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

October 2006
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives of American Art
Title: Palmer C. Hayden papers
Identifier: AAA.haydpalm
Date: 1920-1970
Extent: 2.4 Linear feet
Creator: Hayden, Palmer C., 1890-1973
Language: English.
Summary: The papers of African-American painter Palmer C. Hayden date from 1920-1970 and measure 2.4 linear feet. The collection contains biographical material, including 32 diaries documenting Hayden’s daily activities, scattered correspondence relating to art sales and Hayden’s work for the Works Progress Administration, printed material, 47 sketchbooks compiled over a period of almost forty years, and photographs of Hayden and his artwork.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
The collection was donated by Palmer C. Hayden in 1970 and a portion of it was microfilmed shortly after receipt.

Available Formats
The papers of Palmer C. Hayden in the Archives of American Art were digitized in 2007 and total 4,060 images.

Negatives of photographs of artwork have not been digitized.

Processing Information
The collection was microfilmed at some point after receipt on reels 43-47. It was fully processed, arranged, and described by Stephanie Ashley in October 2006, and scanned, with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions
The collection has been digitized and is available online via AAA’s website.
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Biographical / Historical

Born Peyton Cole Hedgeman, in Widewater, Virginia in 1890, Palmer Hayden received his first art instruction through correspondence courses, then studied in 1925 with Asa Grant Randall at the Boothbay Art Colony, in Maine, specializing in marine subjects. In 1927, Hayden's seascape, Schooners, won first prize for "Distinguished Achievement in Fine Arts" in the Harmon Foundation's first awards ceremony. With that award, and an additional grant from a patron, Hayden was able to continue his studies in Paris, where he further developed his skills in seascapes and ethnic subject matter. Hayden was among the first African-American artists to use African-American subjects and designs in his painting.

Hayden returned to the United States in 1932 and worked steadily over the next several years for the United States government, including the Treasury Relief Art Project and the Works Progress Administration. In 1944 Hayden began work on his noted Ballad of John Henry series of twelve paintings that would occupy him for a decade. In his later work, Hayden continued to focus on African-American themes, capturing both rural gatherings in the South and the urban milieu of New York.


Scope and Contents

The papers of African-American painter Palmer C. Hayden date from 1920-1970 and measure 2.4 linear feet. The collection contains biographical material, including 32 diaries documenting Hayden's daily activities, scattered correspondence relating to art sales and Hayden's work for the Works Progress Administration, printed material, 47 sketchbooks compiled over a period of almost forty years, and photographs of Hayden and his artwork.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 6 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1920-1969 (Box 1; 2 folders)
- Series 2: Diaries, 1938-1967 (Boxes 1-2; 0.5 linear ft.)
- Series 3: Correspondence, 1922-1967 (Box 2; 2 folders)
- Series 4: Printed Material, 1926-1969 (Box 2; 2 folders)
- Series 5: Sketchbooks and Sketches, 1924-circa 1960 (Boxes 2-6; 1.8 linear ft.)
- Series 6: Photographs, 1932-1970 (Box 6; 4 folders)
Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:
   African American artists

Types of Materials:
   Diaries
   Photographs
   Sketchbooks

Names:
   United States. Works Progress Administration

Occupations:
   Painters -- New York (State) -- New York
Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1920-1969

(Boxes 1; 2 folders)

This series includes general biographical materials such as a biographical sketch of Hayden, a Columbia University transcript, and a typescript of an essay or speech by Hayden on race relations, titled "It's Hard But It's Fair."

Box 1, Folder 1  Address Books and Lists, undated
   Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 2  General Biographical Material, 1920-1969, undated
   Image(s)
Series 2: Diaries, 1938-1967

(Boxes 1-2; 0.5 linear feet)

This series consists of diaries and trip logs documenting Hayden's activities through short daily entries in small pocket diaries, and more extensive accounts of travel in spiral-bound notebooks. Entries typically contain observations about the weather, meals, errands and meetings with friends and others.

The series is arranged chronologically.

