Harold E. Dickson

George Grey Barnard Collection

# Finding Aid

## Centre County Historical Society

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**Dickson, Harold E. / Barnard, George Grey, Collection, 1862 - 2002**

Collection Number: 2002.35

Size: 16 boxes (Boxes 1-16); 7.75 linear feet

Location: Centre County Historical Society Archives, Centre Furnace Mansion

Languages: English

Biographical Sketch of Harold E. Dickson

Harold E. Dickson, Professor Emeritus of Art History at the Pennsylvania State University was a dedicated scholar who authored many articles and books including *Observations of American Art, Art in Pennsylvania*, *One Hundred Pennsylvania Buildings*, and *Pennsylvania Painters*. He sought to showcase the specific beauty of American art as well as the talents of individual artists such as John Wesley Jarvis and George Grey Barnard. Dickson’s work on Barnard seems to be his most passionate, possibly due to a visit to the sculptor’s studio during Dickson’s student years. Like Barnard, Dickson was captivated by the image of Abraham Lincoln, the topic of the vast majority of his research and publication including “George Grey Barnard’s Controversial Lincoln” (*Art Journal*, Fall 1967, XXVII). He did not, however, dwell on the sensational events of Barnard’s life that included scandals, heated public debates, or his collection of architectural elements that became the basis for The Cloisters. Rather, Dickson highlighted his skill and style which made him a successful and famous artist in his own time.

During the 41 years Harold E. Dickson taught at Penn State University, he communicated his zeal for art history through his many projects that changed the artistic landscape of campus. In the 1930s, Dickson was one of three professors who conceived of a project that celebrated the University as a land grant institution. As a result, fresco artist Henry Varnum Poor created the critically acclaimed pictorial that graces over 1300 square feet in the lobby of Old Main. The second, and most famous of all Penn State sites, is the Nittany Lion Shrine. As a gift from the class of 1940, Dickson assisted in bringing sculptor Heinz Warneke to the project, an action that forever changed the face of the University.

Not only did he bring new icons to campus, he was an activist who saved existing pieces. In 1955, two original plaster casts of Barnard’s “Rising Woman” and “The Hewer” went missing from their Schwab Auditorium home. After their discovery two years later, Dickson and many others rallied to have these pieces returned and protected. In a more recent move in and they remain on view today at the headquarters of the American Philatelic Society, the Pennsylvania Match Factory in Bellefonte, PA.

While he retired in 1964, Harold E. Dickson’s presence on campus was not lost. New sculptures continue to dot the campus landscape and a bronze cast of Barnard’s Lincoln enriches the HUB-Robeson Center collection. In 1999, alumni Mary Neilly set the greatest tribute to his life’s work by establishing the Harold E. Dickson Memorial Lectureship in Art History which invites distinguished speakers and scholars to work with both faculty and students to inspire the enthusiasm of future generations, just as Dickson did until his death in 1987.

Biographical Sketch of George Grey Barnard

Born in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania on May 24, 1863, George Grey Barnard had an artistic eye and a strong sense of religion. The son of a Reverend, he tried his hand at avian taxidermy in order to recreate the “shapes of God.” While he would later use these artistic skills in engraving, he was fascinated by perfection in the round, which led to his focus on sculpture. In 1883, he boarded a boat for Paris to study at Ecole des Beaux-Arts and become a part of the workshop of P.T. Cavelier.

Letters from his early days in Paris describe a young man dedicated to his craft. Basic necessities such as food, clothing, warmth, and sleep were often just out of reach. Although he would write about these hardships, he always related it in the context of his project and how his work was progressing. His family often sent gift packages to Barnard, and when in town, friends would treat the young man to keep his spirits up. One friend of Rev. Barnard wrote not to worry about young Barnard in a city such as Paris. Although there is much sin about, “he stays an honorable and true young man to the ways of God.” When there was time for Barnard to relax, he chose to spend it alone reading in his room. In many instances, these books were a source of inspiration and the core of emotion for his later work.

