Catherine Larkin, Long Island University

William Randolph Hearst (1863–1951) was a complex individual best known today for his successful 125 yearlong publishing and media dynasty. During his lifetime, Hearst was portrayed as a demagogue and maligned as the model for the 1941 film character Citizen Kane. Hearst developed a reputation as a magpie lacking self-discipline and discretion in the acquisition of works of art; yet, Hearst remained passionate about antiques and collected objects for over seven decades.

His enthusiasm for art collecting began under the guidance of his mother, Phoebe Apperson Hearst (1842-1919), during their first trip abroad, when he was only ten years of age. Phoebe Hearst, a compulsive collector herself, wrote home to her husband George Hearst (1820-1891) regarding their son, “he wants all sorts of things; the boy has developed a mania for antiquities.” Her collection is the foundation for the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology in Berkeley California, which houses over three millions objects today. David Nasaw, in his biography of Hearst revealed that William’s childhood was marked by impermanence; “His father seldom saw him and his mother, whom he adored, often disappointed him, disappearing too often and too early.” William Hearst clearly clung to and identified with his mother and her
possessions.

After Phoebe Hearst’s death in 1919, William, as the only heir to a mining fortune amassed by his father, George, was free to acquire works at a feverish pace. During the 1920s and 1930s, he continued to acquire art through auction houses and dealers in the United States and throughout Europe. As the items accrued, Hearst soon outgrew rented storage and purchased a five-story building on Southern Boulevard in the Bronx, New York, to secure his growing collection. There he hired a full-time staff to photograph and record each item purchased and a squad of ex-marines to protect it all.  

Hearst’s collecting had become so extensive that by the early 1920s he formed his own company, The International Studio Arts Corporation (ISAC), as a wholly owned subsidiary of his holdings. Hearst used ISAC to purchase art and when necessary to clear customs. Approximately one-half of Hearst’s collection stored at the Bronx warehouse was sold in the late 1930s and early 1940s, most of it through Gimbel Brothers.

Hearst’s style of collecting was ostentatious and cavalier. He was known to spend countless hours examining sales catalogues and frequenting New York galleries, choosing additional objects for purchase. Mary Levkoff described Hearst as a collector with a need for quality and a desire for quantity. “He loved to collect objects used to furnish his six main residences; filling them with art was his joy.” These residences included the Clarendon in New York City, Hearst Castle, San Simeon California, the Beach House, home of his mistress, Marion Davies, in Santa Monica, California, St. Donat’s in Wales, Saint Joan’s Castle, Sands Point, Long Island New York and Wyntoon, near Mount Shasta in California.
In 1972, Long Island University in Brookville, New York, contracted with the Hearst Corporation to house the Bronx warehouse records as part of a plan to develop an art archival division. Subsequently in 1975, the entire collection consisting of 125 original albums (now rehoused in 160 albums) that record the volume and variety of items acquired by Hearst, thousands of his art sales catalogues from as early as 1884, and a surplus of sundry materials in boxes and file cabinets were transferred from the Hearst estate as a gift to the University with the stipulation that over time they would not be sold. Until 2006, all but the albums remained unexplored. Since then, the contents of each album have been systematically removed for archival cleaning; photographs were covered with protective Mylar sleeves, documents were photocopied, and all original contents have been transferred in sequential order to clam-box archival storage.

Hearst’s catalogues were in storage at Long Island University tied and ordered chronologically. Work is at the half point, unbundling, cleaning, and storing the catalogues in archival boxes. At the same time, finding aids and container lists are being produced as the catalogues are entered into an access database. A provenance field has been added to the database and research on items purchased by Hearst is in progress. At this point, only a few hundred select items are cataloged.

The albums are regarded as fundamental to the archive because scholars in the arts often utilize them as research tools. They contain, in most cases, an index of the
contents of the album, followed by a photograph, description, known provenance, purchase price, shipping destination, and subsequent sale of the item. The albums were recorded on microfilm in the 1980s, however only a few copies of the film exist today. Thus it is not readily accessible to most researchers; it is not always complete and can be difficult to read. Moreover, the microfilm is never a substitute for originals in the archive. The growing number of those who know the location of the archive contact us directly with inquiries. As Hearst would have it, the inquiries reflect his eclectic collection and involve everything from cloisters to bed warmers.

