



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Charles Keck Papers, circa 1905-circa 1954, in the Archives of American Art

Stephanie Ashley

Funding for the processing and digitization of portions of this collection was provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art and The Walton Family Foundation. The glass plate negatives were digitized with funding provided by the Smithsonian Institution Women's Committee.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Charles Keck papers
Date:	circa 1905-circa 1954
Identifier:	AAA.keckchar
Creator:	Keck, Charles, 1875-1951
Extent:	8.6 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of New York City sculptor Charles Keck (1875-1951) measure 8.6 linear feet and date from circa 1905-circa 1954. The papers provide scattered documentation of Keck's life through thirteen letters, two speeches, lists of artwork with price and sales information, printed material, and photographic material, including photos of Keck and his studio, and a collection of 1003 glass plate negatives, primarily of Keck's artwork, which document the wide range of work he produced throughout his prolific career.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was loaned for microfilming, and the bulk of it was later donated, between 1962-1972 by Anne C. Keck, widow of Charles Keck.

Separated Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds microfilm of material lent for microfilming (reel D105) including scrapbooks containing clippings, speeches, photographs, and some correspondence. Items were returned to the donor after microfilming and are not further described in the container listing of this finding aid.

Available Formats

The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2019 and is available on the Archives of American Art's website. Materials which have not been digitized include blank pages, the full text of a publication, blank versos of photographs, and duplicates including copy prints of glass plate negatives.

Processing Information

The papers in the collection received a preliminary level of processing after donation, between 1962 and 1972, and were microfilmed on Reels D105, 439, 441, and 2068. The glass plate negatives were re-housed in 2015 by Anna Rimel with a grant provided by the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund.

The collection was processed and described in a finding aid by Stephanie Ashley in 2018, and the collection was digitized in 2019 with funding provided by the Smithsonian Institution Women's Committee, the Terra Foundation for American Art, and The Walton Family Foundation.

Preferred Citation

Charles Keck papers, circa 1905-circa 1954. 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

New York City sculptor Charles Keck (1875-1951) was known for his statuary and relief sculpture, including military and presidential statues, busts, and memorials, medal relief sculpture, and memorial tablets.

Keck was born in New York City, and began his art training at the National Academy of Design and the Art Students League of New York. He also worked in the studio of Augustus Saint-Gaudens from 1893-1898. In 1899 he won the Prix de Rome and studied sculpture at the American Academy in Rome from 1901-1904. On returning to the United States in 1905, he opened a studio in New York City, from which he worked for the remainder of his life.

Keck's most famous works include a figure of Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee, Alabama (1922), a seated figure of Abraham Lincoln at Wabash, Indiana (1926), a statue of World War II chaplain, Father Francis D. Duffy in Times Square, New York (1937), and equestrian statues to Andrew Jackson in Kansas City (1934) and Independence (1949), Missouri. His relief work included designs of state medals, seals, and coins, memorial tablets such as his USS "Maine" tablet, and friezes for the Nelson Atkins Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, and the Bronx Building in New York.

Keck received many awards during his career, including the Annual Gold medal for Sculpture of the Architectural League of New York (1926), and was a member of professional art organizations including the National Academy of Design, the National Sculpture Society, the American Federation of Arts, and others.

Scope and Contents

The papers of New York City sculptor Charles Keck (1875-1951) measure 8.6 linear feet and date from circa 1905-circa 1954. The papers provide scattered documentation of Keck's life through thirteen letters, two speeches, lists of artwork with price and sales information, printed material, and photographic material, including photos of Keck and his studio, and a collection of 1003 glass plate negatives, primarily of Keck's artwork, which document the wide range of work he produced throughout his prolific career.

Keck's thirteen letters include two from Alexander Stirling Calder and one from Homer Saint-Gaudens. His lists of artwork include details of contracts, payments, and prices.

