

Silvermine Artist Guild Manuscript Collection

Description and Finding Aid

2 file boxes, 1 flat box

Processor: Zinaida Tsemel

Date of processing: 2014

Acquisition: The Silvermine Artist Guild (SAG) Papers were received by the Norwalk Public Library from the Norwalk Museum during the restructuring of the Museum in 2013.

Access: There are no restrictions to items in this collection.

Related materials: Additional materials on some of the artists are found in Norwalk Artist Files boxes, and photographs of some of the artists are found by name in the Portraits photograph prints.

Permission to Publish: Requests for permission to publish from the collection should be made to the Norwalk History Room.

Copyright: Norwalk Public Library does not hold the copyright on the materials in the collection.

Introduction

The area known as Silvermine is part of the municipalities of Norwalk, Wilton and New Canaan. The mine which gave the place its name was actively used in colonial times, but was subsequently abandoned because the silver was of poor quality. Today nobody even knows where it was situated. In 1895 the attractive landscape with a winding river and old barns and farmhouses attracted the sculptor Solon Borglum. He passed the word to his artist friends and founded the Silvermine art colony. Artists who made their homes and studios in Silvermine included Addison Miller, Howard Logan Hildebrandt, Daniel Putnam Brinley, Carl Schmitt, the George Picknells, Bernard Gutmann, Hamilton Hamilton, Frank Townsend Hutchens, Justin and Johnny Gruelle, Henry Salem Hubbell, Leo Dorn, Charles Reiffel, John Cassell, Harry Townsend, David Robinson, Adele Klaer and many others . The first organized art

movement was called the Knockers' Club. It met in Borglum's studio to "knock" [critique] each other's work and held exhibitions starting from 1908. In 1924 the artists incorporated, bought a barn and converted it to an art gallery.

The art colony called the Silvermine Guild of Artists started with painting and later branched out to include almost all of the creative arts: sculpture, design, ceramics, photography, music, drama and dance. Regular exhibitions were held throughout the year, not just of local artists, but also wide-ranging international shows. The "Silvermine Sillies" inspired by the experimental plays were designed, directed and acted by the Guild members. The freshness and satire of the "Silvermine Sillies" attracted even professionals looking for material.

Today, the Silvermine Arts Center is comprised of a Guild of over 300 professional artists, five galleries which present new exhibitions every six weeks and sponsor prestigious regional and national competitions, a School of Art which provides a wide range of classes for people of all ages, public programs and outreach programs in the Norwalk and Stamford schools.

Scope and Content Note

The SAG collection is housed in three boxes. It contains mostly newspaper articles and other publications about SAG; programs, event announces and other SAG memorabilia; and similar materials about Murray McKay (in box 3).

Description of the Collection

Box 1 (oversize)

Monographic Publications

Jungle Parade by Charlotte Barske, illustrated by Harry Townsend, Whitman Pub. Co., 1938, 23 p.

Silvermine Guild of Artists, [1942], 28 p., 2 copies.

The Silvermine Guild of Artists, 1946, 76 p., 1 copy, 1 photocopy.

The Alex J. Rummeler Murals in the Norwalk High School publ. by the Board of Education of Norwalk, Conn., 1956, [7] p.

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Silvermine Guild of Artists, 1972, [25] p., 2 copies.

"A Forest of Pencils: A Story of Schools Through the Ages" by Winifred Trask Lee, publ. by Bobbs-Merrill in 1973, photocopy of the excerpt pp. 48-63 (attribution to this work is tentative).

"Notes on Silvermine," most likely from *D. Putnam Brinley, 1879-1963: Impressionist and Mural Painter* by Elizabeth M. Loder, publ. by Brinley Associates in Yarmouth, ME, 1983, xiv, 93 p. , pp. 48-63.

Sport in Art from American Museums: Inaugural Exhibition of the National Art Museum of Sport ed. by Reilly Rhodes, Universe Publ. Inc., 1990, 128 p.

Artists of Norwalk: Literary Performing Visual by Arts Council of Norwalk.

Silvermine Arts Guild: Early Silvermine Artists [DVD] produced by Dream Street Productions in Norwalk, CT.

