

# George M. Harding papers

Collection ID# MS.2017.01

Finding Aid prepared by Leo Wong

---



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY  
OF THE FINE ARTS

The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts  
118-128 North Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

[archives@pafa.org](mailto:archives@pafa.org)

215-972-2066

Prepared June 2017

## Summary Information

<b>Repository</b>	The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Dorothy and Kenneth Woodcock Archives
<b>Creator</b>	George Matthews Harding, 1882-1959
<b>Title</b>	George M. Harding papers
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	1902-1959
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1859-2014
<b>Extent</b>	4 document boxes, 12 oversized folders
<b>Location note</b>	A11/B4/S5, FF 40
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Language of Materials note</b>	All materials in English except for two correspondences in French.
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>The papers contain a range of materials that document the life and career of George Matthews Harding (1882-1959) as an art student, war artist, travel illustrator and author, professional muralist, exhibiting artist, and an illustration instructor for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. The bulk of the collection is comprised of his personal and professional correspondences, photographs, exhibition catalogs, clippings, as well as works of art on paper and sketchbooks. Of interest are photographs from Harding's numerous mural commissions. The papers also include a small collection of papers generated by Harding's family members who provide additional biographical research as well as documents pertaining to the sale of his artworks.</p>

### **Preferred Citation note**

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

## **Historical note**

George Mathew Harding was born on October 2, 1882, in Philadelphia. His sister Charlotte Harding encouraged him to study art. Harding eventually attended the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA) from 1899 to 1900 and continued his training under Howard Pyle in 1902. From 1906 to 1911, he traveled extensively while working for Harper's Magazine as an illustrator and author, taking him to Newfoundland, the Caribbean, China, the South Pacific, Arabia, and the Mediterranean. Prior to the First World War, Harding began his work as a mural artist, creating pieces for the Hotel Traymore in Atlantic City.

When the United States entered World War I, Harding was selected as one of eight combat artists attached to the American Expeditionary Forces in France (1917-1919). After returning from war, Harding continued his art career. He became a faculty member of PAFA in 1922 teaching courses in illustration and mural decoration and taught art at the University of Pennsylvania between 1927 and 1942. During his time at PAFA, Harding continued a highly active mural career thanks to the Works Progress Administration (WPA) program. Harding received a number of commissions to create murals in various government buildings in the northeastern United States.

When World War II broke out, Harding was again commissioned as a war artist by the military and served in the Pacific Theater, becoming the only combat artist to serve in both world wars. After the war, some of his significant projects included creating murals for the Montgomery County Courthouse and transitioning the House of naturalist John J. Audubon into a museum.

## **Scope and Contents note**

The George M. Harding papers consist of records that document Harding throughout his life as an art student, illustrator, author, muralist, combat artist, art teacher, and as an accomplished artist. The bulk of the papers are comprised of his personal and professional correspondences, clippings, photographs, and works of art on paper. Of particular interest are materials pertaining to his extensive mural commissions; artwork related to his time serving as combat artist during both world wars; and his work as a magazine illustrator and reporter. Also included are personal and professional correspondences of Harding's family members which provide context to his early life, world travels, and the status of his artwork after his death. Most journals and correspondences are difficult to read or illegible. Harding's exhibition history is not complete and includes many gaps.

## **Arrangement note**

The papers are arranged into 6 series:

Series 1. Correspondence

Series 2. Author and Illustrator

Series 3. WWI/American Expeditionary Force illustrations

Series 4. WWII/Service in the Marines

Subseries 1. Correspondence

Subseries 2. Photographs

Subseries 3. Clippings

Subseries 4. Works on Paper (art)

Series 5. Art Career

Subseries 1. Awards and accolades

Subseries 2. Projects

Subseries 3. Professional Journals

Subseries 4. Exhibitions

Subseries 5. Mural Commissions

Series 6. Family Papers

Subseries 1. George Harding Jr.

Subseries 2. Charlotte Harding (niece)

Subseries 3. Charlotte Harding (artist)

Subseries 4. Mrs. Kistler

## **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**

Donated by George Harding Jr. on May 16, 2017

**Processing Information note**

Upon arrival, papers did not have particular order and haphazardly stored in boxes. No container list was provided. As a result, project archivist imposed a new arrangement to the papers to promote greater access and preservation. Oversized artworks were placed in large flat folders and stored separately. Staples, rubber bands, and paper clips were removed. One binder that contained documents pertaining to the commission of murals for the Montgomery County Courthouse was photocopied and binder discarded. Photographs in poor condition were placed in sleeves. Duplicates were removed from the collection.

