Cowdrey, Mary Bartlett, 1910-1974.

Mary Bartlett Cowdrey papers 1834–1963 (bulk dates 1930–1954)

Abstract: The papers of American art historian Mary Bartlett Cowdrey comprise nine linear feet of notes; correspondence; manuscripts of published and unpublished books and articles; engravings and lithographs from published sources; photographs of paintings and engravings; postcards; clippings from books, exhibition catalogs, magazines, and newspapers, for approximately 1,600 American artists active during the eighteenth through early twentieth centuries. The collection is arranged in five series that roughly correspond to Cowdrey's publishing and research projects.
## Descriptive Summary

**Identification:** MSS 556  
**Creator:** Cowdrey, Mary Bartlett, 1910-1974.  
**Title:** Mary Bartlett Cowdrey papers  
**Inclusive Dates:** 1834–1963  
**Bulk Dates:** 1930–1954  
**Extent:** 9 linear feet (9 boxes)  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

## Administrative Information

**Citation:** MSS 556, Mary Bartlett Cowdrey papers, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.  
**Shelving Summary:** Boxes 1-9: Shelved in SPEC MSS record center cartons  
**Location:** Special Collections, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/  
**Source:** Transfer from University of Delaware Art History Department, 1999.  
**Processing:** Processed by Marina Dobronovskaya, March 2007; revised and encoded by Teresa K. Nevins, January 2009.  
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Biographical Note

Mary Bartlett Cowdrey (1910–1974) had a long career as an art historian, archivist, and curator. She graduated from the New Jersey College for Women (later Douglass College) at Rutgers University in 1933, and spent the next two years studying at the University of London in Great Britain, where she conducted research in philosophy and aesthetics.

Cowdrey held a variety of positions in prominent cultural institutions, starting as an assistant in the exhibits department at the Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey, in 1935. She worked as registrar at the Brooklyn Museum (1940–1942); curator of prints at the New York Historical Society (1943); curator of paintings at the Old Print Shop/Harry Shaw Newman Gallery in New York (1943–1949); curator, assistant director, and acting director of the Smith College Museum of Art (1949–1955); New York area archivist for the Archives of American Art of the Detroit Institute of Art (1955–1961); and curator of prints for the New Jersey Historical Society in Newark (1961-1962). She also belonged to the American Museum Association, Long Island Historical Society, Bibliographical Society of America, and the College Art Association.

Cowdrey wrote numerous articles and reviews in the field of nineteenth century art. She contributed to American Collector, Antiques, Dictionary of American Biography, Art in America, Panorama, The Old Print Shop portfolio, and several other publications. She is responsible for compiling the National Academy of Design Exhibition Record, 1820-1860 (New York: Printed for the New York Historical Society, 1943) and the American Academy of Fine Arts and American Art-Union Exhibition Record, 1816-1852 (New York: New York Historical Society, 1953). These two-volume sets are considered important references sources for information on paintings and engravings in America. In 1963 Cowdrey completed A History of American Painting and Sculpture, 1700-1713 for the National Park Service. She also served as author and co-author of several books and exhibition catalogs on artists, including George H. Durrie, William Sidney Mount, Fanny Palmer, and Winslow Homer.

Sources:


Additional biographical information derived from the collection.
The papers of American art historian Mary Bartlett Cowdrey comprise nine linear feet of notes; correspondence; manuscripts of published and unpublished books and articles; engravings and lithographs from published sources; photographs of paintings and engravings; postcards; clippings from books, exhibition catalogs, magazines, and newspapers, for approximately 1,600 American artists active during the eighteenth through early twentieth centuries. The collection is arranged in five series that roughly correspond to Cowdrey's publishing and research projects.

