



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Marion Sanford and  
Cornelia Chapin Papers, 1929-1988,  
in the Archives of American Art

Erin Corley

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## Collection Overview

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Repository:</b> | Archives of American Art  |
| <b>Title:</b>      | Marion Sanford and Cornelia Chapin papers   |
| <b>Identifier:</b> | AAA.sanfmari  |
| <b>Date:</b>       | 1929-1988   |
| <b>Extent:</b>     | 2.5 Linear feet   |
| <b>Creator:</b>    | Sanford, Marion   |
| <b>Language:</b>   | English   |
| <b>Summary:</b>    | The papers of sculptors and close companions Marion Sanford and Cornelia Chapin measure 2.5 linear feet and date from 1929-1988. The papers include scattered materials created by and about both women, including biographical materials, one folder of correspondence for each woman, a few writings and essays, newsclippings, exhibition catalogs, other printed materials, and four scrapbooks (three about Chapin and one about Sanford). Photographs are of Chapin only and of artwork of both women. There is also one phonograph album transferred onto cassette of a radio interview with Chapin and several motion picture films of Chapin's home movies shot in upstate New York and Paris. |

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## Administrative Information

### Provenance

A portion of the Marion Sanford and Cornelia Chapin papers were donated by Marion Sanford in 1974. Additional materials were donated by Sanford's caretaker, Brenda Brenwell-Lejeune, in 1999.

### Related Material

Harvard University Library houses the the bulk of Cornelia Van Auken Chapin's papers, 1877-1959.

### Available Formats

The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2015 and is available on the Archives of American Art's website. Materials which have not been scanned include blank pages, blank versos of photographs, and duplicates. In some cases, exhibition catalogs and other publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages scanned. All of the sound and motion picture film recordings in this collection were digitized for research access in 2009 and 2014 and are available at the Archives of American Art offices. Researchers may view the originals for the archival notations on them, but they are not available for playback due to fragility.

## Processing Information

Portions of the collection received a preliminary level of processing after donation. The entire collection was fully processed, arranged, and described by Erin Corley in 2007 and digitized in 2015 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art. Motion picture film reels were inspected and re-housed in 2016 with funding provided by the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund, and preserved in 2018 with funding provided by the National Film Preservation Foundation.

## Preferred Citation

Marion Sanford and Cornelia Chapin papers, 1929-1988. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center. Contact Reference Services for more information.

## Ownership and Literary Rights

The Marion Sanford and Cornelia Chapin 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 Note

Marion Sanford was born in 1904 in Ontario, Canada and was raised in Warren, Pennsylvania. She studied painting at the Pratt Institute in New York, and worked for a period of time as a stage and costume designer. She developed an interest in sculpture, and studied the direct-carving method briefly at the Art Students League, but was largely self-taught. In 1937 she had her first exhibition of sculptures depicting women performing household chores and everyday tasks. She later created a series called "Women at Work" and her imagery of women would be the subject for which she would become best known, although she also completed bronze portraits and bas-reliefs. In 1941 and 1943 she worked as a Guggenheim Fellow, and became a member of the National Academy of Design, National Sculpture Society, and the National Association of Women Artists. Sanford won many awards and medals for her works and also created sculptures on commission, including a carved altar panel for the First Methodist Church in Warren, Pennsylvania. Marion Sanford died in 1987.

Cornelia Van Auken Chapin was born in 1893 in Waterford, Connecticut. After exploring other interests, including aeronautics, she decided to become a sculptor in the 1920s. She studied with Gail Corbett and in the early 1930s began exhibiting her sculptures of animals. In 1934 she moved to Paris, France and studied with Mateo Hernandez as his only student. Under Hernandez, she learned the technique of direct-carving from life in stone and wood and won the 2nd grand prize at the Paris Exposition in 1937. In 1936, Chapin was the only foreign and woman sculptor elected to the Societaire Salon d'Automne in Paris. The threat of World War II brought her back to the United States in 1939. Chapin won many awards for her sculptures and became a member of the National Academy of Design in 1945 and the National Sculpture Society. She was also one of the founding members of Artists' for Victory, Inc. and a participant in the women's artist group known as "The Philadelphia Ten," a unique and progressive group of women painters and sculptors who often exhibited together in the Philadelphia area.

