



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Dean Cornwell papers, circa 1893-1981, in the Archives of American Art

Allessandra Liberati

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Dean Cornwell papers
Date:	1893-1981
Identifier:	AAA.corndean
Creator:	Cornwell, Dean, 1892-1960
Extent:	3.9 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of Dean Cornwell measure 3.9 linear feet and date from circa 1893-1981. They illustrate his career through biographical material, correspondence, writings, printed and photographic material, and artwork.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Papers were donated in 1984 by Lucy Cornwell, daughter of Dean Cornwell.

Available Formats

Portions of the collection are available on 35mm microfilm reels 3781-3783 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

Dean Cornwell papers, circa 1893-1981. 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.

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Biographical / Historical

Dean Cornwell (1892-1960) was a muralist, painter, and illustrator who worked primarily in New York.

Cornwell was born in Louisville, Kentucky. He began his career as a cartoonist for the *Louisville Herald* and then moved to Chicago where he studied at the Art Institute and worked for the *Chicago Tribune*. In 1915 he moved to New Rochelle, New York where he studied under Harvey Dunn at the Art Students League of New York. Eventually he traveled to London where he began to study mural painting under Frank Brangwyn.

Cornwell was a teacher at the Art Students League in New York, served as President of the Society of Illustrators (1922-1926), and was elected to its Hall of Fame in 1959. In 1934, he was elected Associate Academician into the National Academy of Design, and became a full Academician in 1940. He also served as president of the National Society of Mural painters from 1953 to 1957. At the peak of his career, he earned the nickname "Dean of Illustrators".

Cornwell's artwork was featured in multiple publications including *Cosmopolitan*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Redbook*, and *Good Housekeeping*. He painted many murals during his career including those found in the Sir Walter Raleigh Room in the Hotel Warwick, the Lincoln Memorial Shrine in Redlands, and the General Motors Mural at the 1939 World's Fair in New York.

Cornwell died on December 4th, 1960 at the age of sixty-eight in New York City.

Scope and Contents

The Dean Cornwell papers measure 3.9 linear feet and date from circa 1893-1981. Biographical material consists of a resume, obituaries for Cornwell, estate papers referencing various inheritances, multiple membership and award certificates, and material relating to a *Who's Who in America* article featuring Cornwell. Correspondence is to and from Dean Cornwell and is with artists and business associates. Writings include various essays by Cornwell as well as multiple diaries. Also included are the transcript of a biography about Cornwell titled *Dean Cornwell: Dean of Illustrators* (1978) by Patricia Janus Broder and two article drafts. Printed material consists of exhibition announcements and catalogs, printed reproductions of Cornwell's artwork, news clippings, and two scrapbooks of artwork by others. Photographic material includes personal photographs and photographs of Cornwell as well as photographs of his mural projects. Also included are a set of fifty-seven glass plate negatives which depict various drawings by Cornwell. Artwork includes a folder of sketches.

Arrangement

This collection contains six series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1930-1961 (.1 Linear feet: Box 1)
 - Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1933-1981 (.2 Linear feet: Box 1)
 - Series 3: Writings, circa 1930-1978 (.7 Linear feet: Box 1)
 - Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1924-1970 (1.1 Linear feet: Box 2, OV 5, and OV 6)
 - Series 5: Photographic Material, circa 1893-1960 (1.7 Linear feet: Boxes 2-4, OV 7, and OV 8)
 - Series 6: Artwork, circa 1934 (.1 Linear feet: Box 3)
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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:

Mural painting and decoration -- 20th century -- United States
Mural painting and decoration, American

Types of Materials:

Scrapbooks

Names:

Broder, Patricia Janis

Occupations:

Illustrators -- New York (State) -- New York
Muralists -- New York (State) -- New York
Painters -- New York (State)

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1930-1961

.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Biographical material consists of a resume, obituaries for Cornwell, estate papers, multiple membership and award certificates, and material relating to a *Who's Who in America* article featuring Cornwell.