At LIU, we have taken the first step toward making the archive more accessible to researchers. Now, for the convenience of the user, the indices of the albums are available online via a beta website. Scholars can search the albums for items purchased by Hearst using 12 fields, or browse the albums using subject keywords defined by Hearst. With ever-escalating interest and increasing scholarship regarding Hearst, the website has become an important research tool. A link and further information regarding the archive has been added as a resource to Archives Directory for the History of Collecting in America, the Frick Collection. This internet access has substantially increased inquiries regarding the archive at LIU.
Although still under construction, collection highlights such as in-house exhibitions and information regarding Hearst’s major purchases and residences is available online. There are also links photo services, copyright policy and contact information.

**In-House Digital Image Archive**

As part of a digital image archive, many Hearst documents are digitized for publication, exhibition and study material for researchers. The images are named, archived at multiple resolutions and backed up on external drives and on the Library server. The images can be viewed in analog or digital format by contacting us for an appointment. In the future, the University will implement Content Pro, a module of our Library system, which will offer easy online access to portions of this collection. Here are a few samples:
One of Scotland’s most famous lost buildings; Hamilton Palace (last occupied by the 12th Duke of Hamilton) was demolished in the 1920s. Its contents were sold off worldwide including paneled rooms, architectural details, paintings, sculptures and furnishings. Now with its virtual reconstruction, an attempt is underway to bring back together this rare collection. The Hearst Archive is rich with information regarding the lost works of Hamilton Palace and we continue to communicate with scholars working on the project.

For example, Hearst purchased the two Irish black marble chimneypieces pictured in the long gallery in the virtual reconstruction, as well as statues of Apollo and Venus. Most impressive, Hearst acquired 6 paneled rooms, the dining room and the living room, probably all from French and Company, New York. The rooms are listed in the 1941 sell-off of at least one-half of Hearst’s art collection. Archival records indicate that one item; the “Magnificent George I Panelled Room” was sold to “Le Passe” (La Passe, Ltd., Nicholas de Koenigsberg, Buenos Aires and New York) in October 1942 for $5,000. Hearst purchased it from French and Company in 1934 for 25,000. There are also blueprints and photographs of a marble doorway and an oak door, offer by White and Allom & Co., New York. It is not yet clear if Hearst purchased them.
In addition to the many inquiries regarding the virtual reconstruction of Hamilton Palace, quite recently, unique photographs of the interior of Saint Joan’s Castle, Sands Point, Long Island, New York, were requested from the Hearst Archive for publication in Mary Levkoff’s book, *Hearst the Collector*. Saint Joan’s Castle, like Hamilton Palace is now lost. Levkoff selected a view of the great hall with traces of Saint Joan’s murals, the living room and the La Fontaine Room including its 23-foot wide Beauvais tapestry by Le Price and a Boucher painting, *Venus disarming Cupid*. The tapestry was a gift from Hearst to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the painting is now in a California private collection.

Coincidentally, archival records indicate that artifacts from Hamilton Palace were shipped to Sands Point and installed there, including woodwork, trim, doors and a white marble mantel. Hearst purchased Saint Joan’s Castle for his wife Millicent in 1927 from Alva Vanderbilt Belmont; it was torn down in 1945. The structure was known first as Beacon Towers but later dubbed Saint Joan’s Castle after the interior murals of Joan of Arc installed by Belmont.
An “Istrian Balcony” was purchased by Hearst through Howard Studios in New York, is most intriguing for what it represents. Along with supporting sales and shipping records found among the unbound contents of the file cabinets, the renderings, photographs and documents represent a complete cycle of Hearst’s progression from image to purchase and lastly to installation. According archival records, the sales transaction took place on January 19, 1922 and the balcony was shipped to San Luis Obispo, California, for transport to Hearst’s San Simeon estate on February 16th of the same year. Hearst must have consulted with his chief architect Julia Morgan (1872–1957) who directed the installation of the balcony at San Simeon’s glazed porch off the Doge’s suite in the main building where it remains today. 12
Thirty photographs of a twelfth-century Cistercian monastery dedicated to Santa María Real from Sacramenia in Segovia, Spain are included in the archive. Ultimately the photographs represent crucial visual documentation of the monastery in situ. The sale and removal of the monastery resulted from exchanges between Hearst and Arthur Byne, an American art dealer who resided in Madrid and who was also an authority on Spanish architecture and interiors. The expatriate Byne photographed the site for Hearst and on his approval arranged for the sale at $40,000. Hearst was interested in the cloister and other parts of the structure and sent experts to diagram, catalogue, and dismantle each stone and artifact before shipping it to a New York warehouse. Hearst’s plan to reconstruct the monastery was never realized and the shipment, in a final state of disarray, was held in storage in the Bronx for twenty-six years.

