



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Robert Reid papers, circa  
1880-circa 1930, in the Archives of American Art

Stephanie Ashley

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

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Robert Reid papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.reidrobe
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1880-circa 1930
<b>Extent:</b>	0.9 Linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Reid, Robert, 1862-1929
<b>Language:</b>	English  Collection is in English.
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of New York painter Robert Reid measure 0.9 linear feet and date from circa 1880-circa 1930. The collection provides scattered documentation of Reid's career and family history through a certificate, letters, an essay of family recollections, scrapbooks containing letters, writings, printed material and family photographs, printed material about Reid, and photographs of Reid, his studio, travels, and works of art.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The collection was donated to the Archives of American Art by Joseph Bowdring in 1973. Bowdring purchased the papers along with Reid's paintings.

### Available Formats

The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2014 and is available via the Archives of American Art's website. Items which have not been scanned include blank versos of photographs and a pamphlet on the Unitarian Memorial Church in Fairhaven, Massachusetts. Only the cover, title pages and other relevant pages of this pamphlet have been scanned.

### Processing Information

The collection was microfilmed at some point after donation on reel 641. The collection was fully processed and a finding aid prepared by Stephanie Ashley in 2014 and the collection was digitized in 2014 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

### Preferred Citation

Robert Reid papers, circa 1880-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. Contact Reference Services for more information.

## Conditions Governing Use

The Robert Reid 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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Robert Reid (1862-1929) was a painter, muralist, craftsman, and teacher who worked primarily in New York City and Colorado.

Robert Reid was born in 1862 in Stockbridge Massachusetts and studied at the School of Painting and Drawing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, from 1880-1884. He then moved to New York City and studied at the Art Students' League before moving to Paris in 1885, where he continued his studies at the Académie Julian over the next four years.

In 1887 Reid embarked on a tour of Italy that included visits to Milan, Venice, Florence, Rome and Naples. On his visits to Naples he was accompanied by several cousins, including Clara Field, who were on an extended European tour. Throughout the year Reid recorded his experiences and impressions in letters to his sister, Sara Bigelow Reid. In March of 1887 he submitted the first of three paintings to the Paris Salon, all of which were subsequently accepted.

In 1889 Reid returned to the United States and settled in New York City, teaching at the Cooper Union and the Art Students' League and painting portraits before embarking on various mural and decorative art projects. His first mural project was for one of the eight domes in the Liberal Arts Building of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1892. In 1897 he painted allegories of the five senses for octagonal panels in the Library of Congress, and in 1899 executed a large allegorical mural for the New York Appellate Division Court House. The Boston State House includes three large panels, including "Paul Revere's Ride" and the "Boston Tea Party," painted by Reid between 1901 and 1904. His stained glass work included a 1906 series of ten windows for the Unitarian Memorial Church at Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

During the 1890s Reid's return to outdoor work and his easel paintings demonstrated a balance between decorative and Impressionist techniques, and were often of women in landscape settings holding or carrying flowers. In 1898 he exhibited as one of the Ten American Painters who seceded from the Society of American Artists in favor of a less traditional, more Impressionistic style.

In the 1920s Reid moved to Colorado Springs and taught at the Broadmoor Art Academy. Several years before his death, Reid taught himself to paint with his left hand after suffering a stroke that resulted in paralysis of his right hand. He died in Clifton Springs, New York, in 1929.

H. Barbara Weinberg's 1975 essay "Robert Reid: Academic 'Impressionist'" (*Archives of American Art Journal*, Vol 15, No. 1, 1975) was used in the writing of this Biographical Note.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of New York painter Robert Reid measure 0.9 linear feet and date from circa 1880-circa 1930. The collection provides scattered documentation of Reid's career and family history through a certificate, letters, an essay of family recollections, scrapbooks containing letters, writings, printed material and family photographs, printed material about Reid, and photographs of Reid, his studio, travels, and works of art.

Letters are primarily from Robert Reid to his sister Sara Bigelow Reid and document a single year in Reid's life (1887) when he moved to Paris and traveled to Italy, serving as a diary of his activities through October of that year. Writings consist of an essay and journal entries entitled "Really Random Recollections of Charles D. Reid for Robert N. Reid" written by Robert Reid's brother Charles between 1918 and 1920. Scrapbooks 1 and 2 were compiled by Charles D. Reid and document Reid family history. Scrapbook 3 consists primarily of correspondence between Charles D. Reid and various schools concerning his interest in vocational education and a 1913 paper he wrote on that subject. Scrapbook 4 has had most entries removed and is inscribed by Charles D. Reid's father "Jared Reid Jr., Hartford Ct., Jan. 1880." Charles D. Reid presumably removed the entries to place in Scrapbooks 1-3.

Photographs of Reid include a group of men (circa 1880s) with Reid in the back row, of Reid working on a mural, and a 1927 portrait of Reid. Additional photographs of Reid are found in the scrapbooks. Also found is a copy print of Reid's studio, photographs of Europe, photographs of works of art by Reid, and a photograph of the stage and crowd at an unidentified event.

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## Arrangement

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

- Series 1: Robert Reid Papers, circa 1880-circa 1930 (Boxes 1-2; 0.9 linear feet)

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Artists' studios -- Photographs  
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

Photographs  
Scrapbooks

Names:

Reid, Charles D.  
Reid, Sara Bigelow

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Robert Reid Papers, circa 1880-circa 1930

#### *0.9 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2, OVs 3-5)*

There is one certificate is for the 1897 Clarke Prize presented to Robert Reid by the National Academy of Design for his painting *Moonrise*.

