

Collection #
P 0862

**JOHN FARRELL SIMPSON LITHOGRAPHS
1975, N.D.**

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4 July 2023

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: One half-size OVA graphics box

COLLECTION DATES: 1975, n.d.

PROVENANCE: Purchased from the Washington County Historical Society, Salem, Indiana

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 0000.0751

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Farrell Simpson was an artist and art teacher in Indianapolis. He was an industrial designer, illustrator, etcher, sculptor, and ceramist. He was a frequent judge of local art exhibitions.

John Farrell Simpson was born on 11 March 1904 to Oliver Obediah Simpson and Bessie Catherine Kettrey Simpson in Salem, Washington County, Indiana. It appears that he was the eldest of five children. He graduated from Salem High School in 1922. Following the death of his father in 1927, his mother and siblings moved to Indianapolis.

John was awarded a scholarship to the John Herron School of Art in Indianapolis and attended that institution from September 1922 to June 1926. He began teaching art at Arsenal Technical High School in September 1926, becoming head of the art department in 1948. In the summers of 1949–1951, he taught ceramics at the Herron School of Art. He earned his Master of Art degree from Indiana University in 1951. The following year he became art consultant for the Indianapolis public high schools. In 1960 he became head of the art department of Arlington High School, retiring in 1970 after forty-four years of teaching.

He served as president of the Art Education Association of Indiana, the Art Section of the Indiana State Teachers Association, the Alumni Association of the Herron School of Art of Indiana University, and the Retired Teachers Association at Arsenal Technical High School. He was also a member of the Benton House Association, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the Mystic Tie Masonic Lodge, and Scottish Rite. He served as an elder at Irvington Presbyterian Church. John Farrell Simpson died on 24 November 1983 in Oaklandon in Marion County.

Sources:

Ancestrylibrary.com (Accessed 3 July 2023):

- Find a Grave
- Indiana, U.S., Death Certificates, 1899–2017
- United States Federal Census, 1910–1950
- U.S., City Directories, 1822–1995
- U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–2016

“John F. Simpson, 79, retired artist, dies.” *The Indianapolis Star*, 26 November 1983, p. 42.

“John Simpson Services Set.” *The Indianapolis News*, 26 November 1983, p. 19.

Materials in the collection

HISTORICAL SKETCHES

Beck's Mill

George Beck and his family left North Carolina and arrived in southern Indiana in the fall of 1807. Beck and his sons found a river they named Blue River and built a mill by a large spring there, about seven miles southwest of what is now the town of Salem. The first corn was ground at the mill on 28 August 1808. Later that year, a sawmill was added to the gristmill. Over time, new equipment was installed, such as carding machines and a wool picker. More space was needed to accommodate the additional equipment, so a larger log mill was constructed in 1825–1826. The present frame building that is now known as Beck's Mill was erected in 1864. The mill continued to operate until approximately 1950. Beck's Mill was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2007. It is the only extant mill in Indiana that used only grindstone milling in the entire milling process.

John Milton Hay Birthplace and Stevens Memorial Museum

John Milton Hay (1838–1905) was born to Dr. Charles Hay and Helen Leonard Hay in Salem, Indiana. He was a statesman and diplomat whose government service lasted more than forty years. Beginning as a private secretary and assistant to Abraham Lincoln, he served as Secretary of State under William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. Hay's birthplace, a small brick house on S. College Avenue, was built in 1824 as a school building. Hay's father bought the building in 1833. The Hay home was acquired by the Washington County Historical Society in 1967. Part of the John Hay Center, it has been a National Historic Site since 1971.

The Stevens Memorial Museum is the centerpiece of the John Hay Center, founded by the Washington County Historical Society. It was built in 1970 to preserve the county's history. It was named after the family of Warder William Stevens and Sarah Caspar Stevens. Warder Stevens wrote and published *The Centennial History of Washington County* in 1916.

Washington County Court House

In 1814 Washington County was established by the General Assembly of the Indiana Territory. Commissioners selected the county seat and named it Salem, which was platted the same year. The courthouse pictured in this collection is the third structure to serve this purpose and was completed in 1888. It was designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style by Harry P. McDonald of Louisville, Kentucky, and constructed with locally quarried limestone. This courthouse was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

Sources:

"History of Beck's Mill" [History of Historic Becks Mill in Southern Indiana](#) Accessed 4 July 2023.

Indiana Historical Bureau. "Washington County Courthouse / Salem Downtown Historic District" [IHB: Washington County Courthouse / Salem Downtown Historic District](#) Accessed 4 July 2023.

The John Hay Center <https://johnhaycenter.org/index.php> Accessed 4 July 2023.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of five mounted and matted lithographs of illustrations by John Farrell Simpson of historic buildings in his native Salem, Washington County, Indiana. They depict Beck’s Mill, the John Milton Hay Birthplace, Stevens Memorial Museum, and the Washington County Court House. Four are designated as plates I, II, III, and IV of Washington County Historical Society Collector Prints, and are numbered 102 of 200 printings. The fifth is a smaller print of plate I, John Milton Hay’s birthplace, and has the year 1975 written on back. It is likely that all of this collection is from around that time.

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Beck’s Mill (Plate III: 102/200)

John Milton Hay Birthplace (Plate I: 102/200)

John Milton Hay Birthplace (smaller print, with 1975
written on back)

Stevens Memorial Museum (Plate IV: 102/200)

Washington County Court House (Plate II: 102/200)

CONTAINER

OVA Graphics, Box 1,
Folder 1

OVA Graphics, Box 1,
Folder 2

OVA Graphics, Box 1,
Folder 3

OVA Graphics, Box 1,
Folder 4

OVA Graphics, Box 1,
Folder 5