After Hearst’s death, the structure was sold for $7,000 and later shipped to Miami’s Dade County and reconstructed there. The ancient Spanish Cistercian monastery, now named in honor of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, functions under the auspices of the Episcopal diocese of Miami. The monastery is the subject of a documentary by Barredo Productions, Inc. an independent Miami filmmaker. Its images in situ were prepared at LIU from archival documents.
At least 1,500 documents including photographs, correspondence, notes, descriptions, drawings and blueprints, were housed in file cabinets in Hearst’s Bronx warehouse. Hearst’s simple system A-Z has been maintained during the transfer of these items to archival storage. The documents reference every conceivable category of art from altars to tapestries. All are accompanied by different levels of metadata and provenance. These items, unlike other objects in the collection, are potentially of major value to researchers because they have remained a hidden portion of the archive. Approximately 800 items have been digitized at low and high resolutions. Those with appropriate levels of metadata are slated for a possible online exhibition. Two examples are shown here: details of the altar from the church of St. Pedro in Vitoria, Spain, offered in the 1921 Nicholas Martin sale, and a gouache rendering dated 1923 of a pair of marble columns sent to Hearst by Luigi Gallant, Rome.

**Wanderlust and Exotic Taste**

The Hearst family embraced adventure. George Hearst owned mining properties in Peru, Chile and Mexico. He spent most of his life at various locations, causing great psychological stress to his wife and son. At the turn of the twentieth century, Phoebe Hearst financed the University of California’s major archeological expeditions to Egypt, Peru and North America and was known to make extended site visits. William Randolph Hearst travelled to Egypt, Peru and Mexico between 1884-1900, living in Mexico for a time and tracing paths similar to the ones...
chartered by his parents. It is likely that William Hearst developed a broader understanding of global artifacts while on these journeys and began collecting non-western objects.\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Lady Meux Sale 1911 and Amherst Sale 1921}
\end{center}

Drawn to the allure of Egyptomania, Hearst began collecting items from Egypt’s twelfth dynasty and beyond from a wave of sales of the estates of important nineteenth-century British collectors. Egyptian rooms, museums within private estates, were in vogue in Europe and among the American elite class during this period. When Hearst moved to his New York residence the Clarendon in 1908 he occupied three floors. In 1913 Hearst purchased the entire building to accommodate a growing family and his art collection. Archival records indicate that Hearst had already transformed the eleventh floor of the Clarendon into his Egyptian Room.\textsuperscript{16}

Hundreds of purchases, from scarabs to mummy cases, are recorded in the Hearst Archive at Long Island University. In 1911, when the furniture and contents of the mansion of the late Lady Henry Bruce Meux were sold at auction,\textsuperscript{17} Hearst perused the catalogue, with an obvious focus on the contents of Lady Meux’s private museum of Egyptian antiquities. Hearst marked numerous items with his signature X, a mark of interest that Hearst used throughout his catalogue collection. Many of these objects pre-selected by Hearst were secured through William Permain, Hearst’s primary agent in London for the better part of the first half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{18} Among the many objects, two wooden models of unguent vases (catalogue #1507) purchased by Hearst for $28.10 were acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1941 for
$9.25. Later in 1921, Hearst purchased a twelfth dynasty statue of Senwesret-senbefny from the Amherst Collection described as a gift from Napoleon to Josephine. The Brooklyn Museum purchased it in 1939; it is currently on view there.¹⁹

