# A Finding Aid to the Timothy Cole Papers, 1883-1936, in the Archives of American Art

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# Collection Overview

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| **Repository:** | Archives of American Art |
| **Title:** | Timothy Cole papers |
| **Identifier:** | AAA.coletimo |
| **Date:** | 1883-1936 |
| **Extent:** | 0.5 Linear feet |
| **Creator:** | Cole, Timothy, 1852-1931 |
| **Language:** | English |
| **Summary:** | The papers of wood engraver Timothy Cole date from 1883-1936, and measure 0.5 linear feet. Found within the papers are letters primarily written by Timothy Cole to the editors of *Century Magazine*, and letters to Cole from colleagues Gifford Beal, Alice Brown, George de Forest Brush, Kenyon Cox, David Finney, Helen C. Frick, Joseph Pennell, Caroline Powell, John Singer Sargent, and Helen M. Turner. Also found are miscellaneous writings, artwork including wood engravings and printing plates, miscellaneous clippings and a photograph of Cole and his wife. |

# Administrative Information

## Provenance

The collection was acquired by the Archives of American Art in a series of accessions from several different donors between 1959 and 1973. Charles E. Feinberg donated letters in 1959. The artist's sons Percy J. Cole and Lucius Cole loaned 181 letters and gave the Archives materials in 1962. Alphaeus Cole, another son, donated papers in 1973.

## Separated Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds microfilm of material lent for microfilming (reel D30) including 181 letters. Loaned materials were returned to the lender and are not described in the collection container inventory.

## Available Formats

Portions of the collection and material lent for microfilming are available on 35mm microfilm reels D30, D117, and 583 at the Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of the material described in the container inventory does not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

## Processing Information

Portions of this collection were microfilmed as separate collections on reels D30, D117, and 583 at some point after receipt; the microfilm is no longer in circulation. All material relating to

Timothy Cole was compiled as one collection and processed and described by Jean Fitzgerald in March, 2008.

## Preferred Citation

Timothy Cole papers, 1883-1936. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

## Ownership and Literary Rights

The Timothy Cole 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.

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# Biographical Note

Timothy Cole was a wood engraver working primarily in the New York City area. Cole worked for several notable magazines, *Scribner's Magazine*.

Timothy Cole was born in 1852 in London, England, the seventh of the twelve sons of Skinner Cole, a milliner. In 1857, the family immigrated to New York City. Following his mother's death, the family suffered financial hardship and Cole earned money as a delivery boy, newspaper seller, and lamplighter.

In 1868, the family moved to Chicago where Cole was apprenticed to a wood engraving firm and made rapid progress in learning this skill that was the most widely used method of magazine illustration at the time. When the Chicago Fire destroyed his place of employment in 1871, Cole returned New York City where his talents as a wood engraver were soon recognized by various artists and publishers. Cole began his career working for the magazines *Hearth and Home*, the *Christian Weekly*, and the Aldine Press.

After the Aldine Press went out of business in 1875, Cole was employed by *Scribner's Magazine* (later renamed *Century Magazine*.) During the same year, he married Annie Elizabeth Carter of Jersey City Heights, New Jersey. In 1883, Cole was commissioned by *Century Magazine* to travel in Europe and make wood engravings of the works of the old masters. He finished a series of Italian masters in 1892, a Dutch and Flemish series in 1896, an English series in 1900, a Spanish series in 1907, and a French series in 1910. In the course of his travels, Cole befriended many artists, including Joseph Pennell and James Abbott MacNeill Whistler. In 1910, Cole returned to the United States where he began work on a series of engravings of American master paintings in public and private collections.

Cole's work received a diploma of honor at the Chicago Exposition in 1893, the gold medal at the Paris Exposition of 1900, and the Grand Prix at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904. He was an honorary member of the Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Engravers of London, a member of the American Academy of Arts and letters, and was elected a National Academician in 1908. In 1903, Cole received an honorary M.A. degree from Princeton University.

Timothy Cole died on May 17, 1931 in Poughkeepsie, New York.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Timothy Cole measure 0.5 linear feet and date from 1883 to 1936. Found within the papers are letters primarily written by Timothy Cole to the editors of *Century Magazine* including A. W. Drake, W. Lewis Fraser, Richard Watson Gilder, Robert Underwood Johnson, and George Howes Whittle, discussing Cole's production of wood engraved copies of European master paintings for the magazine, and details of the wood engraving process. There are scattered letters to Cole from *Century Magazine* editors and colleagues Gifford Beal, Alice Brown (discussing Cole's wood engraved portrait of Louise Imogen Guiney for Brown's biography of her), George de Forest Brush, Kenyon Cox, David Finney, Helen C. Frick (concerning a bookplate), Joseph Pennell, Caroline Powell, John Singer Sargent, and Helen M. Turner.

