

# **Finding Aid to Louise Kidder Sparrow Papers 1900-1986 Archives of Women Artists**

Finding Aid Prepared by: Emily Moore (March, 2020)  
Collection Processed by: Patrick Brown (August, 2006)

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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](mailto:lrc@nmwa.org)  
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## Title:

Louise Kidder Sparrow Papers

## Provenance:

The Louise Kidder Sparrow Papers were donated in 1986 by the artist's son, Maj. Gen. Herbert G. Sparrow, USA, Ret. from the artist's effects after her death. A majority of the material is photocopies from a collection of papers donated to the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College, but there are some original exhibition catalogues, tools and small works of art. The collection is an excellent representation of the artist's methods, her work and her thoughts.

## Collection Dates:

Inclusive Dates: 1900-1986  
Bulk Dates: 1930-1980

## Physical Description:

3 boxes (approx. 2.5 linear feet)

## Summary:

The Louise Kidder Sparrow Papers contains papers, tools and ephemera relating to the life of the artist. While much of the collection is photocopied material, original exhibition catalogues and tools belonging to the artist speak to her sculptural artistry and legacy.

## Finding Aid URL:

## **Administrative Information**

### **Access Information:**

Unrestricted

### **Preferred Citation:**

Item, Date, Series, Louise Kidder Sparrow 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:**

#### **LRC Library Collection**

Sparrow, Louise Kidder. Louise Kidder Sparrow: Sculptor. Washington D.C., 1930. (RARE VF N44 .S67815 1930)

Sparrow, Louise Kidder, artist file

Sparrow, Louise Kidder. Narrative poems: from Journal in Verse. Boston: Branden Press, 1970. (PS3569 .P37 N3 1970)

Sparrow, Louise Kidder. Lyrics. Boston, 1904. (RARE VF N44 .S67815 1904)

Radice, Anne-Imelda; Hansen, Mary Lou. Highlights from Washington's newest, and oldest, museums: National Museum of Women in the Arts and the U.S. Capitol Collection. Arlington, VA: USA Today, 1984. (VF CAT N6535 .W3 H53 1984)

The photocopies in this collection come the Papers of Louise Kidder Sparrow, 1839-1964, Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University. Hollis Number 990006052200203941.

**Processed by:**

Tania Lee, 1988.

**Processing Note:**

Tania Lee prepared the initial housing for the Louise Kidder Sparrow Papers in 1988. In 2003 a finding aid was written for the collection. In 2006, Patrick Brown re-housed the collection in three acid-free boxes and rewrote the finding aid according to DACS standards. The finding aid was updated again by Emily Moore in the spring of 2020. The Louise Kidder Sparrow Papers are housed in three acid-free boxes which are located in the Library and Research Center. The collection is in good condition. In 2006, a rack was constructed for the tools in the collection in order to minimize abrasion.

**Biographical Note**

Louise Kidder Sparrow was born in Malden, Massachusetts and a graduate of Emerson College. After beginning her artistic training in Europe, Sparrow returned to the United States, moving to Washington, D.C. around 1909. Working with sculptors including Henry Kirke Bush-Brown, Edmund C. Messer and Ulric Stonewall Jackson Dunbar, she sculpted primarily portraits and busts from 1924 to 1934, earning her international recognition. From her studio at 1661 Crescent Place in Washington, D.C. Sparrow was successful in securing commissions for portrait busts of Senators and military leaders. Her works are on permanent display in public buildings and galleries throughout the United States, including the National Gallery of Art. In addition to her artistic undertakings, Sparrow was a writer and translator. She wrote more than a dozen books of poetry, and her work appeared in anthologies, small journals and poetry magazines. Her last piece, titled "Midnight Meditation" was written right before her death. She is buried with her husband at Arlington National Cemetery.

**Chronology**

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>January 1, 1884</b> | Born Louise Winslow Kidder in Malden, Mass. Her father, Wellington Parker Kidder was the inventor of the noiseless typewriter.   |
| <b>1900-1901</b>       | In her second year at the Girls' Latin School, Louise, age 16, is offered the opportunity to study for a year and a half in Europe, traveling through Italy, Switzerland, France and England. She writes an unpublished manuscript about the |

trip on her return entitled "Carol Discovers Europe."