After many years of abstinence from artistic competition, the Salon of 1894 presented the work of George Grey Barnard to the world, but he was uncomfortable with the publicity and praise that surrounded it. During his time as a student, he refused to enter the many contests that were held throughout the year. He felt as though he was the only true judge of his work and that artificial ribbons meant nothing, a sentiment often disclosed to his mother. While he received praise from his professors, the media, and the famous sculptor Rodin at the Salon of 1894, fame seemed to be an irritant to him, and he declined to give interviews. He repeated this behavior throughout his career.

The title of “American Michelangelo” was thrust upon him and his previous life of want had changed. For the Americans who traveled to Paris, Barnard became the man to see. He led a steady social life of dining out, donning finery, and watching opera. However, he received this attention with quiet politeness, preferring to spend much of his time with his artist friends and his patron, Alfred Corning Clark. Nevertheless, these new experiences compelled him to capture raw emotion, similar to what he had seen in the theater. By melding the quiet intellectualism of literature and the fiery passion of the stage within his pieces, he created a spirit and a presence in his work that was obvious to the viewer.

While compelling, his intensity often lead to distance and design disagreements with potential patrons. His growing celebrity made him a familiar figure, but few sought his work, believing him to be expensive. Therefore, the vast majority of his work came through the workshop where he competed against his fellow artists. When he did receive a personal commission, he stayed true to his vision, complicating his relationships which patrons which were often tumultuous. The most public of these debates surrounded the statues at the State House in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania for their nudity and the Lincoln in Cincinnati, Ohio for his everyman appearance.

Regardless of his public persona, George Grey Barnard became a private family man despite his firm dedication in his early years to remain a bachelor. He met his wife, Edna Monroe of Boston, while in Paris and was drawn to both her beauty and intellect. She too had artistic skill as violinist, and their courtship was swift. After moving back to New York, they had three children: Monroe, Barbara, and Vivia. He lived apart from the family for long periods of time, staying at his workshop and visiting as the seasons would allow. She, on advice from Mrs. Barnard, acted as George’s manager handling the money and at times, the publicity and commissions for her husband. He preferred to use his money in investments such as land or reselling art while she was more comfortable with solid and individual commissions as a source of income. On occasion, he secured work on his own, but she had to act as an intermediary between the two parties. Despite their separation and working relationship, George and Edna’s love was unwavering, and they enjoyed a grand lifestyle that afforded many luxuries. Edna was fond of travel, parties, and shopping and they both joined special interest groups that focused on spiritualism, vegetarianism, and artistic/intellectual pursuits.

As George grew older, his ideas grew larger. While working in Harrisburg, he returned to France for a visit and supplemented his income by reselling “antiques” that he found during bicycle rides to the country. The profits produced by selling small architectural elements were notable, but this venture proved to be more difficult when he turned his attention to significant pieces, such as those found in the Monastery of Cuxa.

Barnard’s removal of these pieces from farmer’s fields and abandoned monasteries attracted the attention of the French government. Consequently, they established international artistic treasure laws to prevent works of art from leaving the county for fear of the depletion of their artistic resources.

His personal collection of unsold artifacts was housed in a museum-like setting called “The Abbaye” located in New York. These unique pieces of Medieval and Renaissance art from France sparked an interest in Americans, and as a result, study and collecting of this period increased significantly. Barnard’s collection became the basis of The Cloisters of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

His connection with his adopted country continued throughout his life and in unexpected ways. After World War I, he received letters from the wives of the French artists who told of the suffering they had endured during the war. Deeply affected, he dedicated the remainder of his life to the creation of a piece called the “Rainbow Arch” which he believed would symbolize peace in the world. All the proceeds from the display of this work would go to the widows of these artists and their children. Part of the work was displayed in 1934 to such a disappointing reception, he declared that people had stopped caring about him and his work. Declining health and stress finally took its toll and he died in 1938 while working on this piece.

