



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Morris Henry Hobbs Papers,
circa 1901-2014, in the Archives of American Art

Erin Kinhart

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Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Morris Henry Hobbs papers
Identifier:	AAA.hobbmorr
Date:	circa 1901-2014
Extent:	4.7 Linear feet
Creator:	Hobbs, Morris Henry, 1892-1967
Language:	Collection is in English.
Summary:	The papers of etcher Morris Henry Hobbs measure 4.7 linear feet and date from circa 1901-2014. His career as an artist in Chicago and New Orleans is documented through biographical material, correspondence, writings, professional files, printed material, photographs, artwork, and four sketchbooks.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated in 2014 by Reed Isbell-Hobbs, widow of Morris Henry Hobbs' son William Hobbs.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Erin Kinhart in 2016.

Preferred Citation

Morris Henry Hobbs papers, circa 1901-2014. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

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Biographical / Historical

Morris Henry Hobbs (1892-1967) was an etcher in Chicago and New Orleans. Hobbs was born in Rockford, Illinois, and raised in Chicago. As a teenager he took classes at the Art Institute of Chicago and at the age of 17 was hired as a draftsman at an architectural firm. From 1918-1919, he served in France with the Allied Expeditionary Force. While there he contracted influenza which resulted in the loss of his hearing. After the war he lived in Toledo, Ohio, with his wife and two daughters and worked at an architectural firm. He also learned printmaking techniques from etcher J. Ernest Dean and began exhibiting his work. In 1927, he returned to Chicago with his family and in 1930 became director of the Chicago Society of Etchers. During his career he was active in many arts and printmaking organizations.

In 1938, Hobbs traveled to New Orleans for an extended visit, opened a studio space, and began a ten-year project of etching French Quarter scenes. A year later he moved to New Orleans permanently and became the first president of the Louisiana Society of Etchers. In 1942, he married Alice "Judy" Seddon. In 1948, he was hired as a designer for the architectural firm Favrot, Reed, Mathes and Bergman, and was employed there until his death. Also at this time, he and his wife establish a country home in Mandeville, Louisiana, where he built a greenhouse and cultivated tropical bromeliads. They kept an apartment in the French Quarter as a weekday residence.

In 1960, Hobbs began a series of watercolors depicting bromeliads and in the subsequent years traveled to Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Trinidad to collect specimens for a potential book project. He died in 1967 at the age of 75 and that year the Reinike Gallery held a retrospective of his work. His wife Alice Seddon Hobbs died in 1993 at the age of 95.

Scope and Contents

The papers of etcher Morris Henry Hobbs measure 4.7 linear feet and date from circa 1901-2014. His career as an artist in Chicago and New Orleans is documented through biographical material, correspondence, writings, professional files, printed material, photographs, artwork, and four sketchbooks.

Biographical material includes chronologies, biographical statements, and documentation on his home and studio. Correspondence includes letters to friends and family regarding art, travel, and botany. Of note are letters from the etchers John Taylor Arms and Bertha Jaques and botanist Lyman Smith. Writings consist of Hobbs' diary kept during World War I while serving in the U.S. Army, journal pages documenting his move to New Orleans, and garden notebooks. Professional files include documents relating to Hobbs' memberships and activities in the Bromeliad Society, Chicago Society of Etchers, Louisiana Society of Etchers, New Orleans Art League, and other organizations. Also included are exhibition records, price lists, and sales records.

