Finding aid for the Phoenix Furniture Company
folios Collection 391

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Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections
Department

111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
localhis@grpl.org
URL: http://www.grpl.org
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Summary Information

| Repository: | Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department |
| Title: | Phoenix Furniture Company folios |
| ID: | Collection 391 |
| Date [inclusive]: | 1837-1929 |
| Physical Description: | 21 Linear Feet 36 boxes |
| Language of the Material: | English |
| Abstract: | The Phoenix Furniture Company folios is a collection of 97 folios from the Phoenix Furniture Company's collection. These folios are believed to have been the working folios for the company's furniture designers, including David Wolcott Kendall, Frank J. Davidhazy, and J. Stuart Clingman, among others that were associated with Phoenix Furniture Company directly or with other companies that were part of the Phoenix Furniture Company's history, such as Robert W. Irwin, Stowe & Davis Inc., and Davidhazy Studios. In several of the folios there is evidence of frequent use by the designers in the form of small sketches, marked paragraphs or images, and a few larger scale drawings. These folios provide an insight in the design process, the influence of other designers, and the development of furniture made in Grand Rapids during this time, 1872-1953. |

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Biographical / Historical

In 1868 William A. Berkey was made assignee for Atkins & Soule cabinetmakers. In 1870 the premises were purchased by parties who organized the Phoenix Manufacturing Company. For several years they did business at the corner of Ottawa and Fairbanks streets, as the manufactures of miscellaneous furniture. Berkey retired from the firm of Berkey Bros. & Gay, January 1, 1873, and devoted his energies to building up the new company which had been reorganized as the Phoenix Furniture Company, with a capital stock of $200,000. Phoenix Furniture Company moved into a factory at the corner of West Fulton and Summer streets in 1873. The main buildings were brick, with lumber sheds, freight houses and yards attached. There was also a suite of salesrooms in the Blodgett block, near the corner of Louis and Ottawa. Phoenix Furniture Company produced primarily chamber suits, folding beds, book cases, dining tables and heavy office furniture, but its most successful line was its oak and cane McKinley Chairs, designed
by David W. Kendall in 1894. The chairs were named after President McKinley, who owned and used one.

David W. Kendall joined the company in 1879 as a draftsman, but was quickly promoted to a designer. He left Phoenix for Berkey & Gay between 1883 and 1886, and the short-lived company of Kendall, Beardsley, and Dey in Detroit in 1886. Kendall returned as chief designer at Phoenix in 1888, and stayed with the company until his death in 1910.

In 1911, the Phoenix Furniture Company was purchased by Robert W. Irwin and was consolidated, along with the Royal Furniture Company, into the Robert W. Irwin Co., though products produced by Phoenix continued to be labeled with the Phoenix name. The Robert W. Irwin company closed in 1953 and the space was used for storage until it became home to Stow & Davis, Inc. in the late 1950's. Steelcase Inc. purchased Stow & Davis Furniture Co in 1985 and the building that was Phoenix Furniture Company was donated to Grand Valley State University. In 1988, GVSU razed Phoenix Furniture Company and the Public Museum of Grand Rapids salvaged a 2000-square-foot section of the original building which they reconstructed in the Van Andel Museum Center of The Public Museum of Grand Rapids.

Scope and Contents

The folios in this collection represent furniture design, interior design, and architecture of and before the time of the Phoenix Furniture Company. Included in several of the folios are small sketches, notations, page markings, larger scale drawings, and other items that suggest that these were the working folios for the furniture designers at the Phoenix Furniture Company and possibly the other companies that came to be associated with the Phoenix Furniture Company.

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department

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Controlled Access Headings

- Furniture design -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Furniture industry and trade -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids -- History
- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
- Phoenix Furniture Company

Collection Inventory

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<tr>
<th>Title/Description</th>
<th>Instances</th>
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<tr>
<td>Schottmuller, Frida. Wohnungskultur Und Mobel Der Italienischen Renaissance. Stuttgart: J. Hoffmann, 1921. Print.</td>
<td>Box 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sluyterman, K. Huisraad en Binnenhuis in Nederland. [S.l.: s.n.], 1918. Print.</td>
<td>Box 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Scope and Contents

Small sketch page 109, Piece of paper as bookmark between pages 160 and 161, Small notation bottom of page 248

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Description</th>
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Scope and Contents

In prehistoric art volume – mark along line of text on pages 67 & 68, 116, 158, 164, 167, 169, 204, 228, 233, 244-246, 261, 283, 365-366


Scope and Contents

Two small sketches page 257; Two small sketches page 315; Small sketch page 329; Notation, page 343; Sketch, page 493; Sketch, page 555


Scope and Contents

Small piece of paper as bookmark, between pages 84 and 85

Talbert, Bruce J. and Henry Shaw. Fashionable furniture; a collection of three hundred and fifty original designs representing cabinet work, upholstery and decoration, by various designers. New York: J. O’Kane [188-?]. Print.

