



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Thomas Prichard Rossiter and Rossiter Family Papers, 1840-1961, in the Archives of American Art

Erin Corley

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>
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Thomas Prichard Rossiter and Rossiter Family papers
Identifier:	AAA.rossthom
Date:	1840-1961
Creator:	Rossiter, Thomas Prichard, 1818-1871
Extent:	0.5 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The Thomas Prichard Rossiter and Rossiter Family papers measure 0.5 linear feet and date from 1840 to 1961. Included are letters to painter Thomas Prichard Rossiter and letters to his son, architect Ehrick Kensett Rossiter, documenting their friendships with many artists and Thomas Prichard Rossiter's sketchbook and loose sketches. Edith Rossiter Bevan's papers include her writings on her grandfather, Thomas Prichard Rossiter; a scrapbook; photographs of the Rossiter family; notes by Bevan; news clippings; and other printed material. Also found is Bevan's collection of artists' letters.

Administrative Information

Provenance

A portion of the collection was donated in 1957 by Edith Rossiter Bevan, daughter of Ehrick Kensett Rossiter, and granddaughter of Thomas Prichard Rossiter. Additional material was donated in 2007 by Patti Rossiter Ravenscroft, Rossiter's Great Great Granddaughter.

Related Material

Also found in the Archives of American Art is a Thomas Prichard Rossiter letter to Elias Beirs dated January 12, 1840.

Alternative Forms Available

The papers of **Thomas Prichard Rossiter** and the Rossiter family in the Archives of American Art were digitized in 2009, and total 467 images.

Processing Information

Portions of the collection received a preliminary level of processing at some point after donation and were microfilmed on reel D33. The entire collection was fully processed, arranged, and described by Erin Corley in 2008 and digitized in 2009 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Preferred Citation

Thomas Prichard Rossiter and Rossiter Family papers, 1840-1957. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

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Biographical Note

Thomas Prichard Rossiter (1818-1871) was born in New Haven, Connecticut. He first learned painting as an apprentice for a Mr. John Boyd, and also studied with Nathaniel Jocelyn. In 1838 he exhibited two paintings at the National Academy of Design, and in 1839 moved to New York City and opened a studio.

In 1840, Rossiter traveled to Europe with Asher B. Durand, John Kensett, and John Casilaer, and while there visited Rome with Thomas Cole. He decided to stay in Italy until 1846 when he moved to New York City and shared a studio with Kensett and Louis Lang. During this period he relied on portrait painting for his income, but also painted historical and religious paintings.

In 1851 Rossiter married Anna Ehrick Parmly and they toured Europe in 1853. They settled in Paris where Anna gave birth to twins Ehrick Kensett and Charlotte. Rossiter exhibited at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1855. Anna died shortly after the birth of their daughter Anna, and the family moved back to New York.

For a brief period of time Rossiter had an art gallery, exhibiting his work and the work of his friends. In 1860 he married Mary (Mollie) Sterling and moved his family to Cold Spring, New York on the Hudson River. He continued to paint portraits, historical, and religious paintings, and exhibited at the National Academy of Design and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, until his death in 1871.

Ehrick Kensett Rossiter (1854-1941), named after his father's friend John Frederick Kensett, attended Cornell University and became an architect in New York as part of the firm Rossiter & Muller. He was a member of the Architectural League, United States Public Architects' League, and trustee of the American Fine Arts Society. In 1877 he married Mary Heath and they had three sons and a daughter. Their daughter Edith Rossiter Bevan was a historian and avid collector of historical autographs.

Scope and Content Note

The Thomas Prichard Rossiter and Rossiter Family papers measure 0.5 linear feet and date from 1840 to 1961. Included are letters to painter Thomas Prichard Rossiter and letters to his son, architect Ehrick Kensett Rossiter, documenting their friendships with many artists. Notable letters are from James Fenimore Cooper, William Morris Hunt, John Jay, J. F. Kensett, William H. Morris, Samuel F. B. Morse, George Peabody, Cecelia Beaux, William A. Coffin, Daniel Chester French, Will H. Low, Gari Melchers, William Sartain, Augustus Vincent Tack, Dwight Tryon, and many others.

The collection contains Thomas Prichard Rossiter's sketchbook drawn while living in Italy in 1843, and three other sketches including a portrait of his family.

Also found are letters to Edith Rossiter Bevan and her writings on her grandfather, Thomas Prichard Rossiter, including a biography and checklist of his paintings. Bevan also compiled a scrapbook on his career and family history which includes drawings by Rossiter, photographs of the Rossiter family and his artwork, notes by Bevan, news clippings, and other printed material.

