



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Edgar Spier Cameron papers, circa 1868-1968, in the Archives of American Art

Allessandra Liberati

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical	2
Scope and Contents	2
Arrangement	2
Names and Subjects	
Container Listing	
Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1925-1938	4
Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1882-1947	5
Series 3: Personal Business Records, circa 1900-1940	6
Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1884-1968	7
Series 5: Photographic Material, circa 1888-1941	8
Series 6: Artwork, circa 1882-1940	9

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Edgar Spier Cameron papers
Date:	circa 1868-1968
Identifier:	AAA.cameedga
Creator:	Cameron, Edgar Spier, 1862-1944
Extent:	2.8 Linear feet
Language:	This collection is in English and French.
Summary:	The papers of mural painter and art critic Edgar Spier Cameron measure 2.8 linear feet and date from circa 1868-1968. They detail Cameron's life and career through biographical material, correspondence, personal business records, printed material, photographic material, and artwork.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Edgar Spier Cameron microfilmed materials on reels 4290-4292 and papers were donated to the Archives of American Art by Arthur B. Carpenter and Marjorie L. Kimberlin, Cameron's nephew and niece, in 1988.

Available Formats

Portions of the collection are available on 35mm microfilm reels 4290-4292 at the Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of material described in the container inventory does not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

Processing Information

This collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared, by Alessandra Liberati in 2023.

Preferred Citation

Edgar Spier Cameron papers, circa 1868-1968 Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

This collection is open for research. Access to original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Edgar Spier Cameron (1862-1944) was a muralist and art critic who worked primarily in Chicago. He was born in Ottawa, Illinois in 1862 and, while growing up, was heavily encouraged to become an artist by his stepmother. In 1882 he joined the Art Students League in New York where Thomas W. Dewing took him on as a student. Prior to 1890 Cameron became a student of renowned French painters Boulanger, Lefebvre, Laurens, and Benjamin Constant alongside his future wife Marie Gelon in Paris. In 1900 he returned to Paris for the Paris Exposition where he won the silver medal. Before dedicating his time strictly to art, Cameron was also an art critic for the *Chicago Tribune*. Cameron, among others, was commissioned to work on the cyclorama *The Chicago Fire* which started his path of painting murals, after which he became one of the most successful muralists in the Midwest.

Many buildings in Chicago as well as throughout the Midwest are decorated with Cameron's murals including an Oklahoma City bank and the Flint, Michigan Courthouse, Cameron's final project. Cameron died in Illinois in 1944.

Scope and Contents

The Edgar Spier Cameron papers measure 2.8 linear feet and date from circa 1868-1968. Biographical materials include a genealogy report of Cameron's American lineage for *The Abridged Compendium of American Genealogy: The Standard Genealogical Encyclopedia of the First Families of America* and membership cards for the Chicago Galleries Association for both Edgar and Marie Cameron. Correspondence is between Cameron and his wife Marie Gelon Cameron and with the United States Treasury Department regarding the Paris Exposition of 1900. Personal business records include permission slips for the *Century of Progress International Exposition* (1933-1934) also known as the Chicago World's Fair, a typescript of Cameron's autobiography *The Cusp of Gemini* (1940), and copyright records for Cameron's artwork issued by the Library of Congress Copyright Office. Printed material consists of exhibition announcements and catalogs, materials relating to Jean Paul Laurens, a yearbook for the Cliff Dwellers, and various scrapbooks of news clippings. Photographic material contains photographs of Edgar Spier and Marie Gelon Cameron, friends and family, travel, and artwork. Artwork includes sketches, oil sketches, a sketchbook, and various mural panels painted by Cameron.

Arrangement

This collection consists of six series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1925-1938 (.1 Linear feet: Box 1)
 - Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1882-1947 (.9 Linear feet: Box 1)
 - Series 3: Personal Business Records, circa 1900-1940 (.5 Linear feet: Box 2)
 - Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1884-1968 (.4 Linear feet: Box 2)
 - Series 5: Photographic Material, circa 1888-1941 (.4 Linear feet: Boxes 2-4)
 - Series 6: Artwork, circa 1882-1940 (.5 Linear feet: Boxes 3-4, OV 5)
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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:

Scrapbooks
Sketchbooks

Names:

Cameron, Marie Gelon, 1872-1953

Occupations:

Art critics -- Illinois -- Chicago
Muralists -- Illinois -- Chicago
Painters -- Illinois -- Chicago

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1925-1938

.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Biographical materials include a family genealogy created for *The Abridged Compendium of American Genealogy: The Standard Genealogical Encyclopedia of the First Families of America* and membership cards for the Chicago Galleries Association.

Box 1, Folder 1 Family Genealogy, circa 1928-1938

Box 1, Folder 2 Chicago Galleries Association, Artist Membership Cards, circa 1925

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1882-1947

.9 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Correspondence is between Cameron and his wife Marie Gelon Cameron and with the United States Treasury Department regarding the Paris Exposition of 1900. Also included is correspondence regarding commission and projects with various companies. The bulk of general correspondence is from Cameron to his parents.