Processed by Leo Wong, June 2017

**Controlled Access Headings**

**Person(s)**

Harding, Matthews George, 1882-1959

Harding, Charlotte, 1873-1951

Pyle, Howard, 1853-1911

**Corporate Name(s)**

United States. Army. American Expeditionary Forces

United States. Marines Corps

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. School

**Genre(s)**

Personal correspondence

Work of Art on Paper

Clippings

Installation photograph

**Geographic Name(s)**

Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada  
France  
Pacific Ocean  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**Subject(s)**

Mural painting and decoration  
Muralists  
World War I, 1914-1918  
World War II, 1939-1945

**Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements note**

Most journals and correspondences are difficult to read or illegible.

## Collection Inventory

Series	Subseries	Date	Folder Title	Box	Folder	Format
Correspondence		1931	Edward Willis Redfield	1	1	paper
Correspondence		1901-1902	Howard Pyle school	1	2	paper
Correspondence		1942-1943	Nellie (Cornelia Greenough?)	1	3	paper
Correspondence		1921, 1929	Joseph Pennell	1	4	paper
Correspondence		1901-1913	To mother, father, and Nellie (Cornelia Greenough?)	1	5	paper
Correspondence		1944-1945, 1948, 1953, 1958	PAFA related	1	6	paper
Correspondence		1945, 1957	Painting sold	1	7	paper
Correspondence		1908, 1913, 1917-1930, 1940	Personal - various	1	8	paper
Correspondence		1942-1947, 1958	Personal - various	1	9	paper
Correspondence		1908-1913	Postcards from Various Locations (mostly Charlotte Harding)	1	10	paper
Correspondence		undated	Professional	1	11	paper
Correspondence		1958	Walker Hancock	1	12	paper
Correspondence		1917-1919	War related	1	13	paper
Correspondence		1944-1946	War art	1	14	paper
Correspondence		1925	Legal Documents (home remodel)	1	15	paper
Author and Illustrator		1917 December	Article (draft)- Harper's Weekly, On Admiralty Service	1	16	paper
Author and Illustrator		1909	Article - Harper's Weekly, When Our Ship Went Down by G. Harding	1	17	paper
Author and Illustrator		1917 December	Article (draft)- Harper's Weekly, untitled	1	18	paper
Author and Illustrator		1939 October	Article - Magazine of Art, Drawing the War	1	19	paper

## George M. Harding papers (MS.2017.01)

Series	Subseries	Date	Folder Title	Box	Folder	Format
Author and Illustrator		1929 July	Article - National Geographic, The Sailing Saga of Newfoundland	1	20	paper
Author and Illustrator		1912	Correspondence - Harper's Weekly	1	21	paper
Author and Illustrator		1919	Correspondence - Ladies' Home Journal	1	22	paper
Author and Illustrator		1906	Correspondence - McClure's Magazine	1	23	paper
Author and Illustrator		circa 1910s	Journal (loose)	1	24	paper
Author and Illustrator		circa 1910s	Journal with clippings	1	25	paper
Author and Illustrator		1908	Photographs - Newfoundland and Labrador	1	26	photographic print
Author and Illustrator		1892-1958	Scrapbook - Newfoundland Sealing Data (Compiled after his time in Canada)	1	27	paper
WWI/American Expeditionary Force illustrations		1914 May	Clipping - Harper's Weekly	2	1	paper
WWI/American Expeditionary Force illustrations		1919 September	Clipping - Ladies Home Journal	FF 40	2	paper
WWI/American Expeditionary Force illustrations		1918 April 7	Clipping - New York Times	FF 40	2	paper
WWI/American Expeditionary Force illustrations		2014 June 29	Clipping - Philadelphia Inquirer	FF 40	2	paper
WWI/American Expeditionary Force illustrations		1919 March 16	Clipping - Public Ledger Philadelphia	FF 40	2	paper
WWI/American Expeditionary Force illustrations		1964	Clipping - Times	FF 40	2	paper
WWI/American Expeditionary Force illustrations		1918-1920	Clipping - various publications	2	2	paper
WWI/American Expeditionary Force illustrations		circa 1917-1918	Marine Corps Sketchbook	2	3	paper
WWI/American Expeditionary Force illustrations		1917-1919	Photograph - Behind Montmirail (France)	2	4	photographic print
WWII/Service in the Marines	Correspondences	1944-1946	General	2	5	paper