Letters are primarily from Robert Reid to his sister Sara Bigelow Reid and document a single year in Reid's life (1887) when he moved to Paris and traveled to Italy. The letters serve as a diary of his activities through October of that year, and focus in particular on visits to Venice, and his preparations for and reactions to acceptance of his artwork by the Paris Salon, which he expresses in letters to his sister and in a letter to his Uncle, Alexander Napier. Additionally, the letters document his program of study in Paris, and his summer work in Étaples, France. Also found are three letters from Reid's cousin, Clara Field, who accompanied Reid to Naples and wrote to Sara Reid about their travels. In one 1930 letter from Whitney Warren to Sara Reid, Warren thanks her for sending her brother's sketchbook and letters to him.

Writings consist of an essay and journal entries entitled "Really Random Recollections of Charles D. Reid for Robert N. Reid" written by Robert Reid's brother Charles for his son Robert Newell Reid between 1918 and 1920. The writings relate family history and include journal entries relating to the end of the First World War through to October 1920.

Printed material about Reid includes several newspaper and journal articles, an announcement for Reid's figure painting class at Broadmoor Art Academy, and a *Saturday Evening Post* article in which an unidentified author shares personal recollections of Robert Reid. Other printed material includes an edition of the *Harvard Lampoon*.

Scrapbooks are dated by the estimated date of compilation but contain items that pre-date the folder dates. Scrapbooks 1 and 2 were compiled by Charles D. Reid for Robert Newell Reid and document Reid family history. They include family letters, photographs and news clippings, including several photographs of Robert Reid, three letters which the artist wrote to Robert N. Reid, a 1909 Reid exhibition announcement and a 1916 Reid exhibition catalog, as well as clippings about some of Reid's exhibitions and mural projects. The scrapbooks also include copies of a 1916 paper and related materials that Charles D. Reid wrote on "Early Transportation Conditions in New England." Scrapbook 3 consists primarily of correspondence between Charles D. Reid and various schools concerning his interest in vocational education and a 1913 paper he wrote on that subject. Scrapbook 4 has had most entries removed and is inscribed by Charles D. Reid's father "Jared Reid Jr., Hartford Ct., Jan. 1880." Charles D. Reid presumably removed the entries to place in Scrapbooks 1-3.

Photographs of Reid include a group of men (circa 1880s) with Reid in the back row; four photographs of Reid working on a mural, probably in the 1890s; and a 1927 portrait of Reid. Additional photographs of Reid can be found in the scrapbooks. Also found is a copy print of Reid's studio, photographs of Europe including Antwerp and Brussels in 1885 and Pas-de-Calais in 1888, photographs of works of art by Reid, and a photograph of the stage and crowd at an unidentified event.

Series is scanned in entirety with the exception of blank versos of photographs and a pamphlet on the Memorial Church at Fairhaven, Massachusetts. Only the cover, title pages and other relevant pages of this pamphlet have been scanned.

Box 1, Folder 1

Certificate, 1897

	<a href="#">Image(s)</a> Oversized material housed in OV 1
Box 1, Folder 2	Letters from Clara Field to Sara Bigelow Reid, 1887 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 3	Letters from Robert Reid to Aunt and Uncle Alexander Napier, circa 1887 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 4	Letters from Robert Reid to Sally Ann, circa 1900 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 5	Letters from Robert Reid to Sara Bigelow Reid, circa 1887 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 6	Letters from Robert Reid to Sara Bigelow Reid, 1887 January <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 7	Letters from Robert Reid to Sara Bigelow Reid, 1887 February-April <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 8	Letters from Robert Reid to Sara Bigelow Reid, 1887 May-October <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 9	Letters from Robert Reid to Unknown (Illegible), 1887 February 16 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 10	Letter from Whitney Warren to Sara Bigelow Reid, 1930 May 27 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 11	Writings, "Really Random Recollections of Charles D. Reid for Robert N. Reid", 1918-1920 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 12	Printed Material, About Reid, 1892-circa 1930 <a href="#">Image(s)</a> Oversized material housed in OV 2
Box 1, Folder 13	Printed Material, Other, circa 1918 <a href="#">Image(s)</a> Oversized material housed in OV 2
Box 1, Folder 14-15	Scrapbook 1, circa 1915 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>

	<a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 16-18	Scrapbook 2, circa 1917 <a href="#">Image(s)</a> <a href="#">Image(s)</a> <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 19-20	Scrapbook 3, circa 1917 <a href="#">Image(s)</a> <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 2, Folder 1	Scrapbook 4, 1880 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 2, Folder 2	Photographs of Robert Reid, circa 1880-1927 <a href="#">Image(s)</a> Oversized material housed in OV 3
Box 2, Folder 3	Photograph of Reid's Studio, circa 1900 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 2, Folder 4	Photographs of Travel, 1880s <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 2, Folder 5	Photographs of Works of Art by Reid, circa 1900-circa 1920 <a href="#">Image(s)</a> Oversized material housed in OV 3
Box 2, Folder 6	Photograph, Miscellaneous, circa 1900 <a href="#">Image(s)</a> Oversized material housed in OV 3
Box OV 1	Oversized Certificate scanned with Box 1, Folder 1
Box OV 2	Oversized Printed Material scanned with Box 1, Folders 12-13
Box OV 3	Oversized Photographs scanned with Box 2, Folders 2, 5 and 6

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