

Guide to Research Resources for Portraiture, Biography, and History

This guide for researching portraiture, biography, and history provides a listing of professional resources compiled by the National Portrait Gallery's Catalog of American Portraits (CAP). CAP staff have worked with the public and numerous institutions on a wide range of research projects involving publications, exhibitions, documentaries and education programs. The public can locate art works using the CAP search on the Portrait Gallery's website. The archive covers portraiture in painting, sculpture, drawings and decorative arts but generally excludes graphic art prints and photographs, except rare daguerreotypes. We encourage private collectors, scholars, and institutional representatives to register portrait collections and update portrait records in our research archive. To register a portrait, contact NPGResearch@si.edu.

Portrait Gallery staff are not authorized to appraise or authenticate art work for the public, but they can offer an informal opinion about historical portraits. If you desire a monetary evaluation of an art work, please contact a professional art appraiser or auction house representative, several of which are listed below. An art appraiser can research your portrait and possibly identify the sitter or artist, and a professional art conservator can examine fragile works and recommend appropriate cleaning and/or restoration treatment. Using technical processes, a conservator can sometimes discover inscriptions or historical evidence for an art work. If you know in which geographic region the art work was created, you can write to regional institutions, whose staff will be more acquainted with the artists active in that area. Also, you can seek museums that specialize in particular kinds of portraiture, such as naïve/folk art, western or military art.

The following U.S. and international organizations have online collection searches, archives, libraries and inquiry services to assist you with your portrait research. *This guide is not intended to be a comprehensive listing of research resources or an endorsement of commercial organizations.*

ARCHIVES, LIBRARIES, AND COLLECTIONS ONLINE RESOURCES

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery and Smithsonian American Art Museum Library, <http://www.npg.si.edu/research/library.html>

Smithsonian Institution Libraries: <http://www.sil.si.edu/>

Tools for the Researcher: <http://www.sil.si.edu/research/>

Smithsonian Institution Research and Information System: <http://www.siris.si.edu/index.html>

Smithsonian main website: <http://www.si.edu>

Encyclopedia Smithsonian: Online Resources from A to Z, <http://www.si.edu/Encyclopedia>

Smithsonian Collections Search Center: <http://collections.si.edu/search>

Smithsonian Online Virtual Archives (SOVA): <http://SOVA.si.edu>

Smithsonian Archives of American Art: <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections>

Smithsonian American Art Museum: <http://americanart.si.edu/visit/>

National Art Inventories, Research and Scholars Center (Inquiry Service): <http://americanart.si.edu/research/programs/inventory/>
Researching Your Art, <http://americanart.si.edu/research/tools/art/>

Smithsonian Museum of American Indian, Cultural Resource Center, Washington, D.C. and Suitland, MD: <http://nmai.si.edu/explore/collections/crc/>

Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, National Anthropological Archives: <http://anthropology.si.edu/naa/index.htm>

Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture: <http://nmaahc.si.edu/>

United States

Frick Art Museum Reference Library Digital Image Archives, NYC, http://www.frick.org/research/archives/digital_archives

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Library and Archives, NYC, <http://libmma.org/portal/collections/>

National Gallery of Art, Library and Archives, Washington, D.C.: <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/research/library.html>

National Museum of Women in the Arts, Library and Archives, Washington, DC: <http://www.nmwa.org/learn/library-archives>

New York Public Library Digital Gallery, NYC, http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/explore/dgexplore.cfm?topic=all&col_id=482

Northwest Digital Archives, <http://nwda.orbiscascade.org/>

University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Seattle, WA, <http://www.lib.washington.edu/specialcollections/>

US Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.: <http://www.loc.gov>

Print and Photograph Division, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/>

Washington D.C. Library, Special Collections/Washingtoniana Collection, <http://dclibrary.org/node/35928>

Costume Collections

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Costume Institute, NYC: <http://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-museum/museum-departments/curatorial-departments/the-costume-institute>

Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, NYC: <http://www.cooperhewitt.org/>

Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Costume Collection: <http://amhistory.si.edu/costume/>

First Ladies Collection: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/first-ladies/first-ladies-collection>

Folk Art Collections

American Folk Art Museum, NYC, <http://www.folkartmuseum.org/>

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum, Colonial Williamsburg, VA, <http://www.colonialwilliamsburg.com/do/art-museums/rockefeller-museum/>

Hispanic Collections

Hispanic Society of America, NYC: <http://www.hispanicsociety.org/>

US Library of Congress, Hispanic Reading Room, Washington, D.C.: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/>

British Library, Hispanic Collections, London, UK: <http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelplang/spanish/hispcoll/hispaniccols.html>

National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM: <http://www.nationalhispaniccenter.org>

University of Houston Libraries, Hispanic Collections, TX: <http://info.lib.uh.edu/about/campus-libraries-collections/special-collections/hispanic-collections>

Presidential Collections

Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery: <http://npg.si.edu/portraits/collection-highlights/daguerrotype?objectID=dbp-1424166684336-1424166684336-1>

White House, Washington, D.C.: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/inside-white-house/art>

White House Historical Association, Washington, D.C: <http://www.whitehousehistory.org/>

American Presidents, links to historic sites, under the National Park Service program, U.S. Department of Interior, Washington, D.C: http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/presidents/list_of_sites.html

Andrew Jackson, Hermitage, TN: <http://thehermitage.com/>

Thomas Jefferson, Monticello, VA: <http://www.monticello.org/>

John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA: <http://www.jfklibrary.org/>

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, IL: <http://www.alplm.org/>

James Madison, Montpelier, Orange, VA: <https://montpelier.org/>

James Monroe Museum and Memorial Library, Fredericksburg, VA: <http://jamesmonroemuseum.umw.edu/>

Harry Truman, Little White House, Key West, FL: <http://www.trumanlittlewhitehouse.com/>

Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, National Archives, Hyde Park, NY: <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/>

Theodore Roosevelt, Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, National Park Service, Oyster Bay, NY: <http://www.nps.gov/sahi/index.htm>

George Washington, Mount Vernon, VA: <http://www.mountvernon.org/about/mvla>

Woodrow Wilson House, D.C.: www.woodrowwilsonhouse.org

National First Ladies' Library, Canton, OH: <http://www.firstladies.org>

Military Collections

Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Division of Armed Forces History, Washington, D.C.: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/about/departments/armed-forces-history>

Society of the Cincinnati/Anderson House, Washington, D.C.: <http://www.societyofthecincinnati.org/>

US Army Center of Military History, Museum Division, Washington, D.C.: <http://www.history.army.mil/>

US Navy Museum, Washington, DC., Naval History and Heritage Command: <http://www.history.navy.mil/>

US Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, MD: <http://www.usna.edu/Museum/>

West Point Museum, West Point, NY: <http://www.westpoint.army.mil/museumhome.html>

Western History Collections

History Colorado Center, Denver: <http://www.historycoloradocenter.org/>

American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY: <http://www.uwyo.edu/ahc/>

Western Americana Collection, Yale University Beinecke Library, New Haven, CT: <http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/collections/curatorial-areas/western-americana>

Western Americana Collection, University of Texas, Austin: http://www.cah.utexas.edu/collections/western_america.php

Thomas Gilcrease Museum/Institute, Tulsa, OK: <http://gilcrease.utulsa.edu/>

National Portrait Galleries Abroad

National Portrait Gallery, London, UK: <http://www.npg.org.uk>
Enquiry services: <http://www.npg.org.uk/research/archive/enquiry-services.php>
Researching Portraits: <http://www.npg.org.uk/research/portraits.php>

Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland <http://www.nationalgalleries.org/portraitgallery>

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, Australia: <http://www.portrait.gov.au/site/>