## George M. Harding papers (MS.2017.01)

Series	Subseries	Date	Folder Title	Box	Folder	Format
WWII/Service in the Marines	Photographs	circa 1942-1945	Service with Marines	4	6	paper
WWII/Service in the Marines	Clippings	1944	Illustrations	2	7	paper
WWII/Service in the Marines	Clippings	1957 October 27	Illustrations	FF 40	1	paper
WWII/Service in the Marines	Works on Paper (art)	circa 1942-1945	Sketch of Soldiers by John Hess	2	8	paper
WWII/Service in the Marines	Works on Paper (art)	circa 1942-1945	Color Works pt. 1 (see itemized inventory)	FF 40	5	paper
WWII/Service in the Marines	Works on Paper (art)	circa 1942-1945	Color Works pt. 2 (see itemized inventory)	FF 40	6	paper
WWII/Service in the Marines	Works on Paper (art)	circa 1942-1945	Color Works pt. 3 (see itemized inventory)	FF 40	7	paper
WWII/Service in the Marines	Works on Paper (art)	circa 1942-1945	Color Works pt. 4 (see itemized inventory)	FF 40	8	paper
WWII/Service in the Marines	Works on Paper (art)	circa 1942-1945	Color Works pt. 5 (see itemized inventory)	FF 40	9	paper
WWII/Service in the Marines	Works on Paper (art)	circa 1942-1945	Color Works pt. 6 (see itemized inventory)	FF 40	10	paper
WWII/Service in the Marines	Works on Paper (art)	circa 1942-1945	Color Works pt. 7 (see itemized inventory)	FF 40	11	paper
WWII/Service in the Marines	Works on Paper (art)	circa 1942-1945	Pencil Works (see itemized inventory)	FF 40	12	paper
WWII/Service in the Marines	Works on Paper (art)	circa 1942-1945	South Pacific Sketchbook	2	9	color transparencies
Art Career	Art School	1899-1903	Student Life			
Art Career	Art School	1900-1903	Illustration Class			
Art Career	Art School	1923	Illustration Instructor			
Art Career	Awards and Accolades	1926	Sesqui-Centennial Commission of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	2	10	paper
Art Career	Awards and Accolades	1953	Architectural League of New York	2	10	paper

## George M. Harding papers (MS.2017.01)

Series	Subseries	Date	Folder Title	Box	Folder	Format
Art Career	Awards and Accolades	1953	Philadelphia Chapter American Institute of Architects	2	10	paper
Art Career	Projects	1954-1955	Audubon House Renovation to Museum - correspondence	2	11	paper
Art Career	Projects	1955-1956	Audubon House Renovation to Museum - visitor logbook	2	12	paper
Art Career	Projects	1957	Audubon House Renovation to Museum - American Artist article	2	13	paper
Art Career	Projects	1957	Audubon House Renovation to Museum - Clipping	2	13	paper
Art Career	Professional Journals	1942, 1946	Journals	2	14	paper
Art Career	Professional Journals	1947-1948	Journals	2	15	paper
Art Career	Professional Journals	1949-1950	Journals	2	16	paper
Art Career	Professional Journals	1951-1952	Journals	2	17	paper
Art Career	Professional Journals	1953-1954	Journals	2	18	paper
Art Career	Professional Journals	1955-1956	Journals	2	19	paper
Art Career	Exhibitions	1951	Book - Significant War Scenes by Battlefront Artists 1941-1945	FF 40	2	paper
Art Career	Exhibitions	circa 1920-1969	Catalogue - photocopy of other catalogues	3	1	paper
Art Career	Exhibitions	1951	Catalogue - Significant War Scenes	3	2	paper
Art Career	Exhibitions	1959	Catalogue - The American Expeditionary Forces in Action	3	3	paper
Art Career	Exhibitions	1920s	Clippings	3	4	paper
Art Career	Exhibitions	1957-1958	Clippings	FF 40	1	paper
Art Career	Exhibitions	1921, 1926-1927	Correspondence	3	5	paper
Art Career	Exhibitions	1946	Correspondence	3	6	paper
Art Career	Exhibitions	1948	Photograph - Carnegie Institute Painting in the United States	3	7	photographic print

