

Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library
Department of Drawings & Archives
Columbia University
New York, NY

FINDING AID FOR THE
RUSSELL STURGIS (1836-1909) PAPERS,
1874-1932 (bulk 1874-1895)

Collection Dates: 1874-1932 (bulk 1874-1895)

Size: .8 linear feet (2 manuscript boxes)
24 photographs
16 drawings

Preferred Citation: Russell Sturgis Papers, Department of Drawings & Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.

Acquisition Information: This collection was a gift to Avery Library from two sources. The first group of materials appears to have been donated at an unknown date either by Lyman Sturgis, son of Russell, or by a relative of Lyman, perhaps his wife. A second group of materials, known as the Olcott Papers, was donated by Douglas W. Olcott in August 1962. Olcott was the grandnephew of Dudley Olcott, the original recipient of this collection and head of the Merchants' and Farmers' Bank in Albany, New York, at the time of Sturgis' architectural commission.

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Location: Materials are located onsite at Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library.

Processing Information: This collection was processed by Louise Kurlick for the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library in 1977.

Finding Aid Preparation: This finding aid was produced by Louise Kurlick in 1977.

Additional revisions, additions, and preparations for electronic publication were done by Annemarie van Roessel, Archivist, Department of Drawings & Archives, Avery Library, in 2007.

Publication Date: 1977. Last revised April 2007.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Russell Sturgis (1836-1909), architect, art historian and writer, was born in Baltimore, Maryland. After graduating from the Free Academy (later the College of the City of New York) in 1856, he studied with architect Leopold Eidlitz and received further architectural education in Munich, Germany. He returned to New York City in 1863 to begin his career as an architect and resided there until his death.

Sturgis' architectural style has been described as "New-Grec" and "Victorian Gothic." Among his best-known buildings are the Farnam, Durfee, and Lawrence dormitories and the Battell Chapel at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut; the Flower Hospital in New York City; and the Mechanics' and Farmers' Bank in Albany, New York.

His legacy remains, however, more closely tied to his role as an art and architectural historian, writer, and lecturer. In fact, Sturgis virtually abandoned the practice of architecture for these other activities after the early 1880s. He served as president of the Architectural League of New York from 1889 to 1893 and of the Fine Arts Federation from 1895 to 1897. His writings were extensive and, in addition to writing for various magazines and journals, Sturgis was the author of *European architecture: a historical study* (1896); *Annotated Bibliography of fine art: painting, sculpture, architecture, arts of decoration and illustration* (1897) for the American Library Association; the multi-volume *Dictionary of Architecture and Building* (1901-1902); *How to judge architecture; a popular guide to the appreciation of buildings* (1903); and was co-translator of Wilhelm Luebke's *Outlines of the History of Art* (1904). His manuscript for *The History of Architecture* (1906-1915) was only partially complete at this time of Sturgis' death in 1909. Sturgis lectured widely for various audiences, including Columbia College, Barnard College, the Metropolitan Museum, the Peabody Institute, the American Institute of Architects, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the College of the City of New York, among many others.

Finally, Sturgis played a significant role in the founding and development of the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library at Columbia University. Avery Library was founded on June 23, 1890, by Samuel Putnam and Mary Ogden Avery in memory of their son, Henry Ogden Avery, who had studied earlier with Sturgis. In forming the library, the Averys stipulated that there were to be three people responsible for the development of the collection—the librarian of Columbia College, the professor of the Architectural Department, and Russell Sturgis. It appears that the other two members of this committee usually deferred to Sturgis and he was later remembered as "the second most important factor in the formation of the [Avery] library."

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains lectures, notes, photographs, correspondence, and architectural drawings documenting the work of Russell Sturgis, and, secondarily, his son, Lyman Sturgis. The materials were created between 1874 and 1932.

Items in the first gift, given by Lyman Sturgis or a close associate, include typescripts and manuscripts of lectures and addresses about architecture and fine art between 1884 and 1895, often accompanied by slide lists or notes. Occasionally, there are merely slide lists without corresponding lectures.

Also in the first gift is a small group of study photographs, including many images of French architecture, as well as examples of interior decoration. Additionally, there is one portrait photograph of Sturgis, dated 1905.

A second gift, known as the Olcott Papers, documents the planning and construction of the Mechanics' and Farmers' Bank in Albany, New York. The materials consist of five original architectural drawings and a group of more than 160 letters and telegrams, some of which contain small architectural sketches by Sturgis. The letters date from July 14, 1874 to July 16, 1875. Fifty-five of the letters are in Russell Sturgis' hand and the remainder are from the contractors and tradesmen involved in the construction.

