
Velma Adams Papers, Photographs, and Artwork

Autry National Center
Autry National Center
4700 Western Heritage Way
Los Angeles, California 90027
(323) 667-2000
rroom@theautry.org
<http://theautry.org/>
2013

Descriptive Summary

Title: Velma Adams Papers, Photographs, and Artwork

Dates: 1919-1972

Collection Number: MS.244

Creator/Collector: Adams, Velma

Extent: 1.25 Linear feet (2 document boxes, 1 flat box)

Repository: Autry National Center

Los Angeles, California 90027

Abstract: Papers and photographs from Velma Adams. Some of the photographs are of the Gallup Intertribal Ceremonials.

Language of Material: English

Access

Collection is open for research. Appointments to view materials are required. To make an appointment please visit <http://theautry.org/research/research-rules-and-application> or contact library staff at room@theautry.org.

Publication Rights

Copyright has not been assigned to the Autry National Center. All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Autry Archivist. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the Autry National Center as the custodian of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained by the reader.

Preferred Citation

Velma Adams Papers, Photographs, and Artwork. Autry National Center

Acquisition Information

Braun Research Library Manuscript Collection

Biography/Administrative History

Velma Adams (1902-1990) was an American lithographer, etcher, engraver, painter, and sculptor. She was born to Robert Lee Adams and Myrtle Elizabeth (Turner) Adams in Fruita, Colorado 1902 April 4. She attended high school at Northeast High School in Kansas City, Missouri. Adams studied art at the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles, California, the Art Students' League in New York, and the Grand Central School in New York. Her teachers included Julia Bracken Wendt, Merrell Gage, F. Tolles Chamberlin, Loren Barton, and George Biddle. In 1935, Velma Adams accompanied Dr. Frederick Hodge, director of the Southwest Museum, on a camping trip through the southwestern states of America. During this time, Adams produced numerous sketches of the landscapes and people she encountered. She also attended the 1935 Intertribal Council ceremonies at Gallup, New Mexico. Velma Adams was active in many art associations including the Printmakers Society of California, the California Society of Etchers, the Southern Printmakers Society, the California Art Club, the Women Painters of the West, the Los Angeles Art Association, and the Friday Morning Club. In the California Art Club, Adams served as print curator (1939-1940), recording secretary (1943), and was on the board of directors in 1945. She served as the associate chairman of art in 1944 for the Friday Morning Club. Adams' artwork was exhibited at the Appalachian Museum of Art in Mt. Airy, Georgia, the Los Angeles County Museum of Science and Arts, the California Art Club (1935, 1938), the San Gabriel Artists Guild (1938), the Ebell Salon (1938), the Southwest Museum (1939, 1946), Frances Webb Galleries (1939), the Friday Morning Club (1944), Polytechnic High School (1946), and Occidental College (1946). Adams also received awards from the California Society of Etchers, the California Art Club, the Otis Institute Alumni Association, the Southern Printmakers Society, and the Women Painters of the West. Adams remained active in Los Angeles until the early 1960s. Adams passed away 1990 November 13.

Scope and Content of Collection

This collection includes business papers, personal papers, sketches, photographs, and etchings of and by the Los Angeles-based artist Velma Adams. There are receipts and correspondence from the sale of Adams' Indian symbols chart to trading posts and museums throughout the country. Adams' personal papers include sketches, class notes, and letters. Her sketches include notes for the designs on the Indian symbol chart. There are also several handwritten drafts of Adams biographical data which was used in art shows and directories. There are also newspaper clippings, mostly from the Los Angeles Times, about the Navajo and the Intertribal Council ceremonies in New Mexico. Other items include magazines and papers about Native American arts and crafts. The photographs were taken while Adams was traveling with Dr. Hodge through the Southwest in 1935. Subjects include trip companions, landscapes of Zuni, New Mexico, pictures of cliff dwellings, and rock formations. Velma Adams is identified in one of the photographs sitting at a picnic table. There are also pictures of individual participants and tribes from the Intertribal Council ceremonies in Gallup, New Mexico. There are nine

postcard photographs from El Morro National Monument, New Mexico. There are also photographs depicting Pomo Indians that Adams likely purchased; many of these are deteriorated. The etchings in this collection were done on copper plates. A handwritten list of titles accompanies the etchings: Chief Mish (portrait, 5 x 3.5), Zuni grandmother (portrait, 6 x 3.75), Deir Darkcloud/Misted Age (6 x 3.5), Cycle (heads) Theatre Dane (5.75 x 7), Nez Percez (portrait, 8 x 6), Laura Jean (portrait, 8 x 6), Where the Great Trees Drink Their Fill (8 x 6), Little Pichband portrait, 8 x 10). Final processing of collection and publication of finding aid made possible by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

Indexing Terms

Artwork

Indian art

Indian arts

Indians of North America

Indians of North America -- Music

Navajo Indians

Signs and symbols

Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial Association

Arizona -- Description and travel

New Mexico -- Description and travel

El Morro National Monument (N.M.)

Clippings

Correspondence

Booklets

Etchings

Copper plate etchings

Manuscripts.

[Full finding aid](#)
