



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Martin Johnson Heade
Papers, 1853-1904, 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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Archives of American Art
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<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Martin Johnson Heade papers
Identifier:	AAA.headmart
Date:	1853-1904
Extent:	0.4 Linear feet
Creator:	Heade, Martin Johnson, 1819-1904
Language:	English .
Summary:	The scattered papers of painter Martin Johnson Heade measure 0.4 linear feet and date from 1853 to 1904. The bulk of the collection consists of letters from his friend and fellow artist, Frederic Edwin Church between 1866-1899. Within the papers is an annotated sketchbook, circa 1853-1877, and a detailed handwritten notebook about hummingbirds dating from circa 1864 and circa 1881. Also found are a few letters and notes from others, deeds, and an 1865 exhibition catalog.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The collection was donated in 1955 by Robert McIntyre, art historian and director of the Macbeth Gallery.

Related Material

Related material found in the Archives includes a Martin Johnson Heade letter to Frederic Edwin Church, 1868, and the microfilm of a loan of Martin Johnson Heade papers housed at the Bucks County Historical Society containing biographical material about Heade, available on reel 4408. Originals are located at Bucks County Historical Society.

Alternative Forms Available

The papers of **Martin Johnson Heade** in the Archives of American Art were digitized in 2007, and total 214 images.

Processing Information

The Martin Johnson Heade papers received a preliminary level of processing at some point after donation. Material was microfilmed in the order that it was donated on reel D5. The notebook and sketchbook were professionally conserved in 2004. The collection was fully processed by Erin Corley in 2006 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art, and was scanned in 2007 with funding from the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Preferred Citation

Martin Johnson Heade papers, 1853-1904. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

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

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Biographical Note

Martin Johnson Heade was born in Lumberville, Pennsylvania, in 1819. He studied art under painter Edward Hicks, and began his career as a portrait painter. After traveling abroad and living in Rome for two years, he made his artistic debut in 1841 at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Heade began exhibiting regularly in 1848, after another trip to Europe, and became an itinerant artist until he settled in New York in 1859. In the early 1860s he turned to painting landscapes and seascapes, in which he could explore spatial structure and the effects of light. During this period he became friends with fellow landscape painter, Frederic Edwin Church, one of his few friends in the art world, and with whom he exchanged letters for over thirty years. Besides landscapes, Heade painted many still-lives of flowers. After trips to South and Central America in 1863-1864, 1866, and 1870, he began painting hummingbirds and orchids in tropical settings. Heade was never fully accepted by the New York art establishment and for a period of time resumed his itinerant lifestyle. In 1883 he settled in Saint Augustine, Florida and married. He also found a patron, Henry Morrison Flagler, to commission his work, and continued to paint still-lives, swamp scenes, and hummingbirds, until his death in 1904.

Scope and Content Note

The scattered papers of painter Martin Johnson Heade measure 0.4 linear feet and date from 1853 to 1904. The bulk of the collection consists of letters from his friend and fellow artist, Frederic Edwin Church between 1866-1899. Within the papers is an annotated sketchbook, circa 1853-1877, and a detailed handwritten notebook about hummingbirds dating from circa 1864 and circa 1881. Also found are a few letters and notes from others, deeds, and an 1865 exhibition catalog.

Arrangement

Due to the small size of this collection, items are arranged by type of material into folders. Within each folder, items are arranged chronologically.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Hummingbirds
Painting -- United States

Types of Materials:

Sketchbooks

Names:

Church, Frederic Edwin, 1826-1900

Occupations:

Painters -- Florida

Container Listing

Series 1: Martin Johnson Heade papers, circa 1853-1904

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1)

The collection consists of forty letters, some illustrated, from Frederic Church discussing his paintings, his studio, trips abroad to Rome, Syria, and Mexico, his health and his family, and other artists. Church also responds to Heade's letters and provides advice on various subjects. Letters from others include a letter expressing thanks from May Camphen and a letter from the Illinois Audubon Society to the Estate of Martin Johnson Heade requesting a likeness of Mr. Heade for their collection. Also found is a note of praise to Sarita Brady. Within the papers is an annotated sketchbook by Heade containing pencil drawings of animals and landscapes as well as a few notes on art and his travels to South America and a detailed handwritten notebook that includes an essay and other notes on hummingbirds. Miscellaneous papers include deeds for Heade's property in Chicago, Illinois, and an 1865 catalog for the "Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts" in which Heade exhibited.

Box 1, Folder 1 Letters from Frederic Edwin Church, 1866-1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 2 Letters from Frederic Edwin Church, 1869-1871

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 3 Letters from Frederic Edwin Church, 1873-1878

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 4 Letters from Frederic Edwin Church, 1880-1884

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 5 Letters from Frederic Edwin Church, 1885-1899

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 6 Letters from others, 1900-1904

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 7 Note to Sarita Brady, undated

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 8 Annotated Sketchbook, circa 1853-1877

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 9 Notebook on Hummingbirds, circa 1881, circa 1864

[Image\(s\)](#)

This notebook contains a draft introduction to "Gems of Brazil" which would have been written circa 1864, following a trip to Brazil. Heade left Brazil for London in early 1864, where he tried to publish his book, but abandoned the idea and left

England in 1865. Entries later in the notebook, including references to "game monopolies" and painting sales, seem related to events in 1881.

Box 1, Folder 10

Deeds, 1853-1855, 1876

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 11

Exhibition Catalog, "The Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts", 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

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