Box 2

Folders 1-3: Serial Publications, by title

New Canaan-Norwalk News, issues for July 23 and Aug. 13, 1936.

Silvermine Community Association Newsletter, issues for Sept. 1961, June 1978, late summer ed. 1984.

The Silverminer, issues for June and July, 1938.

Wampum to Wall Street, the New Canaan Historical Society Annual, 1992-1993, Vol. IX, no. 2 (contains an article about Silvermine on pp. 32-33) (without folder).

Silvermine News, Sept. 2004

Art Beat publ. by the Silvermine Guild Arts Center, Fall 2004, 2 copies.

Folder 4: Articles about SAG

"Fellow Artists Pay Highest Tribute to Paintings of Hamilton," *South Norwalk Sentinel*, July, 1928.

"Hamilton, Painter, Dies at the Age of 80," *The New York Times*, July 1928.

"Memorial Exhibition in Silvermine of Work of Hamilton," *The Norwalk Hour*, July 17, 1928.

"Memorial Exhibit Draws About 200 to Silvermine Guild Hall," *South Norwalk Sentinel*, July 23, 1928.

"Hamilton Exhibit is Fitting Tribute to Guild Founder," *South Norwalk Sentinel*, July 25, 1928.

"Aide to Financier – a Silvermine Mystery" by Annie Bridge, *The Bridgeport Sunday Post*, June 16, 1940.

"Dream Come True," *Today's Living*, Aug. 18, 1957 (in oversize box).

"Man at Forge Recalls Early Silvermine Days," *The Norwalk Hour*, May 25, 1964, p. 12.

“Silvermine Past Comes Alive with Artists, Filmmakers,” Oct. 1, 1978.

“Artists circa 1900 in Norwalk Show” by David Vaczek, *The Sunday Post*, Bridgeport, Nov. 27, 1983.

“New Director of Silvermine to Lead Walk-and-Talk Tour” about J. J. Smith, June 1, 1985.

“Silvermine Celebrates 70 Years” by Emily Laber, *The Norwalk Hour*, 1990-1991.

“People Doing Things!” about Brian Gormley who had just been appointed Artistic Executive Director of the Silvermine Guild Arts Center, *The Norwalk Hour*, May 15, 1992.

“Artists Brush Up on Local Culture in Museum Tour -- Artists Discover Cultural Roots at Museum’s Silvermine Exhibit” by Amrita Dhindsa, *The Norwalk Hour*, Feb. 1, 2004.

“On a Mission to Preserve and Learn From the Past” by Rita Papazian, *Norwalk Citizen*, April 9, 2004, pp. A23, A25.

“A Look at Silvermine Guild Art Center: The Evolution of the ‘Knockers Club’ – History of Silvermine Guild Art Center” by Tamela J. Ritter, *The Norwalk Hour*, Oct. 5, 2008, pp. C1, C4.

“Whistling Boy From India Arrives for Barn Dance in Silvermine – Whistling Boy Arrives for Dance”

“Artists Get Their Day in the Sun” by Brita Brundage.

“Silvermine” by J.B. about the 8th annual exhibition of the SAG.

Folder 5: Plays produced and performed by the Silvermine Guild Players, in alphabetical order, by title

Bits and Pieces, music by Ande Wuhner, lyrics by Patricia Van Alen, dances staged by John Coy, sketches directed by Basil Burwell, performed on Sept. 4, 1955.

Dark of the Moon by Howard Richardson and William Berney, directed by Chris Jaffe.

Mr. Arcularis by Conrad Aiken, directed by Basil Burwell, performed in Sept.-Oct., 1954.

The Girl on the Via Flamina by Alfred Hayes, directed by John Anderson, performed in March-April, 1955.

The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus by Christopher Marlowe directed by Basil Burwell, performed in July-Aug., 1954.

Folder 6: Skits by David McKay

“Scuttlebutt on the Bulmer,” 1937, 2 manuscripts.

“Tender is the Word for Dough,” 1938

Folder 7: Personal Correspondence

May 16, 1882, Phoebe Ann Austin to her grandmother Mrs. Zalmon Jones.