Photographs include Keck, his wife, Anne Keck, two photos from a circa 1920 Beaux Arts ball, photographs of Keck at work in his studio, including one taken at the American Academy in Rome, three group photographs of Keck, Adolph Weinman, Milton Horn, and others, and photos taken at the unveiling of Keck's monument in Raleigh, North Carolina, that include President Harry S. Truman and Margaret Truman.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as two series.

- Series 1: Personal Papers, 1920-circa 1954 (0.3 linear feet; Box 1)
 - Series 2: Photographic Material, circa 1905-circa 1948 (8.3 linear feet; Boxes 1-22)
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Names and Subject Terms

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

Names:

Calder, Alexander Stirling, 1870-1945
Saint-Gaudens, Augustus, 1848-1907
Weinman, Adolph A. (Adolph Alexander), 1870-1952

Occupations:

Sculptors -- New York (State) -- New York

Container Listing

Series 1: Personal Papers, 1920-circa 1954

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: This series includes three biographical statements written by others about Keck, including an entry for the *National Cyclopedia of American Biography*; a diploma given to Keck in recognition of distinguished service in the field of Lincolniana from Lincoln Memorial University; thirteen letters to Keck, including two from Alexander Stirling Calder and one from Homer Saint-Gaudens; typescripts of two speeches given by Keck, to the Allied Artists, and as president of the National Sculpture Society; and printed material including news clippings from 1933 and 1948, statements released about the addition to the General Post Office building in New York City, for which Keck was selected to create a relief sculpture, and a collection of addresses and papers printed in connection with the unveiling of Keck's monument to Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, and Andrew Johnson in Raleigh, North Carolina in 1948. Lists of artwork include a bound volume listing works alphabetically and giving drawer locations for some of the works; a loose leaf binder of records entitled "Work done" providing overviews of projects including dates of contracts, creation, payments, and some descriptive information about Keck's ideas for the works and his artistic process; and four other loose leaf lists, one of which includes prices.

Available Formats: This series has been digitized in entirety with the exception of the full text of the publication "Presidents North Carolina Gave the Nation" and a binder originally housing lists of artwork.

Box 1, Folder 1	Biographical Statements, circa 1930s-circa 1954
Box 1, Folder 2	Diploma, 1942
Box 1, Folder 3	Letters to Keck, 1920-1950
Box 1, Folder 4	Speeches, circa 1930s
Box 1, Folder 5	Lists of Artwork, Prices, and Sales, circa 1920s-circa 1954
Box 1, Folder 6	Lists of Artwork, Bound Volume, circa 1920s-circa 1940s
Box 1, Folder 7	Lists of Artwork, "Work Done", 1931-1949
Box 1, Folder 8	Lists of Artwork, "Work Done," Binder, 1931-1949
Box 1, Folder 9	Printed Material, Clippings and Statements on Post Office Relief, 1933-1948
Box 1, Folder 10	Printed Material, "Presidents North Carolina Gave the Nation", 1949

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Series 2: Photographic Material, circa 1905-circa 1948

8.3 Linear feet (Boxes 1-22)

Arrangement: The series is arranged as two subseries.

- 2.1: Photographs, circa 1905-circa 1948 (0.3 linear feet; Boxes 1-2)
- 2.2: Glass Plate Negatives, circa 1920s-circa 1940s (8 linear feet; Boxes 12-22)

Available Formats: The bulk of this series has been digitized. Photographs that are copy prints of glass plate negatives have not been digitized.

2.1: Photographs, circa 1905-circa 1948

0.3 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Photographs of Keck include two with his wife, Anne, at a circa 1920 Beaux Arts Ball at the Astor Hotel in New York City, and one photo of him with his youngest son, John. There are also portraits of Keck and photos of him in his studio, including one from circa 1905 at the American Academy in Rome with his sculpture "The Awakening of Egypt." There are copy prints of family members, including Anne Keck, unidentified individuals, including two men sitting for portraits, and three group photographs of Keck, Adolph Weinman, Milton Horn, and others. Some of the copy prints have been printed from the glass plate negatives in Series 2.2. Also found are photos of the unveiling of Keck's monument to Presidents Jackson, Polk, and Johnson in Raleigh, North Carolina, including photos showing President Harry S. Truman and Margaret Truman, state and government officials James McCord, Willis Smith, R. Gregg Cherry, Clyde R. Hoey, and William B. Umstead, and the lunch following the unveiling at the Governor's Mansion in Raleigh, in October 1948.

