

**Frank Edwin Elwell papers, 1883-1972**  
**FLP.RBD.ELWELL**

**Finding aid prepared by Caitlin Goodman**

---

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

July 03, 2014

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Free Library of Philadelphia: Rare Book Department  
May 2014  
Philadelphia, PA, 19103

## Table of Contents

---

<u>Summary Information</u> .....	3
<u>Biographical note</u> .....	4
<u>Scope and Contents note</u> .....	4
<u>Arrangement note</u> .....	5
<u>Administrative Information</u> .....	5
<u>Related Materials</u> .....	5
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u> .....	6
<u>Collection Inventory</u> .....	7

## Summary Information

---

<b>Repository</b>	Free Library of Philadelphia: Rare Book Department
<b>Creator - Compiler</b>	Elwell, Alcott Farrar, 1886-1962
<b>Creator - Sculptor</b>	Elwell, Frank Edwin, 1858-1922
<b>Creator - Compiler</b>	Elwell, Helen Chaffee
<b>Title</b>	Frank Edwin Elwell papers
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1883-1972
<b>Extent</b>	0.63 Linear feet
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	This collection consists of articles, biographical material, photographs, and scrapbooks related to the American sculptor Frank Edwin Elwell (1858-1922), compiled by his son and daughter-in-law, Alcott Farrar Elwell and Helen Chaffee Elwell.

### Preferred Citation note

[Description and date of item], [Box and folder number], Frank Edwin Elwell papers, 1883-1972, Free Library of Philadelphia, Rare Book Department.

## Biographical note

---

**Francis Edwin Elwell** was born in Concord, Massachusetts on June 15, 1858, into a prominent intellectual family. Orphaned at a young age, Elwell was raised by his grandfather and grew very close to the nearby Alcott family, where he spent significant time with author Louisa May Alcott. His artistic education began early with lessons from Alcott's sister, Abigail May Alcott, followed by training at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. In 1880 he moved to Paris and attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts, studying under Alexandre Falguiere.

He returned to America in 1885 with his first wife, Molina (Hildreth) Elwell, and settled briefly in Massachusetts, where he lectured at Harvard University. His statue, "Dickens and Little Nell," now located in Clark Park, Philadelphia, won a medal at the 1893 Columbian Exposition (Chicago World's Fair). Another statue, "Awakening of Egypt," was shown at the Salon de 1896 in Paris. From 1903-1905 he was Curator of Ancient and Modern Statuary at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Between 1884 and 1915 he produced more than fifty sculptural works, primarily statues and busts. Elwell died in Darien, Connecticut on January 23, 1922.

**Alcott Farrar Elwell** (1887-1962) was the eldest son of Frank Edwin Elwell and Molina (Hildreth) Elwell. He spent 1908 with the United States Geological Survey in Wyoming, and served in the "Harvard Regiment" infantry in World War I, and as a Captain in World War II. His career was primarily devoted to Mowglis, a summer camp in New Hampshire, which he ran for 27 years. Alcott Elwell and his wife, **Helen Chaffee Elwell** (1888-1976), donated the Frank Edwin Elwell collection to the library.

### Bibliography:

*Who Was Who in America*, 1929-1940. Taft, Lorado. *American Sculpture*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1903.

---

## Scope and Contents note

---

This collection consists of material related to Frank Edwin Elwell's life and work as a sculptor. It includes articles by and about Elwell, biographical material compiled by his daughter-in-law, Helen Chaffee Elwell, photographs of Elwell's sculptures and studio, and a scrapbook of Elwell-related clippings. It also includes a copy of Lorado Taft's book, *American Sculpture* (1903), in which additional photographs of Elwell's works have been pasted. A short biographical sketch of Elwell's son, Alcott Farrar Elwell, is included in the biographical material.

## Arrangement note

---

The collection is arranged alphabetically into six files. Lorado Taft's book, *American Sculpture*, is housed with the Rare Book Department's General Collection.

---

## Administrative Information

---

### Publication Information

Free Library of Philadelphia: Rare Book Department May 2014

### Conditions Governing Access note

This collection is open to researchers by appointment. Please contact the Rare Book Department at 215-686-5416 for access.

### Conditions Governing Use note

The right of access to material does not imply the right of publication. Permission for reprinting, reproduction, or extensive quotation from the rare books, manuscripts, prints, or drawings must be obtained through application, stating the use to be made of the material. The reader bears the responsibility for any possible infringement of copyright laws in the publication of such material. A reproduction fee may be charged depending upon the use of material.

### Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Gifts of Alcott Farrar Elwell and Helen Chaffee Elwell, 1953-1970.

---

## Related Materials

---

### Related Archival Materials note

American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming: Alcott Farrar Elwell scrapbook, 1908.

Concord Public Library: Louisa May Alcott, Frank Edwin Elwell, Alcott Farrar Elwell : scrapbook, 1891-1968.

Thomas J. Watson Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art: Frank Edwin Elwell papers.

---

## Controlled Access Headings

---

### Genre(s)

- Photographs
- Scrapbooks

### Occupation(s)

- Sculptors

### Personal Name(s)

- Elwell, Frank Edwin, 1858-1922

### Subject(s)

- Art
- Sculpture

## Scrapbooks

## Collection Inventory

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Articles 1898-1908	1	1-3
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
Photostats and copies of three articles by or about Frank Edwin Elwell.		
Biographical information circa 1967	1	4
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
Includes a CV and partial list of works for Frank Edwin Elwell and a brief biographical timeline for his son, Alcott Farrar Elwell.		
Carte d'exposant from Salon de 1896 1896	1	5
<b>Scrapbooks</b>		
		<b>Box</b>
Scrapbook of newspaper clippings 1891-1953		2
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
The great majority of the clippings date from 1891-1894. The scrapbook also includes 1922 obituaries for Elwell.		
Scrapbook of photographs of Elwell sculptures 1883-1970		3

## Sculptures

---

### Scope and Contents note

Includes an 1883 letter from Frank Edwin Elwell.

<b>Sculptures</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
"Dickens and Little Nell" 1944-1972	1	6
"The Dispatch Rider of the American Revolution" 1966-1967	1	7
"Edwin Booth" 1959	1	8
Engraved copper plate of unidentified bust undated	1	9
Photographs of Elwell sculptures, 38 items 1898-1961	1	10-12
		<b>Call-Number</b>
Taft, Lorado. <i>American Sculpture</i> . New York: The Macmillan Company 1903		RBD GEN 1962-418

### Scope and Contents note

This 1903 book has been annotated with additional information about Frank Edwin Elwell and has an additional five plates of photographs of Elwell sculptures pasted in.