In the late 1930s Chapin purchased a studio in New York City which had formally belonged to sculptor Gutzon Borglum. She shared the studio with her fellow sculptor Marion Sanford, and often modeled for Sanford's work. Sanford and Chapin remained close companions until Chapin's death in 1972.

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## Scope and Content Note

The papers of sculptors Marion Sanford and Cornelia Chapin measure 2.5 linear feet and date from 1929-1988. Sanford and Chapin were close companions and shared a studio in New York City. The papers include scattered materials created by and about both women, including biographical materials, one folder of correspondence for each woman, a few writings and essays, newsclippings, exhibition catalogs, other printed materials, and four scrapbooks (three about Chapin and one about Sanford). Photographs are of Chapin only and of artwork of both women. There is also one sound recording of a radio interview with Chapin and several motion picture films of Chapin's home movies shot in upstate New York and Paris.

Biographical material consists of scattered items documenting the careers of Marion Sanford and Cornelia Chapin. Included are a small amount of correspondence of both women, membership certificates, an index card file of Sanford's artwork, Chapin's written description of her sculpting process, and writings by others about Chapin. The sound recording is a radio interview of Chapin after she sculpted a bear for the National Zoo. Films include several home movies of Chapin from 1932-1936, showing Chapin at a summer home in Harpursville, NY, working in her studio, and working in Paris with teacher Mateo Hernandez.

Printed material includes exhibition announcements and catalogs for many group and solo shows of both women, news clippings about Chapin and Sanford, and a few reproductions of their artwork. Source files consist of postcards and clippings of various images that were most probably used as references or inspiration for their artwork.

The collection includes four scrapbooks compiled by Sanford and Chapin documenting their careers through news clippings, a few exhibition materials, and photographs of their artwork. There are three scrapbooks about Chapin, and one about Sanford. Also found are two additional scrapbooks on the subject of bas-relief and sculpture. Photographs include several of Cornelia Chapin in her studio and with her teacher Mateo Hernandez. There are numerous photographs of artwork by Chapin and Sanford. Artwork includes drawings of animals, architectural elements, coins, and people, by either Sanford or Chapin.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 6 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1930-1986 (Box 1, 6, 8; 0.8 linear feet)
- Series 2: Printed Material, 1931-1972 (Box 1-2; 0.5 linear feet)
- Series 3: Source Files, 1940s-1960s (Box 2-3; 0.4 linear feet)
- Series 4: Scrapbooks, 1932-1949 (Box 3-7; 1.0 linear foot)
- Series 5: Photographs, circa 1930-1962 (Box 4, 7; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 6: Artwork, 1929-circa 1960s (Box 4; 5 folders)

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Artists' studios
- Bas-relief
- Sculpture -- Technique
- Sculpture, American -- 20th century
- Sculpture, Modern -- 20th century
- Women sculptors -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

- Drawings
- Interviews
- Motion pictures (visual works)
- Photographs
- Scrapbooks
- Sound recordings
- Video recordings

Names:

- Chapin, Cornelia, 1893-1972
- Hernández, Mateo, 1884-1949

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, 1930-1988

*0.8 Linear feet (Box 1, 6, 8)*

Biographical material consists of scattered items documenting the careers of Marion Sanford and Cornelia Chapin. Material about Marion Sanford includes copyright documents for two sculptures, a certificate of membership in the Allied Artists of America, Inc., and a *Who's Who* biography, as well as an index card file of her sculptures, providing title, date, physical details, awards, and exhibition dates. There is one file of Sanford's correspondence that discusses the sale of her artwork, commissions, and awards received for her works, as well as the handling of Cornelia Chapin's estate.

Material about Cornelia Chapin includes certificates for her membership in the National Aeronautic Association of USA and the Allied Artists of America, Inc., a resume, and obituary. Also found is her written description of the sculpting process for her work "Sandstone Frog," as well as writings by others, including two articles by Dorothy Herzog, and an essay by Chapin's teacher, Mateo Hernandez, putting her work in the context of the history of sculpture. One file of Chapin's correspondence includes letters regarding her participation in Artists for Victory and the National Academy of Design, and discusses her commissioned bear cub sculpture for the National Zoo.

