



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

S. J. Woolf papers

Archives of American Art  
750 9th Street, NW  
Victor Building, Suite 2200  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	S. J. Woolf papers
<b>Date:</b>	1835-1986 (bulk 1880-1948)
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.woolsj
<b>Creator:</b>	Woolf, S. J. (Samuel Johnson), 1880-1948
<b>Extent:</b>	3 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Scrapbooks on reels 4065-4066 lent for microfilming, and remainder donated by Dr. Deborah Hobson, Woolf's granddaughter, through the National Portrait Gallery, which received the papers along with 107 drawings by Woolf of prominent Americans. The papers were transferred to the Archives of American Art, 1988 and 1992.

### Location of Originals

Reels 4065-4066: Originals in the possession of Dr. Deborah Hobson, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

### Other Finding Aids

Finding aid available at Archives of American Art offices.

### Available Formats

35mm microfilm reels 4065-4066 available at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

### 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

S. J. Woolf (1880-1948) was a graphic artist, journalist, illustrator in New York, N.Y. Born into a family long active in the arts, Woolf studied at the Art Students League and at the National Academy of Design. He developed a reputation as a portraitist, primarily drawing celebrities for "Collier's", and, beginning in 1923, combining his portraits with his written accounts of his "personality interviews" for the "New York Times." Woolf also served as a special correspondent during both world wars.

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## Scope and Contents

Biographical material, letters, art works, 2 contracts, notes, writings, subject files, scrapbooks, printed material, and photographs document the journalism and portraiture of S.J. Woolf. His subjects included many of the twentieth century's most influential figures.

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## Scope and Contents

Scrapbook I contains circa 400 photographs of charcoal portraits of noted figures in politics, business, science, and the arts, drawn by Woolf between 1918 and 1948 for the "New York Times" magazine series "Drawings from Life." The other three scrapbooks contain clippings, 1923-1948, of the brief biographies, written by Woolf from his conversations with his subjects as he drew them, which were published with the drawings. The third scrapbook also includes an original drawing of Alfred E. Smith and Woolf's obituaries.

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## Scope and Contents

Birth announcements for Woolf, 1880; a passport, 1929; documents relating to Woolf's work as a war correspondent, 1942-1944; letters, 1847-1903, mentioning musical and theatrical activities of Woolf's relatives including his grandfather Edward Woolf and his great-uncle Benjamin Woolf; letters to Woolf concerning his work, 1910-1949; an essay "My Brownstone Aunts" by Woolf's wife Edith Truman Woolf; 2 essays by Woolf on his career; 5 drawings by Woolf, including portraits of Calvin Coolidge and Alfred Sloan; a caricature of Woolf by "V.D.S."; a caricature of English actor Farren by Edward Woolf, 1835; a design to decorate a bar by Muriel Hobson; 350 subject files, 1904-1986, containing letters, clippings, and typescripts concerning noted figures in politics, business, science, and the arts, such as Irving Berlin, Albert Einstein, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Mark Twain; and files on the Snyder-Grey trial, 1927, the Bruno Hauptmann execution, 1936, Woolf's book, "Here Am I," 1941-1942, and Woolf's work at the front during both World Wars; 4 scrapbooks, 1900-1948, containing clippings, letters, drawings, war zone passes, and Woolf's birth certificate and photograph; clippings, 1903-1980, including articles about Benjamin Woolf and Edith Truman Woolf; 2 exhibition catalogs, 1919 and 1935; photographs, 1890-1941, of Woolf, his family and colleagues, an art class, an exhibition installation, and works of art.

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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 and war
- Journalism, Pictorial
- Journalists as artists -- United States
- Portrait painting, American

### Types of Materials:

- Drawings

### Names:

- Woolf, Benjamin E.
- Woolf, Edith Truman
- Woolf, Edward

Occupations:

Actors -- United States  
Illustrators -- United States  
Journalists -- United States  
Portrait painters -- United States

Places:

United States -- Biography -- Portraits