

Chicago Academy of Sciences / Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum
ARCHIVES – FINDING AID

Collection Title: Leon F. Urbain Papers

Creator: Urbain, Leon F. (1887-ca. 1980)

Dates: 1897-1979, bulk ca. 1900-1950

Language: English; French

Extent: 1.25 Linear Feet (3 boxes)

Level of Description: Folder Level

Repository: Museum Collections and Archives, Chicago Academy of Sciences /Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

Access Conditions: Open for research.

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Citation: Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [item], [folder], [box], Leon F. Urbain Papers, Chicago Academy of Sciences / Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum.

Acquisition Information: Accession 1983.8, Gift of Leon D. Urbain, Jr. Additional photographic material donated in 2016 by Steve Goins (accession 2016.10).

Processor and Date: Glenn Oba and Amber K. King, May 2010; updated by Dawn Roberts 2016

Processing Note: Dates are not all inclusive. Organization not based on original order. Some materials are in French.

Biographical Sketch: Leon F. Urbain (1887-ca. 1980) was born in Brazil, Indiana. He attended DePauw University, studying architecture. He was a practicing architect with his own firm before the war. He served in the United States Reserves in the Air Expeditionary Forces in France during the World War I. He took his architecture background and the engineering experience he gained from his war work and

eventually formed his own company Loxit Systems, Inc. which manufactured education equipment. In his private life, he was an avid photographer and through this interest began to delve into the realm of photomicrography.

It is his interest in photomicrography that connects Urbain with the Chicago Academy of Sciences. The Microscopical Society of Illinois had rooms and worked out of the Laflin Building at the Academy and Urbain used these rooms to start free classes for students in 1961, instructing them on the use of microscopes. In addition he lectured on various topics at local schools and apparently had a love for the Monarch butterfly. This is evidenced in a small pamphlet he produced entitled "Nature and The Story of the Monarch Butterfly" and thank-you letters in the collection that relate to a showing of a film on the Monarch.

Scope and Content: The collection contains information regarding his time in France in relation to his military service. From the records it is apparent that he and his family were stationed in France and remained there after the end of the war. The rest of the materials are related to his personal life and pursuit of his hobbies.

Series Description:

Series 1: Military (1914-1930, undated)

This series contains materials relating to Urbain's service in the American Expeditionary Forces during World War 1. Most of the materials pertain to the time that he spent in France, and as such, many of the documents are written in French. It contains travel permits, travel orders, currency, and very few receipts and other printed materials. It is divided into two sub-series: France and United States.

Series 2: Personal (1897-1979, undated)

This series contains materials related to Urbain's personal life and hobbies. It contains correspondence in the forms of letters, cards, and postcards. There are also materials related to some of the organizations to which Urbain belonged, such as the Microscopical Society of Illinois. There are also some selections of his writing, the majority written while he was in grade school. In addition are some printed materials in the form of flyers, lecture notices, and newspaper clippings and articles. It is divided into six sub-series: Art, Correspondence, Lectures, Organizations, Printed Materials, and Writings.

Series 3: Photographs (1931-1933, undated) (stored separately in RVWD.302 Film Room.Unit 1.I)

This series contains photographic prints and a few black and white negatives. While many of the photos are not dated, by the clothing worn by the subjects, most of the photographs center on the earlier portion of Urbain's life. There are photos from his time in the military and France, as well as some identified prints of his parents. In addition there are some photos of Urbain giving lectures and teaching microscopy classes. Many of the subjects have not been identified conclusively, outside of Urbain himself. It is divided into five sub-series: Military, Leon F. Urbain, People, Places, and Negatives.

Series 4: 35mm Slides (undated) (stored separately in RVWD.305.Film Room.Unit 14.A)

This series contains 35mm slides. They range in mount types including, glass, paper, and plastic. All are color slides and the subject matter varies. Sub-series 1: "Nature Panorama of the Chicago Area"

contains slides from a lecture that was prepared in both English and French. These slides correspond to the note cards found in Series 2, sub-series 3: Lectures. Each slide was titled by Urbain. *Sub-series 2: Unassociated Slides – From Black Slide Box Marked “Selected”*, are all slides removed from the same original housing. They range from images of plants and animals in a natural setting to objects. Not all of these slides were titled and/or labeled by Urbain. The listing on the container list for those not titled by Urbain are set within brackets and reflect the description of the image found in the inventory spreadsheet. More information about all of these slides can be found within this spreadsheet.

