

Textile Study Room records, 1908-2003

Finding aid prepared by Nicole Sonett

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Summary Information

Repository	The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives
Title	Textile Study Room records, 1908-2003
Dates	1908-2003
Extent	1.2 Linear feet (2 boxes)
Language	Primarily in English, with some materials in French, Italian, and Hebrew.
Abstract	The Textile Study Room records contain correspondence, invoices, fabric samples, photographs and other items documenting how curators and staff of The Metropolitan Museum of Art assisted students, designers, and others seeking knowledge or inspiration from historical and contemporary examples of fabrics.

Preferred Citation note

[Title of item], [date], Box [number], Folder [number], Textile Study Room Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

Historical note

The Textile Study Room of The Metropolitan Museum of Art opened in 1909. From then until the mid-1990s, when its activities were integrated into those of the Antonio Ratti Textile Center, the Textile Study Room was consulted by students, designers, and others seeking knowledge or inspiration from historical and contemporary examples of fabrics. In its early years, research supported by the Textile Study Room focused on European textiles and laces, as well as Japanese and Chinese textiles. The Textile Study Room frequently hosted lectures about its holdings by curators and specialists in the field. It also acquired photographs of fabrics and textiles from Central and South America, Asia, and India. Textile Study Room staff included Frances Morris (1910-1929), Frances Little (1928-1942), Marion Bolles (1942-1949), Edith Standen (1949-1970), Jean Mailey (1959-1985), and Alice Zrebiec (1979-1993).

From 1909 to 1933 the Textile Study Room was a part of the Department of Decorative Arts. From 1934 to 1957, it operated under the purview of the department of Renaissance and Modern Art. In 1957, that department split into two, and the Textile Study Room became a part of the Renaissance and Post-Renaissance Art Department, which was renamed the Department of Western European Arts in 1962, and the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts in 1978. In 1995, after a consolidation of the textile collections of nine curatorial departments, the Museum opened a central study and storage area, the Antonio Ratti Textile Center, which assumed responsibility for many of the functions formerly managed by Textile Study Room staff.

Scope and Contents note

The Textile Study Room records contain carbon copies of outgoing letters, incoming letters, notes, telephone messages, invoices, and related material regarding the activity of the Textile Study Room and its curators. The records measure 1.2 linear feet, and the bulk date from 1908 to 1993 with a few items from the early 2000s. Most of the correspondence is with individuals and institutions in the United States, with some correspondence from The Netherlands, France, Germany, Poland, Denmark, Canada, Italy, the United Kingdom and India. Correspondence with curators at different institutions relates to lending material, research on specific textiles, and arranging visits to institutions. Also included are requests from students and scholars wishing to learn more about specific topics. These frequently prompted a response with a bibliography provided by the curator, some of which are included in this collection as a carbon copy.

In addition to correspondence, this collection includes research notes by Edith Standen and Jean Mailey.

Arrangement note

The records are arranged in seven series, ordered alphabetically: Series I. Bolles, Marion; Series II. Little, Frances; Series III. Mailey, Jean; Series IV. Morris, Frances; Series V. Standen, Edith; Series VI. Various Staff; Series VII. Zrebiec, Alice. Within each series the correspondence is arranged in chronological or reverse chronological order. Within Series VI. Various Staff, correspondence is arranged alphabetically by folder, and chronologically within each folder.

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access note

Collection is open for research. Some materials may be restricted at the discretion of Archives staff.

Custodial History note

These materials were transferred to the Museum Archives from Ratti Textile Center, 2015.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

"Textiles in the Metropolitan Museum of Art," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Winter 1995/96, Volume LIII, Number 3.

Standen, Edith A, and Sharon Zane. Oral History Interview with Edith A. Standen, 1994. The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives.

Edith A. Standen Papers, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Gallery Archives.

Parker, James. "The Publications of Edith A. Standen: A Bibliography Compiled for Her Eightieth Birthday." *The Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 19/20, 1984, pp. 5–10.

Indexing Terms

Genres and Forms of Materials

- Clippings (Books, newspapers etc.)
- Correspondence.
- Field notes
- Photographs

Subjects - Topics

- Art consultants--Correspondence
- Art dealers--Correspondence
- Decorative arts
- Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.). History
- Textiles

Collection Inventory

Series I. Bolles, Marion 1942-1949

Biographical Note

Marion Bolles was the Assistant Curator in charge of the Textile Study Room from 1942 to 1949. She published four articles in The Metropolitan Museum of Art *Bulletin* between 1943 and 1945.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains carbon copies of outgoing letters, incoming letters, notes, telephone messages, invoices, and related material about the Textile Study Room. Notable correspondents include Metropolitan Museum of Art staff Decorative Arts Curator Preston Remington and Director Francis Henry Taylor, as well as Mary E. McWilliams from Colonial Williamsburg and Margaret Gaylord from the University of Connecticut.

