

Finding Aid for the E. Parker Lesley, Jr. Papers, 1934-1969

Summary Information

Repository	National Gallery of Art, Gallery Archives Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20565 info-archives@nga.gov
Title	E. Parker Lesley, Jr. Papers
Identifier	RG 28MFAA-E
Creator	Lesley, Everett Parker (Bill) Jr., 1913-1982
Date	1934-1969
Extent	1.25 cubic feet (3 boxes); approximately 175 digital files
Abstract	This collection documents the activities of E. Parker Lesley, Jr., as an officer with the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives (MFAA) Section of the United States Army in Germany during and immediately after World War II. These materials also relate to Lesley's career as a museum professional and scholar of decorative arts. Papers include correspondence, reports, and publications.

Biographical Note

August 31, 1913	Born, Baltimore, Maryland
1934	B.A., Classical Literature (Greek), Stanford University, Palo Alto, California
1935	Certificate, University of Paris, France
1937	M.F.A., Art and Archeology, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey Certificate, Free University of Brussels, Belgium
1938-1939	Curator of European Art, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan
1939-1942	Assistant Professor of Art and Architecture, University of Minnesota, Minnesota

1946-1947	Chief, Restitution Branch, Office of Military Government for Greater Hesse, Germany
1946	Awarded Chevalier, Order of Poland Restored (Polinia Restituta), Poland
1947	Honorary Medal of Art & Science, House Order of Orange-Nassau (Orde van Oranje-Nassau), The Netherlands
1947-1948	Studied at New York University, New York, New York
1950-1954	Keeper, Department of Exhibitions, Cooper Union Museum, New York, New York
	Acting Director, Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences (later, Chrysler Museum of Art), Norfolk, Virginia
	Assistant Professor of Art, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia
1959-1979	Professor of Art, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia
1974-1976	Curator of Decorative Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington
1978-1979	Eminent Professor of Art (later, Professor Emeritus), Old Dominion University
February 1982	Died, Norfolk, Virginia

Scope and Content

This collection documents the activities of Everett Parker (Bill) Lesley, Jr., as a captain with the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives (MFAA) Section of the United States Military Government in Germany immediately after World War II. While in Germany, Lesley was assigned to several posts, including Frankfurt and Bad Nauheim. In April 1946, he accompanied a restitution train of twenty-seven cars, *Special Train A*, from Nuremberg, Germany, to Cracow, Poland. The shipment included many important works of art and cultural monuments, most notably the Veit Stoss altar from the Church of Our Lady, Cracow, and Leonardo da Vinci's *Lady with an Ermine*. Lesley helped draft and later signed the *Wiesbaden Manifesto*, which opposed the military decision to transport 202 German-owned works of art to the National Gallery of Art, Washington, for safekeeping. This collection also reflects Lesley's research interest in decorative arts.

The collection consists of official documents relating to Lesley's work with the MFAA.

Resources Relating to World War II describes other WWII-related archival materials available at the National Gallery of Art.

The National Archives and Records Administration of the United States (NARA) holds official government records relating to the work of the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives officers and the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas (Roberts Commission).

Monuments Men Foundation Archives available at the National WWII Museum.

Series Descriptions

E1 Art Restitution-Related Materials, 1944-1951 [box 1]

Arranged alphabetically. This series contains a catalogue of an exhibition of eighteenth-century paintings held at the Central Collecting Point, Wiesbaden, organized by the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives (MFAA) Section of the United States Military Government in Germany. Also included is the *Wiesbaden Manifesto* and a publication containing editorials about the Berlin paintings controversy, and materials relating to the military government and transportation of looted art. Of special interest is a report detailing the discovery and transportation of property belonging to the House of Saxe-Weimar.

E2 Professional Subject Files, 1934-1969 [box 2]

Arranged alphabetically. This series contains materials relating to Lesley's academic and scholarly work. Included are a research paper on the arts and crafts movement, notes taken during an interview with artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, a bound collection of exhibition catalogues from the Cooper Union Museum for the Arts of Decoration, correspondence, and reference material on the *Chalice of Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis*.

E3 Photographs, 1946 [box 3]

Arranged alphabetically by subject. This series documents Lesley's supervision of the removal and return of looted works of art and other cultural materials. Included are nearly 200 photographs documenting the journey of Special Train A from Nuremberg, Germany to Cracow, Poland. Photographs in this series have been digitized and are available to researchers.

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2-2 Correspondence - Joan Evans, 1963-1969

Includes a color slide and photograph of Evans.

2-3 Reference files regarding Suger Chalice

2-4 Reference files regarding Suger Chalice (microfilm and printout)

2-5 Research paper by Everett P. Lesley, Jr. "A History of the Development and Ideals of the Craftsman Movement, 1850-1915"

Research paper for a Stanford University graphic arts class, spring quarter, 1934.

2-6 Notes and transcript of conversations with Frida Kahlo de Rivera and Diego Rivera, 27 May 1939

Series E3 Photographs, 1946

Box 3

3-1 Cracow [Krakow] - general, April-May 1946

43 images. Digitized version(s) available.

3-2 Cracow [Krakow] - Special Train A, April-May 1946

14 images. Digitized version(s) available.

3-3 Journey of Special Train A, April-May 1946

120 images. Digitized version(s) available.