March 14, 1883, Franklin Austin to his sister Phoebe Ann Austin.

Folder 8: Maps of Silvermine

Folder 9: Photographs

Folders 10-11: Events

Aug. 28-30, Sept. 4-6, 1909, "Exhibition by the Silvermine Group of Artists, Studio of Solon H. Borglum."

Sept. 3, 1910, "Annual Exhibition by Silvermine Group of Artists, Studio of Solon H. Borglum."

Sept. 19-24, 1910, "Catalogue of the subjects shown at the art exhibit given by the Silvermine group of artists under the patronage of Dr. W. C. Wile and Rev. H. C. Meserve at the First Church Chapel."

Dec. 12, 1914, "First Annual Banquet of the Sculptors Dept. of the Pan-Pac Exposition Co" (in oversize box)

May 16, 1914, "Exposition Sculptors' Ball" (in oversize box).

Aug. 28-30, Sept. 4-6, 1915, "8th Annual Exhibition by the Silvermine Group of Artists at the Studio of Solon H. Borglum."

Aug. 20, 1937, "Silvermine Guild of Artists: Starlight Symphonic Festival with 75 Members of the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra."

1938, "Silvermine Festival," 28p.

Aug. 18-21, 1938, "Silvermine Festival"

May 24, 1978, "Silvermine Past."

Oct. 8, 1978, "Silvermine Past, 1700-1920" (in oversize box)

1981-1982, "The Silvermine Guild School of the Arts"

1983-1984, "Norwalk Artists, 1900-1950, an exhibition of paintings and illustrations."

1997, "Silvermine 75th Birthday 'Bash'"

1998, "The Knockers at Silvermine: 1907, 1922, a special exhibit at the New Canaan Historical Society Town House."

2004, Silvermine Guild Arts Center Calendar of Events, July-Sept., 6 copies.

July 8, 2006, "Reminiscences of Silvermine: a special viewing of Bert Tanners, Silvermine Artist Colony Video and a dialogue with the Schmitt and Borglum families at the New Canaan Historical Society."

June 8 – July 31, 2004, "The Silvermine Art Colony."

Aug. 30 – Oct. 30, 2004, "Connecticut Treasures: Artists in Their 80s"

Sept. 18, 2004, "Historic Silvermine House Tour," 1 p., 2 copies.

Sept. 18, 2004, "Historic Silvermine House Tour," 24 p., 2 copies.

Sept. 30, 2006, "Historic Silvermine House Tour," 1p., 1 p. of notes

Dec. 8-22, 2006, "Silvermine Art Colony: 100 Years Later."

Folder 12: Silvermine Sillies, Articles

"Silvermine Sillies' Begin 3-Night variety Performance Thursday," 1935.

"Sillies' in Silvermine More Clever Than Ever," *The Norwalk Hour*, Aug. 23, 1935.

"Silvermine 'Sillies' Rich in Laughter," *Ridgefield Press*, Aug. 20, 1936.

"Silvermine Ready for New 'Sillies,'" *The Norwalk Hour*, Aug. 21, 1936.

"Big Time Artists Go to Silvermine Sillies Starting Thursday," *Herald*, Bridgeport, CT, Aug. 23, 1936.

"Sillies' to Open Thursday Night," *The Bridgeport Sunday Post*, Aug. 23, 1936.

"Silvermine Sillies' – Gay and Sophisticated: First Night Large Audience Repeated," Aug. 25, 1936.

"In Sixteenth Edition of 'The Silvermine Sillies': It's 'Silly' Time at Silvermine, and Show is On," *New York Herald Tribune*, Sept. 3, 1937.

"Silvermine Sillies' Play to Full Capacity Audiences – Sillies Delight Large Audiences," *New Canaan Advertiser*, Sept. 9, 1937.

"Paul Lewis, Hill Billies Guest Stars prove Hits of Silvermine Sillies, to be Repeated," 1937.

"Silvermine Sillies" advertisements, 1939.

"An Annual Two-Day Laugh... Roll 'Em in the Aisles."

"In 'Silvermine Sillies.'"

"Sillies' Opens at Silvermine, Silly as Ever."

