

# Cecilia Beaux collection

MS.060

Finding Aid prepared by Hoang Tran

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PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY  
OF THE FINE ARTS

The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts  
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Philadelphia, PA 19102

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215-972-2066

Updated by Hoang Tran, January 2016

## Summary Information

<b>Repository</b>	The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Dorothy and Kenneth Woodcock Archives
<b>Creator</b>	Cecilia Beaux (1855-1942)
<b>Title</b>	Cecilia Beaux collection
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	1885-1915
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1953-1955
<b>Extent</b>	2.5 linear feet
<b>Location note</b>	
<b>Language</b>	
<b>Language of Materials note</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>The Beaux materials in the PAFA Archives consist primarily of photographs, clippings, and personal artifacts. (The majority of her surviving personal papers is housed at the Archives of American Art.) Most of the collection dates from the beginning of Beaux's professional career, about 1885, through the mid-1920s. It should be noted that the museum of the Pennsylvania Academy houses the largest single collection of works of art by Beaux, encompassing twelve oil paintings, forty oil sketches, over thirty works on paper, and two sketchbooks.</p>

### **Preferred Citation note**

[identification of item], Title of Collection, Collection ID#, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives, Philadelphia, PA.



## **Historical note**

Cecilia Beaux, a native of Philadelphia, received her first instruction in drawing from a former Academy student and distant cousin of her uncle Will Biddle, Catherine Ann Drinker. She continued decorative arts training in 1872 and 1873 sketching plaster geometric forms at the art school of Adolf Van der Wielen and, in 1879, mastering china painting at the National Art Training School with Camille Piton. From 1876 to 1878, Beaux studied briefly and irregularly at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (but avoided working with Thomas Eakins). Her most important Philadelphia arts professor was William Sartain with whom she studied in a private classroom 1881 to 1883.

In 1885 Beaux won a prize at the Pennsylvania Academy for a double portrait of her sister and first-born nephew (*Les Derniers jours d'enfance*, 1883-85), and thereafter became a rising star in the Philadelphia art world. Beaux completed her art training in Paris in 1888 and 1889 at the Academie Julian and the Academie Colarossi, and with private study in Concarneau, France. During her lifetime Beaux was regarded as one of the country's leading portraitists. In 1896, six of her portraits were hung together at the Paris Salon, a distinct honor for an American artist. The Pennsylvania Academy awarded her its Gold Medal in 1898, the Temple Medal in 1900, and the Mary Smith Prize in 1885, 1887, 1891, and 1892.

In 1895, Beaux became the first woman critic at the Academy and headed its portrait classes until 1915. After the First World War, the American government selected Beaux as part of a team commissioned to paint official portraits of Europe's war heroes. Throughout her career, Beaux lectured and traveled frequently. Following her success at the Carnegie Art Institute in 1899, when her *Mother and Daughter* was awarded a first class gold medal, William Merritt Chase pronounced Beaux "the greatest woman painter of modern times." As her reputation grew, Beaux moved her work to studios in New York City and her summer home at Gloucester, Massachusetts, "Green Alley." Her productivity declined sharply in later years with the onset of cataracts, and a hip injury in 1924. Her autobiography, *Background with Figures*, was published in 1930. Beaux died at Green Alley in 1942.

## **Scope and Contents note**

The Beaux materials in the PAFA Archives consist primarily of photographs, clippings, and personal artifacts. (The majority of her surviving personal papers is housed at the Archives of American Art.) Most of the collection dates from the beginning of Beaux's professional career, about 1885, through the mid-1920s. It should be noted that the museum of the Pennsylvania Academy houses the largest single collection of works of art by Beaux, encompassing twelve oil paintings, forty oil sketches, over thirty works on paper, and two sketchbooks.