Also received in the first gift is a small group of correspondence to and from Lyman Sturgis, a writer and literary agent for the Beacon Syndicate in New York City. This material relates to literary matters and dates from 1931 and 1932.

ORGANIZATION

- Series I: Lectures
- Series II: Photographs
- Series III: The Olcott Papers, Mechanics' and Farmers' Bank, Albany, New York
- Series IV: Lyman Sturgis Correspondence

ARRANGEMENT

The first series contains materials received grouped in envelopes based on where the lectures were given. The envelopes did not appear to be in any particular order. The material is now arranged in chronological order, as best it could be determined, often referring to what appeared to be Sturgis' own dating after the fact, as indicated by his question marks or "I think" annotations. This chronological ordering does not much change the received arrangement of the material.

Much of the material in Box 1 was received in acidic brown envelopes. All the material was removed and placed in archival housing. If there was writing on the enveloped indicating the contents and assumed to be in the hand of Sturgis, those notes were excised, mounted on acid-free paper, and maintained with the contents of the envelope. The papers were generally in good condition, although the first and last sheets were in contact with the acidic enveloped and are usually badly discolored.

The collection inventory describes the subject of each item in what appears to be the words of Sturgis, as indicated by quotation marks, or with a few descriptive words supplied by the archivist. Each item had been numbered in either the upper or lower right corner, corresponding to the numbering noted in the inventory. All dates are taken from either the lecture or the corresponding envelope. An exception to the chronological order is the House Lectures. Since it is unknown what "House" refers to, and although the materials spans two years, the archivist has chosen to place the materials together as items 2 through 6. The slide lists or notes accompanying lectures are given sub-letters, rather than separate identifying numbers.

Series II contains one portrait photograph and many small albumen print photographs, most of which have minor creases at the edges, kept with original envelope marked "duplicates – or at least reductions of larger photos." These study images are arranged alphabetically by supplied title.

Series III, the Olcott Papers, is arranged in chronological order by month and year. The monthly folders have been retained and contain a monthly item count, with brief description of the contents of selected contents of each month's correspondence. These letters are generally in good physical condition.

The Lyman Sturgis correspondence in Series IV is arranged in chronological order, with related outgoing and incoming correspondence kept together where appropriate.

BOX LIST

Series	Box #
I. Russell Sturgis Lectures	1
II. Russell Sturgis Photographs	1
III. Olcott Papers, Mechanics' and Farmers' Bank, Albany, New York	2
IV. Lyman Sturgis Correspondence	2

SHELF LIST

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Location</i>
Boxes 1-2	C185

COLLECTION INVENTORY

SERIES I-LECTURES

Box.Item	Description	Dates
1.1	Lecture on architects and the legacy of the past. American Institute of Architects Convention. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 22pp.	1884? or 1885?
1.2	Lecture on Roman sculpture. House Lecture. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 7pp.	1889 Mar 23
1.3	Lecture on Venice. House Lecture. Typescript. 14pp.	1889 Lent
1.4	Lecture on Greek sculpture. House Lecture. Typescript. 12pp.	1889? Lent
1.5	Lecture on Greek non-architectural sculpture. House Lecture for ΑΔΦ? Typescript. 11pp.	1889-1889?
1.6a	Slide list for House Lecture on Venice. Typescript. 1 pp.	1889 Apr 6
1.6b	Slide list for House Lecture on Venice. Typescript. 1 pp.	1889 Apr 20
1.6c	Slide list for House Lecture on French architecture. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 1 pp.	1889 Apr 27
1.6d	Slide list for House Lecture on Liber Studorium. Typescript and manuscript. 3 pp.	1889 Mar 01
1.6e	Slide list for House Lecture on Liber Studorium. Typescript. 1 pp. Second copy.	1890 Mar 01
1.6f	Slide list for House Lecture on various artists. Typescript 1 pp.	1890 Mar 15
1.6g	Slide list for House Lecture on various artists. Typescript 1 pp.	1890 Mar 29
1.6h	Slide list for House Lecture on various artists. Typescript. 1 pp.	1890 Mar 29
1.7	"First draft of address" on designs and designing. Architectural League. Typescript. 28pp.	1889 Oct
1.8	"First draft of address" on designs and designing. Architectural League. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 21pp.	1889 Oct
1.8a	Notes. Manuscript. 1pp.	[1889 Oct]
1.8b	Slide list. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 6pp.	[1889 Oct]

