

Finding Aid to The Marian Stevens Papers, 1885-1974 Archives of Women Artists

Finding aid prepared by: Sara Mahan, September, 2017

Collection processed by: Jill Schaljo, September, 1993

Betty Boyd Dettre Library & Research Center

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Overview

Repository Information:

National Museum of Women in the Arts,
Betty Boyd Dettre Library & Research Center
1250 New York Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20005
Email: lrc@nmwa.org
Phone: 202-783-5000

Title:

Marian Stevens Papers

Provenance:

In May 1988, this collection was donated to the National Museum of Women in the Arts by Marian Stevens' nephew, Robert C. Stevens.

Collection Dates:

Inclusive Dates: 1909-1965
Bulk Dates: 1920-1965

Physical Description:

2.5 linear feet (5 document boxes, 1 artifact box)

Summary:

The papers of Marian Stevens are housed in six acid-free boxes in the Betty Boyd Dettre Library & Research Center. The bulk of the collection features 1,116 pencil and watercolor sketches. The remainder of the collection consists of personal correspondence, newspaper clippings, one journal/scrapbook, and various memorabilia.

Finding Aid URL:

https://nmwa.org/sites/default/files/shared/4.3.4.2-marian_stevens_papers_1885-1974.pdf

Administrative Information

Access Information:

This collection is open for researchers.

Preferred Citation:

Item, Date, Series, The Marian Stevens Papers, (Archives of Women Artists), National Museum of Women in the Arts, Betty Boyd Dettre Library & Research Center.

Publication and Photocopies Note:

Permission from the National Museum of Women in the Arts required for publication and reproduction of original materials. Photocopies of original materials can be made for a fee and at the discretion of the library director.

Related Materials Note:

A collection of Marian Stevens' papers and artwork can be found in the Stevens Family Papers housed at the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections in Cornell University Library. Her materials are located in subseries IV-E. Marian Stevens (1885-1974).

Biographical Note

Marian Stevens was born in Attica, NY, on July 12, 1885, but lived most of her life in Washington, D.C. Manifesting artistic talent at an early age, she was sent to the Corcoran School in Washington, and later to the Art Students' League in New York, where she studied under George Bellows.

She sketched, drew and painted all her life. Her mediums were primarily charcoal and chalk, and watercolor, although she did use oils occasionally. She especially liked still life, city scenes and women's hats. During the years 1935 to 1938, Marian exhibited a number of her works at the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors in New York. The artist also showed at Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo. In 1965, the exhibition *Hats, Sketches by Marian Stevens* was shown at the George Washington University Library from April 4th to May 2nd.

Stevens remained with her mother after her father died, spending her winters in Washington with her mother. However, usually in the late winter and early spring, when

her mother went South to Charleston, SC, she would travel to New York and stay at the Cosmopolitan Club.

Stevens's oeuvre consists mostly of pencil and watercolor drawings of people, events, architecture, women's hats, and city scenes. As is indicated by the great number of newspaper clippings that correspond in subject matter to the sketches, many of Stevens' material appears to have been drawn from reports of people and events in the contemporary media. Since there is little or no indication that Marian Stevens actually traveled to the places she sketched, it is likely that she relied heavily upon this source for her imagery. However, many of the local characters and gathers that are recorded in these sketches were perhaps known to or witnessed by Stevens herself. Together, Stevens' sketches of Washington provide a warm and often humorous look at local life during the 1920s - 1940s. Notable among the sketches are various composers and performers; World War II women officers; World War II African-American men officers and soldiers; and the Suffrage Parade of 1912.

In addition to her artwork, Stevens founded the Attica Historical Society in Attica, NY. Beginning initially with relics removed from the Stevens family houses in the village and at Maplewood. By her death it had grown to be representative of the history of the village and the surrounding community. She also volunteered for the American Red Cross during World War II.

The artist never married and lived in her apartment at the Fairfax Hotel on Massachusetts Avenue, NW for over 46 years, up to the time of her death. Marian Stevens died on January 28, 1974, in a Maryland hospital.

Organization and Arrangement Information

Arrangement Note:

The record group is divided into 5 series. Series 1 consists of two subseries, with subseries 1 containing the sketches, arranged in the numerical order in which they were received, and subseries 2 containing an item-level inventory created by LRC staff. Series 2 consists of correspondence from friends and external contacts, arranged by person's surname (or first name or initials in the case of missing or unknown surname). Series 3 consists of clippings, divided into three subseries based on subject: sketches, hats, and miscellaneous, and subarranged by date. Clippings with corresponding sketches will have matching numbers in pencil on the back of the clipping. All of the clippings have been photocopied onto acid-free paper for preservation purposes. Series 4 contains a variety of materials arranged by material type and subject in alphabetical order: exhibition materials, invitation cards, miscellaneous, notes and poems, photographs, programs, silhouettes, and WWI and WWII materials; within each grouping, materials are arranged

chronologically. Series 5 contains her journal/scrapbook.