Box	Folder	
1	3	Correspondence. 1942-1949

Series II. Little, Frances 1928-1942

Biographical Note

Frances Little was the Assistant Curator in charge of the Textile Study Room from 1929 to 1942 and Associate Curator in charge of the Textile Study Room from 1937 to 1942. She is the author of many articles in The Metropolitan Museum of Art *Bulletin* and published two monographs: *Early American Textiles* (1931) and *Eighteenth-Century Costume in Europe: a Picture Book* (1937).

Scope and Contents note

This series contains carbon copies of outgoing letters, incoming letters, notes, telephone messages, invoices, and related material about the Textile Study Room. Notable correspondents include Claude H. Hulsen from the Old Fort Niagara Association; Gertrude Townsend from the Museum of Fine Arts, The Valentine Museum; Irena Piotriwska, Director of Polish Art Service; and Howland Morgan from Henry Morgan and Company, LTD.

Box	Folder	
1	2	Correspondence. 1928-1942

Series III. Mailey, Jean 1954-1985

Series IV. Morris, Frances

Biographical Note

Jean Mailey was Assistant Curator in charge of the Textile Study Room from 1959 to 1967 and the Associate Curator in charge of the Textile Study Room from 1967-1985. She published "Art Treasures of Turkey" in The Metropolitan Museum of Art *Bulletin* (1968) and a monograph titled *The Manchu Dragon: Costumes of the Ch'ing Dynasty 1644-1912* (1980), which accompanied the Costume Institute exhibit of that year.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains carbon copies of outgoing letters, incoming letters, notes, telephone messages, invoices, and related material about the Textile Study Room. Notable correspondents include Metropolitan Museum of Art staff Director James Rorimer, Dudley Easby, and John Goldsmith Phillips, as well as Peter Floud from the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Cooper Union Museum; Joseph J. Kunts from the City Art Museum of St. Louis; Mildred Lanier from Colonial Williamsburg; Kwabena Okwae Asare Ansha; Luigi Dal Pane from University of Bologna; Robert M Pettit; and Harold Burnham, Curator of Textiles at the Royal Ontario Museum.

Box	Folder	
2	2	Correspondence. 1954-1968
2	3	Correspondence. 1968-1985
2	4	Notes. 1959-1985

Series IV. Morris, Frances 1908-1929**Biographical Note**

Frances Morris (1866-1955) was first employed by The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1896, and was associated with early efforts to organize the Museum's musical instruments collection. In 1910 she was appointed Assistant Curator, and was assigned the task of organizing the Museum's extensive lace collection. In 1913, Morris completed a new edition of Volume II of the *Catalogue of the Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments*. Morris helped found the Needle and Bobbin Club in 1916 and was involved with it for the rest of her life. In 1921, Morris was appointed Associate Curator in the Department of Decorative Arts and Morris remained at The Metropolitan Museum of Art until 1929. In 1923, she co-authored the catalogue of the *Ballard Collection of Rugs* with Joseph Breck. Between 1915 and 1924, Morris gave lectures on textiles and musical instruments. She resigned in 1929 to go on an extended tour of the Far East and continued to have a warm relationship with the institution and its staff.

Scope and Contents note

This series contain carbon copies of outgoing letters, incoming letters, notes, telephone messages, invoices, and related material about the Textile Study Room. Notable correspondents include Metropolitan Museum of Art staff Director Edward Robinson, as well as Theodore Belote, the Curator of History at the Smithsonian; Bessie Bennett from the Chicago Art Institute; R. Gembarzewski from the National Museum in Warsaw, Poland; and Gertrude Townsend from the Museum of Fine Arts, The Valentine Museum.