Series I, *National Academy of Design; American Academy of Fine Arts; American Art-Union Exhibition Record* is the largest segment of the collection. The series is divided into three subseries which correspond to the chronological periods before 1820s, 1800s–1890, and late 1800s–1930. Within each period, general alphabetical files (A - F, etc.) are followed by individual files alphabetized by the artist's last name. The files include information on more than 1,200 American artists and 12,000 works of art, which Cowdrey collected to write her books *National Academy of Design Exhibition Record, 1820-1860* and *American Academy of Fine Arts and American Art-Union Exhibition Record, 1816-1852*. For these projects, she selected artists who displayed their work at the three major annual art exhibitions held during the nineteenth century in New York City at the National Academy of Design, the American Academy of Fine Arts, and the American Art-Union. Cowdrey continued to use the files for other projects, such as preparing exhibition catalogs for individual artists like George H. Durrie, William Sidney Mount, Fanny Palmer, and Winslow Homer. Materials in this series include Cowdrey’s notes and correspondence; photographs of paintings and engravings; postcards; and clippings from books, exhibition catalogs, magazines, and newspapers. Other visual materials include engravings and lithographs published in the periodicals *The New Mirror*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, *The Christian Diadem and Family Keepsake*, and *The Columbian Magazine*, as well as a number of nineteenth-century books. The bulk of this series dates from 1940 to 1954, and items from this era include exhibition catalog records, articles, information about owners, and pricelists. Cowdrey corresponded with museums, libraries, private galleries, art historians, and private owners to attribute and identify works of art.

Series II comprises Cowdrey’s unpublished manuscript *National Academy of Design Exhibition Record, 1861-1890*, which she completed in 1965. Intended to be a continuation of her earlier work, *National Academy of Design Exhibition Record, 1820-1860*, the manuscript includes 3,700 artists and 27,000 entries, making it a more comprehensive survey than the similar volume published by M. Naylor in 1973.

Series III is a draft of the manuscript *A History of American Painting and Sculpture, 1700-1913*. The National Park Service commissioned this work as a part of a project for the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. The purpose of the project was to assemble a list of sites connected to celebrated American artists. Only two copies were issued, and the National Park Service possesses both.

Series IV, Writing and Publicity combines two groups of materials. The first group comprises clippings from publications and articles in manuscript form that Mary Cowdrey wrote between 1936–1965 for a variety of publications, including exhibit catalogs, art magazines, bulletins, and books. The second group is composed of press publicity devoted to Cowdrey.
Series V. English Art is composed mainly of engravings from published sources and photographs of British paintings and engravings, with some notes and articles interspersed among the visual materials. Cowdrey began collecting this material while studying at the University of London in 1934–1935, and continued her efforts after her return to the United States.

The Mary Bartlett Cowdrey papers offer valuable insight into the research methods of a prominent American art historian and curator, as well as providing a wealth of information gathered over many years concerning the exhibition history of American artists in the nineteenth-century.
Selected Search Terms

Personal Names

Cowdrey, Mary Bartlett, 1910-1974.
Durrie, George Henry, 1820-1863.
Homer, Winslow, 1836-1910.
Palmer, F. (Fanny), 1812-1876.

Corporate Names

American Academy of the Fine Arts.
American Art-Union.
National Academy of Design (U.S.)

Topical Terms

Art, American--Exhibitions--History.
Art, American--19th century--Indexes.
Art, Modern--19th century--Indexes.
Painting, American--Exhibitions--History.

Form/Genre Terms

Black-and-white photographs.
Clippings (information artifacts)
Correspondence.
Engravings (prints)
Exhibition catalogs.
Lithographic engravings (prints)
Picture postcards.
Arrangement

I. National Academy of Design; American Academy of Fine Arts; American Art-Union Exhibition Record
   I.A. American Artists, active before 1820s
   I.B. American Artists, active 1800s–1890s
   I.C. American Artists, active late 1800s–1930
II. National Academy of Design Exhibition Record, 1861-1890
III. History of American Painting and Sculpture, 1700-1913
IV. Writing and publicity (by years)
V. English Art
Detailed Description of the Collection


This series is divided into three subseries corresponding to the chronological periods before 1820s, 1800s-1890, and late 1800s-1930. Within each period, general alphabetical files (A - F, etc.) are followed by individual files alphabetized by the artist's last name. These files include information on more than 1,200 American artists and 12,000 works of art, which Cowdrey collected to write her books National Academy of Design Exhibition Record, 1820-1860 and American Academy of Fine Arts and American Art-Union Exhibition Record, 1816-1852.

