



# Smithsonian

## *Archives of American Art*

### A Finding Aid to the Fredrick Olmsted Papers, 1940-1941, in the Archives of American Art

Jayna M. Josefson

The digitization of this collection received Federal support from the  
Smithsonian Collections Information System (CIS) IRM Pool Fund

2025/01/31

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Fredrick Olmsted papers
<b>Date:</b>	1940-1941
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.olmsfred
<b>Creator:</b>	Olmsted, Fred, 1911-1990
<b>Extent:</b>	1 Microfilm reel
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The scattered papers of sculptor Fredrick Olmsted date from 1940 to 1941. Found are photographs of Olmsted's large-scale sculpture of the heads of Michelangelo, da Vinci, and Thomas Edison and a speech by William Lawson dedicating the sculpture to San Francisco Junior College (now City College of San Francisco).

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The papers were lent to the Archives of American Art for filming by Lewis Ferbrache and returned after filming. The lender, Lewis Ferbrache, collected papers for AAA from artists and administrators of the various government funded art programs of the Depression. It was part of a larger nation-wide, collecting project, "New Deal and the Arts."

### Location of Originals

Originals returned to Lewis Ferbrache after microfilming.

### Available Formats

The collection has been microfilmed on reel NDA15. The microfilm has been digitized and is available on the Archives of American Art website.

### Processing Information

The collection was microfilmed on Reel NDA15 and was returned to Lewis Ferbrache after filming. The microfilm was described in a finding aid by Jayna Josefson in 2025 and the microfilm was digitized in 2024 with funding provided by Smithsonian Collections Information System (CIS) IRM Pool Fund.

### Preferred Citation

Fredrick Olmsted papers, 1940-1941. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

The Archives of American art does not own the original papers. Use is limited to the microfilm copy.

## Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

Fredrick "Rick" Olmsted, Jr. (1911-1990) was a sculptor and scientist in San Francisco, California. Olmsted studied science at Stanford University and art at the San Francisco Art Institute. He created works for various Works Progress Administration programs including the Art in Action and Public Works of Art Project. In the 1950s, he stopped sculpting and became a scientific researcher at the Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio and Yale University. He developed a prototype for the modern pacemaker.

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## Scope and Contents

The scattered papers of sculptor Fredrick Olmsted date from 1940 to 1941. Found are photographs of Olmsted's large-scale sculpture of the heads of Michelangelo, da Vinci, and Thomas Edison and a speech by William Lawson dedicating the sculpture to San Francisco Junior College (now City College of San Francisco).

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## Arrangement

Due to the pre-existing microfilm arrangement, the collection is arranged as one series.

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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:

Federal Art Project (Calif.)  
San Francisco Junior College

Occupations:

Sculptors -- California -- San Francisco

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Fredrick Olmsted Papers, 1940-1941

Scope and Contents: A typescript is of a dedication speech by William R. Lawson in April of 1941 in which he dedicates the Olmsted sculpture to San Francisco Junior College (now City College of San Francisco). Photographs are of the heads of da Vinci, Thomas Edison, and Michelangelo; a mock-up of one of the heads; Olmsted working on the heads; unidentified women posing with the sculpture; and of William Lawson, the WPA director of Northern California, and Dr. McCloud of San Francisco Junior College shaking hands with the sculpture in the background.

Reel NDA15.olmsted, [Speech, 1941](#)  
Frame 12-16

Reel NDA15.olmsted, [Photographs, 1940](#)  
Frame 17-45

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