

# THE PHILLIPS --- COLLECTION

*Donation of Dora J. Gage*

1940-2003

**Guide to the Collection**

**The Phillips Collection  
Library and Archives  
1600 21<sup>st</sup> Street NW  
Washington D.C. 20009  
[www.phillipscollection.org](http://www.phillipscollection.org)**

**Collection Title:** Donation of Dora J. Gage

**Author/Creator:**

**Collection No:**

**Size:** 1 linear foot

**Bulk Dates:** 1940-1965

**Inclusive Dates:** 1940-2003

**Repository:** The Phillips Collection Archives, 1600 21<sup>st</sup> St NW, Washington, DC 20009

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The Donation of Dora J. Gage consists of materials dated from 1940 to 1965 and includes photographs of Marsden Hartley, his friends and associates, and the interior and exterior of his studio, in Corea, Maine. Also included in the donation is a photograph of a drawing of Marsden Hartley by Polly Scribner Ames, and a photograph of Mrs. Dora J. Gage, dated 1965.

## **PROVENANCE**

The Donation of Dora J. Gage was given to The Phillips Collection through Mr. Clarence Goldberg, who holds power of attorney for Mrs. Gage. Mr. and Mrs. Goldberg brought the materials included in the gift to The Phillips Collection on December 17, 2003, and discussed them with Karen Schneider, Librarian and Beth Turner, Senior Curator. The donation was in the custody of The Phillips Collection Archives beginning December 17, 2003. The Deed of Gift of Historical Materials to The Phillips Collection for the Donation of Dora J. Gage was signed by Mr. Clarence Goldberg on March 3, 2004.

## **BACKGROUND HISTORY**

Mr. Clarence Goldberg and his wife Adrienne have been friends with Mrs. Dora J. Gage and her husband for over 50 years. The Goldbergs provided the following information about the Gages and how they met Marsden Hartley.

Mrs. Gage was born in New York City in 1898 and grew up in Brooklyn. As a child of four or five, she was injured on her doorstep as the result of a random shooting. Following this incident, her mother moved the family to Boston.

Mr. Henry Gage, Dora's husband, was an historian and helped to found the Westminster record label in the 1950s, which produced and recorded the finest and rarest classical music of its kind, much of it in Europe. Mr. Gage started the Berlioz Society. Many of the Gages' friends were musicians whom Henry Gage met through his work for Westminster. They were also friends with actors, such as Edmund Purdom, who played in the movie *The Egyptian*.

The Goldbergs described the Gages as “unworldly.” According to the Goldbergs, they had a very interesting life in which art, music and friendships mattered most of all. Money and material things were never very important to them. For many years, they lived in the same two-story apartment building in New York City, on East 19<sup>th</sup> Street near Second Avenue in Gramercy Park, on a site which is now a hospital. They never had a car or bought a house.

During World War II, the Gages both worked. They did not have any children. Mrs. Gage worked for a publishing firm. She later worked for the Brooklyn Museum as an assistant to the Women’s Auxiliary and assisted with fundraising efforts. She was also an editor and a member of a group called The Open Road, in which Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt was interested. Mrs. Roosevelt wrote Mrs. Gage a kind note in 1941, two days before Pearl Harbor. The Goldbergs brought the note from Mrs. Roosevelt to The Phillips Collection during their visit.

The Gages bought war bonds and set them aside. They had no plans to cash them in, but when a deadline was announced for doing so, they learned that they had \$600,000 worth of bonds. Their new-found financial security enabled them to venture further afield. The Gages enjoyed traveling, and they traveled through Scotland with a daughter of the illustrator Arthur Rackham. According to the Goldbergs, the Gages entertained beautifully. The Goldbergs were often guests at their New Years Eve parties. Henry Gage was a terrific baker and made delicious cakes.

The Gages began going to Maine for vacations during the 1930s. On one trip, they were driving through Corea, and met Forrest and Katie Young by chance. Forrest Young was a lobster fisherman. His wife Katie was known as “the foreigner” by locals because she was from Austria, despite the fact that she had lived in Corea a long time. The Youngs were very hospitable and offered their cottage to the Gages as a place to stay.