Scope and Contents

Small sketch, page 18; Small sketch, page 29; Small sketch, page 32; Small sketches, page 37; Notations, page 39; Small sketch, page 41; Underlining, page 58; Signatures, “Henry Shaw”, page 61; Sketching over drawing 218, page 93; Small sketch, page 103; Sketching, near drawing 252, page 106; Sketching, over drawing 270, page 110


Scope and Contents

Notation top corner, Plate 1


Scope and Contents

Sketch, Plate 33; Sketch, Plate 92; Sketches on Plate 114

Scope and Contents

Signature on front inside cover “J. Stuart Clingman”; “Time Ticket” as bookmark between pages 96 and 97; “X” next to paragraph on page 116; “X” next to paragraph on page 117; “Time Ticket” as bookmark between pages 220 and 221; “X” and line drawn near paragraph page 354; notations and bracket drawn around paragraph page 355; notations next to a chest, page 358; mark over one of the images, page 374; brackets around paragraph, page 387


Scope and Contents

Some notations on first inside page; Small sketch on reverse of plate “Stalls in Wantace Church, Berkshire”


Scope and Contents

Small piece of paper as bookmark, plate no. 36; Small piece of paper as bookmark, plate no. 51


Richardson, Charles James. Architectural remains of the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. London: Charles James Richardson, 1840. Print. Box 6

Scope and Contents

"X" marking part of the drawing on plate no. 5; Some markings on plate “Coombe Abbey”

**Scope and Contents**

Check marks next to list of plates, pages 29-31


**Scope and Contents**

Small sketch on front cover; Small sketches on plate no. 1; Some sketches on plate no. 4; “X” next to title, plate no. 6


**Scope and Contents**

From the Paris World's Fair 1900


**Scope and Contents**

Sketch, revers of Plate XLIX

Historical art furniture: specimens of English, French, German and Italian workmanship from the Middle Ages, Renaissance-Period, and epochs of Louis XIII, Louis XIV, Louis XV, and Louis XVI. New York: Helburn & Hagen, [1880?]. Print.  

**Scope and Contents**

Several sketches, Plate 13; Notations, Plate 36


**Scope and Contents**


**Scope and Contents**

Small drawing first inside page; 1 small loose paper sketch/drawing found between plates no. 3 and 4 see folder Box 35; Small notation in upper right corner, plate no. 31; Small flyer/advertisement for Maple & Co. found between plates no. 60 & 61; Small drawing, center bottom of page, plate no. 62; Small drawing, right side of page, plate no. 63; 2 small loose papers with sketches found between plates no. 76 & 77 see folder Box 35

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Box 10

Box 10

Box 10

Box 10

Box 11

Box 11

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Box 12

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Box 13

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Box 13

Box 13

Box 14

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- Page 9-
**Scope and Contents**

Date and initial on inside cover page

Box 14

Box 14

**Scope and Contents**

Edward M. Brolin's name and address printed on first inside page (Brolin was master chair designer for Baker Furniture); 1 loose photograph of a chair see folder Box 35; Notation on last inside page, upper left corner

Box 14

Box 14

Box 14

**Scope and Contents**

Large loose sheet of paper tucked inside front cover. Furniture diagram with notes. See folder Box 35

Box 15

Box 15

**Scope and Contents**

Initials and a date on first inside page; Small piece of paper as bookmark, plate no. Heft X. No.8 Gruppe III. 18; Small note, upper right corner of last page

Box 15

**Scope and Contents**

Initials and a date on first inside page

Box 16
Monckton, James H. Stair-building in its various forms : and the new one-

**Scope and Contents**

2 loose papers with calculations on them see folder Box 2; One loose image/plate of a buffet from a furniture catalog no designer noted see folder Box 35


