



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Denys Wortman Papers,
1887-1980, in the Archives of American Art

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Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Denys Wortman papers
Identifier:	AAA.wortdeny
Date:	1887-1980
Extent:	2 Linear feet
Creator:	Wortman, Denys, 1887-1958
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of cartoonist Denys Wortman measure 2.0 linear feet and date from 1887 to 1980. The collection includes biographical material, correspondence, personal business records, writings, interviews, artwork, printed material, and photographs.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Denys Wortman papers were donated by Hilda Wortman, Wortman's widow in 1979-1983. Denys Wortman Jr., Wortman's son, donated the Craven interview tape in 1981.

Separated Materials

Thirty-five letters to Wortman from friends and colleagues (1910-1957) were microfilmed on reel 3014 and returned to Hilda R. Wortman after microfilming. Letters are from Gifford Beal, James Cagney, Stuart Davis, Guy Pène du Bois, Juliet and Pier Hamilton, Edward and Jo Hopper, Kenneth Hayes Miller, Herbert Satterlee, John Sloan, Austin Strong, Frank Sullivan, William Sulzer, Gluyas Williams, and Mahonri Young. Microfilm reel 3014 is available at Archives of American Art offices and for interlibrary loan, but is not further described in the container listing of this finding aid.

Processing Information

The collection was processed shortly after donation. A finding aid for the collection was written in 2018 by Caroline Donadio.

Preferred Citation

Denys Wortman papers, 1887-1980. 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.

Conditions Governing Use

Unfilmed: Authorization to publish, quote or reproduce requires written permission from Denys Wortman, Jr.

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Biographical / Historical

Denys Wortman (1887-1958) was an American cartoonist in New York, New York. Born in Saugerties, New York, Wortman studied engineering at Stevens Institute of Technology and at Rutgers College. From 1906-1909, he attended the Chase School of Art in New York City with Kenneth Hayes Miller and classmates George Bellows, Edward Hopper, and Rockwell Kent. Beginning as a landscape painter from the "Gloucester School," Wortman's career changed when his drawings of life as a sailor in World War I were published in the New York Tribune. From 1924-1954, his daily cartoons "Metropolitan Movies" and "Mopey Dick and the Duke" mirrored New York life in the New York World-Tribune.

Scope and Contents

The papers of cartoonist Denys Wortman measure 2.0 linear feet and date from 1887 to 1980. The collection includes biographical material, correspondence, personal business records, writings, interviews, artwork, printed material, and photographs.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 8 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1913-1958
- Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1911-1980
- Series 3: Personal Business Records, 1921-1954
- Series 4: Writings, undated, 1918-1927
- Series 5: Interviews, undated, circa 1952
- Series 6: Artwork, undated, 1919
- Series 7: Printed Material, circa 1903-1978
- Series 8: Photographs, circa 1887-1956

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Cartooning--New York (State)--New York

Types of Materials:

Illustrators

Interviews

Photographs

Occupations:

Cartoonists -- New York (State) -- New York

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1913-1958

Biographical material includes biographical accounts and a certificate of marriage between Wortman and his first wife, Aimée Kempe in 1913.

Box 1, Folder 1 Biographical Material, 1913-1958

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Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1911-1980

Correspondence, which comprises the bulk of this collection, consists of letters, some illustrated, to Wortman and his second wife Hilda. Letters are from his mother, his brother Elbert, newspaper publishers, and colleagues including Peggy Bacon, Roy Baker, George G. Barnard, Gifford Beal, Ruth Benedict, Isabel Bishop, Charlton Bolles, Arthur Brown, E. Button, Stuart Campbell, Edward C. Caswell, Thomas Cole, Nathaniel Collier, Worth Colwell, Fred Cooper, Raymond M. Crosby, Benjamin Dale, Bob Davis, John Dawson, Ed De Cossey, Steven Dohanos, Max and Eliena Eastman, Pat Enright, W. D. Faulkner, Robert Fawcett, Max Fleischer, Juliana Force, Lora B. Fox, Fred Freeman, James Freeman, Alfred Frueh, Murray Harris, Jim Herbert, R. John Holmgren, Ellison Hoover, Will B. Johnstone, H. J. Kauffer, J. Graham Kaye, Clarence B. Kelland, Walter Klett, Gene Lockhart, Arthur Mann, Frank J. Marshall, Jim McKenna, Helen Miller, Gladys Mock, Feg Murray, Frank Netter, William Oberhardt, Lloyd Parsons, Audrey Parsons, Garrett and Florence Price, Raymond Prohaska, George Raab, Samuel Raab, Jack Ratcliff, Norman Rothschild, Harry Salpeter, Albert Sterner, Jack Van Ryder, Leroy Ward, Mahonri Young, Carl Zigrosser, William Zorach, and Thomas Benton's wife Rita.