Subseries I.A. American Artists, active before 1820s

This subseries includes artists selected by Cowdrey who were active before the 1820s and displayed their work at the three major annual art exhibitions held during the nineteenth century in New York City at the National Academy of Design, the American Academy of Fine Arts, and the American Art-Union.

A – F [Box 1 F1]

G – P [Box 1 F2]

R – W [Box 1 F3]

Badger, Joseph [Box 1 F4]

Blackburn, Joseph [Box 1 F5]

Cooper, J (J. F.) [Box 1 F6]

Copley, John Singleton, 1738-1815 [Box 1 F7]

Earl, Ralph, 1751-1801 [Box 1 F8]

Feke, Robert, ca. 1705-1750 [Box 1 F9]

Hesselius, Gustavus, 1682-1755 [Box 1 F10]

Houdon, Jean Antoine, 1741-1828 [Box 1 F11]

Malbone, Edward Greene, 1777-1807 [Box 1 F12]

Pratt, Matthew, 1734-1805 [Box 1 F13]

Sharples, James, 1752-1811 [Box 1 F14]
Smibert, John, 1688-1751 [Box 1 F15]

Theus, Jeremiah, ca. 1719-1774 [Box 1 F16]

Wollaston, John, 1710-1775? [Box 1 F17]

Wright, Joseph, 1756-1793 [Box 1 F18]

**Subseries I.B. American Artists, active 1800s–1890**

This subseries includes artists selected by Cowdrey who were active during the period 1800s-1890, and displayed their work at the three major annual art exhibitions held during the nineteenth century in New York City at the National Academy of Design, the American Academy of Fine Arts, and the American Art-Union.

A [Box 1 F19]

B – Bl [Box 1 F20]

Bo – Bu [Box 1 F21]

C – Ch [Box 1 F22]

Cl – Cus [Box 1 F23]

D – De [Box 1 F24]

Di – Du [Box 1 F25]

E [Box 1 F26]

F [Box 2 F27]

G [Box 2 F28]

H – He [Box 2 F29]

Hi – Ho [Box 2 F30]

Hu – J [Box 2 F31]

K [Box 2 F32]

L [Box 2 F33]

M – Me [Box 2 F34]
Mi – Mu [Box 2 F35]

N – O [Box 2 F36]

P – Pee [Box 2 F37]

Pel – Pr [Box 2 F38]

Q – Ri [Box 2 F39]

Rob – Sa [Box 2 F40]

Sc – Spe [Box 2 F41]

Sta – Swo [Box 3 F42]

T – U [Box 3 F43]

V – Wa [Box 3 F44]

Web – Wim [Box 3 F45]

Win – Y [Box 3 F46]

Allston, Washington, 1779-1843 [Box 3 F47]

Ames, Ezra, 1768-1836 [Box 3 F48]

Audubon, John James, 1785-1851 [Box 3 F49]

Bartlett, W. H. (William Henry), 1809-1854 [Box 3 F50]

Beard Family [Box 3 F51]

Benett, William James, 1787-1844 [Box 3 F52]

Bierstadt, Albert, 1830-1902 [Box 3 F53]

Bingham, George Caleb, 1811-1879 [Box 3 F54]

Birch, Thomas, 1779-1851 [Box 3 F55]

Blythe, David Gilmour, 1815-1865 [Box 3 F56]

Bodmer, Karl, 1809-1893 [Box 3 F57]
Bonaparte, Charlotte, princess, 1802-1839 [Box 3 F58]

Brady, Mathew B., 1823 (ca.)-1896 [Box 3 F59]

Browere, Albertis D. O., 1814-1887 [Box 3 F60]

Bullard, O. A. (Otis Allen), 1816-1853 [Box 3 F61]

