

**YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY ACQUIRES IMPORTANT ALBERT SACK
LEGACY ARCHIVES**

The Yale University Art Gallery has announced its purchase of the **Albert Sack Legacy Archives, an unparalleled resource of comparative material for the study of American furniture** from the professional records of Israel Sack, Inc.

Initiated by the Yale University Art Gallery, the acquisition is made possible by **Anne T. and Robert M. Bass, B.A. 1971**. The archives include original photographs and transparencies, business records, and publications on American furniture and silver. The core of the archives are the 7,000 black-and-white photographs and their corresponding negatives; several hundred color transparencies and slides; approximately 100 binders of images from advertisements in periodicals, auction catalogues, and museum collections identified as “The Encyclopedia”; 25 binders of illustrated advertisements featuring objects from the Sack firm; and notes and images for Albert Sack’s books *Fine Points of Furniture* and *New Fine Points of Furniture*. In addition to these materials and other business records, the archives also include a library of books on American furniture and early American silver, several sets of industry periodicals, and a broad selection of auction catalogues from the turn of the century to the year 2000. Of particular importance are the 7,000 black-and-white photographs, the clarity of which surpasses the image quality obtained from published references.

“Albert Sack was renowned for his generosity in sharing his knowledge with others. His dream was to make his life’s work and research accessible to inspire a new generation of collectors, dealers, and scholars,” say **Shirley D. Sack**, Albert Sack’s widow, and their daughter, **Deborah A. Friedman**. “We are so honored that Yale has chosen to preserve the Albert Sack legacy.”

Richard C. Levin, President of Yale University, comments, “This wonderful gift from Anne and Robert Bass will greatly enhance our exceptional resources for the study of American decorative arts. We are deeply grateful.”

Robert M. Bass, B.A. 1971, whose donation helped make this acquisition possible, says, “My interest in American furniture was piqued by Ted Stebbins’ course in American art that introduced me to Yale’s extraordinary Garvan Collection. When Anne and I began to assemble our collection, we turned to the renowned firm of Israel Sack where we had the privilege of working with brothers Harold and Albert Sack, who had succeeded their legendary father in the enterprise. As dealers and scholars of American decorative arts, their tutelage over many years enhanced our appreciation for the distinctive character of American furniture at its best and enabled us, and many others, to become discerning collectors. We are pleased to honor the Sack family and the university with this gift.”

Patricia Kane, Friends of American Arts Curator of American Decorative Arts, notes, “The Albert Sack Legacy Archives is an extraordinary resource that every scholar of American furniture will want to draw upon. It has provided me with insights into Rhode Island furniture in the past and in the future access to its original photographs will enhance our website the Rhode Island Furniture Archive at the Yale University Art Gallery.”

Jock Reynolds, the Henry J. Heinz II Director of the Yale University Art Gallery, states, “The

addition of this legendary archive will greatly enhance the resources that have been compiled by the generations of distinguished Yale curators and faculty members who have devoted themselves to the study and teaching of American material culture. Once the Albert Sack Legacy Archives are digitized and made accessible, Yale will be able to freely offer an incomparable wealth of cultural resources on the decorative arts. For those studying early American furniture and silver, the addition of the Albert Sack Legacy Archives to the Gallery's Garvan Collection, Rhode Island Furniture Archive, and Furniture Study will provide comprehensive and centralized access to original source materials."

Israel Sack, Inc., and Albert Sack

For much of the 20th century, Israel Sack, Inc., was the premier vendor for early American furniture. Founded by Israel Sack, a cabinetmaker who emigrated from Lithuania to Boston in 1903, the firm developed from its roots in repairing antique furniture to being a major dealer of antique furniture by the 1920s. Israel Sack, Inc., became a family business when Israel was joined by his oldest son, Harold, in 1933, by Albert in 1934, and by Robert, his youngest son, in 1952. After Israel's death in 1953 the three sons continued to grow the family business, educating collectors and dealers through lectures and publications. In 1957 the firm began publishing a periodical brochure, "Opportunities in American Antiques," later reissued as ten bound volumes, *American Antiques from Israel Sack Collection*. Drawing on the firm's photography archives, Albert Sack published *Fine Points of Furniture* (1950), a bible for beginning collectors, as well as scholars and curators that helped define the field. A second iteration, *New Fine Points of Furniture*, came out in 1993. The firm had a solid reputation for selling only objects of outstanding quality and still holds the record for paying the highest price for a piece of American furniture at auction, the Nicholas Brown desk and bookcase that sold for \$12.1 million at Christie's in 1989. The firm closed its doors in 2002.

Yale University Art Gallery

The Yale University Art Gallery, America's oldest and one of its most important university art museums, was founded in 1832, when patriot-artist John Trumbull donated more than 100 of his paintings to Yale College. Since then, the Gallery's collections have grown to number more than 185,000 objects, spanning the globe and ranging in date from ancient times to the present day. In addition to its celebrated collections of American paintings and decorative arts, the Gallery is noted for its important holdings of Greek and Roman art; early Italian paintings; later European art; Asian art; African art; Indo-Pacific art; art of the ancient Americas; and Impressionist, modern, and contemporary works. Located at the corner of Chapel and York Streets in New Haven, Connecticut, the Gallery is open to the public free of charge: Tuesday–Saturday 10:00 AM–5:00 PM, Thursday until 8:00 PM (September–June); Sunday 1:00–6:00 PM. Closed Mondays and major holidays. For additional information, visit www.artgallery.yale.edu, or call 203.432.0600.

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For additional press information, contact Maura Scanlon, Director of Public Relations, at 203.432.0611 or maura.scanlon@yale.edu.