

Theodore J. Richardson Collection
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Finding aid prepared by Marsha Collins

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James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library
December 30, 2014
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Table of Contents

<u>Summary Information</u>	3
<u>Biography</u>	4
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u>	5
<u>Collection Inventory</u>	6
<u>Art Work</u>	6

Summary Information

Repository	James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library
Title	Theodore J. Richardson Collection
Date	1855-1914
Extent	2.0 boxes
Language	English

Biography

Theodore J. Richardson, April 5, 1855 – November 19, 1914

Born in Readfield, Maine, Theodore Jerome Richardson grew up in Red Wing, Minnesota. Following high school, he studied at Boston Normal Art School before returning to Minnesota where he instructed in art, penmanship and geometry at Minnesota State Normal College, in Winona. In 1880, Richardson was hired by the Minneapolis Public Schools as superintendent of industrial drawing. Until his arrival, there was no teaching of drawing in the city's public schools: it is believed to be one of the first art instruction departments in the nation's public schools. A founding father and charter member of the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts in 1883, he had his first retrospective posthumously, in 1928. In 1944, the Minneapolis Public Library mounted a show.

The Artist of Alaska Painting primarily with watercolors and pastels, Richardson took his easel west every summer, where he traveled on steamship to Alaska, basing his camp in Sitka, Alaska. Traveling up the Inland Passage, Richardson explored and painted Glacier Bay, Muir Glacier, Wrangell, Juneau, and Klawock and Kilisnoo. With a Native American guide, he traveled by canoe quite broadly, with visits to the southern Aleutian Islands, and to many glaciers. His pioneer experiences in Minnesota served him well in Alaska, and he got on well with both the Native Americans and the white immigrants. Making 24 trips in all, he used a "floating studio" in which he rigged up his easel, umbrella and paints on a boat. Beginning in 1884, Richardson worked under contract for the Smithsonian to document Alaska's Native American villagers, their communities and their art.

In 1886, he married a fellow artist whom he met in California's Monterey artist colony. That same year, Richardson resigned from Minneapolis Public Schools, spending the next six years living in Europe with his wife. There, they cycled around the continent painting in Italy, France, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Switzerland. He studied with European teachers, including Von der Weden, Paul Dessar, and with fellow artists at the French artist colony Etaples, near Paris-Plage. It was during this period that he began painting with oils. His paintings were exhibited in the Royal Academy of London, and the Paris Salon.

Stateside, Richardson was awarded the Grand Prize for his contribution to the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in 1909, and before he died, painted several works for the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915.

Returning from Europe in 1903, and until his death in 1914, Richardson and his wife followed the sun, and he painted with oils and watercolors equally. They spent winters in California and Mexico, and in summer, Richardson, either alone or with his wife, returned to Alaska. He augmented his income by making sketches of the national parks for the Great Northern Railroad, owned by James J. Hill, and painting scenes from Alaska for the Smithsonian Institute. He died in Minneapolis, the result of injuries sustained when a steamship on which he was traveling in 1911 capsized outside of Seattle.

Collectors and Major Holdings: Mr. Harry E. Wood has donated several Richardson paintings to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, one to the Minneapolis Public Library (a painting titled "Au Coin de Feu,") and another to the Minneapolis Women's Club.

Holdings include: Minneapolis Institute of Art (16 works), Smithsonian Museum (22 works), and the State of Alaska (5 works).

* <http://new.artsmia.org/?s=theodore+richardson> **http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/results/index.cfm?rows=10&q=&page=1&start=0&fq=name:%22Richardson%2C%20Theodore%20J%2E%22&fq=online_media_type:%22Images%22 ***<http://vilda.alaska.edu/cdm/search/collection/cdmg12!cdmg41!cdmg30!cdmg22!cdmg21!cdmg31!cdmg2!cdmg1!cdmg7!cdmg47!cdmg10!cdmg25!cdmg14!cdmg13!cdmg11!cdmg3/searchterm/%22theodore%20richardson%22/field/all/mode/all/conn/and/rmcoll/cdmg41/order/nosort/ad/asc>

Administrative Information

Publication Information

James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library December 30, 2014

Controlled Access Headings

Personal Name(s)

- Richardson, Theodore J.

Subject(s)

- Alaska -- Description and travel
- Art, Modern -- 19th Century
- Art, Modern -- 20th Century
- Artists -- Minnesota.
- Painters -- Minnesota.

Collection Inventory

Art Work	Box
Beach on Sitka	1
Isles at Sundown	
Guardians of Glacier Bay	
Low Tide, Opposite the Greek Church, Sitka	
Untitled / Mountains and two canoes in water	
Calm Evening, Sitka	
Near Taku Glacier	
Sunrise Alaska	
Taku Berg	
Victoria Point	
In the Corrador, San Juan	

Art Work

Santa Barbara

Untitled / Santa Maria della Salute, a church in Venice, Italy

Untitled / Venetian church.

Untitled / Village lane with woman carrying head basket; possibly Greece

Mission San Fernando

San Diego Mission

Mission San Gabriel

Side Ruins, San Luis Rey

Dr. Briggs place, La Crecenta, California

Santa Barbara / Title written on matting; on back, titled "Rocks at Santa Barbara"

Santa Barbara

Untitled / on back: "... [indecipherable] Ranch"

Ruined Arches, San Juan, Calif.

San Diego Mission

Art Work

The Chapel Looking Thru the Arches, San Juan

The Kitchen, San Juan Mission

Old Adobe Near Santa Barbara Mission

Venice, After a rain, Piazzetta

Untitled / Possibly a paint doodle

Untitled / Woman and child

Red Palace on Grand Canal

Maggiore, Early Evening, from Royal Gardens

Town of Capri-Across the Bay of Naples

Untitled / Church, possibly in Italy

Appian Way out from Rome

Untitled / Gondola on canal (probably Venice, Italy)

Near Capri -- Italy

Near Downpatrick, Ireland

Art Work

Untitled / Venetian residence viewed from canal

Volendam - Holland

Wash-day on the dyke -- Volendam -- Holland

Untitled / Clothes washing; probably in the Netherlands

Suisse Chalet on Trail to Mer de Glace

At St. Nicolas -- near the Weisshorn

The Matterhorn from above Zermatt , Suisse

Swiss

Cottages. Montreuil-Sur-Mer, France

Box **Folder**

Custodial History

2

1

Clippings and Articles

2

2

Correspondence

2

2

Photographs undated

2

4