Box 1, Folder 3  Diaries, 1938-1940
(3 diaries)
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 4  Diaries, 1945-1947
(3 diaries)
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 5  Diaries, 1948-1950
(3 diaries)
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 6  Diaries, Trip Log, New York to Los Angeles, June-July 1950
(2 log books)
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 7  Diary, Trip Log, New England, 1951
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 8  Diaries, 1951-1953
(3 diaries)
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 9  Diary, Trip Log, New England and Canada, 1952-1953
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 10  Diary, Trip Log, 1954
(1 log book)
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 11  Diaries, 1954, 1955
(2 log books)
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 12  Diary, Trip Log, San Francisco to Los Angeles, 1955
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 13  Diaries, 1956-1958
Box 1, Folder 14  Diaries, 1959-1961  
(3 diaries)  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 15  Diaries, 1962-1963  
(2 diaries)  
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 1  Diary, Trip Log, 1963  
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 2  Diaries, 1964-1965  
(2 diaries)  
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 3  Diaries, 1966-1967  
(2 diaries)  
Image(s)
Series 3: Correspondence, 1922-1967

(Box 2; 2 folders)

Correspondence in this series documents the sale and exhibition of Hayden's paintings, and includes administrative letters relating to Hayden's work for the Works Progress Administration and the Treasury Relief Art Project. The series also includes some scattered personal correspondence.

Box 2, Folder 4
Correspondence, 1922-1929, undated
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 5
Correspondence, 1931-1967
Image(s)

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Series 4: Printed Material, 1926-1969

(Box 2; 2 folders)

This series includes clippings with reviews of Hayden exhibitions, including a 1927 issue of the Paris based periodical *Revue du Vrai et du Beau* containing a review of Hayden's work. There is also a fragment of a catalog from a 1926 Hayden exhibition in New York, and a catalog of the exhibition, *The Ballad of John Henry in Paintings by Palmer Hayden*, at Argent Galleries in New York City, January 1947.

Box 2, Folder 6  Clippings, 1926-1969, undated
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 7  Exhibition Catalogs, 1926, 1947
Image(s)
Series 5: Sketchbooks and Sketches, 1924-circa 1960

(Boxes 2-6; 1.8 linear feet)

This series is arranged as 2 subseries:

- 5.1: Sketchbooks and Sketches by Hayden, 1924-circa 1960
- 5.2: Sketches by Others, 1928

5.1: Sketchbooks and Sketches by Hayden, 1924-circa 1960

This subseries consists of several loose sketches and 47 sketchbooks that Hayden compiled over an almost 40 year period. Pencil is the primary medium, but there are also some sketches in ink and watercolor. The sketchbooks contain sketches of landscapes and coastal scenes, including many from 1927 to 1932 when Hayden lived in Paris and Brittany, France. Some of the sketchbooks document trips taken by Hayden and include his travel notes and notes on his daily activities.

Loose sketches are followed by sketchbooks. Sketchbooks are arranged chronologically with some overlap for those that span several years.

Box 2, Folder 8  Loose Sketches, undated
                Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 9  Sketchbook, undated
                Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 10 Sketchbook, "N. Y. Environ's", 1924
                Image(s): Sketchbook, "N. Y. Environ's,"

Box 2, Folder 11 Sketchbook, "Pelham Bay Park & Envir's", circa 1924-1925
                Image(s): Sketchbook, "Pelham Bay Park & Envir's,"

Box 2, Folder 12 Sketchbook, "Around Pelham Bay", circa 1924-1925
                Image(s): Sketchbook, "Around Pelham Bay,"

Box 2, Folder 13 Sketchbook, 1925-circa 1930
                Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 14 Sketchbook, circa 1926
                Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 15 Sketchbook, France, circa 1926
                Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 1 Sketchbook, "Port Louis, France", circa 1926
                Image(s): Sketchbook, "Port Louis, France,"

Box 3, Folder 2 Sketchbook, New York, circa 1927-1930
Box 3, Folder 3  Sketchbook, France, circa 1927-1932
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 4  Sketchbook, circa 1928
Image(s): Sketchbooks

Box 3, Folder 5  Sketchbook, circa 1928
Image(s): Sketchbooks

Box 3, Folder 6  Sketchbook, circa 1928-1930
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 7  Sketchbook, circa 1929
Image(s): Sketchbooks

