



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Charles Volkmar papers

Archives of American Art
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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Charles Volkmar papers
Date:	1827-1985
Identifier:	AAA.volkchar
Creator:	Volkmar, Charles, 1841-1914
Extent:	1.2 Linear feet ((on 1 microfilm reel))
Language:	Carl Volkmar family papers are in German.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Papers were lent by Susan Volkmar, the wife of Peter Volkmar, great-grandson of Charles Volkmar.

Location of Originals

Originals returned to the lender, Mrs. Susan Volkmar, after microfilming.

Available Formats

35mm microfilm reel 4391 available for use at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

Restrictions

The Archives of American art does not own the original papers. Use is limited to the microfilm copy.

Biographical / Historical

Ceramicist, painter. Born in Baltimore, Charles Volkmar received his early art training at the Maryland Institute. He moved to Paris, where he studied landscape painting with Henri Harpignies in the 1860's. His paintings were exhibited in the Paris salons of the 1870's. He studied pottery painting and tile making in France, working as an apprentice at the Haviland factory. Returning to the United States, Charles built a kiln at Greenpoint, Long Island, in 1879 where he produced tiles and vases. He was the first potter to use underglaze slip painting in the United States. His son, Leon, was an accomplished potter and formed a partnership with his father. When the kiln was moved to Metuchen, New Jersey, the name was changed to Charles Volkmar and Son. In 1911 the partnership dissolved and Leon moved to Bedford, New York; established Durant kilns and devoted much time to glaze experimentation.

Scope and Contents

Printed material, biographical material, correspondence, and photographs (ca. 1860-1920) documenting the Volkmar family's involvement in the development of the ceramics industry in northeastern America. The collection focuses on Charles Volkmar but the careers of Carl, Leon (1879-1959), and Charles Volkmar, Sr. (1809-1892) are also documented. Material on Charles Volkmar includes correspondence (1897-1915), notes and writings, clippings (1872-1913), articles, 2 sketchbooks, and prints and drawings. In the original 41-page typed draft of his reminiscences, Charles Volkmar writes of his flight to Europe at the outbreak of the civil war, the life of American artists in Paris, studying landscape painting under Henri Harpignies, the work of Jean-Francois Millet and Charles Emile Jacque, and his work painting pottery and tiles in France, after which he returned to the United States and went into the ceramics business. Leon Volkmar's correspondence (1901-1953) and printed materials discuss the business, artistic and family traditions of the ceramics industry. Photographs depict Leon, his family, the Volkmar Pottery and the tiles and ceramics they produced. Carl Volkmar's family papers, documents (1827-1838) and a notebook are all in German.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Ceramics
- Decorative arts

Types of Materials:

- Sketchbooks

Names:

- Harpignies, Henri, 1819-1916
- Jacque, Charles Emile, 1813-1894
- Millet, Jean François, 1814-1875
- Volkmar, Carl
- Volkmar, Charles, 1809-1892
- Volkmar, Leon, 1879-1959

Occupations:

- Ceramicists -- United States