Hearst purchased a dagger composed of copper with two strengthening ridges down the center of the blade and the handle set with ebony and alabaster. The object was originally offered for sale from the estate of F.G. Hilton-Price where it was purchased by Robert D. Rustafjaell. Hearst acquired the dagger through William Permain in 1913 for $40.88 and sold it to Gimbel Bros. March 31, 1941 for $19.00. It entered the collection of Princeton University Art Museum in 1941 where it remains today.²⁰ Hearst acquired a fine blue faience Senet game board from Thebes, found with some of its draughtsman intact from the MacGregor collection in 1922.²¹ The object passed from Hearst to Brummer Gallery in 1939. It entered the collection of the Brooklyn Museum after Joseph Brummer’s death in 1949.
A greyware flask also purchased by Princeton University from the Hearst collection features a frontal Chimú lord of supernatural status in a toothed crescent headdress, hands raised, and flanked by two lizard-like creatures. Two additional objects depicting marine life, a bridge-spout vessel and a vessel painted with a serpentine or sea creature motif passed from Hearst to Princeton’s collection. Both are very fine examples of the art form, but the bridge-spout vessel is unique in its iconography. Princeton’s curator Bryan Just was particularly intrigued with its imagery because of the “x-ray convention used to portray anchovies in the bird's gullet.”

Two Nazca stirrup spout vessels from lot #1287, purchased by Hearst in 1936 from Brummer Gallery, New York, are now part of the Philbrook Art Museum’s collection in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Dr. Christina Burke, curator at Philbrook, recently identified the two objects through scanned archival photographs. Dr. Burke, unaware of Hearst provenance, relied on cracks in the objects and in the photographs as documentation.
Metates, or grinding stones for maize and other substances, vary in form and size from small utilitarian objects to larger ceremonial works, which may have had ritual importance. In 1927, Hearst purchased five metates from a sale at Hotel Drouot in Paris from Henri Portier & Company. The items were part of a collection formerly owned by Baron J. Benoist-Méchin (1901-1983), a French politician and writer. Four of the five metates are now in the permanent collection of the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco (FAMSF).

Hearst purchased three stone ceremonial ballgame yokes from Brummer Gallery, New York between 1927 and 1936, two are now lost. 25 According to Margaret Tamulonis, Manager of Collections and Exhibitions at the Robert Hull Fleming Museum of Art and Anthropology, Burlington, Vermont, the third object, a toad effigy ballgame yoke, dated 600-900, is in the permanent collection there. Henry E. Schnakenberg (1892-1970), a New York artist and collector, donated it to the museum in 1941. Schnakenberg was known to frequent the Gimbel sale of Hearst items. The serendipitous discovery of the missing yoke was made while investigating an Aztec textile fragment, one of four once owned by Hearst, believed to be in the Fleming collection. The yoke was a match to archival photographs; the textile fragment is lost.
Codex San Pedro Atlapolco is related to a genre of late seventeenth century Mexican documents. This fragile document, painted on amatl (native fig-bark), is now in the collection of the Brooklyn Museum of Art. Similar works continue to fuel debate among scholars regarding their purpose and importance. Some scholars believed that codices of this type might have been mass-produced to document indigenous customs.26

Hearst acquired a lot of four “Aztec paintings on cloth” described in the archive as painted on both sides with symbolic figures. There has been much speculation regarding the authenticity and current location of the fragments. One fragment, recently found in the collection of Princeton University Museum of Art, depicts Tlaloc the Central Mexican God of rain and lightning. Although the work is considered a modern forgery, its investigation led to subsequent research, which established Hearst provenance for all the Princeton objects mentioned here as well as for Vermont’s ceremonial yoke.
In addition to the Hearst Archive’s presence online at the Frick Collection site, colleague at the Frick have given their support in shaping the future of this resource. Hearst’s art auction catalogues are of particular interest to the Frick because they disclose critical information regarding Hearst’s approach to collecting. As unique research tools they also provide insight into the history of international art collecting and trends in artistic taste. Within the last year, the Frick Art Reference Library and Long Island University have embarked upon a collaborative digital project employing a selection of auction catalogues from New York houses, 1884-1923.