1.9	Lecture on architecture and decoration. Brooklyn Institute; also delivered at Columbia or Barnard or both. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 29pp.	1889 Autumn-Winter
1.10	Lecture on application of color to architecture. Columbia College, in Professor Ware's department. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 9pp.	1889
1.11	Lecture on color applied to the decorative arts. Columbia College. Typescript. 15pp.	1889 Nov 14 or 1889 Dec 05
1.12	Lecture on use of natural materials as pieces of color. Columbia College, School of Mines. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 9pp.	1889 Dec 05
1.12a	Slide List. Typescript. 1 pp.	[1889 Dec 05]
1.13	Notes for lecture. Manuscript. 1pp.	[1889] Mar 20
1.14	Lecture on nature and use of color to assist architectural form. Columbia College. Typescript. 8pp.	[1889]
1.14a	Diagram. Manuscript. 1pp.	[1889]
1.15a	Slide list for Columbia College lecture. Typescript. 1pp.	1889 Dec 02
1.15b	Slide list for Columbia College lecture, with sketch on verso of last page. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 4pp. First page lacking.	1889 Dec 19
1.15c	Slide list for Columbia College lecture. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 1pp.	1890 Feb 06
1.15d	Slide list for Columbia College lecture. Typescript. 1pp.	1890 Feb 13
1.15e	Slide list for Columbia College lecture. Typescript. 1pp.	1890 Feb 20
1.15f	Slide list for Columbia College lecture. Typescript. 1pp.	1890 Apr 03
1.15g	Slide list for Columbia College lecture. Typescript. 1pp.	1890 Apr 09
1.15h	Slide list for Columbia College lecture. Typescript. 2pp.	1890 May 02
1.16a	Examination questions for Theory of Architecture course at Columbia College, ten questions. Typescript. 2pp.	Undated
1.16b	Examination questions for Theory of Architecture course at Columbia College, same as above with one extra question. Typescript. 2pp.	Undated
1.16c	Student grading sheet [presumably for Theory of Architecture course at Columbia College], showing 11 questions and thirty students. Manuscript. 1 pp.	Undated
1.17	Acceptance speech for presidency of the Architectural League. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 2pp.	1889

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| 1.18 | Slide lists and notes "On Tombs." Brooklyn Institute. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 4pp. | 1890 Mar 07 |
| 1.19 | "Draft prepared for reporters, not used" on Japanese art. Alpine Club. Typescript. 9pp. | 1890 Apr 18 |
| 1.19a | Slide list. Typescript. 1pp. | [1890 Apr 18] |
| 1.20 | Lecture about application of color to sculpture. Archeological Society of New York. Typescript. 22pp. | 1889? or 1890? |
| 1.20a | Slide list. Archeological Society of New York. Manuscript. 1pp. | 1891 Mar 20 |
| 1.21. | Lecture on "The Nature Lover's and the Moralists View of Art." Columbia College. Also given at the Brooklyn Art Association on April 22, 1891? Typescript. 33pp. | 1891 Jan 10 |
| 1.21a | Slide list. Manuscript on verso of Alpha Delta Phi Club invitation cards. 2pp. | [1891 Jan 10] |
| 1.22 | Lecture on "The Art Lover's View of Art." Columbia College. Also given at the Brooklyn Art Association on April 22, 1891? Typescript. 22pp. | 1891 Jan 17 |
| 1.22a | Slide list. Manuscript. 2pp. | [1891 Jan 17] |
| 1.23 | Notes or slide list. Brooklyn Art Association. Manuscript. 1pp. | 1891 Feb 18 |
| 1.24 | Lecture on "Sources of Modern Art in the Graeco-Roman Mold." Barnard College, also Brooklyn Institute. Typescript. 24pp. | 1891 Apr 03 |
| 1.24a | Slide list. Manuscript. 1pp. | [1891 Apr 03] |
| 1.25 | Lecture on "Sources of Modern Art – Middle Ages." Barnard College, also Brooklyn Institute. Typescript. 24pp. | 1891 Apr 10 |
| 1.25a | Slide list. Manuscript. 1pp. | [1891 Apr 10] |
| 1.26 | Lecture on "Sources of Modern Art – Early Renaissance." Barnard College, also Brooklyn Institute. Manuscript in outline form. 7pp. | 1891 Apr 17 |
| 1.26a | Slide list. Manuscript. 2pp. | [1891 Apr 17] |
| 1.27 | Program announcement for Brooklyn Institute lectures on "The Sources of Modern Art." Printed paper. 1pp. With 2 copies. | 1891 Apr |

