

**HELDNER (KNUTE A.) PAPERS**

(Ms. 3650)

**Inventory**

Compiled by

Laura Clark Brown  
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Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections  
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Baton Rouge, Louisiana

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**SUMMARY**

<b>Size.</b>	2.5 linear feet.
<b>Geographic locations.</b>	Louisiana, Minnesota, New York, Sweden, France.
<b>Inclusive dates.</b>	1924-1978.
<b>Bulk dates.</b>	1924-1938.
<b>Languages.</b>	English, Swedish, Dutch, French.
<b>Summary.</b>	Correspondence, printed items, manuscripts, photographs, and pencil drawings of Knute Heldner, a Swedish painter and woodcarver who kept a residence in New Orleans from the late twenties until his death in 1952. Some papers from an unknown individual's research on Heldner and chapters from a book on Heldner are included. The majority of papers consist of Heldner's reflective writings on the values of art, artists, and culture.
<b>Source.</b>	Placed on deposit 1982.
<b>Copyright.</b>	Physical rights are retained by the LSU Libraries. Copyright of the original materials is retained by the creators, or their descendants, of the materials in accordance with U.S. copyright law.
<b>Citation.</b>	Heldner (Knut A.) Papers, Mss. 3650, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
<b>Stack Location.</b>	48:22

**BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE**

Knute Heldner, (1886-1952) born in Vederslov Smoland, Sweden, was a painter and woodcarver who spent the latter part of his professional career in New Orleans, Louisiana, gaining national and international recognition for his Louisiana landscapes. He received early formal training at Karlskrona Technical School and the National Royal Academy of Stockholm. Heldner immigrated to the United States ca. 1902, arriving first in Boston and moving later to the Great Lakes region. He held a variety of jobs such as miner, cobbler and lumber camp cook in Minnesota and continued his art education at the Minneapolis School of Fine Art. His early art work focused on the manual labor of mining and lumbering in paintings titled "Veterans of the Mines" and "The Lumberjacks". His later work in Southern landscapes including "The Cotton Pickers" retained a subject interest in the physicality of work.

He first exhibited his art work ca. 1915, when he entered a painting in a Minnesota State Fair competition and won the Gold Medal. In the mid-1920s, Heldner began spending his winters in New Orleans where he painted Vieux Carré scenes and Louisiana landscapes. In the summers, he returned to Duluth, Minnesota. He was an active member of local art communities in both New Orleans and Duluth. In New Orleans, he joined the Southern States Art Union organized by Ellsworth Woodward and was a charter member of the New Orleans Art League. The Art Association of New Orleans displayed Heldner's first one-man show at the Isaac Delgado Museum of Art in 1926. He also taught painting at the New Orleans Art School established by the Arts and Crafts Club of New Orleans.

Heldner continued to study art through the twenties and thirties at the Chicago Art Institute, the Academy of Scandinavian Art in Paris, and under the direction of artists David Erickson, Dispieu and others. In 1926, he won highest honors at the Swedish-American Art Exhibition in Chicago, and in 1932 he held one-man shows at the Salon d'Automne in Paris, a gallery in Stockholm, and the Arts and Crafts Club of New Orleans Gallery. In the 1930s, Heldner participated in the Workers Progress Administration Federal Art Project in Louisiana, continuing to paint landscapes as well as portraits. The New Orleans Assembly of Delphians purchased a Heldner painting "Petit Vernon" and donated it to the Isaac Delgado Museum in 1937. His paintings also hang in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian Institute, the White House, and the Luxembourg Museum in Paris.

Heldner married Colette Pope and had two children, Paulette and Franz. He died in New Orleans in 1952.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

Correspondence, printed items, photographs and manuscripts from 1924 to 1978 reflect the artistic and intellectual life of Knute August Heldner, a Swedish painter who resided in New Orleans from the 1920s until his death in 1952. The largest series of the collection consists of manuscript writings by Heldner. His writings pertain to views on art; modern art; art appreciation; modern architecture and culture in American cities; the artist's role in society; distinctions between business mores and cultural, artistic values; the creative spirit; the New Orleans art community of the Depression era; and Heldner's advice to artists in essays and speeches such as "Three Hundred Don'ts in Art." Heldner's prolific writings also document his own life in informal memoirs "An American Short Cut Biography." Also included in the series is an extensive manuscript draft of an unpublished novel written by Heldner.<sup>1</sup> Correspondence documents artistic activity including exhibitions, sales and competition adjudication in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, St. Louis, Chicago, Minnesota, Sweden, and Paris. Letters in Swedish appear to be correspondence from Heldner to family members. Printed items include newspaper clippings from Louisiana, Minnesota, and Sweden concerning Heldner exhibits and paintings, exhibition catalogs, and typescripts with biographical information. Other typescripts are written by Heldner including "A Treatise on Art." The printed series also holds a typescript draft of chapters from a biographical work on Heldner by Evans Casso. The graphic series contains photographs of Heldner and several paintings, and it includes sketches and drawings, reproductions of paintings and dry points, and two prints.