Printed material includes clippings and exhibition announcements documenting his career as well as published versions of his etchings. Photographs and slides are of Hobbs, family and friends, trips abroad, and his properties in New Orleans and Mandeville, Louisiana. Artwork includes architectural renderings, sketches of Chicago, France, and New Orleans, and an annotated scrapbook containing original etchings. Four sketchbooks include figure drawings and landscapes in pencil and ink.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 8 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1918-2014 (0.2 linear feet; Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1921-1993 (0.7 linear feet; Boxes 1 and 5)
- Series 3: Writings, 1918-2014 (0.3 linear feet; Boxes 1-2)
- Series 4: Professional Files, 1922-2014 (1.0 linear foot; Boxes 2-3)
- Series 5: Printed Material, 1929-2014 (0.6 linear feet; Box 3)
- Series 6: Photographs, circa 1901-1991 (0.6 linear feet; Boxes 3-4)
- Series 7: Artwork, circa 1919-1950s (0.3 linear feet; Boxes 4-5)
- Series 8: Sketchbooks, 1930s-1950s (0.2 linear feet; Box 4)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Gardening
World War, 1914-1918

Types of Materials:

Architectural drawings
Diaries
Photographs
Prints
Scrapbooks
Sketchbooks
Sketches

Names:

Arms, John Taylor, 1887-1953
Bromeliad Society
Chicago Society of Etchers
Jacques, Bertha
Louisiana Society of Etchers
New Orleans Art League
Smith, Lyman B.

Occupations:

Etchers -- Illinois -- Chicago
Etchers -- Louisiana -- New Orleans

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1918-2014

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Biographical Material includes chronologies, biographical statements, vital records, and military records. Also included are subject files regarding living in New Orleans, Hobbs' home and studio, and hurricane experiences. Additionally, there are two guest books for studio visitors.

Box 1, Folder 1	Biographies and Chronologies, circa 1966-2014
Box 1, Folder 2	Alice Seddon Hobbs Biographical Information, 1950-2014
Box 1, Folder 3	Birth and Death Certificates, 1967, 1961
Box 1, Folder 4	House in Mandeville, Louisiana, 1945-1973
Box 1, Folder 5	Hurricanes, 1964-1969
Box 1, Folder 6	Life in the French Quarter, 1939-1962
Box 1, Folder 7	Military Service, 1918-1967
Box 1, Folder 8	Move to New Orleans, 1938-1939
Box 1, Folder 9	New Orleans Studios, 1938-1974
Box 1, Folder 10	Obituaries, 1967
Box 1, Folder 11	Pontalba Apartments, 1952-1961
Box 1, Folder 12	Studio and Home Guest Book, 1938-1939
Box 1, Folder 13	Studio and Home Guest Book, 1940-1992

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1921-1993

0.7 Linear feet (Box 1 and 5)

Correspondence primarily consists of personal letters to and from friends and family regarding art, travel, and botany. Of note are letters from the etchers John Taylor Arms and Bertha Jaques and botanist Lyman Smith. Additional professional correspondence is included in Series 4: Professional Files.

Box 1, Folder 14	Arms, John Taylor, 1939-1950
Box 1, Folder 15	Condolence Letters, 1967-1969
Box 1, Folder 16-31	Davis, Ralph, 1959-1970
Box 1, Folder 32	Dean, J. Ernest, 1928-1932
Box 1, Folder 33	Hobbs Family Christmas Letters, 1959-1993
Box 1, Folder 34	Jaques, Bertha, 1939-1940
Box 1, Folder 35	Smith, Lyman (Smithsonian Horticulture), 1941, 1954-circa 1966
Box 1, Folder 36	Wisdom, William and Mary, 1960-1985
Box 1, Folder 37	General Correspondence, 1921-1967
Box 5	Oversized Handmade Card from Friends, 1953

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Series 3: Writings, 1918-2014

0.3 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Writings include draft manuscripts and notes for a book on etchings, loose journal pages documenting Hobbs' move to New Orleans in 1938, and a garden diary and notebook documenting his bromeliad collection. Also found are original pages from a pocket diary Hobbs kept during his service in World War I and a typescript of the diary by Reed Isbell-Hobbs. Writings by Alice Seddon Hobbs include two essays and a speech about her husband's artwork.