Scope and Content Note

The Harold E. Dickson / George Grey Barnard Collection is housed in sixteen archival boxes and is arranged in two series. These series have been designated for Dickson’s materials and for Barnard’s materials. The collection includes correspondence, newspaper clippings and journal articles, research journals, and other sundry items. The collection represents the research materials of Penn State Professor of Art History Harold E. Dickson, in his unfinished project to create a biography of Bellefonte-born sculptor George Grey Barnard. The collection consists of Dickson’s research notes, collected source materials in photocopy and published form, and drafts of chapters for the biography along with articles and addresses he published and presented about Barnard’s life and work. The larger portion of the collection, however, is original manuscript materials written by and to George Grey Barnard, chiefly letters but also some personal diaries and account books.

To our knowledge, these materials have never been used by other art historians, scholars or researchers. There are additional collections of Barnard materials in three major repositories: the Smithsonian Institution’s Archives of American Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Cloisters, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s archives. Little of this collection is duplicated in these other repositories.

Series I: Harold E. Dickson Materials

Series II: George Grey Barnard Materials

Provenance: These materials were received in one accession.

Accession Gift of Ms. Rae Chambers, daughter of Dr. Dickson, to the Centre County Historical Society after his death in 1987.

Barnard materials given to Dr. Dickson by Monroe and Vivia Barnard, children of Mr. Barnard, beginning in 1957. Other Barnard materials given to Dr. Dickson by friends and colleagues of Mr. Barnard during the time of Dr. Dickson’s research.

Restrictions: None

Separations: Book, *History of Art* by H.W. Janson, shelved in the Centre County Historical Society Library

Index Terms:

These record series are indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Dickson, Harold E. (xxxx-1987)

Barnard, George Grey (1863-1938)

Organizations:

The Pennsylvania State University

Ecole des Beaux-Arts

The Cloisters, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Places:

Paris, France

State College, Pennsylvania

Bellefonte, Pennsylvania

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Subjects:

Art

Art history -- Pennsylvania

Sculptors -- American

Processor: 2005-2006; Sara Louise Howells, under the supervision of Leon J. Stout, Head of Public Services and Outreach for the Penn State Special Collections Library, and Ms. Angela Breeden, Executive Director of the Centre County Historical Society. Ms. Jacqueline Melander, President of the Society, and Dr. Elizabeth Smith, Penn State Associate Professor of Art History, also provided important assistance and advice.

The processing of this collection was made possible through the generosity of an Archives & Records Management Grant to the Society from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Preferred Citation: [Item], The Harold E. Dickson/George Grey Barnard Collection, Centre County (PA) Historical Society.

**Container List**

**Series I: Harold E. Dickson Materials**

Research Notebooks

Box 1 Folder 1 Correspondence 1883-1909

Box 1 Folder 2 Correspondence 1910-1938

Box 1 Folder 3 Scrapbook Files M.B. Tape Mrs. B. mss

Box 1 Folder 4 Opus I-IV

Box 1 Folder 5 Opus V-

Box 1 Folder 6 Notebook I

Box 1 Folder 7 Notebook II

Professional Correspondence

Box 2 Folder 1 Norway Correspondence

Box 2 Folder 2 Bozelle Material

Box 2 Folder 3 Monroe and Vivia Barnard

Box 2 Folder 4 A-B

Box 2 Folder 5 C-D

Box 2 Folder 6 E-F

Box 2 Folder 7 G

Box 2 Folder 8 H

Box 2 Folder 9 I-J

Box 2 Folder 10 K-L

Box 2 Folder 11 M

Box 2 Folder 12 N-O

Box 2 Folder 13 P-Q

Box 2 Folder 14 R

Box 2 Folder 15 S

Box 2 Folder 16 T-U-V

Box 2 Folder 17 W

Box 2 Folder 18 X-Y-Z

Articles and Related Source Material on Barnard

Box 3 Folder 1 *The Art Bulletin*, March 1962. (Reprint) “Barnard and Norway” by

H.E. Dickson

Box 3 Folder 2 *The Art Journal*, Spring 1961. “Log of a Masterpiece: Barnard’s

Struggle of the Two Natures of Man” by H.E. Dickson

Box 3 Folder 3 *Pennsylvania Contributors to Art*, 1968. “The Early Years of a

Great Sculptor George Grey Barnard” by H.E. Dickson

Box 3 Folder 4 Photographs of Barnard’s Lincoln Sculpture

Box 3 Folder 5 *Barnard’s Lincoln*, 1917.