## **Related Materials**

### PAFA Archives Collection:

- Photographic reproduction of William Merritt Chase's painting, *A Friendly Call*, inscribed by Chase: "To the only Miss Beaux/ from her great admirer/ W. M. Chase." Date unknown, provenance unknown.
  - A large amount of mostly routine correspondence with Beaux regarding teaching duties and exhibitions, 1878-1942; and a few letters from Beaux to members of the Sartain family in the Sartain family papers.
  - A photograph of an 1895 student caricature of Beaux's painting *Sita and Sarita*.
  - One copy of Beaux's autobiography *Background With Figures*, (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930).
  - New copies of *The Paintings and Drawings of Cecilia Beaux*, by Henry Drinker, 1955; and *Cecilia Beaux* by Thornton Oakley, 1943, (several each).
  - Two rolls of microfilm purchased for research purposes from the Archives of American Art, constituting the Beaux papers in the AM. collection (AM. reels 428-29).
- The PAFA Archives houses photographs and documents pertaining to the Cecilia Beaux Memorial Prize in Portraiture. First awarded in 1947, the prize money of \$100 (later \$200), for the best portrait by a PAFA student, resulted from the gift of seven gold medals won by Beaux during her lifetime. The medals were the gift of Henry S. Drinker and his siblings, the residuary legatees of Cecilia Beaux. It was their suggestion to sell the medals for the gold, to create a fund for the prize.
- The PAFA Archives houses audio tape interviews (1973) with Ernesta Barlow (Beaux's niece) and Walker Hancock (sculptor and former PAFA faculty member). Both parties discuss their recollections of Beaux with Frank H. Goodyear, Jr., curator of the Academy's 1974 Beaux exhibition, Both tapes have been transcribed.
- Extensive file of newsclippings, magazine articles, and other ephemera on Beaux in the PAFA library.
- Ph.D. Dissertation by Tara Leigh Tappert, *Choices – The Life and Career of Cecilia Beaux: A Professional Biography*, George Washington University, 1990. (PAFA library)

Special issue (July 2000) of *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* dedicated to Cecilia Beaux and the collection of material relating to her at the Pennsylvania Academy of the

Fine Arts. PMHB is published by The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Nine articles and some 60 illustrations present an in-depth exploration of Beaux's life and work. Orders may be mailed to *PMHB*, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1300 Locust St., Philadelphia, PA 19107-5699.

- Photograph taken by Tara Tappert in John Randall's home: Tappert visited John Randall, the son of Beaux's cousin Emma Leavitt Randall, in Gladwynne, PA in 1985. He showed her a framed photograph (approx. 8 x 10") of Beaux in her studio. To her left, her cousin Emma Leavitt is seated at a desk, and on the other side, the painting *Les Derniers Jours d'Enfance* can be seen. The well-known photograph of Beaux in front of the painting, was apparently created by cropping a copy of this photograph, in order to remove Emma at the desk, and place Beaux directly in front of the work. The framed photograph is currently unlocated. The creator of the well-known image was probably Henry Drinker, as the copy in his papers clearly shows the alteration.

### **Arrangement note**

### **Administrative Information**

#### **Conditions Governing Access note**

Collection is open for research.

The archives reserves the right to restrict access to materials of sensitive nature. Please contact the department for further information.

#### **Conditions Governing Use note**

The collection is the physical property of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Archives. The Museum holds literary rights only for material created by Museum personnel or given to the Museum with such rights specifically assigned. For all other material, literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. Researchers are responsible for obtaining permission from rights holders for publication and for other purposes where stated.

#### **Immediate Source of Acquisition note**

#### **Provenance note**

The Academy's collection of Cecilia Beaux materials is the result of several donations of papers:

## Cecilia Beaux collection (MS.060)

1. Henry S. Drinker (1880-1965) a nephew of Beaux, published *The Paintings and Drawings of Cecilia Beaux* in 1955. In 1965, he donated his research files and photographs of work by Beaux, as well as a small collection of her personal papers. The Beaux papers in his donation, and the photographs of Beaux paintings, have been microfilmed by the Archives of American Art on reel 4236.

There is a separate finding aid for Drinker's Cecilia Beaux research materials.

2. Jules Bahssin, proprietor of the Old Post Road Antiques Shop in Larchmont, New York, donated a collection of papers, and a few photographs, apparently purchased at a local auction, in 1976. Parts of this collection have been microfilmed by the Archives of American Art on reel 3658.

3. Cecilia Drinker Saltonstall, Henry S. Drinker's daughter, and Beaux's great-niece, donated sixty-five loose photographs, and two photograph albums, of Beaux, her homes, studios, and family, in 1998. These items were in the custody of Tara Leigh Tappert from 1985 to 1998, while she prepared a dissertation and the manuscript of a book on the artist.

### **Processing Information note**

## **Controlled Access Headings**

**Person(s)**

**Corporate Name(s)**

**Genre(s)**

**Geographic Name(s)**

**Subject(s)**

## **Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements note**

### **Collection Inventory**

**Inventory of photographs and memorabilia relating to Cecilia Beaux. (Gifts of Henry S. Drinker (1965); Jules Bahssin, (1976); and Cecilia Saltonstall, through Tara Leigh Tappert, (1998).**

Dates and identifications for boxes 1-4 were provided by Tara Leigh Tappert. A few of the loose photographs are inscribed by Beaux in black ink, usually with instructions for photographic

Cecilia Beaux collection (MS.060)

reproduction. In the albums, Beaux's identifications are also in black ink. All blue ink inscriptions on the backs of the photographs, and in the larger album, are by Beaux's niece, Catherine Drinker Bowen. Boxes 5 and 6 house the earlier Drinker and Bahssin gifts.