**Scope and Contents**

“83 M 50.00” and “OBPG 165.00” written on top right corner of inside page 2; Short note on the bottom of page 53; Small drawing, top of page 95


**Scope and Contents**

Short note, left side of page 178 “5236 Maple”; Note “5236” on the back of a plate/advertisement for a chair, found between pages 178 and 179 see folder Box 35


**Scope and Contents**

Piece of paper as bookmark, plate no. 30


**Scope and Contents**

Notes page 47; Sentence underlined / passage marked page 126; Notes page 247; “David Wolcott Kendall” written across the top of page 263; “D. W. Kendall” stamped on bottom of page 263; Sketches page 278; “D. W. Kendall” stamped on middle of page 319; Notation page 409; “D. W. Kendall” stamped on bottom of page 411; Sentence underlined page 439

Scope and Contents

Paint/Watercolor splattered on reverse of plate no. 10; Paint/Watercolor splattered on reverse of plate no. 45; Paint/Watercolor splattered on plate no. 51

Schoy, Auguste. L'art architectural, décoratif, industriel et somptuaire de l'époque Louis XVI / 1. Liège: Claesen, 1868. Print. Box 18

Scope and Contents

Markings near the top of Plate 7; Sketch, bottom of Plate 30; Sketch, reverse of Plate 44; Sketches, reverse of Plate 69; Notation, top of Plate 72


Scope and Contents

Small notation, next to plate no. 15


Scope and Contents

Notation inside front cover; Notation reverse of plate no. IX; Drawing reverse of plate no. XXII

Charvet, Alberto. Raccolta pratica e artistica d'ammobigliamenti completi in diversi stili. Torino: A. Charvet-Grassi, [1890?]. Print. Box 19

Scope and Contents


Scope and Contents

Sketch on the reverse of plate no. XVIII; Small thumbtack holes at the top of plate no. XXVI; Small thumbtack holes at the top of plate no. XXXVI; Small thumbtack hole at the top

Scope and Contents

1 loose paper with notes see folder Box 35; Small notation inside cover, upper left side; Small sketches, upper right side of plate no. 20; Small sketch in margin, right side of plate no. 29; Small sketch, upper left side of plate no. 55; Small notations on plate no. 57; Small “X” next to a chair on plate no. 59; Small “X” next to a chair on plate no. 60; Small notation, bottom left side of plate no. 70; Small sketch, bottom of plate no. 80


Scope and Contents

1 Loose paper, “Organization Chart of Robert W. Irwin Co.” found between plates no. 30 and 31 see folder Box 36


Scope and Contents

Inside front cover: “Edward M. Brolin 215 Hall Street Rockford, Illinois Baker Furniture, INC Holland, Mich”; Loose paper, drawing, found before Fig. 149 Mahogany Book-Case see folder Box 36


Chippendale, Thomas. The Gentleman and Cabinet-

Scope and Contents

Underlined text, page 5; 1 small loose paper sketch/drawing found between plates no. XLIV and XLV see folder Box 35; Small drawing, right side of page, on plate no. LXIII; Small piece of paper as bookmark, plate no. LXVII; Small piece of paper as bookmark, plate no. LXXXII; Small piece of paper as bookmark, plate no. LXXXIV; Small piece of paper as bookmark, plate no. LXXXVIII; Small piece of paper as bookmark, plate no. CI; Small piece of paper as bookmark, plate no. CX; Small piece of paper as bookmark, plate no. CXI; Small piece of paper as bookmark, plate no. CXII; Small
drawing, right side of page, on plate no. CXVIII; Small piece of paper as bookmark, plate no. CXXX; Small piece of paper as bookmark, plate no. CXXXI; Small drawing, center of page, on plate no. CXXXI; Small drawing, center of page, on plate no. CXLIV; Small piece of paper as bookmark with small drawings on it, plate no. CXLVII; Small drawing, right side of page, on plate no. CLIII; Large leaf found between plates no. CLII and CLIII see folder Box 35; Small piece of paper as bookmark, plate no. CLXII; Small drawing, top right side of page, on plate no. CLXVIII; Small drawing, top right side of page, on plate no. CLXXI; Small drawing, bottom left side of page, on plate no. CLXXIII; One small loose piece of paper with numbers on it found at plate no. CLXXVI see folder Box 35; Small drawings, plate no. CXCIV; Small drawing, bottom right side of page, plate no. CC