Box 1, Folder 38	"How Etchings Are Made", 1937-1985
Box 1, Folder 39	Journal Pages, 1938
Box 2, Folder 1	Mandeville Garden Diary, 1949-1950
Box 2, Folder 2	Notebook on Bromeliad Collection, 1955-1956
Box 2, Folder 3	Poetry, 1941-1967
Box 2, Folder 4	World War I Diary (Original and Typescript), 1918-1919, 2014
Box 2, Folder 5	Writings by Alice Seddon Hobbs, 1967, undated

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Series 4: Professional Files, 1922-2014

1 Linear foot (Boxes 2-3)

Professional files include documents relating to Hobbs' memberships and activities in the Bromeliad Society, Chicago Society of Etchers, Louisiana Society of Etchers, New Orleans Art League, and other organizations. Also included are exhibition records, price lists, and sales records. Additionally there are records documenting his career as an architectural draftsman. Files may include correspondence, publications, news clippings, lists of artworks, and event photographs. Some records dating after Hobbs' death in 1967 were maintained by his wife, Alice "Judy" Seddon Hobbs.

Box 2, Folder 6-8	Architectural Career, circa 1920s-1963
Box 2, Folder 9	Art Dealers, 1930-1962
Box 2, Folder 10	Art Institute of Chicago, 1932-1940
Box 2, Folder 11	Bromeliad Society, 1952-1977 Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 12	California Society of Etchers, 1938-1950
Box 2, Folder 13	Chicago Society of Etchers, 1931-1954
Box 2, Folder 14	Chicago Studio, 1930-1943
Box 2, Folder 15	Harmanson Bookseller, circa 1958
Box 2, Folder 16	Historic New Orleans Collection, 1959-1976
Box 2, Folder 17	Houston Museum of Fine Arts, 1966
Box 2, Folder 18	Library of Congress, 1937-1950
Box 2, Folder 19	Louisiana Society of Etchers, 1939-1941
Box 2, Folder 20	Louisiana State Museum, 1985-1987
Box 2, Folder 21	MacDowell Colony, 1943-1956
Box 2, Folder 22	Miniature Print Society, 1941-1942, 2014
Box 2, Folder 23	New Orleans Art Associations, 1939-1950
Box 2, Folder 24	Permo Press, 1936-1938

Box 2, Folder 25-26	Price Lists and Sales Records, 1967-1978
Box 2, Folder 27	Reinike Gallery, 1967-1973
Box 2, Folder 28	St. Tammany Art Association, 1983-1987
Box 2, Folder 29	Salmagundi Club, circa 1945-1948
Box 2, Folder 30	Smithsonian Institution, 1936-1939
Box 2, Folder 31-32	Society of American Etchers, 1928-1950
Box 2, Folder 33	Toledo Museum of Art, 1922-1954
Box 2, Folder 34	Tulane University, 1951-1969
Box 2, Folder 35	University of Southwest Louisiana, 1963
Box 2, Folder 36	Various Exhibitions, Louisiana, circa 1939-1963
Box 2, Folder 37	Various Exhibitions, Midwest US, 1930-1971
Box 3, Folder 1	Various Exhibitions, Northeast US, 1931-1948
Box 3, Folder 2-3	Various Exhibitions, Southern US, 1930-1970
Box 3, Folder 4	Various Exhibitions, Western US, 1931-1948

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Series 5: Printed Material, 1929-2014

0.6 Linear feet (Box 3)

Printed material documents Hobbs' career through news clippings, one scrapbook containing new clippings, exhibition catalogs, and brochures listing prints for sale. Also found are published reproductions of Hobbs' etchings found in advertisements, event programs, a deck of cards, and on the cover of several issues of the *Bromeliad Society Bulletin*.

Box 3, Folder 5	Book Jacket Illustration, 2014, 1946
Box 3, Folder 6-8	<i>Bromeliad Society Bulletin</i> , 1952, 1958-1964
Box 3, Folder 9-11	Clippings, 1932-1986
Box 3, Folder 12	Clippings Scrapbook, 1929-1936
Box 3, Folder 13-14	Commercial Art Samples, 1939-1960s
Box 3, Folder 15-16	Exhibition Catalogs and Print Brochures, 1930s-1986
Box 3, Folder 17	Mardi Gras/Carnival Program Illustrations, 1948-1957
Box 3, Folder 18	Miscellaneous Printed Material, circa 1938-1991
Box 3, Folder 19	Playing Cards, circa 1940s
Box 3, Folder 20	Published Etching Descriptions, undated

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Series 6: Photographs, circa 1901-1991

0.6 Linear feet (Boxes 3-4)

Photographs and slides are of Hobbs, his family, trips abroad, his properties in New Orleans and Mandeville, Louisiana, and artwork.

