

Collection #
SC3689

**ARTHUR E. MIDDLEHURST
LETTERS, CA. 1928-1936**

Collection Information	1
Biographical Sketch	2
Scope and Content Note	3
Contents	4

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 4 manuscript folders

COLLECTION
DATES: ca. 1928-1936

PROVENANCE: Gift of Dorothy Jean "Jeannie" Coulter, Traverse City, MI

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NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Arthur E. Middlehurst (April 27, 1895-March 18, 1954) was born in Greenfield, Indiana to John and Florence Middlehurst, the oldest of three children. He grew up in Vincennes and graduated from Vincennes High School in 1912. From there, he moved to Indianapolis where he studied architecture with Herbert W. Foltz and was a member of the Indianapolis Architectural Club and the Beaux Arts Society. He enrolled in the architecture program at Cornell University and graduated in 1919. He joined the firm of York and Sawyer in New York City and worked on the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. He then moved to Los Angeles to work for the firm of Meyer and Holler. In 1928, Middlehurst was sent by his firm to Spain for an eight month term arranging the furniture and interiors of the International Telephone and Telegraph Company building in Madrid. The job lasted longer than the expected eight months and was completed in 1930. After finishing the job, Middlehurst remained in Spain to work on watercolor paintings which were granted an exposition in February of 1931 at the National Library in Madrid and at the Costa Galleries in Mallorca in 1932. Middlehurst remained in Mallorca and continued his art and architecture practice, designing the "Demountable House" and relocated to Barcelona in 1934 where he continued his architecture practice. Aside from a few trips back to the United States to visit his family, he remained in Spain for the rest of his life.

Sources:

"Local Architects Score in Beaux Art Problems." *The Indianapolis Star*, 21 December 1913, Page 32.

Middlehurst, Arthur E. "Architects Have Beaux Arts Club." *The Indianapolis Star*, 31 January 1915, Page 8.

"The Star's Brick House Designing Contest." *The Indianapolis Star*, 30 May 1915, Page 47.

"Beaux Arts Ball to Be Held February 28." *The Cornell Daily Sun*, 20 February 1919, Page 4.

"Vincennes Man Doing Architectural Work in New York." *The Western Sun*, 3 February 1922, Page 5.

"Paintings of Local Artist Win High Praise in Spain." *The Vincennes Sun-Commercial*. 22 February 1931, Page 1.

"Vincennes Man Displays Group of Paintings at Exposition." *The Vincennes Sun-Commercial*, 4 March 1932, Page 5.

"Parents Anxiously Await Word Concerning Safety of Arthur Middlehurst." *The Vincennes Sun-Commercial*, 24 July 1936, Page 1.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains letters written by Arthur Middlehurst back home to his parents and sister in Vincennes, Indiana. During the course of the correspondence, the effects of the economic downturn and the instability of the Spanish government are apparent. The letters track Middlehurst's arrival and initial impressions of Spanish life and move on to his attempts to assimilate into the culture by becoming fluent in Spanish. Middlehurst always intends to come back to the United States but also wishes to travel around Europe once his job with the International Telephone & Telegraph Company building is finished. However, the economic conditions at home in the United States deteriorate to the point where Middlehurst decides to try and wait out the trying times in Mallorca, Spain, where he can live more frugally and try his hand at becoming a painter. The remaining letters document Middlehurst's attempt at a career in the fine arts, his transition back to his architecture practice, and his continued reluctance to return to America. Middlehurst often comments on the worldwide economic downturn and reference the political instability in Spain. The last three letters in the collection are from 1936 and Middlehurst gives more descriptions of what is happening on the ground as political tensions between right wing and left wing factions increased ahead of the military coup in July of 1936. On July 21st, 1936, he sends a cable to Vincennes to let his family know he is safe, and two days later he sends a longer letter with someone who is leaving Spain on a French boat bound for Marseilles giving more details on what impacts the coup is having on his daily life in Barcelona.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Passenger List, S.S. Minnetonka, 24 March 1928

Correspondence, 1928-1929

Correspondence, 1930-1933

Correspondence, 1934-1936

CONTAINER

Folder 1 of 4

Folder 2 of 4

Folder 3 of 4

Folder 4 of 4