The New Note in Furnishings. London: Waring & Gillow Ltd., [1901?]. Print. Box 24

Scope and Contents

Notation and signature, Title page; “X” next to left image, page 37; Sketching around left image and small sketch on page 39; “X” next to right image, page 45; “X” under chairs “D 60.” and “D 61.”, page 57; Notation and line drawn to left image, page 65; “X’s” over three chairs, page 67; Small sketch, page 67; “X’s” near three chairs, page 68; Notations, page 68; Arrow drawn to chair, upper right corner of page 95; “X” next to chair “E 121.” page 96; Circled “X” next to chair “E 171.” page 97; Arrow drawn to chair, middle of the page 97; Table circled with a large “X” next to it, page 113; Two small sketches, page 193

Some examples of Warings Furniture. London: Waring & Gillow, [1900?]. Print. Box 24

Scope and Contents

Small sketch, Hall Furniture page 6; Small sketches, Drawing Room Suites, page 7; Small sketch, Drawing Room Suites, page 9; Small sketch, China Cabinets, page 9; Small sketch, China Cabinets, page 10; Sketching around bottom of right image, China Cabinets, page 11; Chair lightly circled, Screens, page 16; Sketch of a chair, Bedroom Suites, page 37

Scope and Contents

Notation page 14; Notations, bottom of page 41; Small piece of paper as bookmark, between pages 224 and 225; Small portion of image on page 239 colored in with red pencil


Scope and Contents

1 Small calling card/business card with notation on the reverse side see folder Box 35; Page glued to reverse side of plate no. 18


Hessling, Egon and Walter Hessling. Louis XIV Möbel des Louvre und des Musee des Arts Decoratifs. Berlin, New York [etc.]: B. Hessling, g.m.b.h., 1909. Print.  Box 27


Scope and Contents

Some notation on the back cover of part 1


Scope and Contents

Several markings, front and reverse of page “Table des Planches”


Scope and Contents

Small sketch reverse side of plate no. 21; “X” next to one of the images on plate no. 27; “X” next to image on plate no. 30; “X” next to image on plate no. 32; Small sketches on plate no. 40; Small sketch on plate no. 44; Large sketches on reverse
of plate no. 60; “X’s” next to 3 images on plate no. 83; Small sketch on plate no. 87; Sketching on plate no. 98

Meuble De Luxe. Paris: Armand Guerinet, 1906. Print. [Not in original order. The folio has been reordered and put into folders, presumably by Phoenix Furniture Company]

Scope and Contents

Notation/Label “Louis XVI Cabinets Desks Sideboard”, first folder; Notation/Label “Louis XIV Sofas Chaise Lounge Beds”, second folder; Notation reverse of Plate 14 “Sieges des Palais”; Notation/Label “Empire Sofas- Chaise- Lounge Beds-”, third folder; Notation/Label “Louis XV Sofas Chaise Lounge Beds-”, fourth folder; Notation reverse of Plate 37 “Sieges des Palais”; Notation reverse of Plate 192 “Canape Louis XV”; Notation/Label “Louis XVI Sofas Chaise Lounge Beds-”, fifth folder; Notation reverse of Plate 39 “Sieges des Musees Nationaux”; Notation reverse of Plate 149 “Palais de Trianon”


Scope and Contents

Small sketch, next to description of Plate LXVII; Circled “X”, Plate I; “X” next to lower left desk, Plate II; Circled “X”, Plate VII; Circled “X”, Plate IX; “X” next to upper right desk, Plate XI; Short line drawn next to desk, left side of page, Plate XVI; “X” next to chair, right side of page, Plate XXIV; “X” and sketch next to chair, right side of page, Plate XXVI; “X” above bottom middle chair, Plate XXVIII; “X” next to upper left chair, Plate XXIX; “X’s” above two chairs, Plate XXXI; Circled “X” above chair, left side of page, Plate XXXII; “X” above chair, right side of page, Plate XXXIII; “X” and line drawn above upper right chair, Plate XXXIV; “X’s” near three chairs, Plate XXXVI; “X’s” above two chairs, Plate XXXIX; Very faded sketch, reverse of Plate XL; Small sketch, near bottom middle chair, Plate XLII; “X” above top middle chair, Plate XLVIII; Small sketch, bottom left corner, reverse of Plate XLIX; Notation and line drawn to bottom middle chair, Plate L; Small “X” beneath chair, left side of Plate LII; Very faded sketch, reverse of Plate LIII; Very faded sketch, reverse of Plate LV; “X” above top right chair, Plate LVI; Lines above bottom right chair, Plate LVIII; “X” above chair, right side of page, Plate LXI; “X” and line drawn to top right chair, Plate LXVII; “X” beneath bottom left chair, Plate LXVII; “X” next
to image, right side of page, Plate LXXXVIII; Faded sketch reverse of Plate LXXXVIII; Sketch, Plate XCIX