Folder 13

Programs for the years 1928, 1933, 1935 (4 copies), 1936, 1937 (2 versions), 1938, 1941, 1948, 2 programs for unidentified years.

Folders 14-15: Correspondence and Notes about the Silvermine Artist Group

"Earliest artists to Live in Silvermine, 1906-1912," a list.

“Artists Who Joined the Silvermine Group of Artists in 1912-1922.”

1929, “Silvermine Guild of Artists.”

April 17, 1944, letter from the Silvermine Volunteer Fire Co. to its members and contributors.

May 10, 1967, letter from Charles Haessig, secretary of the Fire Company to its president, Frank Whitman.

Aug. 15, 1976, “Walking Tour of Silvermine” compiled by Katherine Evans Whitman, 5 p.

Sept. 29, 1976, notes on the history of the Silvermine area by David G. MacKay, with a page of notes added on May 25, 1978.

Sept. 19, 1978, “From Silvermine Past,” 13 p.

“Silvermine Past: an Exhibition of Works by the Original Silvermine Group of Artists, Oct. 7-8, 1978.”

1980s, “Silvermine Guild Arts Center.”

1980s, “The Vision: Facility Expansion Funding Campaign.”

Nov. 28, 1981, letter from Stanley Cuba to Bonnie Hardwick, that he’d been looking for the works of Hamilton Hamilton and been fortunate to see some in the home of Mrs. Mervyn Davies, a daughter of S. Borglum.

Nov. 30, 1981, letter from Stanley Cuba to Mrs. Mervyn Davies.

March 12, 1986, letter from Robert Austin from Indianapolis who was doing research for an article on Edmund Marion Ashe to Mrs. Mervyn Davies.

March 28, 1986, letter from Mrs. Mervyn Davies to Robert Austin.

Sept. 28, 1995, “Two Local Women Muralists of the WPA Era: Laicita Worden Gregg of Wilton and Helen Hamilton of Silvermine” by Virginia Walters Rider, 14 p.

Feb. 19, 1998, letter from A. Simonson from the Norwalk Museum/Silvermine Guild to David Mushegian, president of the Mushegian Charitable Trust, seeking funding for the celebratory exhibition, dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the Silvermine Artists Group.

“Budget for the 75th Anniversary Exhibition”

Oct., 2003, “Early Artists of the Silvermine Art Colony,” notes.

April 16, 2004, e-mail from Bert Tanner to Susan Gunn with brief biographies of many of Silvermine Artists and her brief reply.

Oct. 25, 2005, e-mail from Kathleen Vollmer to Susan Gunn about Edmund Marion Ashe.

Notes on the various buildings in the Silvermine area.

Brief biographical essay on Helen Hamilton.

Notes for the tour of Silvermine.

Brochure about the Silvermine area.

"The Silvermine Group of Artists – the Knockers," a list.

In the oversize box 1:

Advertisements in Newspapers_– 4 sheets.

Box 3

Materials about Murray McKay

Folder 1: Articles and Reproductions

"Young Detroit Artist Wins Success in Paris," *The Detroit Free Press*, Aug. 4, 1907.

"Pictures Chosen for the Institute Display," *The Pittsburgh Post*, April 16, 1908.

"Salle XXVI," "Salle XXVI," *New York Herald*, May 1, 1909.

"English and American Painters at the Salon of the Artistes Francais," *Daily Mail*, May 2, 1909.

"Barnard's Work Divides Art World," *The New York Times*, May 1, 1910.

"Americans in Paris Salons: Artists from New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago and other Cities Have Pictures in the Spring Exhibitions," *The Detroit Free Press*, May 8, 1910.

"Winter Exhibition of American Artists," *New York Herald*, Paris ed., March 11, 1910 or 1911.

Untitled article about E. Murray MacKay, *Pittsburgh Bulletin*, Jan. 28, 1911.

"The Beatty and McKay Pictures" by Maud Carrell, *The Pittsburgh Dispatch*, Jan. 29, 1911.

"Two Paintings Presented to Museum of Art to Put in Permanent Collection," *Detroit News Tribune*, May 5, 1913.

"Pictures by Detroit Artist Somewhere in War-Ridden France," unknown publication, 1914.