PLEASE NOTE: This series will expand as the Urbain 35mm slides are processed. To date, it is not complete.

Container List:

Box 1		
Series 1: Military (1914-1930, undated)		
<i>Sub-series 1: France (1914-1930, undated)</i>		
1	Correspondence – General (in French)	June 1919
2	Currency	1914, 1922-1923, 1925, 1930
3	Printed Materials (in French)	1921
4	Receipts (in French)	1921
5	Slide/Photograph List (unmatched to photos in collection)	undated
6	Travel Orders (in English and French)	1918-1919
7	Travel Permits (in English and French)	1918-1919
<i>Sub-series 2: United States (1917)</i>		
8	First Company Second Engineers Training School – Muster Roll	1917
Series 2: Personal (1897-1979, undated)		
<i>Sub-series 1: Art (undated)</i>		
9	Art	undated
<i>Sub-series 2: Correspondence (1913-1979, undated)</i>		
10	To Urbain	1913, 1968
11	Thank You Letters – DuSable High School – Monarch Film	1947-1949
12	Thank You Letters – DuSable High School – Monarch Film	1949, undated
13	Cards – Signed	1970-1971, undated
14	Cards – From Urbain	undated
15	Cards – To Urbain	1930, undated
16	Cards – Unsigned	undated
17	Postcards – To Mr. and Mrs Urbain	1919, 1979
18	Postcards – To Mr. Urbain	1919, 1921-1922
19	Postcards – To Mrs. Urbain	1944, 1979, undated
20	Postcards – Unsigned	undated
Box 2		
Series 2: Personal (1897-1979, undated)		

<i>Sub-series 3: Lectures (undated)</i>		
1	“Nature Panorama of the Chicago Area” – Cards (in French)	undated
<i>Sub-series 4: Organizations (1914-1968, undated)</i>		
2	General	1959-1960, undated
3	Professional – Free Masons/ Registered Professional Engineer	1914, 1945
4	State Microscopical Society of Illinois	1967-1968, undated
<i>Sub-series 5: Printed Materials (1951-1968, undated)</i>		
5	General	undated
6	Graduation Program – University of Illinois	June 1910
7	Lecture Announcements	1967, undated
8	“Nature and the Story of the Monarch Butterfly”	1953
9	Newspaper Articles/ Clippings	1962, undated
10	Photomicrography/ Microscopy	1951, 1957-1968, undated
<i>Sub-series 6: Writings (1897-1907, undated)</i>		
11	Articles	undated
12	Lectures	undated
13	School Assignments	1902-1904
14	Short Stories – Collection (Incomplete)	undated
15	Short Stories – Complete	1897-1898, 1901-1902, 1907, undated
16	Short Stories – Incomplete	1902, undated
Photo Box 1 (stored separately, RVWD.302 Film Room.Unit 1.I)		
Series 3: Photographs (1931-1933, undated)		
<i>Sub-series 1: Military (undated)</i>		
36	World War I – France and Unidentified Locations	undated
<i>Sub-series 2: Leon F. Urbain (undated)</i>		
37	Alone – Prints	undated
38	With Others – Prints	undated
<i>Sub-series 3: People (1931, 1933, undated)</i>		
39	Identified – Prints	1933, undated
40	Identified – Mother and Father - Prints	undated
41	Unidentified – Prints	1931, undated
<i>Sub-series 4: Places (undated)</i>		
42	Unidentified – France and Other Locations – Prints	undated
<i>Sub-series 5: Negatives (undated)</i>		
43	Negatives	undated
<i>Sub-series 6: Family</i>		
44	Family	ca. 1908
Slide Box 1 (stored separately, RVWD.305 Film Room.Unit 1.C)		
Series 4: 35mm Slides		

