

# M001

## J. Ottis Adams Papers, 1882-1951 | Indianapolis Museum of Art Archives

By Eliza Sparacino

### Collection Overview

Title: J. Ottis Adams Papers, 1882-1951

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

Extent: 2.5 Linear Feet.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged in three series: Personal and Professional Materials, Exhibition Materials, and Journals

Languages: English

### Scope and Contents of the Materials

The first series, Personal and Professional Materials, includes business cards, clippings, a postcard from the artist Clifton Wheeler, small black and white reproductions of the J. Ottis Adams painting *The Gleaners*, 1886, and an anonymous painting of Mary Queen of Scots, as well as the Adams family's inventories of the collection. The second series, Exhibition Materials, consists of exhibition catalogues, announcements, and art association bulletins. The last series, Journals, includes journals with articles about J. Ottis Adams, Winifred Adams, and other artists of the Hoosier Group.

### 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.

## 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,  
Society of Western Artists

### Forms of Material:

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

## Administrative Information

Repository: Indianapolis Museum of Art Archives

Alternate Extent Statement: 2.5 linear feet: 7 boxes of documents.

Bulk Dates: 1886-1928

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.

Preferred Citation: [Title of item], [date], [Container information], J. Ottis Adams Papers (M001), IMA Archives, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN.

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## Box and Folder Listing

### Series I.: **Personal and Professional Materials**

Includes business cards, clippings, a postcard from the artist Clifton Wheeler, small black and white reproductions of the J. Ottis Adams painting *The Gleaners*, 1886, and an anonymous painting of Mary Queen of Scots, as well as the Adams family's inventories of the collection.

#### Box 1

- Folder 1: American Artists' Club, entertainment and informal dance, March 2, 1886
- Folder 2: Archive inventories, n.d.
- Folder 3: Biographical dictionary clippings, 1905-1913
- Folder 4: *Charni's Americana* card, n.d.
- Folder 5: Clippings, 1904-1910
- Folder 6: Clifton Wheeler postcard, 1921
- Folder 7: Ella Bond Johnston card, ca. 1916
- Folder 8: Gallerie Classischer Meister card, n.d.
- Folder 9: *The Gleaners* reproduction, n.d.
- Folder 10: Mary Queen of Scots reproduction, n.d.
- Folder 11: The Society of Western Artists letterhead, n.d.
- Folder 12: Summer sketching class in Brookville, 1910-1912

## Series II.: **Exhibition Materials**

Consists of exhibition catalogues, announcements, and art association bulletins.

### Box 1

- Folder 13: 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Indiana State Teacher's Association, Indianapolis, December 29-30, 1903
- Folder 14: American Watercolor Society, 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition, 1882
- Folder 15: Art Association of Indianapolis, Annual Exhibition, 1890, 1896, 1912, 1921
- Folder 16: Art Association of Indianapolis, Bulletin, 1925-1927
- Folder 17: Art Association of Indianapolis, Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture in the Permanent Collection, Fall 1909

### Box 2

- Folder 18: Art Association of Indianapolis, Exhibit of the Recent Work of Home Artists, Propylaeum, February 6-14, 1897
- Folder 19: Art Association of Indianapolis, John Herron Art Institute, Inaugural Exhibition, November 20-December 31, 1906
- Folder 20: Art Association of Indianapolis, Memorial Exhibition, Theodore C. Steele, 1847-1926, December 1926
- Folder 21: Art Association of Indianapolis, New Art School Building, September 1929
- Folder 22: The A.I.C.: 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition of American Paintings and Sculpture, November 2-December 10, 1922
- Folder 23: The A.I.C.: Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Sculpture by American Artists, 1897-1898
- Folder 24: B.R. Fitz, Fifth Avenue Art Galleries, April 21-22, 1892
- Folder 25: Ball State Teacher's College, 1951
- Folder 26: Bay City Art Club, First Annual Exhibition of Paintings, October 27-November 5, 1910
- Folder 27: Bertha Lacey, Exhibition of Paintings, April 28-29, 1927
- Folder 28: Brooklyn Museum, Exhibition of Paintings in Oil by American and European Artists, 1925-1926
- Folder 29: Chicago Galleries Association, First Semi-annual Exhibition by the Artist Members, March 15-April 15, 1926
- Folder 30: Cincinnati Art Museum, Exhibition of Woman's Art Club, November 5-21, 1910
- Folder 31: Cincinnati Museum, Annual Exhibition of American Art, \ 1900-1901, 1909-1911
- Folder 32: Cincinnati Museum Association, Catalogue of Works by Mr. L. H. Meakin, November 19-December 18, 1898