Buttersworth, James Edward, 1817-1894 [Box 3 F62]

Buttre, John Chester, 1821-1893 [Box 3 F63]

Carpenter, F. B. (Francis Bicknell), 1830-1900 [Box 3 F64]

Catherwood, Frederick, 1799-1854 [Box 3 F65]

Catlin, George, 1796-1872 [Box 3 F66]

Chambers, Thomas, 1808?-ca. 1866 [Box 3 F67]

Chapman, Conrad Wise, 1842-1910 [Box 3 F68]

Chapman, J. G. (John Gadsby), 1808-1889 [Box 3 F69]

Church, Frederic Edwin, 1826-1900 [Box 3 F70]

Cole, Thomas, 1801-1848 [Box 3 F71]

Cooke, G. (George), 1793-1849 [Box 3 F72]

Cropsey, Jasper Francis, 1823-1900 [Box 4 F73]

Currier & Ives [Box 4 F74]

Darley, Felix Octavius Carr, 1822-1888 [Box 4 F75]

Doughty, Thomas, 1793-1856 [Box 4 F76]

Dunlap, William, 1766-1839 [Box 4 F77]

Durand, Asher Brown, 1796-1886 [Box 4 F78]

Durrie, George Henry, 1820-1863 [Box 4 F79]

Eakins, Thomas, 1844-1916 [Box 4 F80]
Eastman, Seth, 1808-1875 [Box 4 F81]

Ehninger, John Whetton, 1827-1889 [Box 4 F82]

Eichholtz, Jacob, 1776-1842 [Box 4 F83]

Elliott, Charles Loring, 1812-1868 [Box 4 F84]

Fairman, Gideon, 1774-1827 [Box 4 F85]

Fisher, Alanson [Box 4 F86]

Fraser, Charles, 1782-1860 [Box 4 F87]

Gifford, Sanford Robinson, 1823-1880 [Box 4 F88]

Guy, Francis, 1760-1820 [Box 4 F89]

Hamilton, James, 1819-1878 [Box 4 F90]

Harding, Chester, 1792-1866 [Box 4 F91]

Harnett, William Michael, 1848-1892 [Box 4 F92]

Harvey, George, ca. 1800-1878 [Box 4 F93]

Heade, Martin Johnson, 1819-1904 [Box 4 F94]

Healy, G. P. A. (George Peter Alexander), 1813-1894 [Box 4 F95]

Henry, Edward Lamson, 1841-1919 [Box 4 F96]

Hicks, Edward, 1780-1849 [Box 4 F97]

Homer, Winslow, 1836-1910 [1 of 2] [Box 4 F98]

Homer, Winslow, 1836-1910 [2 of 2] [Box 4 F99]

Huntington, Daniel, 1788-1858 [Box 4 F100]

Inman, Henry, 1801-1846 [Box 4 F101]

Inness, George, 1854-1926 [Box 4 F102]

Jarvis, John Wesley, 1780-1840 [Box 4 F103]
Jennys Family [Box 4 F104]

Jocelyn, Nathaniel, 1796-1881 [Box 4 F105]

Jonhson, Eastman, 1824-1906 [Box 4 F106]

Kensett, John Frederick, 1816-1872 [Box 4 F107]

La Farge, John, 1835-1910 [Box 4 F108]

Lane, Fitz Hugh, 1804-1865 [Box 4 F109]

Leutze, Emanuel, 1816-1868 [Box 4 F110]

Lewis, Henry, 1819-1904 [Box 4 F111]

Morse, Samuel Finley Breese, 1791-1872 [Box 5 F112]

Mount, William Sidney, 1807-1868 [1 of 2] [Box 5 F113]

Mount, William Sidney, 1807-1868 [2 of 2] [Box 5 F114]

Nast, Thomas, 1840-1902 [Box 5 F115]

Neagle, John, 1796-1865 [Box 5 F116]

Palmer, F. (Fanny), 1812-1876 [1 of 5] [Box 5 F117]

