Contents: This series contains a variety of printed materials, including newspapers and magazine clippings from the United States and France, of which French clippings were gathered by Argus de la Presse, a French press clipping service; exhibition announcements and catalogs for both Karl and George Buehr; reproductions of Karl Buehr's artwork; students' reviews of Karl's artwork; as well as posters from exhibitions by George Buehr and Margo Hoff. Published articles by George Buehr and Kathleen Buehr Grander are also included.

Arrangement: The series is arranged by family member and by material type.

Available Formats: The bulk of the series has been scanned. Duplicates, blank versoes, and blank pages have been omitted from scanning. In some cases, printed materials have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages scanned.

Box 1, Folder 20	Reproductions of Works of Art, Karl Buehr, circa 1899- circa 1923
Box 1, Folder 21	High School Students' Art Reviews of Karl Buehr's Artwork, circa 1901
Box 2, Folder 1	Newspaper and Magazine Clippings, US, circa 1900-1910
Box 2, Folder 2	Newspaper and Magazine Clippings, US, 1913-1983
Box 2, Folder 3	Clippings from Argus de la Presse, 1912
Box 2, Folder 4	Clippings from Argus de la Presse, 1913-1914
Box 2, Folder 5	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, Karl Buehr, 1921-1984
Box 2, Folder 6	"My Life and Hard Times on Taiwan" by George Buehr, 1970 Notes: Materials housed in OV 3
Box 2, Folder 7	Exhibition Announcements, George Buehr, 1971-1978
Box 2, Folder 8	Poster Announcing Exhibition by George Buehr, 1968 Notes: Materials housed in OV 3
Box 2, Folder 9	"My Most Unforgettable Character" By Kathleen Buehr Granger, 1969
Box 2, Folder 10	Poster Announcing Exhibition by Margo Hoff, autographed, 1972 Notes: Materials housed in OV 3
Box OV 3	Oversized materials scanned with Box 2, folder 6, 8, and 10, 1968-1972

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Series 6: Artwork, circa 1940-circa 1975

6 Folders (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: This series contains artwork by Kathleen Buehr Granger. Watercolors, pencil, ink, and pastel sketches depict landscapes and wildlife of the U.S. Southwest and California, and were created to illustrate her manuscript "California Notes." Original ink drawings and reproductions describe Kathleen Buehr's childhood experiences and Buehr family life in France, and were intended to illustrate her manuscript "Artists Are People Too."

Available Formats: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Arrangement: This series has been arranged by illustration title.

Box 2, Folder 11 [Artwork by Kathleen Buehr Granger to illustrate "Artists Are People Too", circa 1940-circa 1975](#)

Box 2, Folder 12 [Artwork by Kathleen Buehr Granger to illustrate "Artists Are People Too", circa 1940-circa 1975](#)

Box 2, Folder 13 [Artwork by Kathleen Buehr Granger to illustrate "Artists Are People Too", circa 1940-circa 1975](#)

Box 2, Folder 14 [Artwork by Kathleen Buehr Granger to illustrate "Artists Are People Too", circa 1940-circa 1975](#)

Box 2, Folder 15 [Artwork by Kathleen Buehr Granger to illustrate "California Notes", circa 1948](#)

Box 2, Folder 16 [Artwork by Kathleen Buehr Granger to illustrate "California Notes", circa 1948](#)

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Series 6: Photographs, circa 1886-1947

0.2 Linear feet (Box 2)

Arrangement: The series is arranged by personal/geographic name.

Scope and Contents: The photograph series includes images of the Buehr family, the Hess family, and their distant relatives. More than one hundred photographs from Holland, including fourteen cyanotypes, provide images of peasant farm life during the late nineteenth century. Many photos are posed and some were used as studies for Buehr artwork. The Hess family photographs provide images of an industrial business in Chicago at the turn of the century.

Available Formats: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 2, Folder 17	Buehr Family Album Photographs, 1879-circa 1910
Box 2, Folder 18	Buehr Family Album Photographs, circa 1930-circa 1955
Box 2, Folder 19	Photographs from Laren, Holland, 1899-1902
Box 2, Folder 20	Photographs from Laren, Holland, 1899-1902
Box 2, Folder 21	Photographs from Laren, Holland, 1899-1902
Box 2, Folder 22	Photographs from Laren, Holland, 1899-1902
Box 2, Folder 23	Photographs from Laren, Holland, 1899-1902
Box 2, Folder 24	Cyanotypes from Laren, Holland, 1899-1902
Box 2, Folder 25	Hess Family and Business Photographs, circa 1886-circa 1928 Notes: Photographs are associated with typescript, "A Half Century of Hot Air" by William Hess, which is arranged with Series 1 and housed in Box 1, folders 4-5.

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