



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Edwin Ambrose Webster Papers, 1821-1968, in the Archives of American Art

Judy Ng

Funding for the processing and digitization of this collection was provided by  
The Walton Family Foundation and the Terra Foundation for American Art.

2016 November 2

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Edwin Ambrose Webster papers
<b>Date:</b>	1821-1968
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.webse
<b>Creator:</b>	Webster, E. Ambrose (Edwin Ambrose), 1869-1935
<b>Extent:</b>	2.2 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	The collection is in English.
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of painter and educator Edwin Ambrose Webster measure 2.2 linear feet and date from 1821 to 1968. Found within the papers are biographical material; business and personal correspondence; writings; teaching and research files, including information on Webster's participation in the 1913 Armory show; printed material; artwork; and photographic materials of Webster, his family and friends, and his work.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The papers were donated in 1974 by the wife of Mrs. Webster's nephew, Mrs. Karl F. Rodgers. Additional materials were donated by Mrs. Rodgers in 1975.

### Available Formats

The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2016 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.

### Processing Information

Materials received a preliminary level of arrangement after receipt and portions of the collection were microfilmed onto reels D30 and 866. All accessions were merged and the collection was processed, described, and prepared for scanning by Judy Ng in 2016 with funding provided by The Walton Family Foundation and the Terra Foundation for American Art.

### Preferred Citation

Edwin Ambrose Webster papers, 1821-1968. 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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Painter and educator Edwin Ambrose Webster (1869-1935) lived and worked in Provincetown, Massachusetts and was known for his vibrant landscapes and for opening the first modernist art school in Provincetown.

Born in Chelsea, Massachusetts, Webster began his art studies at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts under Frank Benson and Edmund Tarbell, where he received a three year scholarship to study abroad at the Academie Julian. There, he studied under Jean Laurens and Jean-Joseph Constant and was awarded several additional student prizes for his work. Upon his return, Webster established himself as a founding member of the burgeoning art colony in Provincetown, opening his Summer School of Art in 1900, which he operated for the next thirty five years.

Alongside his teaching duties, Webster continued to develop a modernist style and was invited to exhibit in the 1913 Armory Show. In 1918, he traveled to France to study Cubism under Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger, and upon his return to Provincetown, began incorporating these techniques into his paintings as well as into his lectures and classes. As an active organizer within the art colony, Webster helped to found the Provincetown Art Association in 1914 and served as its director from 1917 to 1919. In 1916, he also hosted the first exhibition of the woodblock carving group, the Provincetown Printers, at his studio. Webster died at his Provincetown home in 1935.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of painter and educator Edwin Ambrose Webster measure 2.2 linear feet and date from 1821 to 1968. Found within the papers are biographical material; business and personal correspondence; writings; teaching and research files, including information on Webster's participation in the 1913 Armory show; printed material; artwork; and photographic materials of Webster, his family and friends, and his work.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 8 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1821-1930 (5 folders; Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1900-1940 (2 folders; Box 1)
- Series 3: Writings, 1910-1930 (3 folders; Box 1)
- Series 4: Teaching Files, 1930-1933 (5 folders; Box 1)
- Series 5: Printed Materials, 1911-1939 (0.4 linear feet; Box 1, OVs 5-6)
- Series 6: Artwork, 1890-1930 (1.1 linear feet; Boxes 1-3, Artifacts 4, 7)
- Series 7: Photographic Materials, 1875-1930 (8 folders; Box 1)
- Series 8: Karl Rodgers Research Files, 1940-1968 (6 folders; Box 1)

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art -- Study and teaching -- Massachusetts -- Provincetown

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Names:

Armory Show (1913: New York, N.Y.)

Occupations:

Art teachers -- Massachusetts -- Provincetown  
Painters -- Massachusetts -- Provincetown

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1821-1930

#### 5 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Biographical materials include address books, certificates, military records, and geneological information for the Webster and Emerson families.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by document type.