Quoting from the Frick Art Reference Library’s press release: “With funding from the New York State Regional Bibliographic Databases Program, as part of its support of the Metropolitan New York Library Council’s Digital Metro New York initiative, the digital catalogue collection will be significantly expanded over the next year with a third phase entitled “Gilding the Gilded Age: Interior Decoration Tastes and Trends in New York City.” This project, scheduled to launch in the fall 2013, will bring together through digitization a group of late 19th and early 20th-century New York auction house catalogues held at the Frick Art Reference Library and the William Randolph Hearst Archive at Long Island University C.W. Post campus. The wider dissemination of these documents that will result from this project will assist researchers who seek to study and document collectors, artists, artistic movements, and the rise of New York City during the time it emerged as a global center for the international art market.”
In April, 1896, S. S. Carvalho resigned as publisher of Joseph Pulitzer’s paper, *The World*, and joined Hearst’s growing publishing dynasty as its Editor in Chief. Carvalho, known to have extensive knowledge of those in the field of publishing, remained as Hearst’s right hand man until he was well into his eighties. In a scathing telegram written in 1913 and found placed randomly in the archive, Carvalho cautioned Hearst regarding a number of potential employees and described them as lightweights, bright but not thorough, and not valuable.

Calvalho, like Hearst, was also an art collector and the son of the painter and photographer Solomon Nunes Carvalho. In 1914, the sale of his Chinese porcelain collection was written up in the New York Times as containing magnificent temple and palace jars and unique single color vessels in coral and apple green. After the porcelain sale, Carvalho either experienced a shift in artistic taste or perhaps began buying art objects for Hearst. For example, in 1915, Carvalho purchased at least eight “highly valuable European paintings” at the Blakeslee Galleries Sale. The well-illustrated catalogue was also selected for the Frick/Hearst digital project. More investigation is needed to determine if the paintings became part of the Hearst
In 1907, after the death of the prominent architect Stanford White, Hearst was invited to attend two sales of the contents of White’s home. Hearst, who admired White’s taste for luxury, marked up his catalogues with his preselected preferences, many of which were successfully purchased by him. Archival records confirm the purchases of two plaques and a ceiling from the April sale. According to David Nasaw, the ceiling, now installed at Hearst Castle, San Simeon, was purchased for $8,000. In the November sale, Hearst purchased 19 items including an “elaborate doorway,” shipped to Pleasanton, California in 1908, quite possibly to his mother’s residence there. In addition, Hearst acquired numerous stained glass windows, columns and various small items, many of which were stored in the Bronx warehouse and sold off in 1941 through Gimbel Brothers.
James Buchanan Brady has been immortalized in the folklore of the Gilded-Age for his meteoric rise to high society from New York’s poorest slum and especially for his collection of more than 2 million dollars’ worth of diamond adornments, which earned him the nickname “Diamond Jim.” Although their public personas were distinct, Stanford White and Diamond Jim shared a true friendship and an attraction to lavish parties, New York nightlife and showgirls. When Harry Thaw murdered White in a jealous rage over Evelyn Nesbit, Brady deeply mourned his loss while most of White’s friends avoided the scandal.  

Like many of his contemporaries, Brady also collected art. Six months after his death, Brady’s estate was up for public auction. It contained thousands of items in 1748 groupings of various object categories. His diamonds were not included in the sale. Although certain pieces of Brady’s jewelry were part of his bequest, Most of the collection was sold in bulk at low appraised prices.  

Future of the Hearst Archive  

The Hearst Archive continues to aid in documenting the activities of Hearst and his contemporaries in the field of art collecting. It also provides a source of rich materials covering a substantial timeframe in the history of art while it generates a great deal of significant scholarship. Recently when the William Randolph Hearst Corporation celebrated the anniversary of its founding in 1887, CEO, Frank A. Bennack, Jr. announced: “Hearst has now informed,
inspired and entertained people for 125 years!”35 As those in our domain know, Hearst’s art collection remains an uncultivated strength of that legacy. There are countless works represented in the archive that require further scholarship; objects that without provenance risk the fate of being lost forever.