"A Recent Portrait by Murray MacKay," *The Detroit News*, March 14, 1920.

"Wrangles with Justice to Get 'Inside' Expression to Paint," *Lansing State Journal*, July 7, 1920.

"To Paint Portrait of Governor Sleeper," *Lansing State Journal*, July 20, 1920.

"Your Inner Self Revealed by Your Face," *The Detroit News*, June 7, 1925.

"Detroit Artist Who Worked Here Dies," unknown publication, Feb. 20. 1926.

"Murray McKay, Artist, is Dead," unknown publication.

"Murray McKay, Artist, Dies Here," unknown publication.

"Detroit Artist Whose Funeral Will Be Tuesday," *The Detroit Free Press*, March 2, 1926.

"Artists circa 1900 in Norwalk Show" by David Vaczek, *The Sunday Post*, Bridgeport, Nov. 27, 1983.

"New Women' Emerge in Art," *New Canaan Advertiser*, Oct. 3, 1985.

"Knocked Off the Pedestal" by Philip Eliasoph, *Southern Connecticut Newspapers, Inc.*, Nov. 3, 1985.

Unknown Date

"Winter Exhibition of American Artists," unknown publication.

"Young Detroit Man Will Sketch Among Italian Hills," unknown publication.

"Artist in Smock Target of Stares," unknown publication.

"Praise Detroit Painter: Brother Artists Say E. Murray McKay's Work Shows Talent," unknown publication.

"A Group of Paintings by Murray MacKay," *Bulletin of the Detroit Museum of Art*.

"Present Generation's Debt to Pioneers: Glimpse of the Life of the Late Alexander Cameron" by Murray MacKay, *Leamington Post and News*.

"A Joint Studio Reception," *The New York Times*.

"Art Museum Receives Gift: Former Detroiter Presents Painting," *The Detroit Free Press*.

"Paris – American Painters Skied on the Line."

"Growing Up in Silvermine," a series of two articles by David MacKay, *New Canaan Advertiser*.

Printouts of Murray MacKay's pictures (8 p.)

Folder 2: Photographs

Photographs of Murray MacKay's pictures

Miss Lockwood painted by Murray MacKay

Mildred Kern Harrick painted by Murray MacKay

Unknown gentleman painted by Murray MacKay

Charles Jelstrup painted by Murray MacKay

Dr. Lusk painted by Murray MacKay

George Picknell painted by Murray MacKay

Unknown gentleman painted by Murray MacKay

Unknown gentleman painted by Murray MacKay (2 copies)

Other Photographs

Murray McKay (portrait)

Murray McKay in his studio in New York

Judge Brooks whose portrait Murray McKay painted

Photographic copy of the photograph of Buttery's Mill taken by Murray McKay prior to painting it

A woman reading (likely a study for a picture)

Portrait of a boy

A man with a dog (taken in 1938)

Landscape

Folder 3: Bulletin of the Detroit Museum of Art, Oct., 1907, 4 copies.

Folder 4: Poems and drawings by Murray McKay

"Rhymes by Murray MacKay," 1 typed p.

Illustration to the poem "Mishap" published in a newspaper.

Illustration to the poem "A Sigh" published in a newspaper.

"Easter," photocopy of a drawing published in a newspaper and the newspaper clipping itself.

"Lily Lemon's Adventures," photocopy of drawings to a children's story published in a newspaper.

Murray MacKay's design to a poem by William Carman Roberts published with an illustration by W. C. Greenough.

Poster "War Talk" (in the oversize box)

Folders 5-6

"The European Surprise" by Murray McKay – essay with his recollections of WWI in France, 2 copies, with a note from David McKay to Ralph Bloom.

Folder 7: Biographical materials

Brief biographical information.

Eulogy of Murray McKay.

"Art Students' League of New York," a list of classes offered in the 1899-1900 academic year, 2 copies.

Murray McKay's card of the salon of the Societe des Artistes Francais.

Art Students' League of New York, Board of Control, 1899-1900, informational broadsheet.

Certificate issued by the Silvermine Community Association to David G. MacKay that he is a part of Silvermine.

