

The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives

**The Havemeyer Family Papers relating to
Art Collecting**

**Processed by Adrianna Del Collo, Associate Archivist
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Collection Summary

Title: The Havemeyer Family Papers relating to Art Collecting

Creator: Havemeyer, Louisine Waldron Elder

Dates: 1901-1922, [1966], [after 1982], n.d. (Bulk, 1901-1922)

Extent: 1.25 linear feet (3 boxes)

Abstract: The New York art collectors Louisine Waldron Elder (1855-1929) and Henry (Harry) Osborne Havemeyer (1847-1907) assembled a large and diverse collection of paintings, sculpture and decorative art between 1876 and 1924. It was known for being one of the first American art collections to include Spanish and Impressionist paintings. The papers include correspondence, writings, notes, and ephemera that document the Havemeyers' art collecting activities between 1901 and 1922. The majority of the collection consists of correspondence with art dealers and agents, such as Mary Cassatt, Théodore Duret, Albert E. Harnisch and Ricardo de Madrazo, who worked on behalf of the Havemeyers to build their renowned art collection.

Administrative Information

Provenance: The Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired the bulk of the Havemeyer Papers through an anonymous gift accepted by the Board of Trustees on March 10th, 1982. Transcripts of correspondence in the collection, created in 1966 by the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., were added to the collection in 1982. In 1983 The Shelburne Museum provided the Museum with photocopies of the correspondence from Mary Cassatt to Electra Havemeyer Webb. Other material was transferred to the Havemeyer Papers from the Office of the Secretary Records in 2009.

Form of citation: [Title of item], [date], Box [number], Folder [number], Havemeyer Family Papers relating to Art Collecting, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives.

Restrictions

Access: The collection is open for research. Researchers are required to use transcripts or photocopies when available for their initial access to correspondence. Requests for access to originals will be reviewed by Archives staff on a case by case basis.

Use restrictions: Correspondence between Louisine Havemeyer and Mary Cassatt is in the public domain and may be freely quoted. Researchers wishing to obtain permission to publish correspondence between Electra Havemeyer Webb and Mary Cassatt should contact the Shelburne Museum. Copyright restrictions may apply to other items in the collection; consult Archives staff regarding permission to quote or reproduce.

Biographical Note

New York art collectors Louisine Waldron Elder (1855-1929) and Henry (Harry) Osborne Havemeyer (1847-1907) assembled a large and diverse collection of paintings, sculpture and decorative art between 1876 and 1924. The collection gained notoriety early on for Harry's purchase of eight Rembrandt portraits in rapid succession, but the Havemeyer's most enduring legacy as American collectors was their pioneering pursuit of Impressionist and Spanish paintings.

Louisine and Harry were born to prominent New York City merchant-class families with ties to the growing sugar industry. Harry, known for his aggressive and controversial business practices, leveraged the family's sugar refining firm, Havemeyers & Elder, into a position of dominance, and amassed a fortune as head of the American Sugar Trust. The couple married in 1883. It was Harry's second marriage. The first, to Louisine's aunt in 1870, ended in divorce. Harry's second marriage would prove a better match as their mutual interest in art united the couple in common purpose.

Harry, who began collecting art before his marriage to Louisine, exhibited the same aggressively acquisitive tendencies in art collecting that he was notorious for in the business world. His early purchases in Japanese decorative arts and salon-style and Barbizon paintings reflect conventional taste among American collectors at the turn of the century. In contrast, Louisine's first purchase was the Impressionist Edgar Degas's pastel *Ballet Rehearsal*. In 1877 it was one of the first works by Degas to enter an American collection.

Louisine's progressive taste can be attributed in large part to her lifelong friendship with American expatriate Impressionist artist Mary Cassatt (1844-1926). Louisine made Cassatt's acquaintance in 1874 through Emily Sartain, a mutual friend, during a stay in Paris. Eleven years her senior, worldly and accomplished, Cassatt captivated the young Louisine with her intelligence and enthusiasm for art. The close and enduring friendship that ensued was anchored in their common interest. In the acquisition of art the knowledgeable and savvy Cassatt became the Havemeyers' most trusted advisor.

Whether home or abroad on collecting trips in Europe, the Havemeyers enlisted the expertise of artists, dealers, critics, and other art-world notables to act as agents and advisors to secure works of art. Despite having access to this well-connected network of experts, the Havemeyers relied most heavily upon their own cultivated judgment and taste in selecting works for their collection. The couple traveled widely in Europe to view masterpieces in museums and private collections firsthand. This approach proved especially fruitful in the area of Spanish painting, as works by El Greco and Goya could be found for sale in the private collections of the crumbling aristocracy.

