

Florence Griswold Museum
Lyme Historical Society Archives
96 Lyme Street, Old Lyme, CT 06371

GUIDE
Artist House Research (1880-1930)

Box 1 & 2

Many of the artists of the Lyme Art Colony purchase houses in Lyme or Old Lyme. Judging by the locations and sizes of many of these residences, this was, by no means, a colony of starving artists. Most of the houses still exist and some are among the most prominent in the area. This collection of files represents the current status of work dealing with the artist's houses.

The files are organized by the name of the artist and a master list is provided. In several cases more than one artist occupied a house, either together or at different times and these are identified by cross-reference. There were over 50 artists who owned homes in the area.

The emphasis of this effort was to provide tangible evidence that the artist actually owned and lived in the house. This was done in many cases by getting copies of the original deeds reflecting when the artist acquired the property. A trail of deeds was created leading from the current owner back to the purchase by the artist and possibly to a prior owner of the house.

Also used in the research, for some artists, were death records and wills. US Federal Census records were reviewed for 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, & 1930. For information about the current status of the houses, the town assessors' databases were consulted.

From the total list of artists with homes in the area, a smaller group was selected for more detailed research. These were:

- a. George Burr
- b. William Chadwick
- c. Lewis Cohen & Frank Bicknell
- d. Louis Paul Dessar
- e. Frank Vincent DuMond
- f. Will Howe Foote
- g. Eugene Higgins
- h. Harry & Beatrice Hoffman
- i. Platt Hubbard & Walter Magee

Extent: 0.50 linear feet (1 box)
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j. Edward Rook
k. Allen Butler Talcott
l. Robert & Bessie Potter Vonnoh
m. Clark Voorhees

For research of these artists, a life chronology was created to record some of their life events that may have been related to house ownership. A research checklist was used to record what resources were consulted. Examples of the forms used are enclosed.

Research dealing with the Oscar Fehrer Family and the property they owned was very generously provided by Ms. Caroline Zinsser. Ms. Zinsser is an author, educator and historian who is a summer resident of East Lyme. Catherine Fehrer, Oscar Fehrer's daughter, left the house at 7 Beaver Brook Road in Lyme to the Florence Griswold Museum at the time of her death in 2001. Ms. Zinsser's research indicates that the house that Ms. Fehrer left was the fourth house occupied by the family and was their home for a relatively short time. The family later occupied the house next door to the 7 Beaver Brook Road from 1920 to 1944.

A few artists on the master list did not own homes in Lyme or Old Lyme but left traces in the town records. In these cases the folders include whatever was found during this research effort.

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