This series also consists of a sound recording and motion picture films of Cornelia Chapin. Included is a lacquer sound disc of an interview with Chapin by Mrs. Putnam for WCFM Radio, Washington, DC, on December 9, 1952. The interview, entitled "Introducing the New Bear Cub," discusses the dedication of Chapin's sculpture, *Bear Cub*, at the National Zoo in Washington, DC. There are also nine film reels containing home movies of Cornelia Chapin. One movie contains intertitles and is introduced as "Hilltop Happenings: Harpursville Summer 1932", showing Cornelia with unidentified friends or family doing daily chores as well as working on a sculpture of a female figure in her studio. Some of the movies were filmed between 1934 and 1936 while she was working in Paris, and show several scenes of her and her teacher Mateo Hernandez at their studio demonstrating their direct carving method. There is also a large amount of footage of Chapin and Hernandez with friends at the zoo in Paris, and Chapin sketching horses at a racing event.

Items are arranged chronologically within each folder.

This series has been scanned in its entirety. The sound recording and film have been digitized for research access.

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Box 1, Folder 1 | Biographical Material on Marion Sanford, 1937-circa 1940s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a> |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Marion Sanford Correspondence, 1939-1988<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>                  |
| Box 1, Folder 3 | Card File of Works by Marion Sanford, circa 1935-1949<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>     |
| Box 1, Folder 4 | Biographical Material on Cornelia Chapin, 1930-1972<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>       |
| Box 1, Folder 5 | Cornelia Chapin Correspondence, 1938-1952   |

[Image\(s\)](#)

- Box 1, Folder 6      Cornelia Chapin, Written Description of Sculpting Process, 1937  
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 1, Folder 7      Writings about Cornelia Chapin, 1939-1940s  
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 6, Folder      Interview of Cornelia Chapin, "Introducing the New Bear Cub", 1952  
*1 Sound cassette (Duplicate)*  
*1 sound discs (lacquer) (Original)*
- Box 8      Home Movies of Cornelia Chapin
- Box 8      "Hilltop Happenings, Harpersville, Summer 1932", 1932  
*1 Film reel (Internegative; 16 mm)*  
*1 Film reel (Answer print; 16 mm)*  
Projection print in can labeled FC 9, internegative in can labeled FC 18.
- Box 8      Home Movies of Studio and Zoo, France, 1934-1936  
*6 Film reels (Internegative; 16 mm)*  
*6 Film reels (Answer prints; 16 mm)*  
Projection prints in cans labeled FC 10-15, internegatives in cans labeled FC 19-24.
- Box 8      Horse Show, 1936  
*2 Film reels (Internegatives; 16 mm)*  
*2 Film reels (Answer prints; 16 mm)*  
Projection prints in cans labeled FC 16-17, internegatives in cans labeled FC 25-26.

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## Series 2: Printed Material, 1931-1972

*0.5 Linear feet (Box 1-2)*

Printed material documents Cornelia Chapin and Marion Sanford's careers as sculptors, primarily through exhibition materials and news clippings. Included are numerous exhibition catalogs for group exhibitions that they participated in, such as the Sculptors Guild annual outdoor sculpture exhibition, as well as a few catalogs and exhibition checklists for solo shows. Also found are news clippings about Marion Sanford and Cornelia Chapin that discuss their work and their participation in exhibitions. There are a few clippings about Cornelia Chapin's family, including her sister and poet, Katherine Garrison Chapin. This series also contains printed reproductions of their artwork from various publications.

Items are arranged chronologically within each folder.

The bulk of this series has been scanned. In some cases exhibition catalogs and other publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages scanned.