Palmer, F. (Fanny), 1812-1876 [2 of 5] [Box 5 F118]

Palmer, F. (Fanny), 1812-1876 [3 of 5] [Box 5 F119]

Palmer, F. (Fanny), 1812-1876 Catalog [4 of 5] [Box 5 F120]

Palmer, F. (Fanny), 1812-1876 Catalog [5 of 5] [Box 5 F121]

Peale Family [Box 5 F122]

Perry, Enoch Wood, 1831-1915 [Box 5 F123]

Peto, John Frederick, 1854-1907 [Box 5 F124]

Powers, Hiram, 1805-1873 [Box 5 F125]

Quidor, John, 1801-1881 [Box 5 F126]
Ranney, William Tylee, 1813-1857 [Box 5 F127]

Read, Thomas Buchanan, 1822-1872 [Box 5 F128]

Remington, Frederic, 1861-1909 [Box 5 F129]

Richards, William Trost, 1833-1905 [Box 5 F130]

Rimmer, William, 1816-1879 [Box 5 F131]

Ritchie, Alexander Hay, 1822-1895 [Box 5 F132]

Robertson, Archibald, 1765-1835 [Box 5 F133]

Rogers, John, 1829-1904 [Box 5 F134]

Rossiter, Thomas Prichard, 1818-1871 [Box 5 F135]

Rothermel, Peter Frederick, 1812-1895 [Box 5 F136]

Rush, William, 1756-1833 [Box 5 F137]

Ryder, Albert Pinkham, 1847-1917 [Box 5 F138]

Saint-Gaudens, Augustus, 1848-1907 [Box 5 F139]

Saint-Mémin, Charles Balthazar Julien Fevret de, 1770-1852 [Box 5 F140]

Salmon, Robert, 1775- ca. 1848 [Box 5 F141]

Sargent, John Singer, 1856-1925 [Box 5 F142]

Savage, Edward, 1761-1817 [Box 5 F143]

Schussele, Christian, 1826?-1879 [Box 5 F144]

Spenser, Lilly Martin, 1824-1902 [Box 5 F145]

Stearns, Junius Brutus, 1810-1885 [Box 6 F146]

Stuart, Gilbert, 1755-1828 [Box 6 F147]

Sully, Thomas, 1783-1872 [Box 6 F148]

Tait, Arthur Fitzwilliam, 1819-1905 [Box 6 F149]
Thompson, Cephas Giovanni, 1809-1888 [Box 6 F150]

Thorpe, Thomas Bangs, 1815-1878 [Box 6 F151]

Trumbull, John, 1756-1843 [Box 6 F152]

Vanderlyn, John, 1775-1852 [Box 6 F153]

Waldo, Samuel Lovett, 1783-1861 & Jewett, William S. (Smith), 1812-1873 [Box 6 F154]

Weir, Robert Walter, 1803-1889 [Box 6 F155]

Wellstood, John Geikie, 1813-1893 [Box 6 F156]

West, Benjamin, 1738-1820 [Box 6 F157]

Whitefield, Edwin, 1816-1892 [Box 6 F158]

Whittredge, Worthington, 1820-1910 [Box 6 F159]

Woodville, Richard Caton, 1825-1855 [Box 6 F160]

Subseries I.C. American Artists, active late 1800s–1930

This subseries includes artists selected by Cowdrey who were active during the late 1800s-1930 and displayed their work at the three major annual art exhibitions held during the nineteenth century in New York City at the National Academy of Design, the American Academy of Fine Arts, and the American Art-Union.