- 1904** Louise's father privately prints her first book of poems "Lyrics and Translations." This book wins her membership into The Boston Authors Club, where she becomes the youngest member.
- 1905** Louise begins her two years at Quincy Mansion Finishing School.
- 1906** Louise spends nine months with Thompson-Baldassaroni School of Travel for the second time under the tutelage of Francesco Baldassaroni and his wife. In Rome she studies painting with Henry Coleman.
- 1907** Louise studies drawing at the Eric Pape School of Art in Boston, and then spends two years at Emerson College of Oratory in Boston.
- November 16, 1909** Louise marries Lieut. Herbert George Sparrow, USN in Jamaica Plain, MA. The newlyweds move to Washington, D.C. for a year.
- November 24, 1910** Louise gives birth to Herbert George Sparrow, Jr. in her childhood home.
- 1915** The family moves back to D.C., where Louise enrolls in Sculpting classes at the Corcoran Gallery of Art with Edmund C. Messer.
- She also studies, for brief periods, with Henry K. Bush-Brown, Ulric S. Dunbar, and Frederick W. Allen.
- 1916-1919** Louise lives with her parents off and on during the time her husband is at sea. During her stays in Boston, she studies with Frederick W. Allen and Bela Pratt in his life-modeling class at the Boston Art Museum.
- 1920-1922** The family spends two years in Rio de Janeiro when Herbert, Sr. becomes Naval Attaché at the American Embassy.

1923	The family lives in Panama and then Europe.
January 21, 1924	Herbert, Sr. dies when his ship, the <i>USS Tacoma</i> , is wrecked near Vera Cruz, Mexico. Louise writes a book, "The Last Cruise", about her life with her husband and the circumstances of his death.  Soon after her husband's death, Louise returns to D.C., where She remains until 1934 and begins her career as professional sculptor, having an exhibition practically every year of that time. She makes a memorial plaque for husband, which is placed in Bancroft Hall at the Naval Academy in Annapolis. The plaque is unveiled by their 14 year old son during a ceremony.
1925	Louise becomes a member of the Society of Washington Artists.
ca. 1928-1937	Louise is hired to be editor of <i>Translations of Star-Dust</i> . She remains in the position for three years.
December, 1929	Louise completes her bust of Senator Theodore E. Burton, who appointed husband to Annapolis and their son to West Point.
1930	<b>January.</b> Louise is awarded the Sculpture Medal at the Corcoran Gallery by the Society of Washington Artists, of which she is an active member. Shortly after, the U.S. Government commissions a portrait bust of Senator Theodore Burton for placement in the Capitol building in D.C.  <b>November 11.</b> Her statue of <i>Titanic</i> disaster hero, Col. Archibald Gracie IV is unveiled in the National Gallery of Art in D.C.  At almost the same time as the Gracie sculpture, a portrait bust of Capt. Gilliss is approved by Lorado Taft and bought by Act of Congress as a gift to Chile for their new Naval Observatory.  <b>Dec. 28, 1930-Jan. 10, 1931.</b> Louise has an exhibition at the

	Arts Club of Washington.
May, 1931	Louise receives the Diplome d'Honneur from the Exposition Coloniale Internationale in Paris, where she is awarded for her bronze bust of General Gorgas.
1934	Louise is in a serious car crash, which ends her career as a sculptor.
1938	Louise writes <u>My World Constitution</u> .
1940	Louise is invited to be Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, London.
	<b>November 9.</b> She marries Lieut. Comdr. Paul E. H. Gripon who \ is in the French Navy. The couple resides in France through 1941.
1942	Louise Gives ten 15-minute radiobroadcasts on the "Wisdom of the Classics."
1942-1946	After spending four years in Virginia, Louise writes <u>Virginia Byways</u> .
1946-1948	Louise returns to live in France with Paul Gripon.
1949	After a 5-year separation due to World War II, Louise gets a divorce from Paul Gripon and legally changes her last name back to the name of her first husband.
1962	Louise settles in Washington, D.C. permanently.
1962-1963	Radcliffe College invites her to donate her personal papers.
July 9, 1979	Louise Sparrow dies of a heart attack at the age of 95.

## Scope and Content Note



The Louise Kidder Sparrow collection consists of materials given to the museum by Sparrow's son, Maj. Gen. Herbert G. Sparrow, USA, Ret. A majority of the materials are photocopies from the Louise Kidder Sparrow Papers at the Schlesinger Library, which is part of the Harvard University Libraries system. The photocopies are interspersed throughout the collection – folders that contain photocopies are identified in the Box Inventory. The series divisions were maintained from previous processing, but the names of the series were changed for the sake of clarity. The seven series are Biographical Files, Clippings, Correspondence, Works of Art Files, Writings, and Tools .

The first series is Biographical Files, which range from biographical essays, chronologies, and notes written by Sparrow. Also included in this series are directions for Sparrow's son after her death. Letters of condolence and Sparrow's death certificate are also included.