After Harry's death in 1907, Louisine continued to collect art, albeit at a slower pace, adding significantly to the Impressionist works in the collection. Over the next decade Louisine became a vocal and committed member of the women's suffrage movement, a cause that led to her arrest in 1919 for leading a demonstration in Washington, D.C.

Louisine died in 1929 at the age of 73. After years of careful consideration and planning in regard to the disposition of the art collection, Louisine bequeathed a selection of important and representative works to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, an institution the Havameyers had long patronized. The remaining works were divided among the Havemeyers' three children, Adaline, Horace, and Electra, with whom Louisine had always maintained a close relationship. In consultation with the Museum's curators, the children gave almost two thousand more works to

the Museum to be added to the “H. O. Havemeyer Collection.” The arrival of the collection was immediately honored by the Museum with an exhibition accompanied by a complete catalogue.

Selected chronology

- 1847 Henry Osborn Havemeyer (Harry, or H. O.) is born on October 18th to Sarah Louise Henderson and Frederick Christian Havemeyer, Jr. of New York. The family business is the sugar refining firm W. and F. C. Havemeyer.
- 1855 Louisine Waldron Elder is born to Mathilda Adelaide Waldron and George William Elder, a New York merchant on July 28th.
- 1874 Louisine is introduced to Mary Cassatt by Emily Sartain, a mutual friend, in June.
- 1876 Harry purchases a large quantity of Japanese decorative arts at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia.
- 1877 Louisine purchases, upon Cassatt’s advice, Degas’s *Ballet Rehearsal* and likely in this year Monet’s *Drawbridge*.
- 1883 Harry Havemeyer and Louisine Waldron Elder wed on August 22nd. This is Harry’s second marriage. His first marriage in 1870 to Louisine’s aunt, Mary Louise Elder, ended in divorce.
- 1884 Adaline, the Havemeyers’ first child, is born on July 11th.
- 1886 Horace born on March 19th. He will go on to take over his father’s business.
- 1888 Electra born on August 16th.
- 1901 The Havemeyers travel to Madeira, Gibraltar, Algiers and Genoa in January with Anne Munn, Louisine’s older sister. Cassatt joins them in Genoa. The group travels through Italy. In Florence the Havemeyers engage Albert E. Harnisch to seek out unknown works in private collections. Travel continues through Paris and Spain. In Madrid the Havemeyers enlist the help of Joseph Wicht, who arranges viewings of works by El Greco and Goya in private collections. In April the couple purchases two Cézannes from Vollard’s gallery in Paris and other Modern French paintings through Durand-Ruel.
- 1903 The Havemeyers travel in Paris and Italy. They purchase works by El Greco and Goya through Durand-Ruel.
- 1905 The Havemeyers travel to Colorado, California, and Salt Lake City on business.
- 1906 The Havemeyers travel to Egypt, Greece, Constantinople, Vienna, and Paris. They purchase Courbet’s *Woman in a Riding Habit* through Duret. In the fall they travel to Colorado and stop in Detroit to visit the art collector Charles Lang Freer.
- 1907 Adaline marries Peter Hood Ballantine Frelinghuysen on February 7th. The Havemeyers spend April in Italy and France. On December 4th, Harry dies of acute nephritis with uremia.