Box 3, Folder 8  Sketchbook, circa 1929
Image(s): Sketchbooks

Box 3, Folder 9  Sketchbook, circa 1929
Image(s): Sketchbooks

Box 3, Folder 10 Sketchbook, circa 1929
Image(s): Sketchbooks

Box 4, Folder 1  Sketchbook, "Concarneau", 1929
Image(s): Sketchbook, "Concarneau,"

Box 4, Folder 2  Sketchbook, France, circa 1930
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 3  Sketchbook, circa 1934-1952
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 4  Sketchbook, "W. VA, VA and Big Bend Tunnel, 1st Trip, and Berkshires", circa 1935-1945
Image(s): Sketchbook, "W. VA, VA and Big Bend Tunnel, 1st Trip, and Berkshires."

Box 4, Folder 5  Sketchbook, circa 1938
Image(s): Sketchbooks

Box 4, Folder 6  Sketchbook, circa 1938
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box, Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 7</td>
<td>Sketchbook, &quot;Cape Cod, Misc &amp; Trip to Columbus, Ohio&quot;, circa 1938</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 8</td>
<td>Sketchbook, &quot;N.Y.C. &amp; Environs&quot;, circa 1939</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 1</td>
<td>Sketchbook, circa 1940</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 2</td>
<td>Sketchbook, 1940s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 3</td>
<td>Sketchbook, circa 1941</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 4</td>
<td>Sketchbook, circa 1941-1943</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 5</td>
<td>Sketchbook, circa 1943</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 6</td>
<td>Sketchbook, circa 1943-1949</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 7</td>
<td>Sketchbook, &quot;John Henry Sketches&quot;, circa 1944</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 8</td>
<td>Sketchbook, &quot;N.Y.C. and Up the River/Trip to Berkshires...&quot;, circa 1945</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 9</td>
<td>Sketchbook, circa 1945-1949</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 10</td>
<td>Sketchbook, circa 1945-1953</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 11</td>
<td>Sketchbook, circa 1946</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 12</td>
<td>Sketchbook, &quot;In Canada&quot;, circa 1946</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 13</td>
<td>Sketchbook, &quot;Sketches for Dutch Colonial Book and a Few John Henry&quot;, 1946-1947</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Image(s): Sketchbook, "Sketches for Dutch Colonial Book and a Few John Henry."

Box 6, Folder 1  Sketchbook, "2nd Trip to Big Bend and Other Points in W. VA", circa 1947  
Image(s): Sketchbook, "2nd Trip to Big Bend and Other Points in W. VA."

Box 6, Folder 2  Sketchbook, circa 1948  
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 3  Sketchbook, circa 1950  
Image(s): Sketchbooks

Box 6, Folder 4  Sketchbook, circa 1950  
Image(s): Sketchbooks

Box 6, Folder 5  Sketchbook, "Vacations in New York State", circa 1950-1951  
Image(s): Sketchbook, "Vacations in New York State,"

Box 6, Folder 6  Sketchbook, circa 1954  
Image(s): Sketchbooks

Box 6, Folder 7  Sketchbook, circa 1954  
Image(s): Sketchbooks

Box 6, Folder 8  Sketchbook, circa 1960  
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 9  Sketchbook, France, circa 1960  
Image(s)

5.2: Sketches by Others, 1928

This subseries consists of a 1928 pencil sketch of Hayden by Hale Woodruff and an undated pencil sketch inscribed "With admiration to a fine artist, Palmer Hayden, best wishes Hilda Simms."

Box 6, Folder 10  Artwork by Others, 1928, undated  
Image(s): Artwork by Others

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Series 6: Photographs, 1932-1970

(Box 6; 4 folders)

Personal photographs are primarily of Hayden and include one of the artist working on a painting at St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1956. There are also photos of Hayden and others at an exhibition opening of his work at Fisk University in 1970. Photographs of artwork include studies for his series of twelve paintings illustrating *The Ballad of John Henry*. This subseries also contains negatives.

Box 6, Folder 11  Personal Photographs, 1932-1970, undated
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 12  Photographs of Artwork, undated
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 13  Photographs of Artwork from Sketchbooks, undated
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 14  Photographs of Artwork from Sketchbooks, Negatives, undated

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