Folder 8: Correspondence

A. W. Drake, director of the art dept. in the magazine *The Century*, to E. Murray McKay, March 6, 1902.

E. Murray McKay to his parents and "Lois," May 2, 1902.

E. Murray McKay in the Netherlands to his parents and "Lois," July 24, 1904.

Receipt from the Carnegie Institute to E. Murray McKay for the painting he sent them for their 12th annual exhibition.

Mildred Aldrich to Isabel Woods, Aug. 16, 1914. Included is a letter from David McKay to Ralph Bloom, which accompanied the letter of 1914.

Government Loan Organization to Mr. Murray McKay who had loaned a picture of his to the government for an exhibition, April 2, 1919.

Government Loan Organization to Mr. Murray McKay, Aug. 6, 1919.

Care Office of the Michigan Supreme Court to Mr. Murray McKay, Dec. 22, 1920.

Joseph B. Moore, a justice in the Michigan Supreme Court, to Mr. Murray McKay, Dec. 29, 1920.

Charles Reiffel to "Muny," June 5, 1921.

Telegram from Mrs. Herbert S. Greims to Mr. Murray McKay, Aug. 23, 1921.

Robert A. Holland, administrator at the City Art Museum in St. Louis, to Mr. Murray McKay, Nov. 5, 1921. Included is a photocopy of the letter from Mr. Murray McKay to Mr. Stevens, Director of the Toledo Museum of Art.

Mrs. Henry Ford to Mr. Murray McKay, 1921.

Barbara Lifflander, Director of Hastings Art, to David MacKay, that they had sold his father's painting, "The Little Dressmaker," June 18, 1985.

Martin A. Petersen, curator of the American art in the San Diego Museum of Art, to Mrs. A. Mervyn Davies, Sept. 19, 1988.

Annie E. Smith to Mrs. F. A. Banks, no date.

Empty envelope from Charles Reiffel to Murray McKay.

Folders 9-10: Exhibitions and Auctions

Twenty Fifth Anniversary Exhibition of the Art Students' League of New York, 1900, 52 p.

American Art Association of Paris, catalogue of annual exhibition, 1905.

Salon de Societe des Artistes Francais, April 30, 1907.

Annual exhibition of the Society of French Artists, May 9, 1909.

Special exhibition, paintings by Edwin Murray MacKay, Oct. 26 – Nov. 15, 1907.

"Messieurs Boris de Romanovsky, E. Murray MacKay, Bernhard Gutmann ont l'honneur de vous prier de visiter l'exposition de leurs oeuvres, 16-30 Avril, 1910."

Americans in Paris Salons, May 8, 1910.

30th annual exhibition, "Le Lynx," Berlin – Paris – London, May 18, 1910.

"Service du Livre d'Or des Peintres Exposants," June 1, 1910.

Exhibition of the Silvermine Group, Sept. 19-24, 1910.

American Impressionism, Coe Kerr Gallery, Nov. 7 to Dec. 7, 1985.

Litchfield Auction Gallery, Americana estates, May 23-24, 1987.

Litchfield Auction Gallery, Americana, Aug. 9, 1987.

Litchfield Auction Gallery, Americana, Aug. 14, 1987.

Undated

Estate of Miss Sarah E. Wiseman, deceased.

"Messrs. Wunderly Brothers invite you to view an exhibition of oil paintings by Murray MacKay at their galleries."

Folder 11: Miscellanea

Handwritten notes in a notebook and on separate sheets.

Materials about other artists

Folders 12-15: Reproductions of artists' works.

Binder of photographs of John Vassos and his works.

Ledger with the names of artists and their works.

Folder 16: Materials About Other Artists

Reproduction of a painting by Eliot Drake Moores for a Christmas card (1921).

Easter card with a picture by Alexander J. Rummler.

Alexander J. Rummler's patent for a new and useful improvement in gift-money holders, 1942.

Reproduction of Barnhard Gutmann's painting, "Marseilles, 1910" in *Art & Antiques*, Feb. 2004.

Description of a Cowboy painting by Krieghoff which had been sold at an auction.

Envelope for "permanent prints" from the Hamilton shop.