- 1908 Horace becomes director of American Sugar Refining Co. and president of Havemeyers & Elder. In March, Louisine and Electra travel to Europe. In December, Cassatt visits Louisine in New York.
- 1909 The United States Government suit against the American Sugar Refining Co. for Customs fraud is tried in U.S. district court. To avoid the press, Louisine, her sister, Anne, and Electra sail to Europe in February. Louisine attempts to commit suicide by throwing herself overboard, but is prevented by Electra. They travel through Italy, France, and Spain. Louisine purchases El Greco's *View of Toledo* through Durand-Ruel, Paris.
- 1910 Electra marries James Watson Webb. Louisine's interest in women's suffrage begins.
- 1911 Louisine visits Cassatt in Mesnil-Theribus and reestablishes contact with Duret.
- 1912 At the December 18th Rouart sale, Louisine acquires, anonymously, Degas's *Dancers Practicing at a Bar* at the highest price paid for a living artist to date.
- 1913 In New York, Louisine acquires Daumier's *Third Class Carriage* at a record-breaking price. She also acquires works by Pissarro, Sisley, and Guys.
- 1914 Louisine travels to Italy, France, Switzerland, and Germany in the spring and purchases works by Cassatt and Degas at the Roger Marx sale in Paris
- 1915 Louisine organizes the exhibition *Masterpieces by Old and Modern Painters* at M. Knoedler and Co., New York to benefit the cause of women's suffrage. Roughly half of works in the exhibition were lent by Louisine. She gives a talk entitled "Remarks on Cassatt and Degas" at the opening. Throughout the year she delivers many speeches on women's suffrage. Louisine begins writing her memoirs, *Sixteen to Sixty*.
- 1916 Louisine acquires works by Degas and Courbet. Lends works to The Metropolitan Museum of Art for an exhibition on early Chinese pottery and sculpture
- 1917 Louisine writes her will.
- 1918 Louisine acquires Cassatt's *Girl Arranging her Hair* from the Degas Collection sale.
- 1919 Louisine is arrested on February 9th for leading a demonstration for women's suffrage and spends three nights in jail. She then embarks on a national tour on behalf of women's suffrage. Louisine drafts the first codicil to her will, selecting works for The Metropolitan Museum of Art. She lends 16 paintings to The Metropolitan's loan exhibition of the works of Gustave Courbet.
- 1920 Suffrage amendment is ratified in August.
- 1921 Louisine delivers the talk "Recollections of Mary Cassatt and Her Work" at The Grolier Club. She travels to Paris, buys Degas sculptures and visits Cassatt in Mesnil-Theribus.
- 1922 Louisine adds second and third codicils to will, enlarging her bequest of works to The Metropolitan. Articles on her experience as a suffragist are published in *Scribners*.

- 1924 Louisine is elected Benefactor of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- 1926 Mary Cassatt dies on June 14th.
- 1927 Louisine lends several works to the Mary Cassatt Memorial exhibition at the Pennsylvania Museum of Art in Philadelphia.
- 1929 Louisine dies at age of 73 of arteriosclerosis complicated by bronchopneumonia on January 6th. The Metropolitan Museum of Art accepts her bequest. From 1929-1930, Horace works with Museum staff to add significantly more works to the “H. O. Havemeyer Collection” at The Metropolitan.
- 1930 The Museum exhibits all 1,967 objects in the collection in the temporary exhibition, “The H. O. Havemeyer Collection”, which runs from March 10-November 2. Other works are sold at auction through the American Art Association the same year.

Works Consulted

Frelinghuysen, Alice Cooney. *Splendid legacy: the Havemeyer collection*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993.

Havemeyer, Louisine Waldron Elder. *Sixteen to sixty: memoirs of a collector*. Edited by Susan Alyson Stein. New York: Ursus Press, 1993.

Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.). *The H. O. Havemeyer Collection; A Catalogue of the Temporary Exhibition, March 10-November 2 [1930]*. 2nd ed. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1958.

Saltzman, Cynthia. *Old masters, new world: America's raid on Europe's great pictures, 1880-World War I*. New York: Viking, 2008.

Tomkins, Calvin. *Merchants and Masterpieces: The Story of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York: H. Holt, 1989.

Weitzenhoffer, Frances. *The Havemeyers: Impressionism comes to America*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1986.

Scope and Content

The Havemeyer Family Papers relating to Art Collecting include correspondence, writings, notes, and ephemera regarding the Havemeyers' art collecting activities between 1901 and 1922. The majority of the collection consists of correspondence to Louisine from art dealers and agents who were working on behalf of the Havemeyers to build their renowned art collection. The collection contains a significant amount of correspondence from Mary Cassatt, Louisine Havemeyer's close friend and the Havemeyers' primary advisor and agent, regarding the acquisition of works of art and personal matters. These letters document the intimate friendship shared by the two women and the inextricable role the acquisition of art played in their relationship. The collection also includes letters from other agents and dealers based in Europe and America who worked on the Havemeyer's behalf, such as Theodore Duret, Albert E. Harnisch, Ricardo de Madrazo, the Durand-Ruels, Dikran Kelekian, and Paul Rosenberg.