Box 1, Folder 3-7	Correspondence (1880s), circa 1882-1889
Box 1, Folder 8-10	Correspondence (1890s), circa 1891-1899
Box 1, Folder 11-13	Correspondence (1900s), circa 1900-1909
Box 1, Folder 14-15	Correspondence (1910s), circa 1913-1919
Box 1, Folder 16	Correspondence (1920s), circa 1921-1929
Box 1, Folder 17	Correspondence (1930s), circa 1930-1939
Box 1, Folder 18	Correspondence (1940s), circa 1940-1947
Box 1, Folder 19	Undated Correspondence, circa 1882-1947
Box 1, Folder 20-23	Cameron, Marie Gelon, circa 1904-1934
Box 1, Folder 24	Deering Harvester Company, circa 1900
Box 1, Folder 25	Tennessee Centennial and International Exposition, circa 1896
Box 1, Folder 26-27	United States Treasury Department, Paris Exposition, circa 1897-1900

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Personal Business Records, circa 1900-1940

.5 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Personal business records include permission slips for the *Century of Progress International Exposition* (1933-1934) also known as the Chicago World's Fair to allow Cameron to paint portraits, a typescript of Cameron's autobiography *The Cusp of Gemini* (1940), and copyright records for Cameron's artwork issued by the Library of Congress Copyright Office. Also included are inventories, price lists, and sales records for artwork.

Box 2, Folder 1 A Century of Progress International Exposition (1933-1934), Permission Slips, circa 1934

Box 2, Folder 2-7 The Cusp of Gemini (1940) by Edgar Spier Cameron, Typescript, circa 1939-1940

Box 2, Folder 8 Library of Congress Copyright Office, Copyright Records, circa 1917

Box 2, Folder 9 Artwork Sales Records, circa 1900-1940

Box 2, Folder 10 Inventory of Artwork, Exhibitions, circa 1901-1927

Box 2, Folder 11 Price Lists, circa 1921

Box 2, Folder 12 Miscellaneous Business Records, circa 1900-1940

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1884-1968

.4 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Printed material consists of exhibition announcements and catalogs, materials relating to Jean Paul Laurens, a yearbook for the Cliff Dwellers, and various scrapbooks of news clippings. Also included are publications regarding Cameron's artwork and reproductions of his artwork.

Box 2, Folder 13	Exhibition Announcements, circa 1899-1929
Box 2, Folder 14-15	Exhibition Catalogs, circa 1899-1946
Box 2, Folder 16	Cliff Dwellers, Yearbook, circa 1936-1938
Box 2, Folder 17	Jean-Paul Laurens, circa 1889-1910
Box 2, Folder 18-20	Clippings, circa 1888-1950
Box 2, Folder 21	Prints of Sketches, circa 1900-1929
Box 2, Folder 22-24	Publications Regarding Artwork, circa 1901-1017
Box 2, Folder 25-27	Reproductions of Works of Art, circa 1890-1940
	Scrapbooks
Box 2, Folder 28	Edgar Cameron, circa 1894-1968
Box 2, Folder 29	Scrapbook, circa 1897-1922
Box 2, Folder 30	Scrapbook , circa 1898-1942
Box 2, Folder 31-33	Scrapbook, circa 1899-1923
Box 2, Folder 34	Scrapbook, circa 1901-1927
Box 2, Folder 35	Miscellaneous Booklets, circa 1884-1917

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 5: Photographic Material, circa 1888-1941

.4 Linear feet (Boxes 2-4)

Scope and Contents: Photographic materials include photographs of Cameron, Marie Gelon Cameron, friends and family, travel, and artwork. Also included are several group photographs and photographs of artwork by others.

Box 2, Folder 36	Edgar Cameron, circa 1890-1941
Box 2, Folder 37-38	Marie Gelon Cameron, circa 1888-1909
Box 3, Folder 1	The Camerons with Family and Friends, circa 1890-1918
Box 3, Folder 2	Travel, circa 1890-1900
Box 4, Folder 1	Group Photographs, circa 1899-1930
Box 3, Folder 3-6	Photographs of Cameron's Artwork, circa 1890-1940
Box 3, Folder 7	Photographs of Others' Artwork, circa 1890-1900
Box 3, Folder 8	Miscellaneous Photographs, circa 1890-1900

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 6: Artwork, circa 1882-1940

.5 Linear feet (Boxes 3-4, OV 5)

Scope and Contents: Artwork includes several mural panels and sketches by Cameron, including a sketchbook. Also included are oil sketches.

Box 3, Folder 9	Annotated Sketches, circa 1890-1940
Box 3, Folder 10-11	Oil Sketches, circa 1899
Box 3, Folder 12	Sketches, circa 1918
Box 3, Folder 13	Sketchbook, circa 1882-1883
Box 4, Folder 2	Mural Panels, circa 1890-1935
Oversize 5	Mural Panels, circa 1890-1935
Box 3, Folder 14	Sketches by Others, circa 1918

[Return to Table of Contents](#)