

M009

J. Ottis Adams Papers Addition, 1891-1967 | Indianapolis Museum of Art Archives

By Rebecca Denne

Collection Overview

Title: J. Ottis Adams Papers Addition, 1891-1967

Primary Creator: Adams, J. Ottis (John Ottis) (1851-1927)

Extent: 1.42 Linear Feet.

Date Acquired: December 3, 2014

Languages: English

Scope and Contents of the Materials

The J. Ottis Adams Papers Addition includes three scrapbooks containing clippings, ephemera, correspondence, and photographs of the artist's home and studio. The first and second scrapbooks document the artist's professional life between the periods of 1891-1927 and 1895-1904. The final scrapbook was assembled by the artist's family and contains additional material and notes related to the artist's life, dated between 1901 and 1967. A letter from the St. Louis World's Fair Department of Art (1904) is also included.

Collection Biographical Note

The landscape painter John Ottis Adams was born in 1851 in Amity, Indiana, a small town south of Indianapolis. He attended Wabash College in 1871, but left a year later for the South Kensington Art School in London to study under John Parker. Adams returned to Indiana in 1876, eventually settling in Muncie.

In 1880 Adams returned to Europe, traveling to the Royal Academy in Munich to study with Gyula Benczúr. In Munich, Adams met two other painters from Indiana, Theodore Clement (T. C.) Steele and William Forsyth. After seven years in Munich, Adams returned to Muncie and opened an art school there with Forsyth. Adams also taught classes in Union City and Fort Wayne, Indiana.

In 1895 Adams, Forsyth and Steele were invited to exhibit at the Athenaeum Building in Chicago with two other Indiana painters, Otto Stark and Richard B. Gruelle. The exhibition, sponsored by the Central Art Association of Chicago, was named "The Hoosier Group," and the term was associated with the five artists throughout their artistic careers. Also in Chicago that year, Adams, Forsyth and Steele joined with other regional artists to form the Society of Western Artists. The mission of the Society was to promote Midwestern art and exhibitions of work by Society members and other artists circulated through the region annually. Adams was president of the Society of Western Artists from 1908-1910.

Adams and Steele purchased an estate together in Brookville, Indiana in 1897, which was later named "The Hermitage." The Hermitage hosted visiting artists and held summer art classes for the public. A decade later Adams became the sole owner of the property and The Hermitage became one of the Adams' family residences.

A year after acquiring the Hermitage, Adams married a still-life painter from Muncie, Winifred Brady. Winifred was the sister of Elizabeth Brady, who married Frank C. Ball, co-founder of the Ball Brothers Glass Manufacturing Business (now Ball Corporation) and one of the founders of Ball State University. Winifred met Adams in 1889 when she was a student at the Muncie art school he founded.

Adams was instrumental in establishing the John Herron Art Institute in Indianapolis in 1902 and taught drawing and painting there until 1906. During this time, the Adams family began summering in Leland, Michigan. By 1910 Adams was in poor health and began spending the winters in Florida. He moved back to Indiana permanently in 1926 and passed away a year later. Adams is buried in Muncie.

Source

J. Ottis Adams Papers (M001) finding aid.

Subject/Index Terms

Adams, J. Ottis (John Ottis), 1851-1927,
Art, American—Indiana,
Art Association of Indianapolis, Indiana,
Artists—Indiana—Biography,
John Herron Art Institute,
Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904 : Saint Louis, Mo.),
Society of Western Artists

Forms of Material:

brochures,
clippings (information artifacts),
correspondence,
exhibition catalogs,

photographs,
scrapbooks

Administrative Information

Repository: Indianapolis Museum of Art Archives

Alternate Extent Statement: 1 box, 1 OVA box

Access Restrictions: Collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions: Unpublished manuscripts are protected by copyright. Permission to publish, quote, or reproduce must be secured from the repository and the copyright holder. Please contact the Archivist for more information.

Acquisition Source: Marty Krause, IMA Curator

Acquisition Method: Transfer

Preferred Citation: [Title of item], [date], [Container information], J. Ottis Adams Papers Addition (M009), IMA Archives, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN.

Related Material:

J. Ottis Adams Papers (M001), IMA Archives, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1

- Folder 1: Letter from St. Louis World's Fair Department of Art, April 11, 1904
- Folder 2: Scrapbook [1 of 4], 1891-1927
- Folder 3: Scrapbook [2 of 4], 1891-1927
- Folder 4: Scrapbook [3 of 4], 1891-1927
- Folder 5: Scrapbook [4 of 4], 1891-1927
- Folder 6: Loose ephemera from scrapbook, 1895-1904
- Folder 7: Loose photos from scrapbook, 1895-1904
- Folder 8: Family scrapbook [1 of 2], 1901-1967
- Folder 9: Family scrapbook [2 of 2], 1901-1967

OVA Box 1

- Item 1: Scrapbook, 1895-1904