1.28	Lecture on the requisites of a museum for the people. Brooklyn Institute. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 24pp.	1891 Dec 16
1.28a	Slide list. Manuscript. 1pp.	[1891 Dec 16]
1.29	Lecture on color in architecture. Architectural League. Manuscript. 13pp.	1892 Feb 01
1.30	Lecture on the nature of the Architectural League. Architectural League. Manuscript. 8pp.	1892 Feb 08
1.31a	Slide list and notes on interior design, monumental and stately. Brooklyn Art Association. Manuscript. 1pp.	1892 Feb 26
1.31b	Slide list and notes on interior design, domestic. Brooklyn Art Association. Manuscript. 1pp.	1892 Mar 04
1.31c	Slide list and notes on furniture. Brooklyn Art Association. Manuscript. 1pp.	1892 Mar 11
1.31d	Slide list and notes on small portable objects. Brooklyn Art Association. Manuscript. 1pp.	1892 Mar 18
1.32	Lecture on "How Styles Originate and Grow...Dress." Museum of Art for Columbia College. Typescript. 38pp.	1893 Jan 07
1.33	Lecture on style. Museum of Art for Columbia College. Typescript. 29pp.	1893 Jan 14
1.33a	Slide list. Manuscript. 1pp.	[1893 Jan 14]
1.34	Lecture on "How Styles Express Nature." Museum of Art for Columbia College. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 22pp.	1893 Jan
1.35	Lecture on "Greek Architecture for Modern Uses." Archeological Society of New York. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 37pp.	1893 Apr 12
1.35a	Slide list and notes. Manuscript. 4pp.	[1893 Apr 12]
1.36	Lecture on the nature of architecture. Brooklyn Institute. Typescript. 6pp.	1893 Winter- 1893 Spring
1.37	Lecture on Greek Architecture. American Institute of Architects. Typescript, with manuscript annotations. 14pp.	1894 Oct 15
1.37a	Note about lecture. Manuscript. 1pp.	[1894 Oct 15]

1.38	Chronological listing of people and places from 1547-1786. Architectural League. Manuscript. 1 pp.	1894 Nov
1.38a-cc	Assorted notes. Manuscript. 30pp.	[1894 Nov]
1.39	Lecture on J.M.W. Turner. Manuscript in blue pencil. 63pp.	1895 Dec 14
1.39a	Slide list of notes. Manuscript. 1pp.	[1895 Dec 14]
1.40	Lecture on J.M.W. Turner, second lecture. Typescript. 21pp.	1895 Dec 21
1.41	Lecture on J.M.W. Turner, second lecture. Manuscript. 63pp.	[1895 Dec 21]
1.42	Unidentified slide list. Manuscript. 1 pp.	1890 Fall?
1.43a-b	Program announcement for lectures on "The Application of Ancient Architecture for Modern Uses." Columbia College. Printed papers. 2 copies.	[18?? Feb-18?? Mar]

SERIES II-PHOTOGRAPHS

Box.Item	Description	Dates
1.44	Russell Sturgis, portrait photograph. Gelatin silver print, mounted on board. 14.2 x 9.8 cm. Photograph by Rockwood, New York, N.Y.	1905
1.45	"La Prevoyance" building, exterior view with figures in doorway, possibly Paris, France. Albumen print.	Undated
1.46	Palais du Trocadéro, Paris, France. Exterior view. Albumen print.	circa 1878-1905
1.47	Unidentified Gothic building, showing street façade with main entrance portal, possibly France. Albumen print.	Undated
1.48a-b	Unidentified Gothic building, detail showing oriel window with pointed arches and polychromed voussoirs, possibly Paris, France. Albumen print. 2 copies.	Undated
1.49	Unidentified parlor or hall interior, showing draped archway and staircase. Albumen print.	Undated
1.50	Unidentified Romanesque building, showing apse, tower, and partial façade, possibly France. Albumen print.	Undated
1.51	Unidentified Stick-Style residence, probably United States. Possible Sturgis' residence? Albumen print.	Undated
1.52	Unidentified townhouse, Paris, France. Albumen print. Noted on verso, "A house in wh. const. frame of wrought iron is let show."	Undated
1.53	Unidentified warehouse or factory building, showing skylit arcade with tables. Albumen print.	Undated
1.54	Cabinet, seen against wainscotting and wallpaper, illustration. Albumen print.	Undated
1.55	Cabinet, with man standing alongside, illustration. Albumen print.	Undated
1.56	Carved door or wall panels depicting flowering vines climbing from a pot, in an Asian style. Albumen print.	Undated

