

Blanche Lazzell, Artist, Papers, 1881-1992 A&M 2008

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Abstract

Photographs, postcards, engravings, sketches, art tools, correspondence, pamphlets, recipes and newspaper clippings belonging to Blanche Lazzell, a West Virginia born leading American artist of the inter-war years. The collection reflects her development as an artist from her student days at West Virginia University to the end of the Korean War. Addenda include correspondence, genealogy, published material, photos, prints, drawings, news clippings, and mementos of Blanche Lazzell. Addenda topics include Lazzell family history, Blanche's art and artistic influences, and the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). See Historical Note for information on Blanche Lazzell.

Creator

Lazzell, Blanche, 1878-1956

Extent

9.08 Linear Feet 9 ft. 1 in. (9 document cases, 5 in. each); (1 document case, 2 1/2 in.); (1 flat storage box, 3 in.); (1 flat storage box, 3 1/2 in.); (2 record cartons, 15 in. each); (1 oversize box, 15 in.); (1 index card box, 3 in.); (4 reels of microfilm, 1.75 in. each)

Physical Location

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Repository

West Virginia and Regional History Center

Administrative Information

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Biographical / Historical

Blanche Lazzell (October 10, 1878 - June 1, 1956) was a West Virginia-born leading American artist of the inter-war years. She studied at West Virginia Conference Seminary (now West Virginia Wesleyan College), South Carolina Co-educational Institute, West Virginia University, and the Art Students League of New York. Lazzell went to Paris during the Belle Epoque when abstraction and cubism in art first flourished. At the end of that era she returned to America living in Provincetown, MA which was a haven after the outbreak of World War I for artists fleeing from Europe. Lazzell, who had become a practitioner of a cubistic type of art, aided her colleagues in the creation of a new art form, the "Provincetown print," which was a revolution in woodcut printmaking allowing the medium to be used in a more abstract manner. Subsequently, during the inter-war years she became known as one of America's foremost abstract artists. Blanche Lazzell is most fondly remembered, though, for her work as a WPA artist during the New Deal in which she came back to Morgantown to paint memorable scenes of the vicinity, particularly of West Virginia University.

Scope and Contents

Photographs, postcards, engravings, sketches, correspondence, pamphlets, art tools, recipes and newspaper clippings belonging to Blanche Lazzell, a West Virginia born leading American artist of the inter-war years. The collection reflects her development as an artist from her student days at West Virginia University to the end of the Korean War. Lazzell's art tools included in the collection consist of carving tools and a set of watercolor paints (boxes 5-6).

Addenda include correspondence, genealogy, published material, photos, prints, drawings, news clippings, and mementos of Blanche Lazzell.

An addendum of 1990/08/14 includes correspondence between Blanche Lazzell and her niece, Martha

Frances Reed (Mrs. Robert E. Sellers). The letters are about family, Blanche's travels to New York City and St. Augustine, FL, and her life and work as an artist in Provincetown, MA. Of interest are her views on the changing character of Provincetown from an art haven to a resort town, her interest and belief in theosophy, and her own feelings about what she has achieved. Lazzell mentions her art career and in particular studying under and working with the abstractionists Fernand Leger and Hans Hofmann. Included are sketches, textiles, and jewelry made by Blanche Lazzell. (1913-1956; 6 in.)

An addendum of 1990/11/15 includes letters, genealogy, miscellaneous literature, and mementos of Blanche Lazzell. The letters are about genealogy of Lazzell and allied families Carhart, McVicker, and Pope. Also included are seed catalogs, a grade report book, a funeral register and a diploma from the South Carolina Co-Educational Institute, all of Blanche Lazzell. (1899-1983; 6 in.)

An addendum of 1994/05/25 includes books, magazines, booklets, photos, prints, postcards, drawings, news clippings, and batik cloth of Blanche Lazzell and her niece, Frances Reed. Included are correspondence, art works, articles, brochures and notes about Blanche Lazzell and artistic influences, interests, and mentors such as Karl Knaths, Charles Demuth, Georges Braque, Guillaume Apollinaire, Henri Matisse, and the Provincetown Art Association. (1909-1992; 4 ft.)

An addendum of 2007/02/02 includes papers regarding Blanche Lazzell, such as manuscript verse, musical material, documents regarding the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), correspondence, and financial records. There are eight pieces of verse in manuscript, some of which could be song lyrics, including "Music," "Silver Daggers," "Childhood, Girlhood, Womanhood," and others. Musical material includes four pieces of hand written music, six pages of published piano pieces with embroidery patterns on opposite pages, and a 16-page booklet of hymns (ca. 1889). DAR papers include three membership applications, one for Eva Hall VanVoorhis, and two for "Nettie" Blanche Lazzell. The applications reference Revolutionary War soldiers Duncan McVicker and Cornelius Carhart. There is also a 1915 DAR membership certificate for Bessie Lazzell Ridgway. Correspondence includes four postcards (1944-1945) written to Blanche Lazzell from James Reed. Financial records include nine checks written in Paris (1912). There is also a note on Hall family genealogy and a 1943 Sunday program for Wesley Methodist Church. (1889-1945; 2.5 in.)

Keywords

Morgantown (W. Va.)
West Virginia University -- Art and Architecture
Art and artists
Photography
W.P.A. -- Artists
Provincetown Art Associaton
Apollinaire, Guillaume, 1880-1918
Braque, Georges, 1882-1963
Demuth, Charles, 1883-1935
Hofmann, Hans, 1880-1966
Knaths, Karl, 1891-1971
Lazzell, Blanche, 1878-1956
Léger, Fernand, 1881-1955
Matisse, Henri, 1869-1954
Sellers, Martha Frances Reed (Mrs. Robert E.)
Smith, Simeon Conant.
Carhart family
Lazzell family
McVicker family
Pope family