



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Alfred Vance Churchill
Papers Regarding Lyonel Feininger,
1888-1944, in the Archives of American Art

Erin Corley

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

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<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
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Collection Overview

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| Repository: | Archives of American Art |
| Title: | Alfred Vance Churchill papers regarding Lyonel Feininger |
| Identifier: | AAA.churalfr |
| Date: | 1888-1944 |
| Extent: | 0.9 Linear feet |
| Creator: | Churchill, Alfred Vance, 1864-1949 |
| Language: | English |
| Summary: | This small collection of Alfred Vance Churchill papers regarding Lyonel Feininger measures 0.9 linear feet and dates from 1888 to 1944. Found here are 36 letters from Feininger, a painter and illustrator, to his friend Churchill and a scrapbook compiled by Churchill containing 117 sketches by Feininger, a photograph of Feininger, clippings, and 47 sketches and reproductions by Churchill. There are also additional loose clippings, an exhibition catalog, and three photographs of Feininger. |

Administrative Information

Provenance

The collection was donated in 1956 by Mrs. Alfred (Marie) Churchill.

Separated Material

The Alfred Vance Churchill papers regarding Lyonel Feininger included approximately 23 photographs of works of art by Feininger. These items were removed from the collection upon receipt and added to Photographs of Works of Art, Collection One, and microfilmed on reel 468.

Related Material

The Archives of American Art also has several collections related to Lyonel Feininger, including Letters to Beatrice Lippincott (Garvan) from Lyonel and Julia Feininger available on microfilm reel 4909, and a 1939 letter from Feininger to Alfred Neumeyer, available on reel 2804. The archives also has additional collections of loaned papers available only on microfilm: Lyonel Feininger papers loaned for microfilming by Feininger's friend, H. Francis Kortheuer and available on reel D5 and D29, and Sketches by Feininger loaned for microfilming by Fred Werner and available on reel D5.

The most complete Lyonel Feininger Archive, donated by the Feininger family, is located at Harvard University. The Alfred Vance Churchill papers, 1828-1948, are located at Smith College Archives.

Alternative Forms Available

The papers of **Alfred Churchill** regarding Lyonel Feininger in the Archives of American Art were digitized in 2007, and total 394 images.

Processing Information

The Alfred Vance Churchill papers regarding Lyonel Feininger received a preliminary level of processing at some point after donation. Material was microfilmed in the order that it was donated on reels D5 and 468. The collection was fully processed by Erin Corley in 2006 and digitized in 2007 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Preferred Citation

Alfred Vance Churchill papers regarding Lyonel Feininger, 1888-1944. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

The collection has been digitized and is available online via AAA's website.

Ownership and Literary Rights

The Alfred Vance Churchill papers regarding Lyonel Feininger 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

Lyonel Feininger (1871-1956), also known as Léonell Feininger, was born in New York City in 1871 to German violinist Karl Feininger and American singer Elizabeth Feininger. He spent his childhood in New York City and became interested in art at a young age. Although born in New York, Lyonel Feininger lived and worked mostly in Germany.

In 1887 Feininger's parents took him to Germany to study violin, but he began taking drawing classes at the Hamburg Kunstgewerbeschule (College of Arts and Crafts) and subsequently moved to Berlin to study art at the Königliche Akademie under Ernst Hancke. During this time he met and befriended a fellow art student, Alfred Vance Churchill, who later became an art historian and curator. They would exchange letters and artwork for many years. For a brief time Feininger studied at the Collège St. Servais in Liège and with Filippo Colarossi in Paris, but returned to Berlin to study at the Akademie der Künste with Karl Schlabitz.

Feininger's career as cartoonist started in 1894. He was working for several German, French and American magazines and illustrated two comic strips "The Kin-der-Kids" and "Wee Willie Winkie's World" for the *Chicago Tribune*. During this period he married Clara Fürst and they had two daughters, Lore and Marianne. He also exhibited drawings at the annual Berlin Secession and the Great Berlin Art Exhibition.

Feininger separated from his wife after starting an affair with Julia Borg. He and Julia traveled to Paris where he became greatly influenced by the French avant-garde. When they returned to Berlin in 1908, he gave up illustration in favor of painting. He and Julia were then married and they had three sons, Andreas, Laurence, and Theodore Lux.

Feininger became a member of the Berlin Secession and exhibited his paintings, primarily landscapes inspired by French cubism. Around 1912, Feininger became affiliated with the German expressionist groups Die Brücke and Der Blaue Reiter, and the Novembergruppe in 1918, where he met Walter Gropius. When Gropius established the Bauhaus in Weimar, Germany in 1919, Feininger became the master artist in charge of the printmaking workshop. He taught there and continued to develop his painting, and in 1925 he formed the Blue Four with Alexei Jawlensky, Paul Klee, and Vasily Kandinsky. When the Bauhaus moved to Dessau in 1926 he became an artist-in-residence and stayed there until it closed in 1933.

