

Finding Aids to Personal Papers and
Special Collections in the VMFA Archives



Special Collection 06 (SC-06)
T. Catesby Jones Personal Papers, 1946-1949

1 box; 1 ln. in.

Processed by
Courtney Yevich Tkacz, VMFA Archivist
March 2011

CONTACT INFORMATION

VMFA Archives
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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Provenance

This collection was donated to the VMFA Archives' in June 2006 by Parker Agelasto, great grand nephew of Michael Agelasto.

Abstract

This small collection documents the relationship between T. Catesby Jones, prominent lawyer and art collector, and Michael Agelasto, cotton broker and later Greek consul to the Port of Norfolk. While they met professionally as younger men in Norfolk, their lifelong friendship was sustained by a common appreciation for modern art, as evidenced by the content of the collections' correspondence between Jones' widow, Louisa Brooke Jones, and Agelasto, after Catesby's death in 1946.

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions on the use of the collection. For permission to publish materials from the collection, please contact the VMFA Archives.

Biographical Note

Thomas “T.” Catesby Jones was born in Petersburg, Virginia in 1880, the third son of Walter Nelson Jones, owner of one of the city’s most prominent mills. After studying at Hampden-Sydney College, Princeton University, and the University of Virginia, Jones graduated with his law degree in 1902 and shortly moved to Norfolk to set up a law practice. In 1911, he moved to New York City to take a job at the firm of Harrington, Bigham, and Englar, where he worked for the rest of his life and established an international reputation in maritime law. In addition, Jones spent twenty years amassing a renowned collection of modern French art and prints, later donated to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the University of Virginia.

Michael “Mickey” Alexander Agelasto was born in Syros, Greece in 1869 and died in Norfolk, Virginia in 1949. He attended Johns Hopkins University and graduated from Columbia University in 1891, where he played varsity tennis and then semi-professional for several years afterwards. He eventually settled in Norfolk, and worked in the family business as a cotton broker. Agelasto’s extended family lived throughout the world and he travelled frequently to England, France, Greece, Italy, and Egypt. In 1916, Agelasto was appointed Greek Consul to the Port of Norfolk and had diplomatic responsibility for receiving all Greek vessels.

It is believed that Jones and Agelasto met professionally in Norfolk and subsequently became lifelong friends. Both men had an interest in modern art, and were members of the Museum of Modern Art from its earliest days. Agelasto continued his friendship with Jones’ widow, Louisa Brooke Jones, after Catesby’s death in 1946.

(The above information was taken from [Matisse, Picasso, and Modern Art in Paris](#) and an email exchange between Courtney Tkacz and Parker Agelasto, March 2011.)

Scope and Content Note

The collection’s inclusive dates are 1946-1949. The collection is comprised of correspondence, postcards, newspaper clippings, and one photograph.

Arrangement

The collection is organized into two series, and items are arranged chronologically within each series. Items with no date are placed at the end at each series:

[Series 1: Correspondence, 1949, n.d.](#)

[Series 2: Clippings, 1946-1949](#)

Controlled Access Points

[Jones, T. Catesby \(Thomas Catesby\), 1880-1946](#)

[Jones, Louisa Brooke](#)

[Agelasto, Michael Alexander, 1869-1949](#)

[Art, Modern--Private collections](#)

[Art, French--20th century--Private collections](#)

[Virginia Museum of Fine Arts--Art collections](#)

[University of Virginia. Art Museum--Art collections](#)

Related Materials

See further information in the VMFA Library:

Catalogs:

- [Modern French Prints: An Address by T. Catesby Jones, Delivered on October 19, 1944 at The Grolier Club of New York, 1944](#)
- [The T. Catesby Jones Collection: A Catalogue, With Which is Incorporated the Collector's Observations, 1948](#)
- [Jean Lurçat: An Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings and Textiles from the T. Catesby Jones Collection of the Virginia Museum, November 16 through December 27, 1970](#)
- [Contemporary French Tapestries, 1970](#)
- [Early 20th Century French Graphics: The T. Catesby Jones Collection, 1989](#)
- [Matisse, Picasso, and Modern Art in Paris: The T. Catesby Jones Collections at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the University of Virginia Art Museum, 2009](#)

Exhibition Files:

- [T. Catesby Jones Collection, 1948](#)
- [Prints from the Alderman Library, 1966](#)
- [Contemporary French Tapestries / Jean Lurçat, 1970](#)
- [Selections From the T. Catesby Jones Collections, 1974](#)
- [Matisse, Picasso, and Modern Art in Paris: The T. Catesby Jones Collections at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the University of Virginia Art Museum, 2010](#)

Subject File:

- VMFA Donors: Jones, T. Catesby

See related archival records in the following institutions:

Library of Virginia:

- [Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Director's Correspondence, 1936-1976 \(Coll. No. 33863 and 44067\)](#)
- [Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Exhibition Files, 1936-1992 \(Coll No. 31633, 32958, 33041, 33160, 34679, 36342, 36957 and 37636\)](#)

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS / ITEM LISTS

Series 1: Correspondence, 1949, n.d.

Box 1 (Folder 1)

This series is comprised of correspondence between Louisa and Agelasto. The January 1949 letter includes a photograph of the monument designed by Jacques Lipchitz for Catesby's grave in Blandford Cemetery in Petersburg, Virginia. The April 1949 letter details Louisa's recent visit to Charlottesville, Virginia for the opening of the exhibition of Catesby's collection there.

Folder Item

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Jones to Agelasto, with envelope and photograph, Jan. 23, 1949 |
| | Jones to Agelasto, with envelope and self-addressed postcard, Apr. 23, 1949 |
| | Jones to Agelasto, postcard, n.d. |
| | Jones to Agelasto, colored postcard of Mt. Wachusett, Princeton, Mass., n.d. |

Series 2: Clippings, 1946-1949

Box 1 (Folder 2)

This series is comprised of newspaper clippings about Jones and his collection.

Folder Item

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 | "T. Catesby Jones, Lawyer, 64, Dead," [1946] |
| | "Jones Collection: Art Exhibit Opening at Va. 'U'," April 9, [1949] |