Forrest Young knew Marsden Hartley and offered Hartley his chicken coop to use as a studio. Hartley was in Corea between 1940 and 1943. The Gages ate meals with the Youngs in their home, so their experiences were probably very similar to those of Marsden Hartley. The Gages probably met Marsden Hartley around 1940, when he first went to Corea.

Mr. and Mrs. Gage went to Marsden Hartley’s first Museum of Modern Art retrospective in 1943 with Forrest Young. They saw a painting that depicted a pair of old boots, and Forrest Young exclaimed with surprise, “Them’s ma [my] old boots.”

After Marsden Hartley died in 1943, his relatives, who virtually disowned him when he was alive, descended on the chicken coop studio in Corea and nearly stripped it of its contents. For some reason, they referred to Hartley as “Uncle Ned.” They missed several rolled up posters and the Youngs asked the Gages what the posters were and what they thought should be done with them. Mrs. Gage took them to The Brooklyn Museum for conservation, where they were discovered to be original posters of Jean

Avril by Toulouse Lautrec. The Youngs decided to sell them, which made it possible for them to remodel their farmhouse.

The Goldbergs and the Gages met through Professor Samuel Workman, Mrs. Goldberg's professor at Northwestern University during the late 1940s. Mrs. Goldberg studied literature and wrote an essay on Emily Dickinson for her Masters Degree at Columbia University. She wrote an article "Emily Dickinson's Social Attitudes: A Dissenting View," which was published in *The Western Humanities Review* in Autumn 1952. Mrs. Goldberg published the article under her maiden name, Adrienne Berenson.

Professor Workman invited the Goldbergs to Corea, where they met the Youngs. Dr. Workman suggested that the Goldbergs call the Gages and introduce themselves. Even though they felt uncomfortable doing so, they called the Gages, met, and became close friends.

## **SERIES DESCRIPTION**

The collection is arranged in one series, consisting of a single letter from Mrs. Goldberg, photographs of Marsden Hartley, his friends, associates, and studio; and a photograph of a drawing of Hartley.

## **PROCESSING**

**Date Processed:** Guide completed March 2004

**Processed By:** Karen Schneider, Librarian.

The collection was in minimal order at the time of accession.

During processing, photographs were lightly marked in pencil on the back upper left-hand corner with Gage, followed by a number. The numbers correspond to the box inventory of the collection, which is listed below. Each photograph was placed in a polypropylene binder page.

The photographs were arranged by general themes when possible. A photograph of Mrs. Dora Gage appears first, followed by photographs of Marsden Hartley's friends and associates; the exterior of Hartley's studio; photographs of Hartley; photographs of the interior of his studio; and a photograph of a drawing made after Hartley's death.

The photograph of a charcoal and crayon drawing of Marsden Hartley after death [1943], by Polly Scribner Ames was removed from its wooden frame and mat board support, which had a high acid content, and placed in a polypropylene binder sheet. The entire collection is housed in a single photo binder album box.

## **BACKGROUND RESEARCH ON THE PHOTOGRAPH OF A DRAWING OF MARSDEN HARTLEY**

The Goldbergs stated that the photograph of a drawing of Marsden Hartley after his death was by Patricia Ames, and added that another drawing of the same subject was at the University of Maine. Calls to the University of Maine, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Archives of American Art, and other museums and archives yielded no information on the location of the original drawing. The Goldbergs believed that the work they were presenting was an original drawing, but further examination revealed it to be a photograph of a drawing rather than an original work of art. The fact that the artist's signature reads "S Ames" added to the uncertainty of the work's provenance.

The Catalog of American Portraits database created by the National Portrait Gallery yielded a brief description of a drawing of Marsden Hartley by Polly Scribner Ames made in 1943 which was owned by the "University Art Museum."