Transcripts, translations and photocopies of the original correspondence in the collection were created by a variety of sources over the years to aid researchers. This material constitutes the "Transcripts" subseries and should be consulted before the fragile material in the "Originals" subseries when available. Transcripts of letters from Mary Cassatt created by the National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.) in 1966 were lent to The Metropolitan Museum of Art for duplication in 1982 by the collection's anonymous donor. The copies were then corrected by Archives staff and added to the collection. The collection also contains transcripts and translations of letters from Duret, Madrazo, and transcripts of a selection of letters from Harnish, probably produced in part by The National Gallery and later added to by Metropolitan Museum Archives staff sometime after 1982. The collection also includes photocopies of correspondence from Mary Cassatt to Louisine's youngest daughter, Electra, regarding her mother's art collection and personal matters. Transcripts of these letters have also been produced, probably by Archives staff, some time after the 1983 donation of the photocopies by the Shelburne Museum, the repository of the original letters. These letters demonstrate the extent of Cassatt's involvement with the Havemeyer family, and indicate that the whole family was involved in matters of art collecting.

While limited in scope, pamphlets and clippings in the collection highlight Louisine Havemeyer's other passion, women's suffrage.

Arrangement

The Havemeyer Family Papers relating to Art Collecting are arranged in two series; "Correspondence" and "Miscellaneous". The bulk of the collection constitutes the "Correspondence" series, which is subdivided into the subseries "Originals" and "Transcripts".

- Series I. Correspondence
 - I.A. Originals
 - I.B. Transcripts
- Series II. Miscellaneous

Related Materials

Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer files, Office of the Secretary Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives.

Henry Osborne Havemeyer files, Office of the Secretary Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives

Horace Havemeyer files, Office of the Secretary Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives

Mary Cassatt Letters, 1908-1910, Shelburne Museum. [Correspondence from Mary Cassatt to Electra Havemeyer Webb]

Electra Havemeyer Webb papers, 1893-1966 (bulk 1947-1960) Shelburne Museum

Subject Headings

Havemeyer, Louisine Waldron Elder--Art collections.

Havemeyer, Henry Osborne, 1847-1907--Art collections.

Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926.

Webb, Electra Havemeyer.

Art--Collectors and collecting--United States.

Art--Private collections--New York (State)--New York

Impressionism (Art)--Collectors and collecting.

Art, Spanish--Collectors and collecting.

Old master paintings and works of art.

Women's suffrage--United States.

Series Descriptions and Container List

Series I. Correspondence

Scope and Content: The “Correspondence” series contains original correspondence and transcripts, translations and photocopies of original material relating to the formation of the Havemeyer’s art collection and personal matters. Indexed transcripts and photocopies for all correspondence with Mary Cassatt, selected correspondence with Albert E. Harnisch, and transcripts, translations and photocopies for all correspondence with Theodore Duret and Ricardo de Madrazo is available in the “Transcripts” subseries. Photocopies and transcripts of correspondence from Mary Cassatt to Electra Havemeyer Webb are available in the “Transcripts” series only. Twenty-five original letters and one photograph from Mary Cassatt were discovered missing from the collection upon receipt by the Museum. Placeholders for the missing letters have been inserted into the appropriate folders, and a note has been made on the folder. Transcripts of these letters had previously been created by the National Gallery of Art (Washington D.C.) and can be found in “Transcripts” subseries. Transcripts for missing letters are annotated with an “X” on the upper margin.

Arrangement: Some supplied dates of correspondence have changed since the collection entered The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives based upon contextualizing scholarship. In both subseries the letters are organized in chronological order within folders according to the latest amended date information. The latest date information may be noted on transcripts, but not on originals. When applicable, the original correspondence is filed in the same order as transcripts. Indices and inventories included in the “Transcripts” subseries were created prior to the amendment of some dates and may not accurately reflect the present arrangement of the letters.

Series I.A. Originals

One box and eight folders.

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically by last name of correspondent, with family correspondence, various and unidentified filed last.

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
1	1	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1901.
	2	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1902.
	3	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1903.
	4	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1906.
	5	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1907.
	6	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1908.
	7	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1909. [Two missing letters.]
	8	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1910. [Thirteen missing letters, one missing photo.]
	9	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1911.
	10	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1912.
	11	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1913.
	12	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1914. [Two missing letters.]
	13	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1915. [Three missing letters.]
	14	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1916. [One missing letter.]
	15	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1917. [One missing letter.]
	16	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1918. [One missing letter.]
	17	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1919.

