



Smithsonian

*National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center*

## Samuel Yellin Collection

NMAH.AC.0254

Carol Dreyfus and David E. Haberstick

2001

Archives Center, National Museum of American History

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	Samuel Yellin Collection
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.0254
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1971-1975 circa 1928 -1930
<b>Creator:</b>	Yellin, Samuel, 1885-1940 Davis, Myra Tolmach (Author) Hofmeister, Richard (Photographer) National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Community Life (Collector)
<b>Extent:</b>	2 Motion picture films 0.33 Cubic feet (2 boxes) acetate,,16mm.,,Films:,Silver gelatin on,silent. Photoprints:,fibre-base paper,,8" x 10",,Silver gelatin on
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	Samuel Yellin was an American master blacksmith. In 1910, he built the Arch Street Metalworker's studio.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The collection was donated Harvey Z. Yellin in 1975.

### Provenance

The collection was transferred to the Archives Center from the Division of Community Life on March 1, 1987.

### Location of Originals

Original 35mm negatives by Richard Hofmeister are in the Office of Imaging, Printing and Photographic Services (OIPP) negative library, nos. 75-4495 to 75-4499.

### Processing Information

Collection processed by Carol Dreyfus and David Haberstick, 2001.

### Preferred Citation

Samuel Yellin Collection, 1928-1975, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

### Restrictions

reference copies do not exist. Special arrangements must be made with the Archives Center to view the motion picture films.

## Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees regarding intellectual property rights. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

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## Biographical / Historical

Yellin, born in Poland, began learning ironwork at seven. He migrated to America in 1906 and taught at the Pennsylvania Museum and the school of Industrial Art. In 1910, he built the Arch Street Metalworker's studio, which eventually employed more than 200 craftsmen. Yellin was also an avid collector of fine examples of ironwork.

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## Scope and Contents

The collection is divided into three series: (1) Motion pictures; (2) Documents; and (3) Photographs. There are two 16mm silent black-and-white films, one showing Yellin working; a master's thesis on Yellin and an article about him, both by Myra Tolmach Davis; and 86 photographs of Yellin's studio, factory, and home.

The films are: (1) "The Making of Wrought Iron", produced by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, shows an artist sketching a grille and Yellin shaping a grille for a chair. (2) "The Florida Film" shows examples of Yellin's first work as used in the Singing Tower, Mountain Lake, Florida. Both are distributed by Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

The documents are two items by Myra Tolmach Davis: "Sketches in Iron: Samuel Yellin," a copy of a typescript addressed to George Washington University (Washington, D.C.), for Master of Museology degree, June 6, 1971. 67 pp. The article, "Samuel Yellin's Sketches in Iron," published in *Historic Preservation*, vol. 23, no. 4 (Oct. Dec.), 1971, pp. 4-13, is virtually identical to the text of her thesis. The photographs (Series 3) are 86 prints from 35mm negatives by Richard Hofmeister, Office of Printing and Photographic Services, Smithsonian Institution, April 1, 1975, with an itemized checklist, "The Samuel Yellin Metal Working Building & Collection, Philadelphia..." These photographs show Smithsonian curator Richard Ahlborn during his visit to the Yellin shop on April 1, 1975, and the exterior of the building, library, factory, study, and collection rooms. The original 35mm negatives by Richard Hofmeister, who accompanied Ahlborn on this research trip, are in the Office of Imaging, Printing and Photographic Services (OIPP) negative library, nos. 75 4495 to 75 4499.

The photographs were made by Richard Hofmeister on a visit with curator Richard Ahlborn to the Samuel Yellin Metalworkers factory, Philadelphia, 1 April 1975. The master's thesis and article by Davis relate to an exhibition of Yellin's work at the Dimock Gallery, George Washington University.

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## Arrangement

Collection divided into three series.

**Series 1, Motion Picture Films,**

**Series 2, Documents,**

**Series 3, Photoprints**

## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

- Art metal-work
- Artisans
- Emigration and immigration
- Ironwork
- Metal-work
- Metal-workers
- Wrought-iron

### Types of Materials:

- Articles -- 20th century
- Motion pictures (visual works)
- Photographs -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin -- 1950-2000
- Theses

### Names:

- Ahlborn, Richard E., 1933-2015
- Samuel Yellin Metalworkers
- Yellin, Harvey

### Places:

- Pennsylvania
- Singing Tower (Mountain Lake, Fla.)

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## Container Listing

### Motion Picture Films

The Making of Wrought Iron

The Florida Film

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## Documents

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|-----------------|---|
| Box 2, Folder 1 | Article: Myra Tolmach Davis, "Samuel Yellin's Sketches in Iron," tear sheets from <i>Historic Preservation</i> , vol. 23, no. 4 (Oct. Dec.), 1971, pp. 4-13.            |
| Box 2, Folder 2 | Thesis: Myra Tolmach Davis, "Sketches in Iron: Samuel Yellin," to George Washington University (Washington, D.C.), for Master of Museology degree, June 6, 1971. 67 pp. |

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## Photographs

Box 2, Folder 3	Contact proof prints from 35mm negatives (86), individually cut and pasted on 5 paper sheets. Images include Mr. Harvey Yellin, Richard Ahlborn, the exterior of the building, carvings from Samuel Yellin's collection, examples of Yellin's work, etc.
Box 2, Folder 4	Photoprints (fiber base), nos. 1-16. Note: See negative nos. in collection
	Harvey Yellin and Richard Ahlborn at entrance with original sign.
	Exterior views of building; hallway; stairway.
	Library
Box 2, Folder 5	Factory: shop with machines and work tables; men working.
	Study
Box 2, Folder 6	Study, includes views of fire screens by Yellin
	Collection rooms with examples of Yellin's work
Box 2, Folder 7	Collection rooms with examples of Yellin's work
Box 2	Collection rooms with examples of Yellin's work

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