1.57	Carved door or wall panels depicting flowering vines climbing from a pot, in an Asian style. Albumen print.	Undated
1.58	Carved four-paneled door or wall insert, depicting flowering branches. Albumen print.	Undated
1.59	Fireplace and wall surround, partially rendered elevation. Albumen print.	Undated
1.60	Living room or parlor wall, showing wall decoration and arrangement of framed art, rendered elevation. Albumen print.	Undated
1.61	Stair rail, with carved birds on newel post, elevation. Albumen print. Noted on verso, "R Sturgis Sandier's drawing for stairs for A H Roosevelt abt 1872."	Undated
1.62	Stair rail with carved lizard on newel post, elevation. Albumen print.	Undated
1.63	Stair rail, with carved peacock on newel post, elevation. Albumen print.	Undated
1.64a-c	Stair rail, with lamp on newel post, and outline of woman ascending stairs, two elevations. Albumen print. 3 copies. One print noted on verso "R. Sturgis. Sandier's drawing for stairs for A. H. Roosevelt, abt. 1872."	Undated

**SERIES III—OLCOTT PAPERS, MECHANICS' AND FARMERS' BANK,
ALBANY, NEW YORK**

Box.Fold.	Description	Dates
2.1	Cashier's Room, brick arch of ceiling, section detail. Ink and watercolor on linen. 50 x 30.1cm. Scale= ¼ full size.	[circa 1874-1875]
2.1	Cashier's Room, marble flooring, plan. Ink and watercolor on wove paper. 31.3 x 25.7cm. Scale ½"=1'.	[circa 1874-1875]
2.1	Director's Room, marble flooring, plan. Ink and watercolor on linen. 41.9 x 24.7cm.	1874 Nov
2.1	Entrance doors on James Street, doors to Director's Room, and Door to Cashier's Room, elevations. Graphite, watercolor, and gold ink on brown wove paper. 12 x 21.8cm.	[circa 1874-1875]
2.1	Unidentified section detail. Ink and watercolor on linen. 20.5 x 24.5 cm.	[circa 1874-1875]
2.2	Correspondence regarding vault and safe. Includes two items with architectural sketches. 10 items.	1874 Jul
2.3	Correspondence regarding heating, stonework, and iron doors. Includes one item with architectural plan sketch. 12 items.	1874 Aug
2.4	Correspondence regarding heating. Includes one item with architectural sketch. 15 items.	1874 Sep
2.5	Correspondence regarding stonework. 8 items.	1874 Oct
2.6	Correspondence regarding chimney and vault. Includes one item with architectural sketch. 14 items.	1874 Nov
2.7	Correspondence regarding chimneys, vaults, and doors. Includes three architectural sketches of flues, chimneys, and doorway. 29 items.	1874 Dec
2.8	Correspondence regarding lobby door. 9 items.	1875 Jan
2.9	Correspondence regarding ironwork, staircase, ornamental glass windows, and marble counter. Includes one item with sketch of a drawer. 20 items.	1875 Feb

2.10	Correspondence regarding marble counter, tiles, and doors. Includes one with a sketch. 7 items.	1875 Mar
2.11	Correspondence regarding marble counters and iron doors. 13 items.	1875 Apr
2.12	Correspondence regarding fireplace, vault, teller's cage, and glass. Includes one item with sketch of fireplace. 21 items.	1875 May
2.13	Correspondence regarding chairs and glass. 13 items.	1875 Jun
2.14	Correspondence regarding tile base. 1 item.	1875 Jul
2.15	Correspondence regarding approval for aspect of design.	Undated
2.15	The New England Patent Self-Supporting Drawer Company, advertising prospectus.	circa 1874-1875

SERIES IV—LYMAN STURGIS CORRESPONDENCE

Box.Folder	Description	Dates
2.16	Correspondence between Lyman Sturgis and various correspondents. 30 items.	1931-1932

Correspondents include Thomas Benrimo, the Century Company, Jacques Chambrun, George Allan England, Herbert Adams Gibbons, Frances Phillips of William Morrow and Company, and Frances Winwar.

Subjects relate primarily to Sturgis' work as a literary agent and editor for the Beacon Syndicate, New York, New York.