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Box 1, Folder 8     | Annual Report, 1933<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br>Fairmount Park Art Association 61st Annual Report.              |
| Box 1, Folder 9     | Exhibition Announcements & Invitations, 1931, 1939, 1940<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>                               |
| Box 1, Folder 10-12 | Exhibition Catalogs, 1933-1938<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br><a href="#">Image(s)</a> |
| Box 1, Folder 13-15 | Exhibition Catalogs, 1939-1949<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br><a href="#">Image(s)</a> |
| Box 2, Folder 1-2   | Exhibition Catalogs, 1950-1972<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>                             |
| Box 2, Folder 3     | News Clippings about Marion Sanford, 1937-1965<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>   |
| Box 2, Folder 4     | News Clippings about Cornelia Chapin, 1931-1965<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |
| Box 2, Folder 5     | News Clippings about the Chapin Family, 1941-1942<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>                                      |
| Box 2, Folder 6     | Pamphlet, 1971   |

[Image\(s\)](#)

National Sculpture Society Classified Index.

Box 2, Folder 7

Printed Reproductions of Artwork by Marion Sanford, circa 1940s-1950s

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 2, Folder 8

Printed Reproductions of Artwork by Cornelia Chapin, circa 1940s-1950s

[Image\(s\)](#)

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## Series 3: Source Files, 1940s-1960s

### *0.4 Linear feet (Box 2-3)*

Found here are printed source files that include postcards and clippings from magazines, newspapers, and catalogs on various topics, most likely compiled by either Marion Sanford or Cornelia Chapin as inspiration or references for their sculptures. Topics include animals, architecture, human figures, and coins, and also include numerous examples of sculptures done by other artists.

Items are arranged by subject.

This bulk of this series has been scanned.

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Box 2, Folder 9   | Animals, 1940s-1960s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |
| Box 2, Folder 10  | Architectural Design Elements, 1940s-1960s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |
| Box 2, Folder 11  | Bas Relief, 1940s-1960s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>   |
| Box 2, Folder 12  | Buildings, 1940s-1960s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |
| Box 3, Folder 1   | Children, 1940s-1960s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>   |
| Box 3, Folder 2-4 | Head & Full-Length Figures, 1940s-1960s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br><a href="#">Image(s)</a> |
| Box 3, Folder 5   | Medallions & Coins, 1940s-1960s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>   |

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## Series 4: Scrapbooks, 1932-1949

### *1 Linear foot (Box 3-7)*

This series contains four scrapbooks compiled by Marion Sanford and Cornelia Chapin - one about Marion Sanford and three about Cornelia Chapin. The scrapbooks primarily contain newspaper and magazine clippings, exhibition announcements, other printed material and photographs of artwork. Two additional scrapbooks, probably compiled by Marion Sanford, are on the subjects of bas relief and sculpture. Similar to the source files, these scrapbooks contain clippings from magazines, newspapers, and other printed sources of sculptures by other artists, including numerous examples of ancient sculpture and relief.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Box 3, Folder 6-7 | Scrapbook about Marion Sanford (disbound), 1937-1948<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>          |
| Box 3, Folder 8   | Scrapbook about Cornelia Chapin, 1932-1939<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br>Oversized material housed in Box 5.         |
| Box 3, Folder 9   | Scrapbook about Cornelia Chapin, 1939-1941<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br>Oversized material housed in Box 5.         |
| Box 3, Folder 10  | Scrapbook about Cornelia Chapin, 1941-1949<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br>Oversized material housed in Box 6.         |
| Box 4, Folder 1   | Scrapbook about Bas Relief, circa 1940s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br>Oversized material housed in Box 5.            |
| Box 4, Folder 2   | Scrapbooks about Sculpture, circa 1940s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br>2 volumes; oversized material housed in Box 7. |
| Box 5, Folder     | Oversized Scrapbook about Cornelia Chapin scanned with Box 3, Folder 8, 1932-1939                                     |
| Box 5, Folder     | Oversized Scrapbook about Cornelia Chapin scanned with Box 3, Folder 9, 1939-1941                                     |
| Box 5, Folder     | Oversized Scrapbook about Bas Relief scanned with Box 4, Folder 1, circa 1940s  |
| Box 6, Folder     | Oversized Scrapbook about Cornelia Chapin scanned with Box 3, Folder 10, 1941-1949                                    |

Box 7, Folder

Oversized Scrapbooks about Sculpture scanned with Box 4, Folder 2, circa  
1940s

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## Series 5: Photographs, circa 1930-1962