Box A		
<i>Sub-series 1: "Nature Panorama of the Chicago Area" (undated)</i>		
1	Place Holder Slide	undated
2	Winter scene & stream	undated
3	Another winter scene & stream	undated
4	Early spring tree-elm	undated
5	Early spring tree-in leaf-poplar	undated
6	Stream in Dunes in early spring	undated
7	Flowering trees, early spring bloom	undated
8	Spring flowering wild crab apple	undated
9	Early spring carpet-forest preserve	undated
10	Bloodroot in bloom	undated
11	Poplar catkins in early bloom	undated
12	Hepatica in early spring carpet	undated
13	Hepatica close up	undated
14	Day lily-Dunes	undated
15	Sudden April storm coming up	undated
16	Sudden April storm progress	undated
17	Lightning and thunder	undated
18	Rainbow-double	undated
19	Iris-a marsh plant	undated
20	Wild Rose	undated
21	Wild onion in bloom	undated
22	Spiderwort-white, blue, pink	undated
23	Sedum-immortalis	undated
24	Pokeberry and habitat	undated
25	Dune scene-old trees uncovered	undated
26	Prickly pear cactus	undated
27	Prickly pear close up	undated
28	Dune scene-now destroyed	undated
29	Columbine in habitat	undated
30	Columbine close up	undated
31	Swamp-Smith's Woods now destroyed	undated
32	Toad-just out of hibernation	undated
33	Frogs-just out of hibernation	undated
34	Arrowroot-a bog plant, in bloom	undated
35	Cattails-a bog plant, in bloom	undated
36	Marsh Marigold, bog plant in bloom	undated
37	Lady's slipper in habitat	undated
38	Lady's slipper close up	undated
39	Lady's slipper very close up	undated

40	Orchis Spectabilis, showy orchid	undated
41	Orange ciliaris, a bog orchid	undated
42	White dogwood in bloom	undated
43	Cinquefoil Potentilla, interesting green	undated
44	Sweet William	undated
45	Virginia bluebells, Mertensis	undated
46	Bunchberry, fruit is red	undated
47	Indian pink, brilliant red	undated
48	Blue Lupine-Dunes-sometimes white, west, orange	undated
49	Leaf of lupine with diamond dew	undated
50	Jacob's ladder in bloom	undated
51	Jacob's ladder close up	undated
52	Butterfly weed, brilliant orange	undated
53	Pitcher plant-carnivorous	undated
54	Pitcher plant close up	undated
55	Pitcher plant in bloom	undated
56	Sundew in bloom-carnivorous	undated
57	Blue violet, Ill. State flower	undated
58	Honeysuckle	undated
59	Mint, stem square, in bloom	undated
60	Ferns, two kinds	undated
61	Ferns in the fall	undated
62	Monarch butterfly	undated
63	Cecropia moth-male	undated
64	Polyphemus close up	undated
65	Polyphemus close up	undated
66	Joe-pye weed	undated
67	Pansy-domestic	undated
68	Pansy-domestic, yellow	undated
69	Poison ivy, late summer	undated
70	Poison sumac in bloom	undated
71	Poison sumac, late summer	undated
Box B		
<i>Sub-series 1: "Nature Panorama of the Chicago Area" (undated)</i>		
72	Coneflower in bloom	undated
73	Coneflower close up	undated
74	Burning bush in fall fruit	undated
75	Solomon's seal in bud	undated
76	Solomon's seal in fruit	undated
77	Solomon's seal	undated
78	High bush cranberry	undated