A collection of Edith Rossiter Bevan's artists' letters is found within the papers. Letters are from Alexander Archipenko, J. Carroll Beckwith, Reginald Birch, Emma M. Cadwalader-Guild, Andre Castaigne, Fanny Cory, Kenyon Cox, Frank Craig, Charles Dana Gibson, Jay Hambidge, Henry Hutt, A. J. Keller, Rockwell Kent, Fiske Kimball, David Scott Moncrieff, H. Siddons Mowbray, Peter Newell, Rhoda Holmes Nicholls, Ralph M. Pearson, Frederic Remington, Otto Soglow, and Elizabeth Whitmore.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 2 series:

Missing Title:

- Series 1: Thomas Prichard Rossiter and Rossiter Family Papers, 1840-1961 (Box 1-2; 0.4 linear feet)
- Series 2: Edith Rossiter Bevan Collection of Artists' Letters, circa 1891-1939, 1951 (Box 1; 2 folders)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Architects -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

Photographs
Scrapbooks
Sketchbooks
Sketches

Names:

Archipenko, Alexander, 1887-1964
Beaux, Cecilia, 1855-1942
Beckwith, J. Carroll (James Carroll), 1852-1917
Bevan, Edith Rossiter
Birch, Reginald Bathurst, 1856-1943
Cadwalader-Guild, Emma Marie, 1843-1911?
Castaigne, Andre
Coffin, William A. (William Anderson), 1855-1925
Cooper, James Fenimore, 1789-1851
Cory, Fanny Y.
Cox, Kenyon, 1856-1919
Craig, Frank, 1874-1918
French, Daniel Chester, 1850-1931
Gibson, Charles Dana, 1867-1944
Hambidge, Jay, 1867-1924
Hunt, William Morris, 1824-1879
Hutt, Henry, b. 1875
Jay, John, 1817-1894
Keller, A. J.
Kensett, John Frederick, 1816-1872
Kent, Rockwell, 1882-1971
Kimball, Fiske, 1888-1955
Low, Will Hicok, 1853-1932

Melchers, Gari, 1860-1932
Morris, William H., 1834-1896
Morse, Samuel Finley Breese, 1791-1872
Mowbray, H. Siddons (Harry Siddons), 1858-1928
Newell, Peter, 1862-1924
Nicholls, Rhoda Holmes
Peabody, George, 1795-1869
Pearson, Ralph M., 1883-1958
Remington, Frederic, 1861-1909
Rossiter, Ehrick Kensett, 1854-1941
Rossiter, Thomas Prichard, 1818-1871
Sartain, William, 1843-1924
Scott-Moncrieff, David
Soglow, Otto, 1900-1975
Tack, Augustus Vincent, 1870-1949
Tryon, Dwight William, 1849-1925
Whitmore, Elizabeth

Occupations:

Painters -- New York (State)

Container Listing

Series 1: Thomas Prichard Rossiter and Rossiter Family Papers, 1840-1961

0.4 Linear feet (Box 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Thomas Prichard Rossiter and Rossiter family members papers include letters, artwork, writings, and a scrapbook. Letters are from artists, writers, and other prominent figures of the nineteenth and early twentieth century to members of the Rossiter family. Letters to Thomas Prichard Rossiter include letters from Adam Badeau, John Britton, James Fenimore Cooper, William Wilson Corcoran, Frederick S. Cozzens, Christopher Pearse Cranch, George Wilson Curtis, John A. Dix, Edward Everett, Schuyler Colfax, George P. A. Healy, William Morris Hunt, Richard Morris Hunt, John Jay, John Frederick Kensett, A. Gracie King, Benson J. Lossing, Louis R. Mignot, George P. Morris, William H. Morris, Samuel F. B. Morse, George Peabody, Henry T. Tuckerman, Nathaniel Parker Willis, Richard Willis, and Timothy Wright. Topics include his artwork, letters of introduction, replies to invitations, accounts of travels, and other general news.

Letters to Ehrick and Mary Rossiter include letters from Samuel Putnam Avery, C. H. Farnham, Cecilia Beaux, Edwin H. Blashfield, B. Boutet de Mouvel, William A. Coffin, Timothy Cole, Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, Frank V. DuMond, Herbert W. Faulkner, William Bailey Faxon, J. William Fosdick, Daniel Chester French, R. Swain Gifford, Grolier Club, Birg. Harrison, Louis C. Jones, Troy Kinney, Charles R. Lamb, Will H. Low, Gari Melchers, Don G. Mitchell, H. Siddons Mowbray, Robert Loftin Newman, Walter Russell, William Sartain, Augustus Vincent Tack, Dwight William Tryon, Bernhardt Wall, Henry O. White, and Rufus Fairchild Zogbaum. Topics include purchase of artwork, replies to invitations, social events, accounts of travels, and other general news.