Box 1, Folder 1	Resume, circa 1934
Box 1, Folder 2	Obituaries, circa 1960
Box 1, Folder 3	Estate Papers, circa 1960-1961
Box 1, Folder 4	The American Legion 193rd Convention Corporation of New York City, Certificate, circa 1938
Box 1, Folder 5	Architectural league of New York, Certificate, circa 1938
Box 1, Folder 6	The Confederate Air Corps, Parody Certificate, circa 1957
Box 1, Folder 7	National Academy of Design, Certificate, circa 1957
Box 1, Folder 8	National Society of Mural Painters, Membership List, circa 1957
Box 1, Folder 9	The Society of Illustrators, Certificate, circa 1930-1935
Box 1, Folder 10	Who's Who In America, Biographical Information, circa 1955-1959
Box 1, Folder 11	George Washington University Club Reception Button, circa 1955
Box 1, Folder 12	Wedding Invitation, Patricia and Dean Bedford, circa 1930
Box 1, Folder 13	Address Book, circa 1941-1957
Box 1, Folder 14	Miscellaneous Biographical Material, circa 1958-1960

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Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1933-1981

.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Correspondence is to and from Dean Cornwell and is with artists and business associates.

Box 1, Folder 15-17	Correspondence (1930s), circa 1933-1939
Box 1, Folder 18	Correspondence (1940s), circa 1940-1949
Box 1, Folder 19-21	Correspondence (1950s), circa 1950-1958
Box 1, Folder 22	Correspondence (1960s), circa 1960-1961
Box 1, Folder 23	Correspondence (1980s), circa 1981
Box 1, Folder 24	Undated Correspondence, circa 1933-1981

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Series 3: Writings, circa 1930-1978

.7 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Writings include various titled essays by Cornwell, as well as multiple diaries. Also included are the transcript of a biography titled *Dean Cornwell: Dean of Illustrators* (1978) by Patricia Janus Broder and two drafts of articles about Cornwell.

By Cornwell

Box 1, Folder 25	"Art", circa 1930-1960
Box 1, Folder 26	"The Gomper's Room", circa 1950
Box 1, Folder 27	"New York World's Fair Mural", circa 1939
Box 1, Folder 28	"Religion", circa 1940
Box 1, Folder 29	"Sir Walter Raleigh Room", circa 1936
Box 1, Folder 30	"Symbolism, Story of Angels, Ideas for Mural Subjects", circa 1949
Box 1, Folder 31	Diary, circa 1941
Box 1, Folder 32	Diary, circa 1942
Box 1, Folder 33	Diary, circa 1943
Box 1, Folder 34	Diary, circa 1946
Box 1, Folder 35	Diary, circa 1957
Box 1, Folder 36	Miscellaneous Notes, circa 1930-1960

By Others

Box 1, Folder 37	Dean Cornwell: Dean of Illustrators (1978) by Patricia Janus Broder, Manuscript, circa 1978
Box 1, Folder 38	"Dean Cornwell", Ebell Magazine, circa 1931
Box 1, Folder 39	"Dean Cornwell" by Willis Birchman, circa 1960

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Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1924-1970

1.1 Linear feet (Box 2, OV 5, and OV 6)

Scope and Contents: Printed material consists of exhibition announcements and catalogs, printed reproductions of Cornwell's artwork including magazine serial illustrations and christmas cards, news clippings, and two scrapbooks of artwork by others.

Box 2, Folder 1	Exhibition Announcements, circa 1953-1970
Box 2, Folder 2	Exhibition Catalogs, circa 1941-1959
Box 2, Folder 3	Christmas Cards Illustrated by Cornwell, circa 1930-1960
Box 2, Folder 4	Color Reproductions from Magazines, circa 1930-1950
Box 2, Folder 5	D.T.C. Event Book, circa 1958
Box 2, Folder 6	Illustrations of Dean Cornwell, circa 1960
Box 2, Folder 7-8	Magazine Serial Illustrations, circa 1924-1925
Box 2, Folder 9-11	Magazine Illustrations by Other Artists, Scrapbook, circa 1930-1940
Oversize 5	Magazine Serial Illustrations, circa 1924-1925
Box 2, Folder 12-16	Magazines, circa 1940-1960
Box 2, Folder 17-22	News Clippings, circa 1926-1963
Oversize 6	News Clippings, circa 1926-1963
Box 2, Folder 23-24	Pictures of Works by Harvey Dunn, Scrapbook, circa 1940-1950
Box 2, Folder 25	Published Articles about Cornwell, circa 1940-1951
Box 2, Folder 26-27	Publications Featuring Artwork, circa 1930-1960