79	Foxtail grass in fall	undated
80	New England Aster	undated
81	Ox-eye daisy	undated
82	Dune scene at lake-fall	undated
83	Harvest scene-wheat	undated
84	Another fall scene & stream	undated
85	Interesting fall scene	undated
86	Sunset starting (1)	undated
87	Sunset (2)	undated
88	Sunset (3)	undated
89	Sunset (4)	undated
90	Sunset (5)	undated
91	The moon-End	undated
Box C		
<i>Sub-series 2: Unassociated Slides – From Black Slide Box Marked “Selected” (undated)</i>		
1	New Life	undated
2	Quietly Radiant	undated
3	Turk's cap lily (131.4)	undated
4	At Last! (131.1)	undated
5	[Sand dunes and the lake]	undated
6	[Sunset over a house]	undated
7	The Sentinel	undated
8	[pine branch]	undated
9	[bronze statue in a park]	undated
10	[sand dunes sloping down to the lake]	undated
11	[sand dunes with a tree overhead and the sky]	undated
12	[the pledge of allegiance] (138)	undated
13	[statue of liberty against the sky]	undated
14	[the White House]	undated
15	[painting of marching Revolutionary War soldiers]	undated
16	Star Spangled Banner (210)	undated
17	[statue of a rugged male figure on a rock]	undated
18	[the National Mall and Capital Building]	undated
19	[large stone statue of George Washington]	undated
20	[yellow jacket nest on the underside of a leaf]	undated
21	Fringed Gentian	undated
22	[blue-purple sunset]	undated
23	[poinsettias and silver tinsel]	undated
24	[flowering tree against the sky]	undated
25	[still life flowers in a vase-very dark]	undated
26	[landscape-clouds over mountains]	undated

27	[prickly pear in bloom among grasses]	undated
28	[blue-yellow sunset over mountains]	undated
29	[oval mushrooms in a forest]	undated
30	[cluster of green vase-shaped plants with red-purple veins]	undated
31	Reflections	undated
32	[cluster of yellow orchid flowers in a green house]	undated
33	[Christmas tree]	undated
34	[Single flower with a pink pouch overhung by a leaf]	undated
35	[landscape-double exposed-snow scene over grass]	undated
36	[sand dunes before the lake]	undated
37	4 Landscape	undated
38	[non-native bird-white with a pink stripe on wing]	undated
39	[single pink blossom on a cactus]	undated
40	[landscape-clouds over trees]	undated
41	[landscape-shady glen with a rock formation and waterfall]	undated
42	[cluster of purple daisy-like flowers with a bumblebee]	undated
43	[single swan swimming]	undated
44	[swan swimming in a body of water surrounded by trees]	undated
45	[pink water lily among leaves]	undated
46	[fall foliage on a small maple]	undated
47	[Two flowers with a pink pouch overhung by a leaf]	undated
48	[White waterlilies among leaves]	undated
49	At Last!	undated
50	[landscape-trees reflected in a body of water]	undated
51	[Two flowers with yellow pouches]	undated
52	[Chipmunk by a piece of wood]	undated
53	[Chipmunk eating an ear of corn]	undated
54	[Single stalk of Turk's cap lily]	undated
55	[Chipmunk on a fence]	undated
56	[landscape-winter scene with snow covered trees and a stream]	undated
57	[Three hollyhock stalks against the sky]	undated
58	[Unknown flower-yellow and spiky with no leaves]	undated
59	[Several flowers with white pouches]	undated
60	[Single pink wild rose]	undated
61	[milkweed stalk gone to seed]	undated
62	[Single yellow lady's slipper with a red overhanging leaf]	undated
63	[Landscape-winter scene of trees and water-very snowy]	undated
64	[Landscape-a tree in a field]	undated
65	[a cluster of white poinsettia in front of evergreens]	undated
66	[landscape-rock formation against the sky]	undated

67	Nut Cracker	undated
68	[A single white lily over a bed of asters]	undated
69	[Cluster of wild roses]	undated
70	[landscape-trees and rock formations]	undated
71	[brown and white cat standing on bare earth]	undated
72	Attention	undated
73	[Fall foliage at the base of a small tree]	undated
74	[Two beached boats]	undated
75	[Purple, bell shaped flower on a tall stalk]	undated
76	[Purple, bell shaped flower on a tall stalk (duplicate)]	undated
77	[Cluster of red poinsettias in front of an evergreen]	undated
78	[Cluster of large pansies]	undated
79	[Landscape-mountain and sky]	undated
80	[Big horned sheep in a field]	undated
81	[Cluster of low, wide, pink flowers]	undated