

Thomas Benedict Clarke

1848–1931

Businessman and Art Collector



Born in New York City, Thomas B. Clarke was the son of Dr. George Washington Clarke, headmaster of the Mount Washington Collegiate Institute of New York, where the boy received his education. Clarke entered the textile business as a partner, first with linen dealer John Carmichael and then, in 1876, with Thomas King of Troy, New York. In 1888, at the age of forty, Clarke retired from business and devoted the rest of his life to collecting and dealing in art.

Clarke's interest in collecting began with American paintings as early as 1872 and continued after he retired. He sold Chinese, Japanese, and Greek ceramics and Middle Eastern art through Art House, his gallery on Fifth Avenue, which he opened in 1891. As an art advisor to financier J. Pierpont Morgan, Clarke contributed to the *Catalogue of the Morgan Collection of Chinese Porcelains*. Clarke disbursed his American art collection during a four-day sale in February 1899. After that he concentrated on early American portraiture and furniture, but he continued to collect Chinese porcelain as well as English and European works of art. He closed his gallery in 1919.

Clarke's collection was sold in 1931 following his death. His New York home at 22 East 35th Street now houses the Collectors Club of New York.

Literature

Thomas E. Kirby et al., *Catalogue of the Private Arts Collection of Thomas B. Clarke*, American Art Galleries, February 14–17 (New York, 1899).

American Art Association, *Collection of the Late Thomas B. Clarke*, Anderson Galleries, December 2–5 (New York, 1931).

Frederick Baekeland, "Collectors of American Painting, 1813–1913," *American Art Review* 3 (November–December 1976), pp. 121–48.

Exhibitions and sales catalogues of the collections of Thomas B. Clarke; search

<https://archive.org/search.php?query=Thomas%20Benedict%20Clarke>

Winterthur Library, Scrapbooks and register, 1872–1879, 1915–1916, 1921–1922; Mantle

Fielding Papers, 1902–1938; search <http://findingaid.winterthur.org/html/col207.html>

Archives of American Art, Archives of Thomas B. Clarke, consisting of Private Art Collection of Thomas B. Clarke, 1848–1931; Thomas Benedict Clarke Scrapbooks, 1880–1930; Letters to Thomas B. Clarke by Artists, 1883–1918; search <http://www.siris.si.edu/>