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
photographs of Beaux (16 items)	Circa 1867-1925	1	1
photographs of Beaux with Emma Leavitt, or other persons, in two different studios in Philadelphia, by unidentified photographers (9 items)	1885-1890	1	2
loose photographs of Beaux's home, Green Alley, in Gloucester, Massachusetts (23 items)	Circa 1905-1955	1	3
photographs showing Beaux, A. Piat Andrew, and Anne Dehon Blake at Beaux's cottage at Gloucester, called the "Rock of Calif." The prints are arranged in a leaflet, titled in Beaux's hand "The Rock of Calif, A Tragedy in three tableaux." (3 items)	1903		4
photographs of members of the Drinker, Biddle, and Leavitt families (10 items); photographs of Natale Gavagnin, Beaux's household servant (3 items)	Circa 1850-1895; 1904-1916	1	5
photographs of works of art by Beaux: Self Portrait #4 (1925), inscribed "To Ernesta"; drawing of an old woman, (ca. 1875); Dorothea and Francesca (1898); Nurse Adelaide Nutting (1906); Mrs. Frederick Otis Barton (1901) (5 items)		1	6
Photograph of Cardinal Desir~ Joseph Mercier, inscribed by him: "A Cecilia Beaux/ la grande et patiente/artiste Americaine/ souvenir reconnaissant/ + o.s. Card. Mercier, Arch./ Malines/ 27-8-19." Inscribed in Beaux's hand on the mount: "Photograph of Card. Mercier/ Presented & signed for me by himself/ 1919/ Malines/ Very valuable/unmounted."		1	7
Beaux's membership certificate for the National Institute of Arts and Letters	1930	1	8
Glass negatives (8 x 10") of views of Green Alley by T. E. Morr, some of which exist as prints in Folder 3. Dated by Tara Tappert to the 1920s (8 items)		2	
Two photograph albums of Green Alley views, and shots of people and parties. Green Alley was Beaux's summer home at Gloucester, Massachusetts. It was built in 1905, and she summered there until her death in 1942. The architect was Dallas McGrew.		3	



Cecilia Beaux collection (MS.060)

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
<p>The smaller album covers 1902-15, and contains 199 photographs. Most of the photographs are identified by Beaux in black ink.</p> <p>The larger album, with the words "Green Alley" embossed on the cover, is inscribed on the first page in blue ink by Catherine Drinker Bowen: "Half a century at Green Alley/ 4 generations and friends." The first 43 pages are photographs taken from 1915-18 at Green Alley. The remaining album pages have been filled with photographs of later occupants of Green Alley from 1947-55. The total number of prints is 369, with 122 of these in the earlier section.</p>			
<p>Personal artifacts: black silk muff, fragment of lace, fragment of embroidered fabric, sachet pouch, and one stocking. These items were given to PAFA Registrar, Elizabeth Bailey, by Cecilia Saltonstall after the Academy's Beaux exhibition of 1974. Tara Leigh Tappert received them from Bailey in 1996, and included them in the 1998 gift.</p>		4	
<p><b>Material from the Henry Drinker papers</b></p>	1965	5	
<p>Photographs of Cecilia Beaux, 3 items of Les Derniers Jours d'Enfance, ca. 1885<i>j</i> at work portrait of Ethel Page, 1884<i>j</i> with A. Piatt Andrew overlooking a stream, ca. 1910).</p>		5	1
<p>Lecture on portraiture delivered at Simmons College, May 4, 1907. 22 page typescript. Microfilmed by the Archives of American Art on reel 4236.</p>		5	2
<p>Correspondence, 1903, 1925, 1934, 1935, and 1940-41<i>j</i> 5 items. The letter from Beaux to Henry S.Drinker, 1940-41, has been microfilmed by the Archives of American Art on reel 4236.</p>		5	3
<p>Ephemera: copy of Beaux's death certificate recollection of Beaux by Royal Cortissoz, 3 pp. <i>j</i> small sketch for Ernesta With Nurse, and sketch of a building.</p>		5	4
<p>Lists of portraits, 1885-1915<i>j</i> lists of paintings exhibited at various institutions, 1896-1921<i>j</i> catalogues of exhibitions, 1897-1935, 22 sheets and 13 printed items.</p>		5	5

Cecilia Beaux collection (MS.060)