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Series 5: Photographic Material, circa 1893-1960

1.7 Linear feet (Boxes 2-4, OV 7, and OV 8)

Scope and Contents: Photographic material includes photographs of Cornwell, family, and friends. Also included are photographs of his mural projects and photographic prints of a set of fifty-seven glass plate negatives which include a set of nitrate negatives stored separately.

Box 2, Folder 28-29	Cornwell, Dean, circa 1920-1960
Oversize 7	Cornwell, Dean, circa 1920-1960
Box 2, Folder 30	Dean Cornwell and Family, circa 1893-1925
Box 3, Folder 1	Dean Cornwell with Professional Friends, circa 1925-1953
Box 3, Folder 2-3	Dean Cornwell with Professional Friends, Negatives, circa 1925-1953 Folder three contains negatives with vinegar syndrome.
Box 3, Folder 4	Cornwell's Trip to India, circa 1925
Box 3, Folder 5	Cornwell's Trip to India, Negatives, circa 1925
Box 3, Folder 6-7	Cornwell's Models, circa 1930-1960
Box 3, Folder 8	Cornwell's Models, Negatives, circa 1930-1960
	Mural Projects
Box 3, Folder 9	American Battle Monument Projects, circa 1956
Box 3, Folder 10	Davidson County Courthouse, Nashville, Tennessee, circa 1937
Box 3, Folder 11	Detroit Athletic Club: Men's Bar, circa 1936
Box 3, Folder 12	Eastern Airline, circa 1946
Box 3, Folder 13	The Lincoln Shrine, circa 1927-1932
Box 3, Folder 14	Los Angeles Public Library, circa 1927-1933
Box 3, Folder 15	National Bank, circa 1960
Box 3, Folder 16	New England Telephone Company , circa 1952
Box 3, Folder 17	"Pioneers of American Medicine", Series, circa 1941
Box 3, Folder 18	Sir Walter Raleigh Room, circa 1938

Box 3, Folder 19	"Strength and Safety", General Motors Building at the New York's World Fair, circa 1939
Box 3, Folder 20	Tennessee State Building, circa 1941
Box 3, Folder 21	Unidentified Mural, circa 1954
Box 3, Folder 22	Miscellaneous Projects, circa 1925-1940
Box 3, Folder 23	Painting, Drawings, and Cartoons for Murals (1935), Exhibition, circa 1935
Box 3, Folder 24	Biblical Paintings, circa 1940-1949
Box 3, Folder 25	Biblical Paintings, Negatives, circa 1940-1949
Box 3, Folder 26	Magazine Artwork, Color Negatives, circa 1920-1955
Box 3, Folder 27-28	Mural Artwork, Color Negatives, circa 1920-1955
Oversize 8	Photographs of Artwork, circa 1920-1955
Box 3, Folder 29-35	Photographs of Artwork, Negatives, circa 1920-1955
Box 3, Folder 36	Photographs of Artwork, Slides, circa 1920-1955
Box 3, Folder 37-40	Photographs of Artwork, Glass Plate Prints, circa 1920-1955
Box 4	Photographs of Art Work, Glass Plate Negatives, circa 1920-1955
Box NTR1	Nitrate Negatives, circa 1920-1955
Box NTR2	Nitrate Negatives, circa 1920-1955
Box NTR4	Nitrate Negatives, circa 1920-1955
Box NTR8	Nitrate Negatives, circa 1920-1955

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Series 6: Artwork, circa 1934

.1 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Artwork includes a folder of sketches.

Contents:

Box 3, Folder 41

Sketches , circa 1934

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