**Scope and Contents**  
Sketch, reverse of Plate 116; Signature, reversed of Plate 125


**Scope and Contents**  
Includes Parts 1 & 2, published in 1917; Includes Parts 3 & 4, published in 1917; Includes Parts 5 & 6, published in 1917; Includes Parts 7 & 8, published in 1918; Includes Parts 9 & 10, published in ?


**Scope and Contents**  
Some small notations on first inside page; Plates look like they have handwritten labels; Some small notations on last inside page


**Scope and Contents**  
Small notation on first inside page, upper left corner; Plates look like they have handwritten labels; “X” under label on plate “Knole, Kent. _The Bedchamber”; “X” under label on plate “Knole, Kent. _The Gallery over the Hall.”; “X” under label on plate “Knole, Kent. _The Cartoon Gallery.”; “X” under label on plate “Knole, Kent. _The Hall.”


**Scope and Contents**  
Plates look like they have handwritten labels; “X” under label on plate “Hatfield, Herts. _ Gallery in the Hall


**Scope and Contents**

Plates look like they have handwritten labels

| Loose Plate found in Huisraad en Binnenhuis in Nederland. (Box 1) | Box 35 |
| Loose papers found in “Stair-building in its Various Forms” (Box 16) | Box 35 |
| Loose papers found in “The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director” (Box 23) | Box 35 |
| Loose paper found in “English Furniture and Decoration 1680-1800” (Box 16) | Box 35 |
| Loose papers found in “The Cabinet Maker” (Box 10) | Box 35 |
| Loose paper found in “Comment Discerner les Styles” (Box 26) | Box 35 |
| Loose paper found in “Italian Renaissance Furniture” (Box 14) | Box 35 |
| Loose paper found in “Die Fünfunddreißig Möbelstyle” (Box 21) | Box 35 |
| Loose paper found in American Seating Company Catalog (Box 14) | Box 35 |

**Scope and Contents**

Small sketch inside front cover; Small sketch inside back cover; Small pinhole on plate “Louis XVI Art Architectural et Decoratif PL 70”; Brief notation on plate “Louis XVI Art Architectural et Decoratif PL 123”; “X” and circle drawn on plate “ Architectural Ornaments in Berlin – Parts of the Arched Roof in the Berlin Industrial Exhibition PL 85”

| Profils et Tournages XIV Siècle Epoche Gothique Plates 1-60 – Loose in a folder | Box 36 |

**Scope and Contents**

Small pinhole at the top of Plate 1; Small sketch, upper right corner, Plate 1; Small sketch, reverse side of Plate 3; Small sketches, one middle of the page along the right side and one near the bottom right corner, Plate 4; Small sketch, near the center of the page, Plate 19; Arrows drawn on Plate 40; Small sketch, near the center of the page, Plate 41; Small sketches, near the bottom of the page, Plate 47; Several small sketches and arrows, Plate 48; Plate 48 has been cut along the left side

| The Art-Worker – Volume 1 / 1878 – Loose in a folder | Box 36 |
**Scope and Contents**

Several pinholes, bottom of Plate 10; Pinhole, bottom of Plate 15; Several lines drawn along the sides of Plate 15; Small sketch, near the center of the page, Plate 20; Several pinholes, bottom of Plate 24; Two sketches, reverse of Plate 24; Drawings filled in with blue colored pencil? Plate 28; “X” next to top drawing, Plate 44; Drawing shaded in several spots with pencil, Plate 49; Several pinholes, bottom of Plate 76; Several pinholes, bottom of Plate 78; Small sketch and writing (near bottom of the page), Plate 85

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Loose paper found in Fragments and Details of Architecture” (Box 22)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Loose paper found in A History of English Furniture (Box 22)</td>
<td>Box 36</td>
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