Box 1, Folder 2	Letters, undated
Box 1, Folder 3-7	Letters, A-L, undated
Box 1, Folder 8-11	Letters, M-Z, undated
Box 1, Folder 12-13	Letters, 1911-1917, 1921-1925
Box 1, Folder 14-19	Letters, 1926-1929
Box 1, Folder 20-27	Letters, 1930-1934
Box 1, Folder 28-35	Letters, 1935-1936
Box 1, Folder 36-48	Letters, 1937-1938
Box 1, Folder 49-62	Letters, 1939-1940
Box 1, Folder 63-70	Letters, 1941-1952
Box 1, Folder 71-78	Letters, 1953-1954
Box 1, Folder 79-83	Letters, 1955-1980

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Series 3: Personal Business Records, 1921-1954

Personal Business records consists of legal contracts with newspapers and publishers, client lists, a lease, check stubs, an expense book, and receipts.

Box 1, Folder 84	Contracts, 1925-1938
Box 1, Folder 85	Client List, 1935-1954
Box 1, Folder 86	Miscellaneous Business Records, 1924-1952
Box 1, Folder 87	Check Stubs, 1921-1922
Box 2, Folder 1	Notebook of Expenses, 1923
Box 2, Folder 2	Miscellaneous Financial Material, 1923-1952

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Series 4: Writings, 1918-1927, undated

Writings includes membership lists for the Dexter Fellows Tent Circus Saints, the Sinners Club of America and, the Artists and Writers Golf Association, word puzzles and mathematical formulas, and the scripts for "I Know What I Like" by Arthur William Brown and Phil Broughton and "Taxi,-Lady?" by William and Vivian Place. Also found is a notebook from 1927, and a diary of Aimée Kempe Wortman.

Box 2, Folder 3	Membership Lists, undated
Box 2, Folder 4	Miscellaneous Notes, undated
Box 2, Folder 5	Diary By Aimee Kempe Wortman, 1918
Box 2, Folder 6	"Writings Hobbies For Everybody:'Drawing and Cartooning'" by Ruth Lampland with Chapter by Wortman, circa 1935
Box 2, Folder 7	"I Know What I Like" Writing Script by Arthur William Brown and Phil Broughton, undated
Box 2, Folder 8	"Taxi,-Lady?" Writing Script by William and Vivian Place, undated
Box 2, Folder 9	Notebook, 1927
Box 2, Folder 10	Miscellaneous Writings, undated

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Series 5: Interviews, circa 1952, undated

The interviews consist of a transcript of Wortman, Charles I. Stewart, and Johanna Harris discussing "Art under a Democracy," and an untranscribed interview of Wortman conducted by Thomas Craven, circa 1952.

Box 2, Folder 11 "Art Under A Democracy," Transcript, undated

Box 2, Folder 12 Interview of Denys Wortman by Thomas Craven, circa 1952
1 Sound tape reel

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Series 6: Artwork, 1919, undated

Artwork includes 25 drawings, a print by Wortman, and drawings by Francis Hackett and William Zorach.

Box 2, Folder 12 By Denys Wortman, 1919, undated

Oversize 4 By Denys Wortman, undated

Box 1, Folder 13 By Francil Hackett, undated

Box 1, Folder 14 by William Zorach, undated

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Series 7: Printed Material, circa 1901-1954

Printed material includes clippings, exhibition catalogs, programs, and material concerning The Players and the Society of Illustrators.

Box 2, Folder 15	Clippings, undated
Box 2, Folder 16-18	Clippings, 1903-1939
Box 2, Folder 19-21	Clippings, 1940-1978
Oversize 5	Clippings and Reproductions of Artwork, 1920-1943, undated
Box 2, Folder 22	Exhibition Catalogs, 1935-1953
Box 2, Folder 23	Reproductions of Artwork, 1918, undated
Box 2, Folder 24	Programs, 1938-1951
Box 2, Folder 25	Society of Illustrators, 1901-1939
Box 2, Folder 26	The Players, 1938
Box 2, Folder 27	Proof Sheet for Booklet Metropolitan Movies, undated
Box 2, Folder 28	Miscellaneous, 1939-1954
Oversize 7	Posters and Reprints of Illustrations, circa 1927-1939

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Series 8: Photographs, circa 1887-1956

Photographs are of Wortman, his family, and colleagues, including Harry Beckhoff, Alexander Brook, Clarence Brown, Glenn O. Coleman, Fred Cooper, Thomas Craven, Rudy Dirks, Steven Dohanos, Max and Eliena Eastman, Duncan Ferguson, Stefan Hirsch, Will B. Johnstone, Frank Kidder, Richard Lahey, Robert Laurent, Joseph Lilly, Esther Merrill, Wallace Morgan, Willard Mullin, Garrett and Florence Price, Otto Soglow, Marguerite Zorach, and Thomas Hart Benton, sports cartoonist Feg Murray (3) with film celebrities Joan Crawford, Marion Davies, and Jean Harlow, works of art, stage productions by members of the Society of American Illustrators and a gathering at the Grand Central Galleries of modern artists including Peggy Bacon, Dorothy Varian, Max Weber, and William Zorach.

Box 3, Folder 1	School, 1908-1909, undated
Box 3, Folder 2-5	Wortman and Family, 1887-1940
Box 3, Folder 6-7	Wortman and Friends, 1912-1956
Box 3, Folder 8	Modern Artists, undated
Box 3, Folder 9	Works of Art, undated
Box 3, Folder 10	Cartoonist Feg Murray with Celebrities, undated
Box 3, Folder 11	Miscellaneous Photographs, undated
Oversize 6	Oversize Photographs, 1933, undated

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