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<sup>1</sup>The manuscript draft is incomplete and unprocessed. It may be partially autobiographical because one character has the same names as his brother and the main character Sven may refer to Heldner.

**LIST OF SERIES AND SUBSERIES**

- I. Correspondence, 1925-1978 (box 1)**
- II. Printed Items, 1924-1978 (box 1)**
- III. Writings, undated (boxes 2-4, 7)**
- IV. Graphic Material, undated (boxes 5-6)**
  - Subseries 1. Photographs, undated (box 5)**
  - Subseries 2. Drawings/Sketches, undated (box 6)**

**SERIES AND SUBSERIES DESCRIPTIONS****I. Correspondence, 1925-1978 (.25 linear feet)**

Early correspondence documents Heldner's involvement in the artistic life of New Orleans and Minnesota and pertains to his activities including international exhibitions, art education, art associations, and the Louisiana WPA Federal Art Project. Other correspondence is between family and friends, and several letters are written in Swedish. Letters (1978) pertain to research on Heldner for a posthumous exhibit.

**II. Printed Material, 1924-1978 (.25 linear feet)**

Printed items consist primarily of newspaper clippings from New Orleans, Minnesota and Stockholm papers. Most articles discuss and review Heldner's art work and particular exhibits. Also included are an article Heldner wrote for the New Orleans *Morning Tribune* and a biographical piece following his death in the *Times-Picayune*. The printed series contains typescripts with biographical information, incomplete typescript drafts of a book about Heldner, and typescripts of Heldner's own writings including "Three Hundred Don'ts in Art" and "Treatise on Art." Other printed items document art association memberships and exhibits.

**III. Writings, undated (1.5 linear feet)**

Manuscripts include two volumes, contents of notebooks, and loose, unbound documents which record Heldner's reflections, memoirs, and formal essays and lectures. The majority of Heldner's manuscript material pertains to art and the artist. An unprocessed manuscript draft seems to be an autobiographical novel.

**IV. Graphic Material, undated (.5 linear feet)****Subseries 1. Photographs, undated (.25 linear feet)**

**Summary:** Subseries contains photographs showing Heldner alone in New Orleans and [Minnesota] and with Josephine Crawford at a Vieux Carré street fair. Also included are photographic reproductions of Heldner paintings.

**Subseries 2. Drawings/Sketches, undated (.25 linear feet)**

**Summary:** Subseries contains informal sketches completed by Heldner. Some drawings are interspersed with manuscript material. Several sketches appear to be studies for paintings. Other graphic material includes two Heldner prints, Heldner dry points printed on post cards and printed reproductions of Heldner paintings.

**INDEX TERMS**

Heldner, Knute, 1886-1952	I-IV
Crawford, Josephine	IV
Stockholm (Sweden)	I-III
New Orleans (La.)	I-IV
Baton Rouge (La.)	II
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Painting, American	I-IV
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Art Appreciation	II
Landscape Painting, American	III-IV
Isaac Delgado Museum of Art	I-II
Arts and Crafts Club of New Orleans	I-II
New Orleans (La.)--Social Life and Customs	I-IV
Letters	I
Manuscripts	II
Photoprints	IV
Sketches	IV



CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
			<b>I. Correspondence</b>
48:22	1	1	Professional letters to Knute Heldner (1925-1932) from Illinois Conference Brotherhood, F. Weber Co., Galerie Montparnasse, The Arts and Crafts Club of New Orleans, City Art Museum of St. Louis, La Revue Moderne, Societe D'Automne, Art Institute of Chicago.
		2	Professional and personal letters to Knute Heldner (1933-1939) from Art Institute of Chicago, [Joseph] Wilner (Duluth, Minnesota), Superior Public Library (Wisconsin), Gideon Stanton (Louisiana Director of Federal Art Project), Ellsworth Woodward (Art Association of New Orleans), Amos Lee Armstrong (Louisiana State Art Committee). Letters from Heldner (1938-1939) to friends Peter and Elias.
		3	Professional and personal letters (1941, undated) to Knute Heldner from Augsburg Publishing House (Minneapolis), unsigned, and Nellie B. McKindley. One letter (1978) Howard A. Buechner to Mr. Boyce.
		4	Personal letters (1938, 1978, undated) from Heldner to family and friends.
		5	Personal letters in Swedish (1943, undated) from Heldner (probably to family).
		6	Manuscript transcriptions of Heldner letters (1926-1928). Letters from F.W. Weber Inc., Charles Bien, Samuel L. Sherer (City Art Museum of St. Louis).
			<b>II. Printed Items</b>
48:22	1	7	Manuscript transcriptions of Heldner letters (1933, 1939, undated). Letters to Knute Heldner from the Art Institute of Chicago, Amos Lee Armstrong, [Joseph] Wilner.
		8	Typescripts (undated) concerning biographical information on Heldner including the summary of a 1938 interview and transcription of "The Legacy of Knute Heldner," memorial article in <u>Dixie Magazine-Times Picayune</u> on Dec. 7, 1952.
		9	Manuscript notes (undated) concerning biographical information on Heldner including awards, association memberships, excerpts from newspaper articles.
48:22	1	10	Typescript excerpts of a biographical manuscript on Heldner by Evans Casso concerning marriage to Colette Pope, friendship with Monsignor Armand Kerlec, and woodcarving.
		11	Typescript copy (ca. 1939) of "Treatise on Art" by Heldner.
		12	Typescript copy with manuscript notes (undated) of "Three Hundred Don'ts in Art" by Heldner.

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
		13	Manuscript transcriptions of newspaper articles and citations to other articles (1925-1977) about Heldner. Citations reference Milwaukee, Duluth, New Orleans, St. Paul, and Baton Rouge periodicals.
		14	Newspaper clippings (1926-1966) from New Orleans papers concerning Heldner, art exhibits, artists, art, Delgado Museum, New Orleans Art League, Heldner's writing, and Achille Peretti Includes an article written by Heldner for <i>New Orleans Morning Tribune</i> (2-1-28) titled "Methods Vary But Essence of Art--Never!"
		15	Newspaper clippings (1952) Heldner obituary.
		16	Newspaper clipping (12-8-52) "The Legacy of Knute Heldner" in <i>New Orleans Times Picayune</i> .
		17	Newspaper clippings (undated) from New Orleans papers concerning Heldner, Vieux Carré artists, Benjamin Prize, New Orleans Art League, Delgado,
		18	Newspaper clippings (1924-1937, undated) from Duluth, Minneapolis and St. Paul papers concerning Heldner, exhibits, awards, woodcarving, city beautification and planning,
		19	Newspaper clippings (1931, undated) from Swedish papers concerning Heldner.
		20	Newspaper clippings (1953-1962, undated) Heldner art exhibit, 12th Annual Louisiana State Art Exhibition, American Art Week,
		21	Printed material: Post card (undated); <i>The Arts and Crafts Review</i> (1932); 19th annual Swedish American Exhibit conditions of entry brochure (1938); Memorial Exhibition catalog (1953).
		22	Exhibition catalog: Paul Van Ryzin at Tweed Gallery (1969).
48:22	1	23	Photocopy of Isaac Monroe Cline's <i>Contemporary Art and Artists in New Orleans</i> (Reprinted from Biennial Report, Board of Curators, Louisiana State Museum, January, 1924); photocopies of photographic reproductions of Heldner paintings (undated); <i>Minnesota Artist</i> (Published by the Minnesota Artists' Union. V. 1 No. 1 November 1938); <i>The Warrington Messenger</i> (Published by W.J. Warrington. V. 11 No. 7 February 1933).
		24	Brochure of Layton School of Art (1924); exhibition catalogs and announcements (1926-1964, undated); association membership cards (1930, 1933).