Box 3 Folder 6 File on Dickson’s Research of Barnard’s Lincoln Sculpture

Box 3 Folder 7 Essays on Barnard’s works of Lincoln by H.E. Dickson

Box 3 Folder 8 File of Photos and Photocopies of photos of Barnard’s work

depicting Abraham Lincoln

Box 3 Folder 9 *Art Journal*, Fall 1967. “George Grey Barnard’s Controversial

Lincoln” by H.E. Dickson

Box 3 Folder 10 *A Survey of American Sculpture: Late 18th Century to 1962* the

Newark Museum

Box 3 Folder 11 *The Saturday Review*, July 16, 1921.

Box 3 Folder 12 Survey Geographic Magazine of Social Interpretation, June 1938.

“George Grey Barnard 1863-1938”

Box 3 Folder 13 *George Grey Barnard Centenary Exhibition 1863-1963*.

Box 3 Folder 14 Articles on George Grey Barnard

Box 3 Folder 15 Publishing on George Grey Barnard

Box 3 Folder 16 Poster of newspaper reviews “The George Grey Barnard Cloisters:

A French Gothic Monastery Open For The Benefit Of Widows and Orphans of French Sculptors”

Box 3 Folder 17 *The George Grey Barnard Collection* by Martin Weinberger

Box 3 Folder 18 *The Decimal Metric System* by Alfred Perot

Magazine & Newspaper Articles with Related Correspondence

Box 4 Folder 1 Barnard/Dickson

Box 4 Folder 2 Penn State Alumni News, May 1963. “Eminent Scholars and

Teachers” Harold Dickson

Box 4 Folder 3 Miscellaneous

Box 4 Folder 4 Barnard original letters and Dickson correspondence

Box 4 Folder 5 Barnard photos

Box 4 Folder 6 Portrait of George Grey Barnard, done in pencil (photo)

Box 4 Folder 7 “The Old Man Frescoes of Henry Varnum Poor”

Box 4 Folder 8 Correspondence about Frank Holman

Box 4 Folder 9 Jarvis

Box 4 Folder 10 Correspondence between Harold Dickson and Henry D. Allison

concerning research on Barnard, 1958

Box 4 Folder 11 Mrs. Richard Steel material

Box 4 Folder 12 Newspaper Articles

Box 4 Folder 13 Magazine Articles

**Series II: George Grey Barnard Materials**

Barnard Personal and Account Books

Box 5 Folder 1 Book of Debts and Accounts of George Grey Barnard, 1903

Box 5 Folder 2 Notebook, 1915

Box 5 Folder 3 Book of Sketches and Notes of George Grey Barnard

Box 5 Folder 4 Harrisburg Statuary Accounts

Box 5 Folder 5 Harrisburg Sculpture Progress Diary

Box 5 Folder 6 Standard Daily Journal 1927 “Antiques”

Box 5 Folder 7 Standard Daily Journal 1929

Box 5 Folder 8 Standard Daily Journal 1929

Box 5 Folder 9 Standard Daily Journal 1930

Sympathies

Box 6 7 folders of letters and cards expressing sympathies on the passing of George Grey Barnard

Letters, 1883-1893

Box 7 Folder 1 1883

Box 7 Folder 2 1884

Box 7 Folder 3 1885

Box 7 Folder 4 1886

Box 7 Folder 5 1887

Box 7 Folder 6 1888

Box 7 Folder 7 1889

Box 7 Folder 8 1890

Box 7 Folder 9 1891

Box 7 Folder 10 1892

Box 7 Folder 11 1893 (1-5C)

Box 7 Folder 12 1893 (6-20)

Box 7 Folder 13 1893 (21-37)

Box 7 Folder 14 1893 (38-53)

Box 7 Folder 15 1893 (54-78)

Oversized Letters & Newspapers

Box 8 Folder 1 Over-sized Barnard original letters

Box 8 Folder 2 Newspapers

Letters, 1894-1895 (30A)

Box 9 Folder 1 1894 (1-39)

Box 9 Folder 2 1894 (40-59)

Box 9 Folder 3 1894 (60-75)