Box 3, Folder 21	Morris Henry Hobbs, circa 1930s-1960s Oversized material housed in Box 5.
Box 3, Folder 22-23	Alice Seddon Hobbs, circa 1901-1980s
Box 3, Folder 24	William Hobbs, circa 1945-1958
Box 3, Folder 25	Jaycox Family, 1991, 1936
Box 3, Folder 26	Homes and Studios, circa 1930s-1950s
Box 3, Folder 27	Travels in Central America, circa 1960s
Box 3, Folder 28-29	Artwork, circa 1940s, undated
Box 3, Folder 30	Slides of Bromeliads, circa 1950s
Box 3, Folder 31	Slides of House and Garden at Mandeville, circa 1950s
Box 3, Folder 32	Slides of Carnival, 1956
Box 3, Folder 33	Slides of Travel, 1962
Box 4, Folder 1-5	Slides of Travel, 1963-1966
Box 5	Oversized Photographs of Morris Henry Hobbs from Box 3, Folder 21, circa 1940-1960s
Box 5	Oversized Photograph of James Swann, 1936

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Series 7: Artwork, circa 1919-1950s

0.3 Linear feet (Boxes 4-5)

Artwork includes Hobbs' original prints and sketches of Chicago, France, and New Orleans, as well as architectural renderings and plans created during his career as a draftsman. Also of note is a scrapbook containing original etchings in chronological order with annotations about the sale, exhibition, and printing process of each work. Additional artwork includes original bookplates and illustrations by Hobbs and a few pencil drawings by others.

Box 4, Folder 6	Architectural Renderings, 1929-1931 Oversized material housed in Box 5.
Box 4, Folder 7	Bookplates, circa 1930s-1940s
Box 4, Folder 8	"Louisiana Cookery" Illustrations, undated
Box 4, Folder 9	Prints and Sketches, "Louisiana Works", circa 1930s-1940s Oversized material housed in Box 5.
Box 4, Folder 10	Prints and Sketches, "Works from France", circa 1919-1940s Oversized material housed in Box 5.
Box 4, Folder 11	Prints and Sketches, "Chicago Works", circa 1930s Oversized material housed in Box 5.
Box 4, Folder 12	Prints and Sketches, Miscellaneous, undated
Box 4, Folder 13	Stationery Designs, circa 1930s-1950s
Box 4, Folder 14	Drawings by Others, 1933 Oversized material housed in Box 5.
Box 5	Oversize Scrapbook of Etchings, circa 1926-1929
Box 5	Oversize Architectural Plans, circa 1935-1944
Box 5	Oversized Architectural Renderings from Box 4, Folder 6, 1935
Box 5	Oversized Prints and Sketches, "Louisiana Works" from Box 4, Folder 9
Box 5	Oversized Prints and Sketches, "Works from France" from Box 4, Folder 10
Box 5	Oversized Prints and Sketches, "Chicago Works" from Box 4, Folder 11
Box 5	Oversized Drawings by Others from Box 4, Folder 14, 1941

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Series 8: Sketchbooks, 1930s-1950s

0.2 Linear feet (Box 4)

Four sketchbooks include figure drawings, landscapes, and street scenes from the French Quarter in pencil and ink.

Box 4, Folder 15	Sketchbook, "Pen Sketches and Studies for Block Prints", circa 1930s
Box 4, Folder 16	Sketchbook, "Carnival Sketches", 1938
Box 4, Folder 17	Sketchbook, circa 1939
Box 4, Folder 18	Sketchbook, circa 1950s

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