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
<b>Bahssin gift</b>	1976	6	
Clippings, including an interview, excerpts from Beaux's lectures, highlights of career, description of Green Alley, n. d., 1902-12, 10 items galley sheets for 1911 article on Beaux by Anne O'Hagan, 1911, 4 pp., microfilmed by the Archives of American Art on reel 3658.		6	1
Two group photographs in which Beaux appears: students at Concarneau, 1888j and Beaux with Eliza Leavitt, Laurie Austin, and Emily Leavitt seated in the steps the Leavitt family home on Spruce Street, ca. 1889.		6	2
Small photograph album, containing fourteen small prints. Seven are of a boy in a sailor suit, five are Green Alley views, one shows Beaux with the boy, and one is of an unidentified woman.		6	3
Letter from Anne Gill to C. R. Leavitt on death of Rev. Aratus Kent, Beaux's great uncle, 1869; copy of Rockford Register article describing Kent memorial service.		6	4
Photographs of Beaux's relatives, including William F. Biddle, Rev.. Aratus Kent, Ernesta Drinker, Emily Leavitt Biddle, Mr. and Mrs. Henry S. Drinker, Eliza Leavitt; 1860s-1890s, 21 items; microfilmed by the Archives of American Art on reel 3658.		6	5
Photographs of Beaux, 2 items (both duplicates of items in the Saltonstall gift).		6	6
Photographs of works of art, including one glass negative, 16 items; microfilmed by the Archives of American Art on reel 3658.		6	7
Ephemera: two prayer books presented to Beaux by Henry S. Drinker; bound expense record of E. A. Leavitt; three xeroxed title pages of books discarded from this collection; calling card of Mrs. Adolphe Beaux (Beaux's mother); Programme of the National Commemoration, July 4, 1876; reproduction of William Foster Biddle medal inscribed by R. Tait MacKenzie to Beaux, 1911.		6	8
Newspapers saved by Beaux for accounts of historical events, including the end of the Civil War, the Philadelphia Centennial, blizzard of 1888, Charles Lindbergh's return from France, 12 items.		6	9

**Addendum to the Cecilia Beaux Papers Finding Aid, Jan. 2008**

## Cecilia Beaux collection (MS.060)

- The items listed below were given to the Academy archives in 2008, by Cecilia Saltonstall, Beaux's great-niece, who was the donor of a significant collection of other Beaux materials in 1998.
- The materials were delivered by Mrs. Saltonstall's daughter Caroline Robison.
- List of items in the 2008 gift:
- Photograph of Henry Sandwith Drinker at about age three, wearing a long military-style coat with braiding and buttons, ca. 1883.
- The coat worn by Henry Drinker in the photograph described above according to a note in the box by Mrs. Saltonstall the coat dates to the 1840s.
- Holograph text of the poem by Beaux "Uncle John's Coat." Beaux published the poem, accompanied by a drawing of a child wearing the braided coat, in the *St. Nicholas Magazine* in January 1885.
- Photograph of Cecilia Beaux, holding a palette, ca. 1886.
- Photograph of Cecilia Beaux's studio, showing the painting *Harold and Mildred Colton* on an easel.
- Modern copy photograph of group of Drinker family members, including Cecilia Beaux, about 1928.
- Small brass plaque, from the frame of a painting, which reads: "Awarded the First Prize Offered by the Trustees of the Corcoran Gallery of Art. 12th Annual Exhibition of the Society of Washington Artists 1902." [Beaux won this award for the portrait of *Mrs. Edith Roosevelt and Daughter Ethel* (private collection)].

### **Notes from Tara Tappert on the seven photographs taken in Beaux's studios (Box 1, folder 2).**

- Group one: Two albumen prints, from 1885 or 1886. The vertical image (6 1/2 x 4 3/4") shows Beaux, seated, looking up at her friend May Whitlock. The portrait visible in the background is that of Eliza Leavitt (1885). The horizontal image (4 3/4 x 7") shows Beaux at left, May Whitlock in the center, and Robert Redfield at left. In the latter photograph some kind of tableaux is being enacted. The location of both images is 1334 Chestnut Street, Beaux's first studio. The date of "1880?", on the verso of both, is in the hand of Cecilia Saltonstall and is incorrect. (PAFA also owns a photograph of Beaux at work on the portrait of Ethel Page, situated in the same studio. This image came to PAFA with the Drinker collection and is not a vintage print.)
- Group two: Three platinum prints (6 x 8", all mounted horizontally on board), show Beaux and her cousin Emma Leavitt in a studio. The women wear the same dresses in all three images. The portraits on the easels are those of Mrs. J. Dillingham and Edward Biddle (1887). The identifications on the mount are by Catherine Drinker Bowen.

Cecilia Beaux collection (MS.060)

- Group three: Two platinum prints (6 3/4 x 4 3/4"), mounted on cabinet cards, one vertically and one horizontally, show Beaux and Emma Leavitt in the same studio as above, but apparently in different dresses. The large portrait on the easel is that of Ethel Burnham (1889). The location of both the second and third groups is 1710 Chestnut Street, Beaux's studio from the fall of 1889 to the late 1890s. The date for the last two groups can be put at circa 1889-90.