



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

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

Jetta Samulski

Funding for the processing and digitization of this collection
was provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art

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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives of American Art

Title: Buehr family papers

Identifier: AAA.buehfami

Date: 1880-1984

Extent: 0.7 Linear feet

Creator: Buehr family

Language: English

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.

Ownership and Literary Rights

The Buehr family 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 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)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

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

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1880-1976

5 Folders (Box 1)

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.

The series is arranged by material type.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Box 1, Folder 1 | Karl and Mary Buehr Biographical Material, 1880-1976 Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Buehr Family Biographical Sketches, 1950-1968 Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 3 | "The Hess Family" typescript by Mary Hess Buehr, 1942 Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 4 | "A Half Century of Hot Air" typescript cover, 1929 Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 5 | "A Half Century of Hot Air" typescript by Will Hess, 1929 Image(s) Typescript contains two cyanotypes and one photographic negative. |

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1898-1980

8 Folders (Box 1)

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.

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

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

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

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Series 3: Writings, circa 1915-1970

4 Folders (Box 1)

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."

The series is arranged by family member.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

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

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Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1899-1984

12 Folders (Box 1-2, OV 3)

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.

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

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.

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

[Image\(s\)](#)

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)

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."

This series has been arranged by illustration title.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Box 2, Folder 11 | Artwork by Kathleen Buehr Granger to illustrate "Artists Are People Too", circa 1940-circa 1975 Image(s) |
| Box 2, Folder 12 | Artwork by Kathleen Buehr Granger to illustrate "Artists Are People Too", circa 1940-circa 1975 Image(s) |
| Box 2, Folder 13 | Artwork by Kathleen Buehr Granger to illustrate "Artists Are People Too", circa 1940-circa 1975 Image(s) |
| Box 2, Folder 14 | Artwork by Kathleen Buehr Granger to illustrate "Artists Are People Too", circa 1940-circa 1975 Image(s) |
| Box 2, Folder 15 | Artwork by Kathleen Buehr Granger to illustrate "California Notes", circa 1948 Image(s) |
| Box 2, Folder 16 | Artwork by Kathleen Buehr Granger to illustrate "California Notes", circa 1948 Image(s) |

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Series 6: Photographs, circa 1886-1947

0.2 Linear feet (Box 2)

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.

The series is arranged by personal/geographic name.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

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|------------------|---|
| Box 2, Folder 17 | Buehr Family Album Photographs, 1879-circa 1910 Image(s) |
| Box 2, Folder 18 | Buehr Family Album Photographs, circa 1930-circa 1955 Image(s) |
| Box 2, Folder 19 | Photographs from Laren, Holland, 1899-1902 Image(s) |
| Box 2, Folder 20 | Photographs from Laren, Holland, 1899-1902 Image(s) |
| Box 2, Folder 21 | Photographs from Laren, Holland, 1899-1902 Image(s) |
| Box 2, Folder 22 | Photographs from Laren, Holland, 1899-1902 Image(s) |
| Box 2, Folder 23 | Photographs from Laren, Holland, 1899-1902 Image(s) |
| Box 2, Folder 24 | Cyanotypes from Laren, Holland, 1899-1902 Image(s) |
| Box 2, Folder 25 | Hess Family and Business Photographs, circa 1886-circa 1928 Image(s) 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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