



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Percy Ives Papers,  
circa 1890-1994, bulk circa 1890-circa  
1930, in the Archives of American Art

Stephanie Ashley

2018/08/03

Archives of American Art  
750 9th Street, NW  
Victor Building, Suite 2200  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Arrangement.....	3
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Names and Subjects .....	3
Container Listing .....	4
Series 1: Percy Ives Papers, circa 1890-1994.....	4

---

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Percy Ives papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.ivesperc
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1890-1994 (bulk circa 1890-circa 1930)
<b>Extent:</b>	1.4 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of Detroit portrait painter Percy Ives (1864-1928), measure 1.4 linear feet and date from circa 1890-1994, with the bulk of the material dating from circa 1890-circa 1930. Two hundred and fifty-eight glass plate negatives of sitters, models, and artwork by Ives form the bulk of the collection. Additional papers include two 1923 letters, a folder of notes, news clippings, sketches, and photographs.

---

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library gave the Archives of American Art Percy Ives' sketches and glass plate negatives in 1956-1957 and lent material for microfilming in 1973. James B. Parker, whose father, Dr. Albert Russell Parker, purchased Ives's desk with the items intact, donated additional material in 1994.

### Separated Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds material lent for microfilming (reel 593) including two diaries, 1885-1887 and 1903-1907, three albums containing photographs of family and friends, a book of illustrations of commercial signs painted by Ives, and fifteen loose sketches. Lent materials were returned to the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library in Detroit, Michigan 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 565 and 593. 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

The glass plate negative were re-housed in 2015 with a grant provided by the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund. Sketches were microfilmed on reel 565 at some point after donation, and this material was merged with the 1994 donation, processed, and described in a finding aid by Stephanie Ashley in 2018.

## Preferred Citation

Percy Ives papers, circa 1890-1994, bulk circa 1890-circa 1930. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C., Research Center.

## Conditions Governing Use

The Percy Ives 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.

---

## Biographical / Historical

Portrait painter and dean of the Detroit Museum of Art School, Percy Ives (1864-1928), was the son of artist Lewis Thomas Ives; father and son were considered to be among the most notable Detroit artists of the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Ives studied initially with his father, and subsequently attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in the early-1880s, and the Academié Julian and École des Beaux-Arts in Paris from 1884 to 1890. He exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1887 and 1893, and at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.

After returning to the United States, Ives settled in Detroit where his father had a studio, and painted portraits, often of prominent men of Michigan, as well as a number of people outside the state including Grover Cleveland and Walt Whitman. Notable examples of his portraiture hang in many of the county and state buildings of Michigan.

Ives was a member of several Detroit artist associations, such as the Scarab Club, served as incorporator, trustee, and treasurer of the Detroit Museum of Art before it became the Detroit Institute of Arts, was appointed dean of the museum school in 1896, and designed the seal of the institute.

Ives died suddenly in 1928 at the age of 63.

---

## Scope and Contents

The papers of Detroit portrait painter Percy Ives (1864-1928), measure 1.4 linear feet and date from circa 1890-1994, with the bulk of the material dating from circa 1890-circa 1930. Two hundred and fifty-eight glass plate negatives of sitters, models, and artwork by Ives form the bulk of the collection. Additional papers include two 1923 letters, a folder of notes, news clippings, sketches, and photographs.

Letters include one to "The Oil and Colour Man" from "The Dweller in the Cave of Winds," and an IOU from A. W. "Gus" Ives to Percy Ives.

Notes include seven index cards with notes on "nibbles" and sales of paintings; and notes about Ives made in 1936 by James Parker's father. News clippings include four 1940 issues of a newspaper column, "We Old Timers," about Ives and his family.

Artwork consists of fifty-eight pencil sketches which have been mounted on the pages of a photograph album.

Thirty-seven photographs, most of them mounted on paper, include two which appear to be of Ives in his studio. The other photographs are of the interior and exterior of a house, an unidentified woman, farm scenes, and other outdoor scenes. There are also two photographs of paintings by Ives, including a self portrait.

---

## Arrangement

Due to the small size of the collection, the papers are arranged as one series.

- Series 1: Percy Ives Papers, (1.4 linear feet; Boxes 1-4)

---

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art teachers--Michigan--Detroit  
Art--Study and teaching--Michigan--Detroit  
Artists' studios--Photographs  
Arts administrators--Michigan--Detroit  
Portrait painters--Michigan--Detroit  
Portrait painting--United States

Types of Materials:

Glass negatives  
Photographs  
Sketches

Names:

Detroit Museum of Art. School  
Ives, Percy L. (Percival L.), 1864-1928

---

## Container Listing

### Series 1: Percy Ives Papers, circa 1890-1994

#### *1.4 Linear feet (Boxes 1-4)*

The series includes one letter to "The Oil and Colour Man" from "The Dweller in the Cave of Winds"; and one IOU from A. W. "Gus" Ives to Percy Ives.

Notes include seven index cards with notes on "nibbles" and sales of paintings; and notes about Ives made in 1936 by James Parker's father. News clippings include four 1940 issues of a newspaper column, "We Old Timers," about Ives and his family.

Artwork consists of fifty-eight pencil sketches which have been mounted on the pages of a photograph album.

Thirty-seven photographs, most of them mounted on paper, include two which appear to be of Ives in his studio. The other photographs are of the interior and exterior of a house, an unidentified woman, farm scenes, and other outdoor scenes. There are also two photographs of paintings by Ives, including a self portrait.

Two hundred and fifty-eight glass plate negatives, primarily of unidentified sitters and models, comprise the bulk of the collection.

Box 1, Folder 1	Letters, 1923
Box 1, Folder 2	Notes, circa 1920-1994
Box 1, Folder 3	News Clippings, circa 1940s
Box 1, Folder 4	Sketches Mounted in Album, circa 1890s-circa 1920s
Box 1, Folder 5	Photographs, circa 1890s-circa 1940s
Box 2	Glass Plate Negatives, circa 1890-circa 1930
Box 3	Glass Plate Negatives, circa 1890-circa 1930
Box 4	Glass Plate Negatives, circa 1890-circa 1930

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*