Available: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Formats:

Box 1, Folder 1      [Address Book, circa 1850-1930](#)

Box 1, Folder 2      [Address Books, circa 1850-1930](#)

Box 1, Folder 3      [Certificates, 1911-1922](#)

Box 1, Folder 4      [Military Records, 1864-1866](#)

Box 1, Folder 5      Webster and Emerson Family, 1821-1930  
[Image\(s\): Webster and Emerson Family: 1821-1867](#)  
 Notes:              Oversized material housed in Box 2, Folder 1

Box 2, Folder 1      Oversized Webster Family material scanned with Box 1, Folder 5, 1821-1930

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## Series 2: Correspondence, 1900-1940

### 2 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Personal correspondence is with family and friends. Professional correspondence includes letters from collecting institutions, galleries, and museums regarding the acquisition or exhibition of Webster's works.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by document type.

Available: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Formats:

Box 1, Folder 6	<a href="#">Personal, circa 1900-1936</a>
Box 1, Folder 7	<a href="#">Professional, circa 1920-1940</a>

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## Series 3: Writings, 1910-1930

### 3 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Writings consist of four notebooks and Webster's 1926 diary, which he kept during his travels abroad in La Guade, France.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by document type.

Available: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Formats:

Box 1, Folder 8	<a href="#">Diary, 1926</a>
Box 1, Folder 9	<a href="#">Notebook, circa 1910-1930</a>
Box 1, Folder 10	<a href="#">Notebooks, circa 1928</a>

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## Series 4: Teaching Files, 1930-1933

### 5 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Teaching files include Webster's informal student account records and notes, promotional material, professional printing blocks, and model cutouts used to teach the Golden Section/Golden Mean.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by document type.

Available: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Formats:

Box 1, Folder 11	<a href="#">Account Records, 1931-1933</a>
Box 1, Folder 12	<a href="#">Golden Section Model, circa 1930</a>
Box 1, Folder 13	<a href="#">Notes, circa 1931-1933</a>
Box 1, Folder 14	<a href="#">Printing Blocks, circa 1930</a>
Box 1, Folder 15	<a href="#">Promotional Material, circa 1930</a>

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## Series 5: Printed Materials, 1911-1939

### 0.4 Linear feet (Box 1, OV 5-6)

**Scope and Contents:** Printed material includes clippings, bulletins, exhibition announcements and catalogs, posters, reproductions of artwork, and several French language monographs and periodicals on art related topics.

**Arrangement:** Materials are arranged by document type.

**Available Formats:** 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 16	<a href="#">Bulletins, 1925, 1936</a>
Box 1, Folder 17	<a href="#">Clippings, circa 1914-1938</a> Notes: Oversized materials housed in OV 5
Box 1, Folder 18	<a href="#">Exhibition Announcement and Catalogs, circa 1915-1939</a>
Box 1, Folder 19	<a href="#">Exhibition Catalogs, Other Artists, 1924-1938</a>
Box 1, Folder 20	<a href="#">Monographs, Le Cento Città D'Italia Illustrate, circa 1924-1929</a>
Box 1, Folder 21	<a href="#">Monographs, On Gauguin and Matisse, circa 1911-1925</a>
Box 1, Folder 22	<a href="#">Periodicals, Cahiers D'Art, 1929</a>
Box 1, Folder 23	<a href="#">Periodicals, L'Amour de L'Art, 1921</a>
Box 1, Folder 24	<a href="#">Periodicals, L'Art Vivant, 1926-1927</a>
Box 1, Folder 25	<a href="#">Periodicals, L'Illustration, 1929</a> Notes: Oversized materials housed in OV 5
Box 1, Folder 26	<a href="#">Posters, circa 1915-1930</a> Notes: Oversized material housed in OV 6
Box 1, Folder 27	<a href="#">Reproductions of Artwork, circa 1915-1930</a> Notes: Oversized materials housed in Box 2, Folder 1 and OV 5
Overize OV 5	Oversized Clippings scanned with Box 1, Folder17, circa 1914-1938
Overize OV 5	Oversized Periodicals, L'Illustration scanned with Box 1, Folder 25, 1929
Box OV 6	Oversized Posters scanned with Box 1, Folder 26, circa 1915-1930
Overize OV 5	Oversized Reproductions of Artwork scanned with Box 1, Folder 27, circa 1915-1930

Box 2, Folder 1

Oversized Reproductions of Artwork scanned with Box 1, Folder 27, circa  
1915-1930

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## Series 6: Artwork, 1890-1930

### 1.1 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3, Artifacts 4 and 7)

**Scope and Contents:** Artwork includes prints and sketches of Webster's work, including numerous figure studies of men, women, and children in graphite, charcoal, and pastels. Two of Webster's palettes and a paintbox, are also included in the series.

