



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Dixie Selden
papers, 1837-1936, 1993-2001,
in the Archives of American Art

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Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Dixie Selden papers
Identifier:	AAA.selddixi
Date:	1837-1936 1993-2001
Extent:	4.3 Linear feet
Creator:	Selden, Dixie, 1868-1935
Language:	English Collection is in English
Summary:	The papers of artist Dixie Selden measure 4.3 linear feet and date from 1837-1936 and 1993-2001. The collection documents the life, world travels, and professional career of the Impressionist painter from Cincinnati, Ohio, through biographical material, correspondence, writings, diaries, printed material, a scrapbook, photographs, artwork, sketchbooks, and artifacts.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Dixie Selden papers were donated to the Archives of American Art by Marcia Goldman Widenor in 2014. Marcia Widenor's grandfather was married to Minnie Schaffer Goldman, Dixie Selden's first cousin.

Processing Information

The collection was processed to a minimal level and a finding aid prepared by Hilary Price in 2015.

Preferred Citation

Dixie Selden papers, 1837-1936, 1993-2001. 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 Dixie Selden 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.

Biographical / Historical

Dixie Selden (1868-1935) was an American Impressionist painter working in Kentucky and Ohio. Born to wealthy parents in Cincinnati, Ohio, Selden moved with her family to Covington, Kentucky when she was two years old. Her parents, John Roger Selden and Martha Peyton McMillon Selden were active in Cincinnati and Covington social circles and societies. Dixie's parents nurtured her artistic abilities early on, building her a studio, and taking her on two tours of Europe.

Selden studied art at the Art Academy of Cincinnati off and on from 1884, when it was called the McMicken School of Design, until 1912. While there she was a student of Fernand H. Lungren and Frank Duveneck. In 1913, Selden traveled to Venice to study painting with William Merritt Chase. She exhibited regularly in the Midwest, and created a professional career as a portrait and landscape painter.

Selden traveled extensively throughout her life, frequently with her close friend and fellow artist Emma Mendenhall. Her travels to Europe, Mexico, China, Japan, the Middle East, as well as sights across the United States served as inspiration for her art, as she took many photographs, collected postcards, and created sketches and paintings.

Scope and Contents

The papers of artist Dixie Selden measure 4.3 linear feet and date from 1837-1936 and 1993-2001. The collection documents the life, world travels, and professional career of the Impressionist painter from Cincinnati, Ohio, through biographical material, correspondence, writings, diaries, printed material, a scrapbook, photographs, artwork, sketchbooks, and artifacts.

Correspondence makes up a significant part of the collection and includes frequent letters sent to her parents while traveling abroad. Selden's travels are also documented in seven diaries, with daily descriptions of events and sights, and nine sketchbooks containing pencil and pastel sketches. Printed material makes up another large part of the collection and primarily includes items that document Selden's career and exhibitions, in addition to her frequent travels. Extensive photographs also document her travel, as well as her artwork, friends and family, and portraits of Selden. Artwork includes pencil sketches and prints by Selden and others. The remainder of the collection includes biographical material, writings, a scrapbook, and artifacts.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 10 series

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1890s-1930s (0.1 linear foot; Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1837-1935, 1998 (0.6 linear feet; Box 1)
- Series 3: Writings, circa 1890s-1930s (0.1 linear foot; Box 1)
- Series 4: Diaries, 1878-circa 1934 (0.2 linear feet; Box 1)

- Series 5: Printed Material, circa 1850-1926, 1993-2001 (1.7 linear feet; Box 2, 4, OV 5, OV 7)
- Series 6: Scrapbook, circa 1889 (0.1 linear foot; Box 2)
- Series 7: Photographs, circa 1860s-1935, 1995 (0.6 linear feet; Box 2-3)
- Series 8: Artwork, circa 1900s-1920s (0.3 linear feet; Box 3, OV 6)
- Series 9: Sketchbooks, circa 1900s-1931 (0.3 linear feet; Box 3)
- Series 10: Artifacts, circa 1890s-1930s (0.3 linear feet; Box 3)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Impressionism (Art) -- United States

Types of Materials:

Diaries
Photographs
Scrapbooks
Sketchbooks

Occupations:

Women painters -- Ohio -- Cincinnati

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1890s-1930s

0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Biographical material dates from circa 1890s-1930s and includes an address book, a resume, and scattered legal documents.

Box 1, Folder 1 Address Book, circa 1890s-1930s

Box 1, Folder 2 Biographical Material, circa 1921-1935

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Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1998, 1837-1935

0.6 Linear feet (Box 1)

Correspondence dates from 1837-1935 and circa 1998, and includes frequent correspondence between Selden and her parents, particularly while traveling abroad. Letters provide detailed descriptions of foreign sites, museums, hotels, and sea crossings. Postcards sent and received by Selden accounts for one file. Also included are letters from Emma Mendenhall, and letters to and from the Goldman family, to which Selden was related by the marriage of her first cousin, Minnie Schaffner. Letters to and from Selden's parents, John and Martha are also included. Martha Selden's letters are primarily addressed to her mother. John Selden's letters are primarily from an unidentified friend in Brussels or relate to business. One file contains letters to the donor and relative, Marcia Widenor, about Dixie Selden.

Box 1, Folder 3	Goldman Family, circa 1920s
Box 1, Folder 4	Emma Mendenhall, 1909-1925
Box 1, Folder 5	Dixie Selden, 1897-1935
Box 1, Folder 6	Dixie Selden Postcards, 1899-1924
Box 1, Folder 7	John Selden, 1837-1904
Box 1, Folder 8	John Selden, Business Correspondence, 1886-1929
Box 1, Folder 9	Martha Selden, 1878-1904
Box 1, Folder 10-20	Selden Family Correspondence, 1890-1904
Box 1, Folder 21	Marcia Widenor, circa 1998

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Series 3: Writings, circa 1890s-1930s

0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Writings date from circa 1890s-1930s and include writings on art, a juvenile novel excerpt, and other unidentified notes.

Box 1, Folder 22	Art Writings, circa 1890s-1930s
Box 1, Folder 23	Notes, circa 1890s-1930s
Box 1, Folder 24	Novel Manuscript, 1898
Box 1, Folder 25	Schools of New York, circa 1890s-1930s

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Series 4: Diaries, 1878-circa 1934

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Diaries date from 1878-circa 1934 and were kept during Selden's frequent travels abroad. Seven diaries are included in which she recorded daily activities and descriptions of foreign sights.

Box 1, Folder 26-32 Travel Diaries, 1878-circa 1934

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Series 5: Printed Material, 1993-2001, circa 1850-1936

1.7 Linear feet (Box 2, 4, 5, OV 5, OV 7)

Printed material dates from circa 1850-1936 and 1993-2001, and pertains to Selden's career, world travels, and family and friends. Items include books in Selden's collection, booklets, clippings, exhibition catalogs and announcements, maps, theater programs and ephemera belonging to John and Martha Selden, and an extensive postcard collection. Also included is an earlier version of the catalog essay for the 2001 book by Genetta McLean, *Dixie Selden*.

Box 2, Folder 1	Articles, 1930
Box 2, Folder 2	Book, <i>The Alchambra</i> , 1922
Box 2, Folder 3	Book, <i>History of Greece</i> , 1878
Box 2, Folder 4	Book, <i>Tone Poets</i> , 1884
Box 2, Folder 5	Booklet, "The Cunard Steamship Company", 1902
Box 2, Folder 6	Booklet, "Daughters of the American Revolution", 1894-1895
Box 2, Folder 7	Booklet and Ephemera, Elizabeth Norse, 1920-1922
Box 2, Folder 8	Booklet, Hospitals, circa 1900s
Box 2, Folder 9-10	Clippings, 1914-1936
Box 2, Folder 11	Clippings from Accordion File, circa 1926-circa 1931
Box 2, Folder 12-13	Exhibition Announcements, 2001, 1913-1931
Box 2, Folder 14	Exhibition Catalog, 1936
Box 2, Folder 15	Exhibition Catalog Essay by Genetta McLean, 1996
Box 2, Folder 16	Magazine, <i>American Art Review</i> , 1998
Box 2, Folder 17	Map of Cornwall, circa 1900s
Box 2, Folder 18	Programs and Ephemera, Theater Clubs, 1862-1901
Box 2, Folder 19	Reproductions, 1929
Box 4, Folder 1-3	Postcard Collection, 1993, circa 1850-1935

Box OV 5 Oversize Newspaper, *The Daily Graphic*, 1878

Box OV 7 Oversize Railway Map of Europe, 1923

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Series 6: Scrapbook, circa 1889

0.1 Linear feet (Box 2)

The scrapbook dates from circa 1889 and contains writings and clippings of poetry and articles relating to Selden, family, or friends.

Box 2, Folder 20

Scrapbook, circa 1889

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Series 7: Photographs, circa 1860s-1935, 1995

0.6 Linear feet (Box 2-3)

Photographs date from circa 1860s-1935 and 1995 and include photographs of Selden's painting class with Frank Duveneck, artworks, friends and family including the Goldman's, homes and places, portraits of Dixie Selden, and her extensive travel.

Box 2, Folder 21	Art Class, circa 1890s
Box 2, Folder 22	Artwork, circa 1890-1920s, 1995
Box 2, Folder 23	Family and Friends, circa 1860s-1930s
Box 2, Folder 24	Goldman Family, circa 1920s
Box 2, Folder 25	Homes and Places, circa 1900s-1920s
Box 2, Folder 26	Dixie Selden, circa 1870s-1930s
Box 3, Folder 1-3	Travel, circa 1890s-1930s
Box 3, Folder 4	Travel Album, Grace E. Ashford, circa 1900s

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Series 8: Artwork, circa 1900s-1920s

0.3 Linear feet (Box 3, OV 6)

Artwork dates from circa 1900s-1920s and includes sketches and prints by Selden, sketches by her friend and teacher Fernand Lungren, and sketches by unidentified artists.

Box 3, Folder 5	Sketches and Prints by Selden, circa 1878-1899
Box 3, Folder 6	Sketches by Fernand Lungren, circa 1900s-1920s
Box 3, Folder 7	Sketches by Unidentified Artists, circa 1900s-1920s
Box OV 6	Oversize Sketch by Unidentified Artist from Box 3, Folder 7

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Series 9: Sketchbooks, circa 1900s-1931

0.3 Linear feet (Box 3)

Sketchbooks date from circa 1900-1931 and were kept by Selden during her travels. Pencil sketches of foreign sights dominate the nine sketchbooks, although some sketches were done in pastel. Location is identified when known.

Box 3, Folder 8-10	France, circa 1900s-1920s
Box 3, Folder 11	Italy, 1909
Box 3, Folder 12	Sketchbook, 1915
Box 3, Folder 13	France, 1926
Box 3, Folder 14	Sketchbook, 1929
Box 3, Folder 15	Sketchbook, 1930
Box 3, Folder 16	Sketchbook, 1931

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Series 10: Artifacts, circa 1890s-1930s

0.3 Linear feet (Box 3)

Artifacts date from circa 1890s-1930s and include an accordion file used by Selden to store clippings, a book jacket, a notebook cover, a palette, and an engraved thimble.

Box 3, Folder 17	Accordion File, circa 1920s
Box 3, Folder 18	Book Jacket, circa 1890s-1930s
Box 3, Folder 19	Notebook Cover, circa 1890s-1930s
Box 3, Folder 20	Palette, circa 1890s-1930s
Box 3, Folder 21	Thimble, circa 1890s-1930s

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