A [Box 6 F161]

B [Box 6 F162]

C [Box 6 F163]

D [Box 6 F164]

E [Box 6 F165]

F [Box 6 F166]

G [Box 6 F167]

H – J [Box 6 F168]

L [Box 6 F169]
Beale, Joseph Boggs, 1841-1926 [Box 6 F177]
Blakelock, Ralph Albert, 1847-1919 [Box 6 F178]
Blum, Robert Frederick, 1857-1903 [Box 6 F179]
Brush, George de Forest, 1855-1941 [Box 6 F180]
Carlsen, Emil, 1853-1932 [Box 6 F181]
Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926 [Box 6 F182]
Chase, William Merritt, 1849-1916 [Box 7 F183]
Davies, Arthur B. (Arthur Bowen), 1862-1928 [Box 7 F184]
Dewing, Thomas Wilmer, 1851-1938 [Box 7 F185]
Duveneck, Frank, 1848-1919 [Box 7 F186]
Frost, A. B. (Arthur Burdett), 1851-1928 [Box 7 F187]
Moran Family [Box 7 F188]
Murphy, John Francis, 1853-1921 [Box 7 F189]
Thayer, Abbott Handerson, 1849-1921 [Box 7 F190]
Whistler, James McNeill, 1834-1903 [Box 7 F191]
Wyant, A. H. (Alexander Helwig), 1836-1892 [Box 7 F192]
Series II. National Academy of Design Exhibition Record, 1861-1890

This series comprises Cowdrey’s unpublished manuscript *National Academy of Design Exhibition Record, 1861-1890*, which she completed in 1965. Intended to be a continuation of her earlier work, *National Academy of Design Exhibition Record, 1820-1860*, the manuscript includes 3,700 artists and 27,000 entries.
Series II.

K [Box 8 F213]
L – Le [Box 8 F214]
Li – Ly [Box 8 F215]
M – Mar [Box 8 F216]
Mas – Moo [Box 8 F217]
Mor – My [Box 8 F218]
N [Box 8 F219]
O [Box 8 F220]
P – Pf [Box 8 F221]
Ph – Q [Box 8 F222]
R – Ri [Box 8 F223]
Ro – Ry [Box 8 F224]
S – Se [Box 8 F225]
Sh – Sm [Box 8 F226]
Sn – Sy [Box 8 F227]
T – Th [Box 8 F228]
Ti – Ty [Box 9 F229]
U – V [Box 9 F230]
W – Web [Box 9 F231]
Weh – Wh [Box 9 F232]
Wi [Box 9 F233]
Wo – U [Box 9 F234]

Series III. A History of American Painting and Sculpture, 1700-1913
This series is a draft of the manuscript *A History of American Painting and Sculpture, 1700-1913*, which was commissioned by the National Park Service as part of a project for the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings.

Outline and name list [Box 9 F235]

Introduction [Box 9 F236]

Chapter 1. Early Professional Portrait Painters, 1700-1760 [Box 9 F237]


Chapter 3. Art and Artists of the US. The Age of Romanticism, 1800-1840 [Box 9 F239]

Chapter 4. The American School, Mid-19th Century, 1840-1876 [Box 9 F240]

Chapter 5. Art vs. Photography, the Fulfillment of Realism, 1876-1913 [Box 9 F241]

Chapter 6. American Sculpture, 1800 to 1913 [Box 9 F242]

Correspondence with NPS, 1962-1963 [Box 9 F243]

**Series IV. Writing and publicity (by years)**

This series combines two groups of materials. The first group comprises clippings from publications and articles in manuscript form that Mary Cowdrey wrote between 1936-1965 for a variety of publications, including exhibit catalogs, art magazines, bulletins, and books. The second group is composed of press publicity devoted to Cowdrey.

1936–1942 [Box 9 F244]

1942–1945 [Box 9 F245]

1943–1949 Old Print Shop [Box 9 F246]

1949–1953 [Box 9 F247]

1953–1964 [Box 9 F248]

**Series V. English Art**

This series is composed mainly of engravings from published sources and photographs of British paintings and engravings, with some notes and articles interspersed among the visual materials. Cowdrey began collecting this material while studying at the University of London in 1934-1935, and continued her efforts after her return to the United States.
Series V.

Painting [1 of 2] [Box 9 F249]

Painting [2 of 2] [Box 9 F250]

Engravings [Box 9 F251]

Shakespeare [Box 9 F252]