Also found are miscellaneous writings including a notebook of poems by Cole, essays about Louise Imogen Guiney and Joseph Pennell, and an autobiographical essay, artwork consisting of wood engravings executed by Cole of works by the master painters of Europe and America, and two printing plates used by *Century Magazine* to reproduce Cole's wood engravings. Several clippings concern Cole, his work, and the publication of the book *Timothy Cole: Wood Engraver* by Alphaeus P. Cole and Margaret Ward Cole in 1936. There is also a photograph of Cole cutting a wood engraving block as his wife reads nearby.

## Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 5 series:

- Series 1: Letters, 1883-1930 (Box 1; 32 folders)
- Series 2: Writings, 1920 (Box 1; 2 folders)
- Series 3: Artwork, 1907-1921 (Box 1, OV 2; 4 folders)
- Series 4: Clippings, 1927-1936 (Box 1; 2 folders)
- Series 5: Photograph, 1910 (Box 1; 1 folder)

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Magazine illustration
Wood-engravers
Wood-engraving

Types of Materials:

Essays
Photographs
Poems
Wood engravings

Names:

Beal, Gifford, 1879-1956
Brown, Alice, 1857-1948

Brush, George de Forest, 1855-1941
Cox, Kenyon, 1856-1919
Drake, Alexander, 1843-1916
Fraser, William Lewis, 1841-1905
Frick, Helen Clay, 1888-1984
Gilder, Richard Watson, 1844-1909
Guiney, Louise Imogen, 1861-1920
Johnson, Robert Underwood, 1853-1937
Pennell, Joseph, 1857-1926
Powell, Caroline Amelia, 1852-1934
Sargent, John Singer, 1856-1925
Turner, Helen Maria, 1858-1958
Whittle, George Howes

Preferred Titles:

*Century illustrated monthly magazine*

## Container Listing

## Series 1: Letters, 1883-1930

*(Box 1; 32 folders)*

Letters are primarily written by Timothy Cole to various editors of *Century Magazine*, but include scattered letters from the editors, and colleagues Gifford Beal, Alice Brown, George de Forest Brush, Kenyon Cox, David Finney, Helen C. Frick, Joseph Pennell, Caroline Powell, John Singer Sargent, and Helen M. Turner.

Letters are arranged chronologically.

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| Box 1, Folder 1-3 | Letters, undated<br>*(3 folders)* |
| Box 1, Folder 4 | Letters, 1883 |
| Box 1, Folder 5-7 | Letters, 1884<br>*(3 folders)* |
| Box 1, Folder 8 | Letters, 1885 |
| Box 1, Folder 9-13 | Letters, 1886<br>*(5 folders)* |
| Box 1, Folder 14-16 | Letters, 1887<br>*(3 folders)* |
| Box 1, Folder 17-20 | Letters, 1888<br>*(4 folders)* |
| Box 1, Folder 21 | Letters, 1889-1890 |
| Box 1, Folder 22 | Letters, 1891 |
| Box 1, Folder 23 | Letters, 1892 |
| Box 1, Folder 24-27 | Letters, 1893<br>*(4 folders)* |
| Box 1, Folder 28 | Letters, 1908 |
| Box 1, Folder 29 | Letters, 1914 |
| Box 1, Folder 30 | Letters, 1915-1918 |
| Box 1, Folder 31 | Letters, 1921 |
| Box 1, Folder 32 | Letters, 1924-1930 |

## Series 2: Writings, 1920

*(Box 1; 2 folders)*

Writings consist of a notebook of poems, essays about Louise Imogen Guiney and Joseph Pennell, and an autobiographical essay.

Box 1, Folder 33          Notebook of Poems, undated

Box 1, Folder 34          Miscellaneous Writings, 1920, undated

## Series 3: Artwork, 1907-1921

*(Box 1, OV 2; 4 folders)*

Artwork consists of wood engravings executed by Cole of works by master painters. Also included are two printing plates used by Century Magazine to reproduce Cole's wood engravings.

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| Box 1, Folder 35 | Wood Engraving of El Greco's *Dominican Monk*, 1907 *(see also OV 2)* |
| Box 1, Folder 36 | Copper Electroplate of Wood Engraving of *Portrait of George Washington*, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 37 | Nickel Electroplate of Wood Engraving of El Greco's *Dominican Monk*, 1907 |
| Box OV 2, Folder | Wood Engraving of Eugene Carrière's *La Maternité*, 1909 |
| Box OV 2, Folder | Wood Engraving of Corot's *The Bathers*, 1910 |
| Box OV 2, Folder | Wood Engraving of Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, 1914 |
| Box OV 2, Folder | Wood Engraving of Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait*, 1921 |

## Series 4: Clippings, 1927-1936

*(Box 1; 2 folders)*

Clippings are about Cole, his work, and the publication of the book *Timothy Cole: Wood Engraver* by Alphaeus P. Cole and Margaret Ward Cole in 1936.

Box 1, Folder 38          Clippings, 1927

Box 1, Folder 39          Clippings, 1928-1936

## Series 5: Photograph, 1910

*(Box 1; 1 folder)*

The photograph is of Timothy Cole cutting a wood engraving block while his wife reads a book nearby.

Box 1, Folder 40             Photograph of Timothy Cole and his Wife, circa 1910