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
		25	Photocopies of 2 pages from Heldner scrapbook (undated)
48:22	2	1	<b>III. Writings</b> "An American Short Cut Biography" by Heldner (undated). <sup>2</sup>
		2	Miscellaneous drafts of "The Fifth Wheel" by Heldner (undated).
		3	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning form for form's sake (undated).
		4	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning the history of landscape painting (undated).
		5	Manuscripts by Heldner (undated) "Modern Painting," "Art," "Art of Painting."
		6	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning Americans as practical people (undated).
		7	Manuscripts by Heldner (undated) "Trends," "The Artist and the Community."
		8	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning art compared with music; nature and art; too many painters and too few artists (undated).
48:22	2	9	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning art appreciation; art education; education; usefulness of art (undated).
		10	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning art and commercialism; art and the soul (undated).
		11	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning art "don'ts"; light and color; artist and teacher; art through education and experience; art as a life force (undated).
		12	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning art and the public; Theodore Decker (undated).
		13	Manuscript art reviews (undated) by Heldner of New Orleans exhibits.
		14	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning artist and businessmen values; money and cultural values; modern architecture (undated).

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<sup>2</sup> Box 2 contains photocopies of the manuscripts, and Box 3 contains the original documents.

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
		15	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning artists and the "city beautiful" (undated).
		16	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning the artist as the gauge of a civilization (undated).
		17	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning creative thinking; the Vieux Carré; and the New Orleans Art School (undated).
		18	Manuscript (undated) concerning Knute Heldner at the Salon des Independants de New York.
		19	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning literature; psychology in art (undated).
		20	Miscellaneous manuscript memoirs by Heldner (undated).
		21	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning modern art (undated).
		22	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning morality; big business; private ownership (undated).
		23	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning New Orleans; New Orleans artists; New Orleans art (undated).
48:22	2	24	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning portrait painting; arrowhead artists; life classes (undated).
		25	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning religion (undated).
		26	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning St. Augustine compared to New Orleans (undated).
		27	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner in Swedish (undated).
		28	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning theater; statuary; and womanly beauty (undated).
		29	Miscellaneous manuscript notes by Heldner concerning war; individuality; the "savage"; leaders and doctors (undated).
		30	Manuscript by Heldner (undated) "Spokattan: A Christmas Story."
		31	Miscellaneous manuscripts by Heldner (undated): unprocessed, incomplete fictional pieces.

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
		32	Manuscript notebook (undated) of Heldner concerning art and cultural background.
		33	Manuscript notebook (undated) of Heldner, "Art is the beginning of all things good..."
		34	Manuscript notebook (undated) of Heldner, "Art" cont.
		35	Manuscript notebook (undated) of Heldner. Speech on history of art and reflections on art criticism. <sup>3</sup>
48:22	3	1-32	Original manuscripts for the copies contained in Box 2.
	4	1	Manuscript notebook (undated) of Heldner. Reflections on art; business; right and wrong,
		2	Manuscript notebooks (undated) of Heldner. Reflections on Artists' Congress and art appreciation.
48:22	4	3	Manuscript notebooks (undated) of Heldner. Reflections on American painting and contents of a speech
		4-7	Original manuscript notebooks for the copies contained in Box 2 Folders 32-35.
		V. 1	Bound manuscript volume (undated) of Heldner. Reflections on God and man; the Bible; and art.
		V. 2	Bound manuscript volume (undated) of Heldner. Reflections on art; education; art appreciation.
48:22	7	--	Unprocessed manuscript draft of Heldner novel [autobiographical?].
			<b>IV. Graphic Material</b>
48:22	5	1	Photographic reproduction of a Heldner painting (undated).
		2	Photographs of Heldner (undated) and photographic reproduction of a painting (probably a Heldner).
		3	Photograph of New Orleans Street Fair (1933). Pictured are Knute Heldner and Josephine Crawford
		4	Photograph of Heldner and others in studio (1927).

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<sup>3</sup> Original notebooks for folders 32-35 are contained in Box 4.

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
		5	Photograph of Heldner painting "The Cotton Pickers" exhibited at the Chicago World's Fair (1933).
		6	Photographic reproduction of Heldner painting (undated); Photographs of Heldner at an outdoor exhibit (undated) and at the Minnesota State Fair (1932).
48:22	6	1-3	Heldner drawings and sketches (undated).
		4	Heldner dry points reproduced on post cards (undated).
		5	Heldner print (undated) "Clipper Ship".
		6	Heldner print (undated) with manuscript notes on verso written by Heldner to a friend.
		7	Heldner sketch (undated) with manuscript notes by Heldner.
		8-9	Reproductions of Heldner paintings (undated).