National Museum/National Portrait Gallery at Gripsholm Castle, Stockholm and Mariefred, Sweden: <http://www.nationalmuseum.se/sv/English-startpage/>

American Collections Abroad

American Museum in Britain, Bath, UK: <http://www.americanmuseum.org/>

Franco-American Museum of the Château of Blerancourt, France: <http://www.museefrancoamericain.fr/>

Giverny Museum of Impressionisms (formerly Terra Museum of American Art Giverny), France: <http://www.museedesimpressionnismesgiverny.com/spip.php?rubrique95>

Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, Italy: <http://www.guggenheim-venice.it/>

Guggenheim Collection, Bilbao, Spain: <http://www.guggenheim-bilbao.es/>

American Academy in Rome, Italy: <http://www.aarome.org/>

La Fayette: Database of American Art. Works by United States artists from the French national collections, 1620-1940. This bilingual database is available at the Louvre Museum website, Paris: <http://musee.louvre.fr/bases/lafayette/index.php?lng=1>

Your Paintings, joint initiative between the BBC, Public Catalogue Foundation, and participating collections and museums in the United Kingdom. This database includes works by American, British, and other foreign artists: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/about>

ORGANIZATIONS

Museum and Professional Associations

American Alliance of Museums (formerly American Association of Museums) (AAM), Washington, D.C., <http://aam-us.org>.

American Alliance of Museums publishes the *Official Museum Directory*, which is available online by subscription and at public libraries.

American Art Collaborative, Linked Open Data Initiative: <http://americanartcollaborative.org/>

American Society of Portrait Artists, Montgomery, AL: <http://www.montgomerybusinesslist.com/business/40586.htm>

International Society of Portrait Artists: <http://www.isofpa.com/>

New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, NYC: <http://newyorkfamilyhistory.org/>

Portrait Society of America, Tallahassee, FL" <http://www.portraitsociety.org/>

Appraisals

American Society of Appraisers, Reston, VA: www.appraisers.org

Appraisers Association of America, NYC: <http://www.appraisersassoc.org/index.cfm>

International Society of Appraisers, Chicago, IL: <http://isa-appraisers.org/>

Conservation

American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, Washington, D.C.: <http://www.conservation-us.org/>

Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts, Philadelphia, PA: <http://www.ccaha.org>

International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, London, UK: <https://www.iiconservation.org/>

Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Conservation Clinic: Lunder Conservation Center, Washington, D.C., by appointment, first Tuesday of every month, <http://www.npg.si.edu/event/currentevents.html>

Smithsonian's Museum Conservation Institute, Suitland, MD: http://www.si.edu/mci/english/about_mci/index.html

US Library of Congress, Preservation Directorate, Washington, D.C.: <http://www.rap-arcc.org/rap-members/library-of-congress-preservation-directorate>

REFERENCE WEBSITES

American National Biography Online (subscription), <http://www.anb.org/main-home.html>

www.Askart.com (subscription), <http://www.askart.com/AskART/index.aspx>

Artcyclopedia.com, <http://www.artcyclopedia.com/subjects/Portraits.html>

Artlex Art Dictionary, <http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/p/portrait.-1700.html>

Art Google.com, <http://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/project/art-project>

Artnet.com, www.Artnet.com

Biography.com, www.biography.com

Digital Public Library of America, <http://dp.la/>

E Museum, www.emuseum.net

Getty Research Institute, <http://www.getty.edu/research>

Grove Dictionary of Art or Oxford Art online (subscription), <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/?jsessionid=DB6DA38C08425822B6E9302231FD0E9E>

HistoryLink.org, www.historylink.org (Pacific Northwest history and culture)

Web Gallery of Art, searchable fine arts image database of American and European artists, <http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>

SELECTED PORTRAIT BIBLIOGRAPHY

This selected bibliography provides samples of the study possibilities, bringing up a range of issues in portraiture.

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