Box 9 Folder 4 1894 (76-94)

Box 9 Folder 5 1894 (95-117)

Box 9 Folder 6 1894 (118-137)

Box 9 Folder 7 1895 (1-17)

Box 9 Folder 8 1895 (18-30A)

Letters, 1895 (31)-1897

Box 10 Folder 1 1895 (31-54)

Box 10 Folder 2 1896 (1A-39)

Box 10 Folder 3 1896 (40-63)

Box 10 Folder 4 Friendly letters relating to exhibit 1896-1897 (51A-51B)

Box 10 Folder 5 1897 (1-40)

Box 10 Folder 6 1897 (41-81)

Letters, 1898-1912

Box 11 Folder 1 1898

Box 11 Folder 2 1899

Box 11 Folder 3 1900

Box 11 Folder 4 1901

Box 11 Folder 5 1902

Box 11 Folder 6 1902 newspaper clippings

Box 11 Folder 7 1903

Box 11 Folder 8 1904

Box 11 Folder 9 1905

Box 11 Folder 10 1906

Box 11 Folder 11 1907

Box 11 Folder 12 1908

Box 11 Folder 13 1909

Box 11 Folder 14 1910

Box 11 Folder 15 1910 Monroe accident (13)

Box 11 Folder 16 1911

Box 11 Folder 17 1912

Letters, 1913-1926

Box 12 Folder 1 1913 (1-27A)

Box 12 Folder 2 1913 (28-40A)

Box 12 Folder 3 1914

Box 12 Folder 4 1915

Box 12 Folder 5 1916

Box 12 Folder 6 1917

Box 12 Folder 7 1918

Box 12 Folder 8 1919

Box 12 Folder 9 1920

Box 12 Folder 10 1921

Box 12 Folder 11 1922

Box 12 Folder 12 1923

Box 12 Folder 13 1924

Box 12 Folder 14 1925

Box 12 Folder 15 1926

Letters, 1927-1934

Box 13 Folder 1 1927

Box 13 Folder 2 1928

Box 13 Folder 3 1929

Box 13 Folder 4 1930

Box 13 Folder 5 1931

Box 13 Folder 6 1932

Box 13 Folder 7 1933

Box 13 Folder 8 1934 (1-13)

Box 13 Folder 9 1934 (15-26)

Box 13 Folder 10 1934 newspaper clippings

Letters, 1935-1938 and Unnumbered Letters

Box 14 Folder 1 1935

Box 14 Folder 2 1936

Box 14 Folder 3 1937

Box 14 Folder 4 1938

Box 14 Folder 5 Sympathy letters of the passing of Edna’s mother 1927

Box 14 Folder 6 Unnumbered letters 1883, 1893-1910

Box 14 Folder 7 Unnumbered letters filed between years 1933-1934

Box 14 Folder 8 Unnumbered letters behind 1930 (32)

Box 14 Folder 9 Barbara’s wedding 1929

Personal Correspondence & Family History

Box 15 Folder 1 Barnard Children

Box 15 Folder 2 Letters to Edna from Barbara and Monroe 1923

Box 15 Folder 3 To Edna from Children

Box 15 Folder 4 To Edna 1

Box 15 Folder 5 To Edna 2

Box 15 Folder 6 To Edna 3

Box 15 Folder 7 Evan Grubb military papers, incl. letters to George G. Grubb, Esq.

Box 15 Folder 8 Edmund M. Grubb letters

Box 15 Folder 9 Edmund M. Grubb and William B. Egan

Box 15 Folder 10 Evan W. Grubb cadet membership certificate Nov. 22, 1858

Personal Correspondence, Family History, Social History & Ephemera

Box 16 Folder 1 To George Grey Barnard

Box 16 Folder 2 Letters from Edna 1933

Box 16 Folder 3 Receipts

Box 16 Folder 4 Postcards and Playbills

Box 16 Folder 5 Drawings and Photographs

Box 16 Folder 6 Unidentified letters and fragments

Box 16 Folder 7 Poetry by Perry MacKaye

Box 16 Folder 8 Monroe Family

Box 16 Folder 9 Elder Barnard Family