### Box 3

- Folder 33: Cincinnati Museum Association, Sixteenth Annual Report, 1896
- Folder 34: Cincinnati Museum Association, Spring Exhibition, 1896-1898
- Folder 35: Expositions at Buenos Aires and Santiago, International Fine Arts, United States Section, 1910
- Folder 36: Fort Wayne Art School and Museum, Exhibitions, 1910, 1912, 1923

- Folder 37: Franklin college, Annual Exhibition of Paintings by Indiana Artists, 1929-1930
- Folder 38: Garden, Flower and Landscape Paintings by frank Galsworthy, March 26-April 7, 1928
- Folder 39: Gary Public Schools, Art Exhibition, 1912-1921
- Folder 40: Gill's 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition, Original Paintings, February 11-March 4, 1905
- Folder 41: Hoosier Paintings: The Dailey Family Memorial, Indiana University, June 1946
- Folder 42: Hoosier Salon, Fort Wayne Art School and Museum, n.d.
- Folder 43: Hoosier Salon, Marshall Field & Company galleries, March 9-19, 1925
- Folder 44: Hoosier Women in Art and Hoosier Women's Book Fair, n.d.
- Folder 45: Indiana Art-Contemporary and Retrospective, April 27-May 9, 1903
- Folder 46: Indiana Artists: Special Exhibit, n.d.
- Folder 47: Indiana Artists, Traveling Exhibition, 1911-1912
- Folder 48: Indiana Artists Club Program, 1932-1933
- Folder 49: J. Ottis Adams and Otto Stark at the Leland Hall, n.d.
- Folder 50: John Herron Art Institute, Announcement, The Art School, 1913-1914
- Folder 51: John Herron Art Institute, Annual Exhibition of Works by Indiana Artists, 1911-1912, 1915, 1922
- Folder 52: John Herron Art Institute, Indiana Centennial Exhibit of Fine Arts and Home Industries, October 1-31, 1916
- Folder 53: John Herron Art Institute, Memorial Exhibition of Paintings of John Ottis Adams, October 1927
- Folder 54: John Herron Art Institute, Paintings and Objects of Art from the Collection of Frank C. Ball, May 5, 1918

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- Folder 55: John Herron Art Museum advertisement, n.d.
- Folder 56: Kansas City, Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Art Club, November 26-December 8, 1900
- Folder 57: Lafayette, Fourth Annual Exhibition of Art Association, March 21-April 4, 1912
- Folder 58: Louisiana Purchase Exposition souvenir, Indiana Building, 1904
- Folder 59: Marion, Fourth Annual Art Exhibition of the Public Library, May 19-June 2, 1908
- Folder 60: The Months and Seasons (Recent Work of John Ottis Adams), Brookville, April 2-9, 1912
- Folder 61: Muncie, Indiana: The Conversation Club, 1901-1902
- Folder 62: Muncie Art Association, Annual Exhibition, 1907-1908, 1912, 1914
- Folder 63: Muncie Art Students League, First Annual Exhibition of Original Paintings of the Western Artists, December 4-18, 1899
- Folder 64: Muncie Art Students League Programme, 1896-1902