**Arrangement:** Materials are arranged by document type and subject.

**Available Formats:** This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 28	Palettes and Paintbox, circa 1890-1930 <a href="#">Image(s): Palette and Paintbox: circa 1890-1930</a> Notes: Oversized materials housed in Artifact Cabinet
Box 1, Folder 29	<a href="#">Prints, Graphs, and Paintings, circa 1890-1930</a> Notes: Oversized material housed in Box 2, Folder 2
Box 1, Folder 30	<a href="#">Sketchbooks, circa 1890-1930</a>
Box 1, Folder 31	<a href="#">Sketches, Buildings, circa 1890-1930</a>
Box 1, Folder 32	<a href="#">Sketches, Woodwork, circa 1890-1930</a>
Box 1, Folder 33	<a href="#">Sketches, Miscellaneous, circa 1890-1930</a> Notes: Oversized materials housed in OV 6
Box 2, Folder 3	<a href="#">Sketches, Portraits, circa 1890-1930</a>
Box 2, Folder 4	<a href="#">Sketches, Men, circa 1890-1930</a>
Box 2, Folder 5	<a href="#">Sketches, Men and Women, circa 1890-1930</a>
Box 3, Folder 1	<a href="#">Sketches, Women, circa 1890-1930</a>
Box 3, Folder 2	<a href="#">Sketches, Women, circa 1890-1930</a>
Box 3, Folder 3	<a href="#">Sketches, Women, circa 1890-1930</a>
Box 3, Folder 4	<a href="#">Sketches, Women, circa 1890-1930</a>
Box 4	Palette and Paintbox, circa 1890-1930 Notes: Digitized with Box 1, Folder 28
Box 7	Palette, circa 1890-1930 Notes: Digitized with Box 1, Folder 28
Box 2, Folder 2	Oversized Graphs and Paintings scanned with Box 1, Folder 29, circa 1890-1930

Box OV 6

Oversized Sketch, Miscellaneous scanned with Box 1, Folder 33, circa 1890-1930

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## Series 7: Photographic Materials, 1875-1930

### 8 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Photographic materials are of Webster with friends, family, and students at his Summer Art School. There are also photographs of individual family members, unidentified individuals, and reproductions of artwork by Webster and other artists.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by subject.

Available Formats: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Formats:

Box 1, Folder 34	<a href="#">Edwin Ambrose Webster, circa 1880-1930</a>
Box 1, Folder 35	<a href="#">Edwin Ambrose Webster with Friends, circa 1900-1925</a>
Box 1, Folder 36	<a href="#">Edwin Ambrose Webster with Students, circa 1920-1930</a>
Box 1, Folder 37	<a href="#">Georgianna Rodgers Webster, circa 1905-1930</a>
Box 1, Folder 38	<a href="#">Webster and Emerson Family, circa 1875-1910</a>
Box 1, Folder 39	<a href="#">Unidentified Individuals and Groups, circa 1890-1920</a>
Box 1, Folder 40	<a href="#">Reproductions of Artwork by Webster, circa 1920-1930</a>
Box 1, Folder 41	<a href="#">Reproductions of Artwork by Others, circa 1920-1930</a>

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## Series 8: Karl Rodgers Research Files, 1940-1968

### 6 Folders (Box 1)

**Scope and Contents:** Research files gathered by Webster's nephew, Karl Rodgers, consist of biographical notes and research on Webster's artwork, including materials related to his participation in the Armory Show; posthumous correspondence with collectors, galleries, and museums; and miscellaneous printed material.

**Arrangement:** Materials are arranged by document type.

**Available Formats:** This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 42	<a href="#">Biographical Notes, circa 1940-1941</a>
Box 1, Folder 43	<a href="#">List of Artworks, circa 1960-1968</a>
Box 1, Folder 44	<a href="#">Armory Show, 1962-1963</a>
Box 1, Folder 45	<a href="#">Collectors, 1946-1968</a>
Box 1, Folder 46	<a href="#">Galleries and Museums, 1963-1965</a>
Box 1, Folder 47	<a href="#">Clippings, circa 1963-1965</a>

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