As inquiries regarding Hearst continue to grow, a richer appreciation and further access to the archive’s resources through digitalization, is long overdue. In the future, we hope to continue our collaborative efforts with our colleagues at the Frick Art Reference Library and with institutional support, further develop digital projects that will bring hidden aspects of the William Randolph Hearst Archive to the academic community.

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1 I would like to express my gratitude to the following people for their interest and help in producing this project and for making this presentation and paper possible: At Princeton University, Dr. Colum Hourihane, Trudy Jacoby and Fiona Barrett; at The Frick Art Reference Library, Dr. Stephen Bury, Deborah Kempe, and the “Gilded Age” project team; at Long Island University, Dr. Donald Ungarelli, Alexandra Janvey, Sisi Zhu and Donna Graziose.


4 Nasaw, The Chief, 22.


6 Nasaw, The Chief, 301


8 Mary Levkoff, Hearst the Collector (New York: Abrams, 2008), 14. This catalogue was published in conjunction with the exhibition, Hearst the Collector, organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California.

9 Larkin, A Reappraisal of the William Randolph Hearst Archive, 240


12 Larkin, 244-245.


15 References to these travels are recorded throughout the literature. For example see the Hearst timeline available at http://www.hearst.com/files/hearsttimimeline.pdf, accessed June 30, 2013, and Nasaw, The Chief, 58-59. Phoebe Hearst financed the University of California’s major archeological expeditions in Egypt, Peru and North America. See, Judith Robinson, The Hearsts: An American Dynasty (New York: Avon Books), 302-303. Finally, Robinson reported that WR Hearst visited Egypt in 1899-1900. Robinson wrote, “His mother’s act was a hard one to follow, although WR bought a number of antiquities,” 324.

16 According Levkoff, Hearst the Collector, 49, the Clarendon contained a Spanish Gallery, an Italian Room and a place for Egyptian antiquities.


19 Napoleon removed the Block Statue of Senwosret-senebnefy from Egypt in 1799 and by 1841 it was part of the collection of Count Pourtalés-Gorgier in Paris. It then passed into the hands of Lord Amherst of England before entering the Hearst collection. See, James F. Romano in, Ancient Egyptian Art in the Brooklyn Museum, # 22, (New York: The Brooklyn Museum and Thames and Hudson, 1989). According to archival documents, Hearst purchased
the “squatting figure in red crystalline sandstone,” for $7480 through William Permain, July 2, 1921. The object was offered for sale in London, Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, the Amherst Collection, 6/13-6/17 1921, WRH Archive Sales Catalogue, Box 51, item 21, # 248, Pl. XVII. In 1937, it was revalued at $3382.46 and reassigned to American Newspapers, Inc. (another Hearst subsidiary). Brummer Gallery, Inc. purchased it from Hearst at his original cost. It entered the collection of the Brooklyn Museum, NY, that same year. Available at: http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/egypt_reborn/senwosret.php, accessed June 30, 2013.


21 MacGregor Collection sale, London: Sotheby’s, June 26-July 6, 1922, catalogue #247; acquired by William Randolph Hearst through William Permain, August 9, 1922 for $2331.00; purchased by Brummer Gallery, Inc. from William Randolph Hearst, June 6, 1939 for Hearst’s purchase price, $2331.00; offered at the second Parke-Bernet sale of the Joseph Brummer collection, May 11-14, 1949; purchased by Brooklyn Museum of Art from sale?

22 Hearst purchase, Brummer Gallery, Inc., New York City, January 2, 1936, lot #1287, $2500, cost breakdown, article #66, $39.04, sold Gimbel Bros. and dispersed individually?

23 Princeton purchase, 1941.

24 Email correspondence March 6, 2012. See also Hearst purchase, Brummer Gallery, Inc., New York City, January 2, 1936, lot #1287, $2500, sold Gimbel Bros. and dispersed individually? Cost breakdown, article # 45, 39.22; # 46, 39.22, Philbrook purchase, 15.00 each, article #3.


28 Nasaw, 105