Letters to granddaughter Edith Rossiter Bevan are from William A. Coffin, Herbert W. Faulkner, Dorothy Sturgis Harding, W. Hamilton Gibson, W. F. Hopson, Will H. Low, Arthur N. Macdonald, R. McGill Mackall, H. Siddons Mowbray, Louis Rhead, Walter Russell, Sidney S. Smith, and Louis S. Vaillant. Topics include Bevin's book plate collection, social events, her activities in clubs, and other general news.

Artwork in the family papers includes two sketches by Rossiter and a small sketchbook from his 1843 travels in Italy containing drawings of landscapes, architecture, and people.

A scrapbook was compiled by Edith Rossiter Bevan, documenting Thomas Rossiter's career and Rossiter family history. Included are sketches by Rossiter of his wife, children, and other subjects; a sketch of Rossiter by Felix Octavius Carr Darley (1852); photographs of Rossiter with his family; photographs and reproductions of his artwork; news clippings; and other printed material. Scrapbook pages include detailed typed captions by Bevan containing additional information about the documents.

This series includes a typescript of Thomas Prichard Rossiter's biography and family history and a checklist of his paintings written by Edith Rossiter Bevan. Also found is an autographed photo of William A. Coffin, a friend of Ehrick Kensett Rossiter.

Arrangement: All letters are arranged alphabetically. This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 1 [Letters to Thomas Prichard Rossiter, A-K, 1840-1870](#)

Box 1, Folder 2 [Letters to Thomas Prichard Rossiter, L-W, circa 1840-1867](#)

Box 1, Folder 3	Letters to Ehrick and Mary Rossiter, A-K, circa 1886-1931
Box 1, Folder 4	Letters to Ehrick and Mary Rossiter, L-Z, circa 1884-1935
Box 1, Folder 5	Letters to Edith Rossiter Bevan, circa 1909-1961
Box 1, Folder 6	"Thomas Prichard Rossiter", Typescript and Notes by Edith Rossiter Bevan, 1957
Box 1, Folder 7	Checklist of Paintings by Thomas Prichard Rossiter, 1957
Box 1, Folder 8	Thomas Prichard Rossiter Sketchbook, 1843 (Oversized, Housed in Box 2)
Box 1, Folder 9	Sketches by Thomas Prichard Rossiter, circa 1840s, 1867
Box 1, Folder 10	Painting Sketch of Rossiter Family by Thomas Prichard Rossiter, circa 1860s (Oversized, Housed in Box 2)
Box 1, Folder 11	Scrapbook, circa 1850-1958 (Oversized, Housed in Box 2)
Box 1, Folder 12	Scrapbook Cover, circa 1958 (Oversized, Housed in Box 2)
Box 1, Folder 13	Photograph of William Anderson Coffin, 1905
Box 2	Thomas Prichard Rossiter Sketchbook, 1843 (Scanned with Box 1, F8)
Box 2	Painting Sketch of Rossiter Family by Thomas Prichard Rossiter, circa 1860s (Scanned with Box 1, F10)
Box 2	Scrapbook, circa 1850-1958 (Scanned with Box 1, F11)
Box 2	Scrapbook Cover, circa 1958 (Scanned with Box 1, F12)

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Series 2: Edith Rossiter Bevan Collection of Artists' Letters, circa 1891-1939, 1951

2 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Found within this collection is Edith Rossiter Bevan's collection of artists' letters. The letters are addressed to Anna Parmly Paret (a cousin of Ehrick Rossiter), journalist Elizabeth Jordan, and Greta Smith. Included are individual letters from Alexander Archipenko, J. Carroll Beckwith, Reginald Birch, Emma M. Cadwalader-Guild, Andre Castaigne, Fanny Cory, Kenyon Cox, Frank Craig, Charles Dana Gibson, Jay Hambridge, Henry Hutt, A. J. Keller, Rockwell Kent, Fiske Kimball, David Scott Moncrieff, H. Siddons Mowbray, Peter Newell, Rhoda Holmes Nicholls, Ralph M. Pearson, Frederic Remington, Otto Soglow, and Elizabeth Whitmore. Many of these letters concern current projects and illustrations for publications, or answers to requests for information. It appears that the letters were collected by Paret, Jordan, and Smith during the course of their work and were later transferred to Edith Rossiter Bevan.

Arrangement: Artists' letters are arranged alphabetically by writer. This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 14 [Letters, A-K, circa 1899-1937, 1951](#)

Box 1, Folder 15 [Letters, L-Z, circa 1891-1939](#)

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