Box	Folder	
1	1	Correspondence. 1908-1929

Series V. Standen, Edith

Series V. Standen, Edith 1949-1989**Biographical Note**

Edith Standen (1905-1998) worked at The Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1949 to 1970 as Assistant Curator and Associate Curator and remained a consultant from 1971 to 1989. She was Curator Emerita from 1983 until her death in 1998. From 1945 to 1947 Standen served in the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives section of the American Military Government in Germany, also called the Montuments Men. In 1985, she published a two-volume guide *European Post-Medieval Tapestries and Related Hangings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. Standen also authored numerous essays and articles published in the The Metropolitan Museum of Art *Bulletin* and *Journal*.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains carbon copies of outgoing letters, incoming letters, notes, telephone messages, invoices, and related material about the Textile Study Room. It also includes undated research notes from Standen's time at the Museum. Notable correspondents include Metropolitan Museum of Art staff Huldah Smith, Thomas Campbell, John Goldsmith Phillips, and Colin Eisler, as well as Esther Sperry from the Minnesota Historical Society; Adele Weibel from the Detroit Institute of Arts; Francis Newton from the Portland Art Museum; Peter Floud from the Victoria and Albert Museum; Vilhelm Slomann from the Museum of Decorative Arts in Copenhagen; Renate Jaque, the Curator of the Textile Collection in Germany; Calvin S. Hathaway, Director of The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art; Mrs. Williard Duncan at Colonial Williamsburg; E. Tankard at the City of Liverpool Public Museums; Jane des Grange from the Suffolk Museum at Stoney Brook, Long Island; A. Bret Waller, Director of the Citadel Museum, in South Carolina; Francis Watson, from the Wallace Collection; Julius Marur at Simon and Schuster; Lisa Terrace at the Museum of Fine Arts; M. Audin at Musée de l'imprimerie et de la Banque; Robert A. Hanks from the Department of Parks and Recreation at Hearst State Historical Monument; Renate Jaques from the Gewebesammlung Textilingenienschule; Guiseppe Bellini from the Galleria Luigi Bellini, Lousie E. Mulder-Erkelens from the Rijksmuseum; and Barbara Bonner Socarides from the Cathedral Museum.

1	4	Correspondence. 1949-1956
1	5	Correspondence. 1956-1962
1	6	Correspondence. 1960-1962
1	7	Correspondence. 1962-1964
1	8	Correspondence. 1965-1969
1	9	Correspondence. 1969-1989
2	1	Notes. n.d.

Series VI. Various Staff**Scope and Contents note**

This series contains carbon copies of outgoing letters, incoming letters, notes, telephone messages, invoices, and related material about the Textile Study Room, from the desks of Metropolitan Museum staff members Madeline Solomon Hart, Malcom Delacorte, Julie Sumfp, Barbara Teague, James Parker and others. Notable correspondents include Metropolitan

Series VII. Zrebiec, Alice

Museum of Art staff John Goldsmith Phillips, Francis Henry Taylor, Alan Priest, Anneke Prins, Barbara Worchester, Mary Glaze, Ruth Hellman, Noelle King O'Connor, Janet S. Bryne, Thomas Campbell and Melinda Watt. Outside correspondents include Rollin H. Tanner from the Archaeological Institute of America, Reginald Poland from the Fine Arts Gallery City of San Diego, Robert Farris Thompson from the Museum of Ethnic Arts, UCLA, and Walter D. Hoag, from the National Aniline and Chemical Company.

Box	Folder	
2	6	Delacorte, Malcom. Correspondence. 1967-1970
2	9	Parker, James. Correspondence. 1976-1981
2	13	Miscellaneous Individuals/Curators in Different Departments 1923-2003
2	5	Solomon Hart, Madeline. Correspondence. 1966-1969
2	7	Sumfp, Julie. Correspondence. 1947-1970
2	8	Teague, Barbara. Correspondence. 1972-1974

Series VII. Zrebiec, Alice 1971-1993**Biographical Note**

Dr. Alice Zrebiec was the Associate Curator in charge of the Textile Study Room from 1979 to 1993. She published articles in The Metropolitan Museum of Art "Bulletin" and "Journal" as well as monographs and pamphlets on tapestries including *From American Looms: Scheuer Tapestry Studio* (1985) and *The Conquest and Glory: Tapestries Devoted to Louis XIV in the Collection of the Speed Art Museum*.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains carbon copies of outgoing letters, incoming letters, notes, telephone messages, invoices, and related material about the Textile Study Room. Notable correspondents include Metropolitan Museum of Art staff John Goldsmith Phillips, as well as Rollin H. Tanner from the Archaeological Institute of America, Reginald Poland from the Fine Arts Gallery City of San Diego, Robert Farris Thompson from the Museum of Ethnic Arts, UCLA, and Walter D. Hoag from the National Aniline and Chemical Company.

Box	Folder	
2	10	Correspondence. 1971-1981
2	11	Correspondence. 1981-1988
2	12	Correspondence. 1990-1993