



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the J. Benjamin Townsend Papers, 1959-1964, in the Archives of American Art

Ricky Gomez

2024 May 8

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	
Administrative Information .....	1
Biographical / Historical .....	2
Scope and Contents .....	2
Arrangement .....	2
Names and Subjects .....	
Container Listing .....	
Series 1: J. Benjamin Townsend papers, 1959-1964 .....	3

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	J. Benjamin Townsend papers
<b>Date:</b>	1959-1964
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.townj
<b>Creator:</b>	Townsend, J. Benjamin
<b>Extent:</b>	0.2 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of art critic and historian J. Benjamin Townsend measure 0.2 linear feet and date from 1959 to 1964. The papers regard Townsend's article on Clyfford Still, "An Interview with Clyfford Still," 1961, including 8 letters from Still (and Mrs. Still on his behalf) and 3 letters to Mrs. Still from Townsend; a clipping of the article from GALLERY NOTES of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery; an annotated manuscript and proofs of the article, and Townsend's notes of his interview with Still, December 14, 1959. Also included are letters to Townsend from artists William Ronald, John Opper, Richard Stankiewicz, and Mrs. Jose Guerrero, mainly regarding Townsend's proposed articles about them, and a letter and receipt from Edwin Dickinson.

---

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Donated 1985 by J. Benjamin Townsend and his wife Jeanette Townsend.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Ricky Gomez in 2024.

### Preferred Citation

J. Benjamin Townsend papers, 1959-1964. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

This collection is open for research. Access to original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center.

### Conditions Governing Use

The Archives of American Art makes its archival collections available for non-commercial, educational and personal use unless restricted by copyright and/or donor restrictions, including but not limited to access and publication restrictions. AAA makes no representations concerning such rights and restrictions and it is the user's responsibility to determine whether rights or restrictions exist and to obtain any necessary permission to access, use, reproduce and publish the collections. Please refer to the Smithsonian's Terms of Use for additional information.

## Biographical / Historical

J. Benjamin Townsend was an art critic and historian from Buffalo, N.Y. Townsend served as assistant director of the National Portrait Gallery (1967-1968) and professor of art and literature at the State University of New York, Buffalo (1957-1983). Among his publications are JOHN DAVIDSON, POET OF THE ARMAGEDDON, Yale (1961) and THE BUFFALO FINE ARTS ACADEMY (1862-1962), Albright-Knox Art Gallery (1962).

---

## Scope and Contents

The papers of art critic and historian J. Benjamin Townsend measure 0.2 linear feet and date from 1959 to 1964. The papers regard Townsend's article on Clyfford Still, "An Interview with Clyfford Still," 1961, including 8 letters from Still (and Mrs. Still on his behalf) and 3 letters to Mrs. Still from Townsend; a clipping of the article from GALLERY NOTES of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery; an annotated manuscript and proofs of the article, and Townsend's notes of his interview with Still, December 14, 1959. Also included are letters to Townsend from artists William Ronald, John Opper, Richard Stankiewicz, and Mrs. Jose Guerrero, mainly regarding Townsend's proposed articles about them, and a letter and receipt from Edwin Dickinson.

---

## Arrangement

The collection is arranged into one series

- Series 1: J. Benjamin Townsend papers, 1959-1964 (0.2 linear feet; Box 1)
- 

## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

Painting, Abstract -- New York (State) -- New York

### Names:

Still, Clyfford, 1904-1980

### Occupations:

Art critics -- New York (State)

Art historians -- New York (State) -- Buffalo

---

## Container Listing

### Series 1: J. Benjamin Townsend papers, 1959-1964

#### 0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: The papers regard Townsend's article on Clyfford Still, "An Interview with Clyfford Still," 1961, including 8 letters from Still (and Mrs. Still on his behalf) and 3 letters to Mrs. Still from Townsend; a clipping of the article from GALLERY NOTES of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery; an annotated manuscript and proofs of the article, and Townsend's notes of his interview with Still, December 14, 1959. Also included are letters to Townsend from artists William Ronald, John Opper, Richard Stankiewicz, and Mrs. Jose Guerrero, mainly regarding Townsend's proposed articles about them, and a letter and receipt from Edwin Dickinson.

Box 1, Folder 1                      Correspondence, undated, 1961-1964

Box 1, Folder 2                      "An Interview with Clyfford Still", 1959

Box 1, Folder 3                      Clippings, undated, 1959

[Return to Table of Contents](#)