The Clippings series includes mentions of Sparrow in newspaper articles, letters to the editor, and Sparrow's obituary. Sparrow's letters to editor cover a wide variety of subjects from sculpture to the need for a world constitution.

The third series is Correspondence, which includes personal letters and letters from foundries about sculptural commissions. The Ephemera series has brochures for commission portrait busts, an exhibition pamphlet, and cards. Of all the paper series in this collection, Ephemera is the only series that does not include facsimiles from the Schlesinger Library. The Works of Art Files series contains a negative of one of Sparrow's works. The sixth series is Writings, which include memoirs, poetry, and essays.

The seventh series contains 48 tools for Sparrow's sculptural work, such as rulers, calipers, wooden and metal modeling tools, loop and ribbon tools, a tape measurer, and improvised tools.

## **Organization and Arrangement Information**

### **Arrangement Note:**

The collection is divided into seven series:

Series I:	Biographical Files, 1900-1986 (original order)
Series II:	Clippings, 1929-1979 (original order)
Series III:	Correspondence, 1912-1980 (by subject)
Series IV:	Ephemera, 1930-1931

Series V: Works of Art Files, 1943-1980 (original order)  
 Series VI: Writings, 1938 (original order)  
 Series VII: Tools, n.d.

## Names and Subject Terms

Sparrow, Louise Kidder

## Container Inventory

### Series #1: Biographical Files

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	1	"The Advantages of Voluntary Seclusion," n.d.
1	2	"Brief Autobiography..." 1965
1	3	"Brief Glimpses of Travel and of Sculpture," 1938
1	4	Condolences, 1979
1	5	Death Certificate, 1979
1	6	"Family Data of All Kinds and dates – always incomplete!" n.d.
1	7	"A Handful of Girlhood Gaffes," 1900
1	8	Inventories of Archive from Radcliffe, n.d.
1	9	"Le Jury International des recompenses decerne," 1931
1	10	Letters of Last Wishes, 1928, 1934, 1973
1	11	"Outstanding Epochs in One Ordinary Life," n.d.
1	12	Photocopies of Family Photos, n.d.
1	13	Le Roman du Vieux Tronc, 1986
1	14	"Spiced Herbs and Rose Petals from the Old Blue Jar," n.d.
1	15	Toast, 1940
1	16	Travel logs, n.d.
1	17	"The Wreck of the USS Tacoma," 1924

### Series #2: Clippings

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	18	Clippings, 1929-1963
1	19	Letters to the Editor, 1934-1942

1      20      Obituaries, 1979

### **Series #3: Correspondence**

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	21	Ada, 1980
1	22	Architect of the Capitol, 1965, signed Mario Campiol
1	23	Caroline, 1979
1	24	Curtis, Kenneth, 1970
1	25	Dad, 1962
1	26	Director of the Art Museum of Montgomery, Ala, n.d.
1	27	Duban, 1979
1	28	ETTL Studios, 1928
1	29	Griffith, Paul, 1974
1	30	Hancock, Howard E, 1978
1	31	Hoare, Edna, 1949
1	32	June, 1973
1	33	Mason, 1963
1	34	McIntosh and Otis, Inc., 1962
1	35	National Cathedral, 1978
1	36	Naval Historical Center, 1979, signed Rear Admiral John Kane & H.A. Vadnais
1	37	Nixon, Richard, 1970
1	38	Plough, John and Helen, 1977
1	39	The Public Library of the City of Boston, 1963
1	40	Roman Bronze Works, Inc., 1964-1978
1	41	Smith, J.H.B, 1979
1	42	Sparrow, Herbert, 1912
1	43	Sparrow, Herbert, Jr., 1949-1971
1	44	United World Federalists, 1967, signed Mary Lee Hunters

### **Series #4: Ephemera**

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	45	Arts Club of Washington Exhibition, 1930-1931
1	46	Ephemera, n.d.

### **Series #5: Works of Art Files**

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	47	Colonel Archibald Gracie IV, n.d.
1	48	Fountain Proposal, c. 1980
1	49	List of her works and owners, n.d.
1	50	Original Works, n.d.
1	51	"Sculpture Notes," 1943

### **Series #6: Writing**

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	52	"For a World Constitution," 1938
1	53	"The French That Is Ours," n.d.
1	54	"Misc. essays & stories -- Sorrento Period -- unpublished," n.d.
1	55	Personal Poetry, n.d.
1	56	"A Planetary Concept 1938," 1938
1	57	Published Poetry, n.d.
1	58	Translations, n.d.

### **Series #7: Tools**

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
2		Tools, n.d.
3		Tools, n.d.