- Folder 65: National Academy of Design, 73<sup>rd</sup> Annual Exhibition Illustrated Catalogue, March 28-May 14, 1898
- Folder 66: The Nixon Collection of Paintings by Indiana Artists, Indiana University, May 3-23, 1931
- Folder 67: Otto Stark, Exhibition at Palmer House, 1913, n.d.
- Folder 68: Panama-Pacific International Exposition, Department of Fine Arts, San Francisco, 1915
- Folder 69: The Portfolio Club Season Programme, 1894-1898, 1901-1902
- Folder 70: Red Cross Benefit Auction, n.d.
- Folder 71: Representative Works of Contemporary Swedish Artists, 1895-1896

Box 5

- Folder 72: Richmond, Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings by John Elwood Bundy, Public Art Gallery, September 17-October 11, 1926
- Folder 73: Richmond, Rotary Club, Exhibition of Paintings by Indiana Artists, May 26-June 2, 1927
- Folder 74: Richmond Art Association, Annual Art Exhibition, 1899-1901, 1903-1905
- Folder 75: The Richmond Art Association, Annual Exhibition, 1906, 1909, 1911, 1913-1915, 1917, 1927
- Folder 76: Richmond Art Association, Paintings Lent from the Permanent Collection, n.d.
- Folder 77: Richmond and Leland, Michigan exhibition ephemera, 1913, n.d.
- Folder 78: The Society of Western Artists, Annual Exhibition, Chicago, 1898-1899, 1901, 1904, 1906, 1910-1912
- Folder 79: The Society of Western Artists, Annual Exhibition, Cincinnati, 1897, 1901-1902, 1904, 1908-1911

Box 6

- Folder 80: The Society of Western Artists, Annual Exhibition, Cleveland, 1897
- Folder 81: The Society of Western Artists, Annual Exhibition, Detroit, 1897, 1903, 1910
- Folder 82: The Society of Western Artists, Annual Exhibition, Indianapolis, 1897, 1902, 1905, 1909-1910, 1914
- Folder 83: The Society of Western Artists, Annual Exhibition, Louisville, 1910
- Folder 84: The Society of Western Artists, Annual Exhibition, Pittsburgh, 1910
- Folder 85: The Society of Western Artists, Annual Exhibition, St. Louis, 1897, 1908-1909, 1911-1912
- Folder 86: The Society of Western Artists, Annual Exhibition Rules, 1900, 1902
- Folder 87: The Society of Western Artists, Exhibition Entry Conditions, 1910
- Folder 88: Universal Exposition, St. Louis, Department of Art, Official Catalogue of Exhibits, 1904
- Folder 89: W. Forsyth Exhibition, January 4-8, 1894

Series III.: **Journals**

Includes journals with articles about J. Ottis Adams, Winifred Adams, and other artists of the Hoosier Group.

Box 6

- Folder 90: *All Arts Magazine*, April 1926
- Folder 91: *The American Student of Art*, June 1906
- Folder 92: *Art and Progress*, April 1912
- Folder 93: *Brush and Pencil*, December 1898
- Folder 94: *A Catalogue of Rare and Valuable Works of the Fine Arts*,  
March-June 1904
- Folder 95: *The Cross Keys of Kappa Kappa Kappa Society*, September 1939

Box 7

- Folder 96: *Fine Arts Journal*, 1908, 1909
- Folder 97: *Harper's Weekly*, May 8, 1891
- Folder 98: *The Indiana Woman*, October 8, 1898
- Folder 99: *Metropolitan*, June 1897
- Folder 100: *Modern Art*, 1893, 1894
- Folder 101: *The Monitor Magazine*, December 1902
- Folder 102: *The Nationalist*, July 1890
- Folder 103: *The New Era*, March 23, 1912
- Folder 104: *The Reader*, May 1906
- Folder 105: *The Sketchbook*, 1903, 1906, 1907
- Folder 106: *The Vagabond*, October 1924