Box 1, Folder 11	Keck and Others, 1920s-1940s
Box 1, Folder 12	Keck in Studio, circa 1905-1940s
Box 1, Folder 13	Keck in Studio, circa 1905-circa 1940s
Box 2, Folder 1	Studio, circa 1910
Box 2, Folder 2	Family, circa 1905-circa 1920s
Box 2, Folder 3	Men Sitting for Portraits, circa 1930s
Box 2, Folder 4	Events Celebrating Unveiling Of Keck Monument in Raleigh, NC, 1948
Box 2, Folder 5	Events Celebrating Unveiling Of Keck Monument in Raleigh, NC, 1948
Box 2, Folder 6	Works of Art, circa 1930
Box 2, Folder 7	Works of Art, circa 1920s-circa 1940s
Box 2, Folder 8	Works of Art, In Studio, 1933
Box 2, Folder 9	Works of Art, In Studio, 1933

Box 2, Folder 10 [Works of Art, Models for Edison Memorial, Eagle Rock, NJ, circa 1924](#)

Box 2, Folder 11 [Works of Art, Negatives, circa 1940s](#)

2.2: Glass Plate Negatives, circa 1920s-circa 1940s

8 Linear feet (Boxes 12-22)

Scope and Contents: 1003 glass plate negatives are primarily of artwork by Keck including busts, carvings, reliefs, plaques, medallions, statues, pillars, and paintings, photographed both in the studio and on location. The last box in the series contains a few images of people, including Anne Keck, and of Keck's studio, some of which appear to have copy prints in series 2.1. Photographs.

Approximately one half of the images are numbered according to a system that is referenced in a list of negatives, numbers 400-533, which appears to record the works of art in rough chronological order, ending around 1931. The unnumbered negatives are from circa 1927- to the early 1940s. The original order of the negatives has been maintained.

Box 2, Folder 12 [List of Negatives #400-533, circa 1924-circa 1933](#)

Box 3 [Numbers 1-38, circa 1920s-circa 1931](#)

Box 4 [Numbers 39-87, circa 1920s-circa 1931](#)

Box 5 [Numbers 88-138, circa 1920s-circa 1931](#)

Box 6 [Numbers 139-189, circa 1920s-circa 1931](#)

Box 7 [Numbers 190-237, circa 1920s-circa 1931](#)

Box 8 [Numbers 238-407, circa 1920s-circa 1931](#)

Box 9 [Numbers 408-457, circa 1920s-circa 1931](#)

Box 10 [Numbers 458-503B, circa 1920s-circa 1931](#)

Box 11 [Numbers 504C-533 and Unnumbered, circa 1920s-circa 1940s](#)

Box 12 [Unnumbered, circa 1920s-circa 1940s](#)

Box 13 [Unnumbered, circa 1920s-circa 1940s](#)

Box 14 [Unnumbered, circa 1920s-circa 1940s](#)

Box 15 [Unnumbered, circa 1920s-circa 1940s](#)

Box 16 [Unnumbered, circa 1920s-circa 1940s](#)

Box 17 [Unnumbered, circa 1920s-circa 1940s](#)

Box 18	Unnumbered, circa 1920s-circa 1940s
Box 19	Unnumbered, circa 1920s-circa 1940s
Box 20	Unnumbered, circa 1920s-circa 1940s
Box 21	Unnumbered, circa 1920s-circa 1940s
Box 22	Unnumbered, circa 1920s-circa 1940s

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