### *0.2 Linear feet (Box 4, 7)*

This series contains primarily photographs of artwork by both women, and a few of Cornelia Chapin sculpting in her studio and at a zoo in Paris, as well as a few portraits of her. Also found are photographs of Chapin with her instructor, Mateo Hernandez at the Jardin d'Acclimatation in Paris. There are also many photographs of artwork by Marion Sanford and Cornelia Chapin. Photographs of Sanford's artwork are arranged alphabetically followed by the work of Chapin.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Box 4, Folder 3  | Photographs of Cornelia Chapin, circa 1930-1950<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br>Oversized material housed in Box 7, Folder 1. |
| Box 4, Folder 4  | Photographs of Cornelia Chapin and Mateo Hernandez, 1934<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>   |
| Box 4, Folder    | Photographs of Artwork by Marion Sanford   |
| Box 4, Folder 5  | Abraham & Isaac, circa 1949<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |
| Box 4, Folder 6  | By the Sweat of the Brow, circa 1945<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>   |
| Box 4, Folder 7  | Cornelia Chapin at Work, circa 1940s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>   |
| Box 4, Folder 8  | Dawn, circa 1947<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>   |
| Box 4, Folder 9  | De Profundis, circa 1940s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |
| Box 4, Folder 10 | Diana, circa 1937<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |
| Box 4, Folder 11 | Georges Berrere, circa 1940s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>   |
| Box 4, Folder 12 | Harvest, circa 1943<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |
| Box 4, Folder 13 | Hugh Ferriss, circa 1962   |

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
|                  | <a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |
| Box 4, Folder 14 | Lady with a Lute, circa 1939<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |
| Box 4, Folder 15 | Little Boy Holding Flower, circa 1940s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |
| Box 4, Folder 16 | Little Lamb, circa 1961-1962<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |
| Box 4, Folder 17 | Lullaby, circa 1944<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>   |
| Box 4, Folder 18 | Memorial Altar, First Methodist Church, circa 1940s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>                             |
| Box 4, Folder 19 | Perry Fitzhugh, circa 1940s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>   |
| Box 4, Folder 20 | Spring, circa 1940s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>   |
| Box 4, Folder 21 | St. Mary's Altarpiece, circa 1940s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |
| Box 4, Folder 22 | Miscellaneous, circa 1935-1950<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br>Oversized material housed in Box 7, Folder 2. |
| Box 4, Folder 23 | Photo Album, circa 1940<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>   |
| Box 4, Folder 24 | Photographs of Artwork by Cornelia Chapin, Garden Figure, circa 1940s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>           |
| Box 4, Folder 25 | Photographs of Artwork by Cornelia Chapin, Miscellaneous, circa 1930s-1940s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>     |
| Box 4, Folder 26 | Photographs of Artwork by Philadelphia sculptor Donald De Lue, 1950s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>            |
| Box 4, Folder 27 | Photographs of Artwork, Unidentified, circa 1930s-1940s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>                         |
| Box 7, Folder 1  | Oversized Photographs of Cornelia Chapin, circa 1950  |

Oversized material scanned with Box 4, Folder 3.

Box 7, Folder 2

Oversized Photographs of Artwork by Marion Sanford, Miscellaneous, circa  
1935-1950

Oversized material scanned with Box 4, Folder 22.

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## Series 6: Artwork, 1929-circa 1960s

### *5 Folders (Box 4)*

This series consists of pencil and ink drawings of various subjects. None of the drawings are signed, but are most likely drawn by either Marion Sanford or Cornelia Chapin. Included are drawings of animals, architectural and decorative elements, possibly done in preparation for commissioned works, coins, including drawings for a nickel, and numerous drawings of people and children.

Items are arranged by subject.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Box 4, Folder 28    | Drawings of Animals, circa 1930s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>   |
| Box 4, Folder 29-30 | Drawings of Architectural and Decorative Elements, circa 1940s-1960s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a><br><a href="#">Image(s)</a> |
| Box 4, Folder 31    | Drawings of Coins, 1938<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |
| Box 4, Folder 32    | Drawings of People, 1929, 1930s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |

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