18	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. Jan.-Apr., 1920.
19	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. May-Dec., 1920. [Two missing letters]
20	DeMotte, George Joseph. 1911-1912, n.d.
21	Durand-Ruel, 1831-1921. 1912-1916.
22	Duret, Théodore, 1838-1927. 1911-1914.
23	Duret, Théodore, 1838-1927. 1915-1922.
24	Fearon, Walter P. (Cottier Gallery). 1910-1913.
25	Fevre, Jeanne to Mary Cassatt. 1918.
26	Freer, Charles Lang, 1856-1919. 1913-1919, n.d.
27	Harnisch, Albert E. 1903-1911
28	Harnisch, Albert E. 1912-1913.
29	Harnisch, Albert E. to Mary Cassatt. 1901-1909.
30	Hart, George (Hart & Son). 1909-1915.
31	Kelekian, Dikran G. 1868-1951. 1909-1910, n.d.
32	Madrazo, Ricardo de. 1909.
33	Madrazo, Ricardo de. 1910.
34	Madrazo, Ricardo de. 1911-1913.
35	Madrazo, Ricardo de. 1914-1919, n.d.
2	1 Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.). 1909-1916.
	2 Oshima, Kano and family to Louisine Havemeyer and family. 1911-1912, n.d.
	3 Rosenberg, Paul (Elpérosen). 1920-1921, n.d.
	4 Trotti and Co. 1918-1919.
	5 Wicht, Josephine V., 1902, n.d.
	6 Family correspondence. 1910, n.d.
	7 Various. 1902-1919.
	8 Unidentified. 1909-1918, n.d.

Series I.B. Transcripts

One box and 18 folders.

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically by last name of correspondent, Mary Cassatt-Electra Havemeyer Webb correspondence filed last. Inventories and indices have been filed in front of the group of transcripts to which they refer. In all cases photocopies of original correspondence have been filed directly after each corresponding transcript. In regard to the Duret and Madrazo correspondence, English translations directly follow original language (French) transcripts.

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
2	9	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. Inventory of letters.
	10	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1901.
	11	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1902.
	12	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1903.
	13	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1906.
	14	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1907.
	15	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1908.
	16	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1909.
	17	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1910.
	18	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1911.
	19	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1912.
	20	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1913.

	21	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1914.
	22	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1915.
	23	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1916.
	24	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1917.
	25	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1918.
3	1	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. 1919.
	2	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. Jan.-April, 1920.
	3	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926. May -Dec. 1920.
	4	Duret, Théodore, 1838-1927. Index of letters. n.d.
	5	Duret, Théodore, 1838-1927. 1911-1914.
	6	Duret, Théodore, 1838-1927. 1915-1922.
	7	Harnisch, Albert E. Index of letters to Havemeyers and Mary Cassatt. n.d.
	8	Harnisch, Albert E. 1905-1911.
	9	Harnisch, Albert E. 1912-1913.
	10	Harnisch, Albert E. to Mary Cassatt. 1906-1909.
	11	Madrazo, Ricardo de. Index of letters. n.d.
	12	Madrazo, Ricardo de. 1909.
	13	Madrazo, Ricardo de. 1910.
	14	Madrazo, Ricardo de. 1911-1913.
	15	Madrazo, Ricardo de. 1914-1919. n.d.
	16	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926 to Electra Havemeyer Webb. 1908.
	17	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926 to Electra Havemeyer Webb. 1909.
	18	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926 to Electra Havemeyer Webb. 1910.

Series II. Miscellaneous

Six folders.

Scope and Content: The miscellaneous series includes clippings, notes, writings, pamphlets and other material related to the Havemeyer's art collection, women's suffrage and other subjects. The typescript of notes on Mary Cassatt has been reproduced in the 1993 edition of Louisine Havemeyer's *Sixteen to Sixty: Memoirs of a Collector*. Louisine's "Notes to My Children" is a companion to her will, which expresses in greater detail her wishes regarding the disposition of the art collection.

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically by subject.

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
3	19	Clippings and miscellaneous. 1909-1910, n.d.
	20	Exhibition catalogue. Durand-Ruel Galleries (New York, N.Y.). "Paintings by Mary Cassatt from April 21 st to May 5th, 1917". [1917].
	21	Notes. 1911, n.d.
	22	Pamphlets regarding women's sufferage. Ca 1922, n.d.
	23	Typescript. "Notes to My Children" regarding disposition of Havemeyer art collection.
	24	Typescript of notes about Mary Cassatt.