- Series 1: Sketches
 - Subseries 1: Sketches
 - Subseries 2: Notes on Sketches
- Series 2: Correspondence
- Series 3: Clippings
 - Subseries 1: Clippings Related to Sketches
 - Subseries 2: Hats – Clippings and Cards
 - Subseries 3: Miscellaneous Clippings
- Series 4: Memorabilia
- Series 5: Journal/Scrapbook, 1904-1905

Processed by:

Jill Schaljo, Tamatha Sapinski, Jeanne O'Connell, and Michelle Wang; September 1992-September 1993. Reprocessed by Jennifer Page, November 2017.

Scope and Content Note

In May 1988, this collection was donated to the National Museum of Women in the Arts by Marian Stevens' nephew, Robert C. Stevens. The collection consists of 1,116 sketches, numerous newspaper clippings, correspondence, invitations, photographs, and a personal journal/scrapbook. Much of Stevens' material appears to have been drawn from reports of people and events in the contemporary media.

Series 1: Sketches

Each folder in this series contains several sketches related to the subject matter on the folder label. The inventory, created by LRC staff, contains basic information about each drawing, including the drawing number, subject, title or brief description, date of sketch, medium, dimensions, and corresponding material (news clippings, programs, etc.).

Series 2: Correspondence

This series includes correspondence with friends and external contacts.

Series 3: Newspaper Clippings

Most of the clippings correspond to her sketches. The remaining clippings include photos, articles, and cards of hat fashions and news events. The series is broken into three subseries to organize the subject matter: sketches, hats, and miscellaneous subject matter.

Series 4: Memorabilia

This series consists of a variety of materials that Marian Stevens collected, including exhibition materials of her work, including a newspaper clipping of a review of her exhibition "Hats, 1920-1955, and the Women Who Wore Them"; invitations to events , including one from Mrs. Roosevelt ; miscellaneous ephemera; notes and poems; untitled photographs of women and men; programs to plays and musical events and Sunday church services; silhouettes; and materials related to WWI and WWII.

Series 5: Journal/Scrapbook, 1904-1905

This series contains a personal journal/scrapbook of Marian Stevens, with written dates on the first page "1904-1905", in which she recorded regular happenings. The journal documents events such as invitations to tea parties and includes drawings recording the seating arrangements, newspaper clippings from events such as her 'coming out' debutant party, invitation cards, place setting cards, and programs.

Inventory

Series 1: Sketches

Subseries 1: Sketches

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	1	Travels:1-10
1	2	Travels: 11-20
1	3	Travels: 21-30
1	4	Travels: 31-40
1	5	Travels: 41-50
1	6	Traves: 51-60
1	7	Travels: 61-70
1	8	Travels: 71-80
1	9	Travels: 81-90
1	10	Architecture: 91-100
1	11	Architecture: 101-110
1	12	Architecture: 111-123
1	13	Portraits: 124-140
1	14	Portraits: 141-150
1	15	Portraits: 151-160
1	16	Portraits: 161-171
1	17	Travels: 172-186
1	18	Hats: 187-200
1	19	Hats: 201-210
1	20	Hats: 211-222
1	21	Travels: 223-230

1	22	Travels: 231-240
1	23	Travels: 241-250
1	24	Travels: 251-260
1	25	Travels: 261-270
1	26	Travels: 271-280
1	27	Travels: 281-290
1	28	Travels: 291-230
1	29	Travels: 301-310
1	30	Travels: 311-320
2	1	Travels: 321-330
2	2	Travels: 331-346
2	3	Hats: 347-360
2	4	Hats: 361-370
2	5	Hats: 371-380
2	6	Hats: 381-390 (less 288, 389 – see clippings for hats)
2	7	Hats: 391-400
2	8	Hats: 401-410
2	9	Hats: 411-418
2	10	Clubs, Restaurants, Shops: 419-430
2	11	Clubs, Restaurants, Shops: 431-440
2	12	Clubs, Restaurants, Shops: 441-446/467-470
2	13	Clubs, Restaurants, Shops: 471-480
2	14	Clubs, Restaurants, Shops: 481-490
2	15	Clubs, Restaurants, Shops: 491-499
2	16	Performing Arts: 500-510a
2	17	Personalities, Events: 511-514, 516-520
2	18	Personalities, Events: 521-529
2	19	Performing Arts: 530-535
2	20	Personalities, Events: 536-551
2	21	Performing Arts: 552-565
2	22	Performing Arts: 566-581
2	23	Performing Arts: 582-590
2	24	Performing Arts: 591-600
2	25	Theatre, Dance & Music: 601-610
2	26	Theatre, Dance & Music: 611-620
2	27	Theatre, Dance & Music: 621-634
2	28	WWI: 635-660
2	29	WWI: 651-660 (654)
2	30	WWI: 661-670
2	31	WWI: 671-680
2	32	WWI: 681-690/691
2	33	WWI: 692-700