## George M. Harding papers (MS.2017.01)

Series	Subseries	Date	Folder Title	Box	Folder	Format
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1927	Americus Hotel - contract	3	8	paper
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1927	Americus Hotel - photographs	3	9	photographic print
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1916	Bond Hotel - correspondence (uncommissioned)	3	10	paper
Art Career	Mural Commissions	circa late 1940s	Century Club - photographs	3	11	photographic print
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1925	Coin Exchange Bank - photographs	3	12	photographic print
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1916	Commonwealth Hotel - correspondence (uncommissioned)	3	13	paper
Art Career	Mural Commissions	circa 1920s	Earl Theater - photographs	3	14	photographic print, photo mounted on board
Art Career	Mural Commissions	circa 1930s	First National Bank - photographs	3	15	photographic print
Art Career	Mural Commissions	circa 1930s	Germantown Trust - photographs	3	16	photographic print
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1915	Hotel Statler and Hotel Cleveland - correspondence (uncommissioned)	3	17	paper
Art Career	Mural Commissions	circa 1920s	Houston Post Philadelphia - photographs	3	18	photographic print
Art Career	Mural Commissions	circa 1920s	Karlton Theater - photographs	3	19	photographic print
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1949-1953	Montgomery County Courthouse - photographs	3	20	photographic print
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1949-1953	Montgomery County Courthouse - photographs	FF 40	4	photographic print
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1859-1949	Montgomery County Courthouse -	3	21	paper

## George M. Harding papers (MS.2017.01)

Series	Subseries	Date	Folder Title	Box	Folder	Format
			research materials			
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1953	Montgomery County Courthouse - American Institute of Architects Award Murals	FF 40	2	plastic
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1955 May 15	Montgomery County Courthouse - illustrated clippings	FF 40	1	paper
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1938	NY World's Fair Federal Building - clippings	3	22	paper
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1939-1940	NY World's Fair Federal Building - photographs	3	23	photo mounted on board
Art Career	Mural Commissions	circa 1928	Pere Marquette Hotel - photographs	3	24	photo mounted on board
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1940	Philadelphia Municipal Court - photographs	3	25	photographic print
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1939	Philadelphia Family Court - photograph	3	26	photographic print
Art Career	Mural Commissions	circa 1930s	Philadelphia Public Buildings - photographs	3	27	photographic print
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1938 April 26	Post Office Department Building - news release	3	28	paper
Art Career	Mural Commissions	circa 1930s	Public Buildings (Unidentified) - photographs	3	29	photographic print, photo mounted on board
Art Career	Mural Commissions	circa 1916-1917	Seafood Restaurant - photographs	3	30	photographic print
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1916-1917	Traymore Hotel - clippings	3	31	paper
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1916-1917	Traymore Hotel - photographs	3	32	photographic

## George M. Harding papers (MS.2017.01)

Series	Subseries	Date	Folder Title	Box	Folder	Format
						print, photo mounted on board
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1916-1917	Traymore Hotel - photographs	FF 40	3	photographic print
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1972 April 23	Trenton Opera House - Clipping			
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1935	US Customs House - photographs	3	33	photographic print, photo mounted on board
Art Career	Mural Commissions	2004	US Customs House - Pennsylvania Historic Preservation legal notice	3	34	paper
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1939	US Post Office North Philadelphia, PA - clippings	3	35	paper
Art Career	Mural Commissions	1941	US Post Office Wilkes Barre, PA - photographs	3	36	paper
Harding's Family Papers	George Harding Junior	1958-1959, 2005	Correspondence - Personal	4	1	paper
Harding's Family Papers	George Harding Junior	1958-1960, 1973-1974	Correspondence - Institutional	4	2	paper
Harding's Family Papers	George Harding Junior	1957-1960, 2007	Order Forms and Price Sheets for Harding's Art	4	3	paper
Harding's Family Papers	George Harding Junior	1984-1991	Military Bookman - correspondences for sale of art	4	4	paper
Harding's Family Papers	George Harding Junior	circa 1984	Military Bookman - photograph album of art for sale	4	5	paper
Harding's Family Papers	Charlotte Harding (niece)	1980	Correspondence - Personal	4	6	paper
Harding's Family Papers	Charlotte Harding (niece)	1977,2005-2011	Biographical research on George Harding	4	7	paper
Harding's Family Papers	Charlotte Harding (niece)	circa 1969-1995	Photocopies of Selections from Periodicals and Publications	4	8	paper

## George M. Harding papers (MS.2017.01)

<b>Series</b>	<b>Subseries</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Folder Title</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Format</b>
Harding's Family Papers	Charlotte Harding (niece)	1991	MHQ	4	9	paper
Harding's Family Papers	Charlotte Harding (artist)	1982	Exhibition Catalogue - Charlotte Harding an Illustrator in Philadelphia	4	10	paper
Harding's Family Papers	Mrs. John S. Kistler	1959-1964	Correspondence - Professional and Personal	4	11	paper