



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.

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Archives of American Art  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Edwin Ambrose Webster papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.webse
<b>Date:</b>	1821-1968
<b>Extent:</b>	2.7 linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Webster, E. Ambrose (Edwin Ambrose), 1869-1935
<b>Language:</b>	English  The collection is in English.
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of painter and educator Edwin Ambrose Webster measure 2.7 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.

## Conditions Governing Use

The Edwin Ambrose Webster 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 / 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 2.7 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, OV 5-6)
- Series 6: Artwork, 1890-1930 (1.1 linear feet; Boxes 1-4, OV 6)
- Series 7: Photographic Materials, 1875-1930 (8 folders; Box 1)
- Series 8: Karl Rodgers Research Files, 1940-1968 (6 folders; Box 1)

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## 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  
Painters -- Massachusetts -- Provincetown

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Names:

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

Occupations:

Art teachers -- Massachusetts -- Provincetown

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## Container Listing

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

*5 folders (Box 1)*

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

Materials are arranged by document type.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 1	Address Book, circa 1850-1930 <a href="#">Image(s): Address Book: circa 1850-1930</a>
Box 1, Folder 2	Address Books, circa 1850-1930 <a href="#">Image(s): Address Books: circa 1850-1930</a>
Box 1, Folder 3	Certificates, 1911-1922 <a href="#">Image(s): Certificates: 1911-1922</a>
Box 1, Folder 4	Military Records, 1864-1866 <a href="#">Image(s): Military Records: 1864-1866</a>
Box 1, Folder 5	Webster and Emerson Family , 1821-1930 <a href="#">Image(s): Webster and Emerson Family : 1821-1867</a> 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)*

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.

Materials are arranged by document type.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

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

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## Series 3: Writings, 1910-1930

*3 folders (Box 1)*

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

Materials are arranged by document type.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

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

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## Series 4: Teaching Files, 1930-1933

*5 folders (Box 1)*

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.

Materials are arranged by document type.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

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

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## Series 5: Printed Materials, 1911-1939

*0.4 linear feet (Box 1, OV 5-6)*

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

Materials are arranged by document type.

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

Box OV 5	Oversized Periodicals, <i>L'illustration</i> scanned with Box 1, Folder 25, 1929
Box OV 6	Oversized Posters scanned with Box 1, Folder 26, circa 1915-1930
Box 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 1-4, OV 6)

Artwork includes prints and sketches of Webster's work, including numerous figure studies of men, women, and children in graphite, charcoal, and pastels. Two artifacts, Wester's palette and paintbox, are also included in the series.

Materials are arranged by document type and subject.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

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

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 4, Folder 1	Oversized Palette and Paintbox scanned with Box 1, Folder 28, circa 1890-1930
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)*

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.

Materials are arranged by subject.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

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

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.

Materials are arranged by document type.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

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

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