After the Nazi's declared Feininger's work "degenerate" in 1937, he moved to California where he taught at Mills College. He settled permanently in New York and had great success exhibiting his work in the United States, which culminated in a joint retrospective in 1944 with Marsden Hartley. Lyonel Feininger died in 1956 at the age of 84.

Scope and Content Note

This small collection of Alfred Vance Churchill papers regarding Lyonel Feininger measures 0.9 linear feet and dates from 1888 to 1944. Found here are 36 long and detailed letters from Feininger, a painter and illustrator, to his friend Alfred Churchill (many letters from 1890 are illustrated), and a scrapbook compiled by Churchill containing 117 sketches by Feininger, a photograph of Feininger, clippings, and 47 sketches and reproductions by Churchill. There are also additional loose clippings and magazines, an exhibition catalog, three photographs of Feininger and one of his children.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 4 series:

- Series 1: Letters to Alfred Churchill, 1890-1920 (Box 1; 5 folders)
- Series 2: Printed Material, 1895-1898, 1917-1944 (Box 1; 6 folders)
- Series 3: Scrapbook of Artwork, 1888-1913 (Box 1-3; 0.5 linear feet)
- Series 4: Photographs, circa 1890, 1911, 1926 (Box 1; 2 folders)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Cartooning -- Germany
Cartooning -- United States
Cartoonists -- Germany
Expressionism (Art) -- Germany
Graphic artists -- United States
Graphic arts -- Germany
Graphic arts -- United States
Painters -- Germany
Painting, Modern -- 20th century -- Germany
Painting, Modern -- 20th century -- United States
Printmakers -- Germany

Types of Materials:

Photographs
Scrapbooks
Sketches

Names:

Feininger, Lyonel, 1871-1956

Container Listing

Series 1: Letters to Alfred Churchill, 1890-1920

(Box 1; 5 folders)

This series contains letters written by Feininger to his friend and fellow artist, Alfred Churchill. These long, detailed letters discuss his time as a student in Berlin, Paris, and Liège, current projects, thoughts on art and the development of his work, the difficulties of being an artist, selling his artwork to magazines, family news, and other general news. Many letters from 1890 are illustrated. Letters are arranged chronologically.

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Box 1, Folder 1 | Letters, 1890 Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Letters, 1891 Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 3 | Letters, 1892-1894 Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 4 | Letters, 1896-1901 Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 5 | Letters, 1904, 1913, 1920 Image(s) |

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Series 2: Printed Material, 1895-1898, 1917-1944

(Box 1; 6 folders)

Printed material depicts Feininger's illustration work and one exhibition. Also found are a few news clippings about Feininger and newspaper cartoons he contributed to the German satirical magazine, *Ulk*. Some of the material is in German.

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Exhibition Catalog, 1931 Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 7 | Magazine, <i>Das junge Deutschland</i> , 1919 Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 8 | Magazine, <i>Das Kunstblatt</i> , 1922, 1924 Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 9 | Magazine, <i>The International Studio</i> , 1917 Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 10 | News Clippings, 1890, circa 1915, 1944 Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 11 | Newspaper Cartoons, 1895-1898 Image(s) |

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Series 3: Scrapbook of Artwork, 1888-1913

(Box 1-3; 0.5 linear feet)

This scrapbook was created by Alfred Churchill and was begun during the period that he and Feininger became friends in Berlin. Included are 117 sketches by Feininger, several reproductions of his work, one photograph of Feininger and one photograph of his children, a few newspaper clippings, and 47 sketches and reproductions by Churchill. Several of the sketches by Feininger include a note or letter to Churchill on the back. For more secure preservation housing, the scrapbook was dismantled and items were removed from the scrapbook pages and arranged in their original order within folders.

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|-----------------------|--|
| Box 1, Folder 12-21 | Scrapbook of Artwork (dismantled), 1888-1913 <i>(10 folders; conserved items housed in box 3)</i> Image(s) Image(s) Image(s) Image(s) Image(s) Image(s) Image(s) Image(s) Image(s) Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 22 | Copy print negatives of scrapbook pages, 1888-1913 <i>(not scanned)</i> |
| Box 2 (pam), Folder 1 | Scrapbook cover, 1888-1913 <i>(not scanned)</i> |
| Box 3 | Conserved Sketches from Scrapbook, 1888-1913 <i>(Items scanned with box 1, folders 12-21)</i> |

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Series 4: Photographs, circa 1890, 1911, 1926

(Box 1; 2 folders)

Found here are two photographs of Lyonel Feininger on a bicycle, and one photograph of him on a postcard sent to his friend Alfred Churchill. Also found is a photograph of Feininger's three sons, Theodore, Laurence, and Andreas. Two photographs are also found in the scrapbook of artwork in Series 3.

Box 1, Folder 23 Photographs of Lyonel Feininger, circa 1890, 1926
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 24 Photograph of Theodore Lux, Laurence, and Andreas Feininger, circa 1911
[Image\(s\)](#)

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