A search on Google provided information on a Polly Scribner Ames (b. 1908) who was active as an artist from the late 1930s through the 1960s. She studied with Hans Hoffman and at the University of Chicago. Further searching revealed that she wrote the monograph *Marsden Hartley in Maine* (1972), which is in The Phillips Collection Library. An illustration of the same drawing of Marsden Hartley after his death appears on page 4 and the credit line reads the University of Minnesota Gallery. A phone conversation with the registrar at the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum in Minnesota confirmed them to be the owners of the original drawing. The drawing was a gift to the Weisman Art Museum from Mr. and Mrs. Hudson Walker. A note on the top of the cardboard backing for the drawing says "drawn in the basement undertaking parlor of the furniture store, Ellsworth, Maine."

Polly Scribner Ames was a young artist when she met Marsden Hartley in Corea, Maine. Hartley took an interest in her and encouraged her work, attending one of her exhibitions and offering advice. Ames was also a friend of Forrest and Katie Young, who provided Hartley with studio space.

Katie Young found Ames' letter to Hartley by his bed after he was taken to the hospital, and she phoned Ames to tell her of Hartley's death. No one was able to reach any of Hartley's relatives, and he was taken to the basement of the little furniture store in Ellsworth, Maine, a town about halfway between Corea and Blue Hill. Ames made the trip to Ellsworth by mail truck, and made the drawing of Hartley in the basement of the furniture store, an experience that she describes in her book.

## **RELATED MATERIALS**

There is no original correspondence between Duncan Phillips and Marsden Hartley in The Phillips Collection Archives.

Original correspondence from Duncan Phillips relating to Marsden Hartley is at the Archives of American Art in The Phillips Collection papers and on microfilm in The Phillips Collection Archives. References to the correspondence are in [The Eye of](#)

Duncan Phillips: A Collection in the Making, edited by Erika Passantino, published by Yale University Press in 1999, on page 763. Additional references on the same page refer to Duncan Phillips' published and unpublished writings on Marsden Hartley.

The Marsden Hartley Papers are in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven.

## **BOX INVENTORY**

1. Goldberg, Adrienne to Karen Schneider, 2003 [letter]
2. Photograph of Mrs. Dot Gage, 1965, at Brooklyn Museum of Art, photographer unknown
3. Photograph of 3 men, Mr. Henry Gage on right with pipe, Mr. Forrest Young in the middle, unidentified man on the left, Corea, Maine, [between 1940-1943], photographer unknown
4. Photograph of Forrest Young, lobster fisherman, Corea, Maine, [between 1940-1943], photographer unknown
5. Photograph of exterior of Marsden Hartley's studio in Corea, Maine (chicken coop belonging to Forrest Young), [between 1940-1943], photographer unknown
6. Photograph of Marsden Hartley with folded hands, Corea, Maine, [between 1940 and 1943], photographer unknown
7. Photograph of Marsden Hartley standing in front of bench, Corea, Maine, [between 1940 and 1943], photographer unknown
8. Photograph of Marsden Hartley seated, wearing cap, Corea Maine, [between 1940 and 1943], photographer unknown
9. Photograph of interior of Marsden Hartley's studio, Roses on easel, bright light coming in on right of frame, Corea, Maine [1943], photographer unknown
10. Photograph of interior of Marsden Hartley's studio, Roses on easel, to far right of frame, white table in full view, [1943], photographer unknown
11. Photograph of interior of Marsden Hartley's studio, Roses on easel, just to right of central frame, partial view of table, [1943], photographer unknown

12. Photograph of interior of Marsden Hartley's studio, table on left, canvas with three large figures in background, two small figures in foreground [between 1940 and 1943], photographer unknown
13. Photograph of interior of Marsden Hartley's studio, full view of white table in center, [between 1940 and 1943], photographer unknown
14. Photograph of interior of Marsden Hartley's studio, close up of white table with tubes of oil paint, rags, rope, two bottles, [between 1940 and 1943], photographer unknown
15. Photograph of charcoal and crayon drawing of Hartley after death, [1943] by Polly Scribner Ames [original drawing in collection of Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis]