



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Robert Tyler Davis Papers, 1924-1960, 1979

Finding aid prepared by Smithsonian Institution Archives

Smithsonian Institution Archives
Washington, D.C.
Contact us at osiaref@si.edu

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Descriptive Entry.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	3

Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Robert Tyler Davis Papers
Identifier:	Accession 18-085
Date:	1924-1960, 1979
Extent:	0.94 cu. ft. (1 half document box) (1 16x20 box)
Creator::	Davis, Robert Tyler
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession 18-085, Robert Tyler Davis Papers

Descriptive Entry

Robert Tyler Davis (1904-1978) was born in Los Angeles, California. He was a museum administrator and an educator in art and art history, specializing in Pacific Northwest Native American art, and decorative arts, particularly tapestries. He graduated from Franklin High School, Los Angeles, and studied art history, drawing, and painting at the University of California at Los Angeles, and at Harvard, A.B., 1926, A.M., 1928. He was a Carnegie Fellow (1927-1929), and studied fine arts abroad, taking courses at the Sorbonne. He taught drawing, painting and art history at the University of Rochester, in New York (1929-1933), and at the Erskine School for Girls, Boston, when he returned to Harvard for graduate museum studies between 1933 and 1934.

On September 6, 1934 Davis married mystery novelist Lillian Soskin, and became Director of Education at the Albright Gallery in Buffalo, New York. In 1939 Davis was named Director of the Portland Art Museum in Oregon, where he researched and collected Native American art. His book, *Native Arts of the Pacific Northwest*, was published in 1949. From 1947 to 1952 Davis was Director of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and Professor of Fine Arts at McGill University in Montreal. Davis was Director of the Vizcaya-Dade County Art Museum, 1953-1957; Interim Director of the Joe and Emily Lowe Gallery, University of Miami, 1955-1956; and Coordinator of Humanities and Professor of Art at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, 1956-1959. Lillian Davis died October 12, 1957. Davis was remarried January 29, 1959 to Janet Evans Golby.

In 1960 Davis was hired as museum consultant and liaison for the French and Company art dealership in New York. In September 1968 Davis became Assistant Director of the National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.; Acting Director, June 1969-January 1970; and later Special Assistant for the Collections, 1972-1975. His son, Martin M. Davis, died in 1969, and Janet Davis died in 1973. In 1975 Robert Tyler Davis retired to Lily Dale, New York, and traveled extensively. He died in 1978 in Pasadena, California.

This accession consists of a photograph album and miscellaneous photographs of Robert Tyler Davis and his family. Included are images of his wife, Lilian Soskin Davis, and their son, Martin M. Davis. The images follow the Davis family as they lived and worked in Pasadena, California; Rochester, New York; Portland, Oregon; Miami, Florida; and Washington, District of Columbia. Materials include a photograph album, images, negatives, and clippings.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art museum directors
Art museums -- Educational aspects
Photograph albums

Types of Materials:

Black-and-white negatives
Black-and-white photographs
Books
Clippings
Color photographs

Names:

Albright Art Gallery (Buffalo, N.Y.)
Davis, Lilian Soskin
Davis, Martin M.
Davis, Robert Tyler
French and Company (New York, N.Y.)
Harvard University
Joe and Emily Lowe Art Gallery (University of Miami)
McGill University
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
National Collection of Fine Arts (U.S.)
Portland Art Museum (Or.)
University of Miami
University of Rochester
Vizcaya Museum and Gardens (Miami, Fla.)

Geographic Names:

Miami (Fla.)
Pasadena (Calif.)
Portland (Or.)
Rochester (N.Y.)
Washington (D.C.)

Container Listing

Box 1

- Box 1 of 2 Photographs - Lilian (Soskin) Davis, 1934, 1944 and undated
- Box 1 of 2 Photograph - Robert Tyler and Lilian Davis, undated
- Box 1 of 2 Miscellaneous photographs - Robert Tyler Davis, family, and friends, 1928-1939, 1949-1955
- Box 1 of 2 Group portrait - Robert Tyler Davis and others, Rock Creek Park, undated
- Box 1 of 2 Photographs and negatives - Helen Belle, undated
- Box 1 of 2 Photograph - Drawing of Joy Greene, by Robert Tyler Davis, August 1979
- Box 1 of 2 Photographs and clipping - Florida, Hilda and Carl Morris, 1960
- Box 1 of 2 Photograph - Mary Anne Roberts, undated
- Box 1 of 2 Photograph - Mannix Walker, undated
- Box 1 of 2 Unidentified photographs, undated

Box 2

- Box 2 of 2 Photo album, 1924-1946
- Box 2 of 2 Photographs - Robert Tyler Davis, 1944, 1950 and undated
- Box 2 of 2 Photographs - Martin Davis, 1944, 1947, and undated
- Box 2 of 2 Photographs - Robert Tyler, Lilian, and Martin Davis, undated
- Box 2 of 2 Photographs - Emile Marcovitch, 1928