3	1	Miscellaneous: 701-710
3	2	Miscellaneous: 711-720
3	3	Miscellaneous: 721-730
3	4	Miscellaneous: 731-740
3	5	Miscellaneous: 741-750
3	6	Miscellaneous: 751-762
3	7	WWII: 763-770
3	8	WWII: 771-780
3	9	WWII: 781-790
3	10	WWII: 791-800
3	11	WWII: 801-810
3	12	WWII: 811-820
3	13	WWII: 821-830
3	14	WWII: 831-839
3	15	Portraits of African-Americans: 840-850
3	16	Portraits of African-Americans: 851-860
3	17	Portraits of African-Americans: 861-870
3	18	Portraits of African-Americans: 871-880
3	19	Portraits of African-Americans: 881-890
3	20	Portraits of African-Americans: 891-900
3	21	Portraits of African-Americans: 901-910
3	22	Portraits of African-Americans: 911-920
3	23	Portraits of African-Americans: 921-930
3	24	Portraits of African-Americans: 931-940
3	25	Portraits of African-Americans: 941-947
3	26	Political Conventions: 948-960
3	27	Political Conventions: 961-967a
3	28	Travel: 968-974
3	29	Travel: 975-985
3	30	Travel: 986-998
3	31	Travel: 999-1002
3	32	Military Sketches: 1003-1013
3	33	Military Sketches: 1014-1024
3	34	Military Sketches: 1025-1032
3	35	Personalities, Hats: 1034-1046
3	36	Hats: 1047-1057
3	37	Hats: 1058-1068
3	38	Hats: 1069-1079
3	39	Travels, Personalities: 1080-1085
3	40	Personalities: 1087-1091
3	41	Personalities: 1092-1102
3	42	Personalities: 1103-1110

3 43 Personalities: 1111-1115

Subseries 2: Notes on Sketches

4	1	Sketches 1-99
4	2	Sketches 100-199
4	3	Sketches 200-299
4	4	Sketches 300-399
4	5	Sketches 400-499
4	6	Sketches 500-599
4	7	Sketches 600-699
4	8	Sketches 700-799
4	9	Sketches 800-899
4	10	Sketches 900-999
4	11	Sketches 1000-1115

Series 2: Correspondence

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
5	1	Chichester, Ethel, July 3, 1955, letter
5	2	Davidger, John W., July 7, 1914, letter
5	3	Debsid, K., February 27, 1919, postcard
5	4	Edith, November 4, 1952, November 30, [no year], 2 postcards
5	5	Howe, Mary, undated, torn half-letter
5	6	Katherine, July 22, circa 1965, letter
5	7	Kibbee, Austin Staats, undated, Christmas card
5	8	Osternas, Grace, July 14, 1955, letter
5	9	Santelmann, William [leader of the Marine Corps Band] September 26, 1918, letter
5	10	Sayre, Elizabeth E., December 29, [no year], letter
5	11	Unknown senders, 1953, 1955, 1958, undated, 5 postcards, 1 envelope

Series 3: Clippings

Subseries 1: Clippings Related to Sketches

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
5	12	#'s 6, 109-671
5	13	#'s 671a-813a
5	14	#'s 817-1089

Subseries 2: Hats – Clippings and Cards

5	15	Cards featuring hats
5	16	Cartoon clippings of hats
5	17	News clippings of hats

Subseries 3: Miscellaneous Clippings

5	18	1887-1968
5	19	Undated
5	20	Undated

Series 4: Memorabilia

5	21	Exhibition Materials
5	22	Invitations, May 10, 1940, undated
5	23	Miscellaneous
5	24	Notes, Poems
5	25	Photographs
5	26	Programs, 1905-1966, undated
5	27	Silhouettes
5	28	War – WWI and WWII materials, clippings, fliers, postcard business cards, letter, 1918, 1941-42, 1946, undated

Series 5: Journal

Box #

6	Journal/Scrapbook, 1904-1905
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