Biographical Sketch

Dr. Norman Goldberg was a Tennessean who graduated from Vanderbilt University’s Medical School in 1930. In 1950, he purchased the John Crome the Elder painting “An Old Watermill,” from the Parke Bernet auction in New York City. Although he was living in the city at the time practicing as a general surgeon, Goldberg ended his career in medicine three years later at the age of forty-seven, and began his new amateur profession in the history of art.

Goldberg bought his Crome painting to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and found that there was a lack of scholarship on the field in terms of Crome’s authenticity. C.H. Collins Baker, the curator of the National Gallery in London and an authority on Crome, sent him a list of presumed works by the artist and Goldberg began his own personal research on Crome the Elder. This took him 100,000 miles across the United States and Canada, and eventually to England in 1960; by 1970, he had travelled to England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, France, the Netherlands, and Spain. He began his catalogue raisonné on the artist in 1963 and after fifteen years saw his work, *John Crome the Elder*, published. Dr. Goldberg’s interests expanded from John Crome the Elder to the entire Norwich School from his initial interest to the end of his life. His other published work, *Landscapes of the Norwich School: An American debut 1967*, was a catalogue for an exhibition held at the Cummer Gallery of Art in Jacksonville, Florida in 1967. Goldberg lectured in both the United States and England at acclaimed institutions such as Vanderbilt University in Nashville, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Castle Museum in Norwich.

In the remaining years of Dr. Goldberg’s life after his research was published, he moved on to study John Sell Cotman, another artist from the Norwich School. He accumulated the largest collection of Cotman etchings outside of England. He was asked to write a book by one of the university presses, but this was never completed before his death on July 30, 1982.

Dr. Goldberg’s memory lives on at his former institution, Vanderbilt University. The Goldberg Room holds his extensive collection of books on the Norwich School and East Anglia. He and his wife, Roselea, posthumously support both a chair position in the Vanderbilt History of Art Department and a regularly occurring lecture series.
Scope & Contents Note

The research materials in the Goldberg Collection span Dr. Goldberg’s entire research career, dating from the mid-1950’s to 1982. The collection was first arranged in order of its original storage, divided into subject headings based on content, and finally organized by subject headings that still maintain the overall order of the original storage. The main subjects are as follows: his notes and drafts on the catalogue raisonné, *John Crome the Elder*; Goldberg’s notes and drafts on “The Norwich School: Birth and Growth;” notes and preparatory documents for an exhibition on the Norwich School; notes from an unpublished manuscript on John Sell Cotman; various prints and illustrations; photographs from a trip to the United Kingdom; publications ranging from exhibition catalogues to newspaper clippings; and finally, a small collection of transparencies.

Provenance

The Goldberg Collection was included in the Goldberg library donation made to Vanderbilt University in the fall of 1982 upon the bequest of Dr. Norman L. Goldberg after his death on July 30, 1982.

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