

Joseph D. Jesensky Collection
Special Collections – Akron Summit County Public Library

ACCESSION #: 2006-7

ACQUISITION: Maureen McGinty, Metro Parks Chief of Interpretive Programming, donated the collection on June 7, 2006.

ACCESS: Restricted access; materials fragile; access by request at Main Library Special Collections only.

VOLUME: 1 manuscript box, 1.5 linear ft.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Joseph D. Jesensky was born in Apatin, Hungary on the Danube River in 1906. His family moved to the United States when he was six years old. By the time he was eight, his family was living along the banks of the Cuyahoga River in a house on top of Main Street hill, now Ohio City. He attended St. Malachi Catholic Elementary school.

At the age of 16, Jesensky received a scholarship to the Cleveland School of Art for life drawing and landscape. While an art student, he began exploring the Cuyahoga Valley, beginning what has been a long and productive career as an artist, naturalist, and historian.

In his late teens, Jesensky worked as an apprentice at Morgan Lithographic and continued his art education in night school.

During the Depression, he volunteered for A.B. Williams, the first Cleveland Metropolitan Park District naturalist, to sketch and record wildflowers and plants in the park. This led to a job in the CMPD sign shop.

Jesensky worked as a forester and map maker for the Ohio Division of Forestry in the late 1930s. In 1941, he began working for the Akron Metropolitan Park District. He has also worked for Hocking Hills and Mohican State Parks.

During World War II, Jesensky worked in the blueprint department of the Corsair war plane at Goodyear Aircraft. After the war, he worked for Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in the graphics department.

Jesensky “retired” from Goodyear in 1971, but has continued to work in his areas of interest, being a valuable member of the Cuyahoga Valley Archaeology Society and the Ohio Parks and Recreation’s “Citizen of the Year” in 1989. In 1999, he published *Joe’s Place: Conversations on the Cuyahoga Valley*.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The collection consists of materials given to Maureen McGinty, Metro Parks Chief of Interpretive Programming, by her friend and mentor Joseph D. Jesensky. Items include a specially prepared copy of Jesensky’s *Pages from a Tinkers Creak Valley Sketch Book, 1923-1933*, correspondence from Jesensky to McGinty dating from 1984-1992, news clippings, and two CDs containing digital images of artwork by Jesensky. Additional items will be added at a later date.

INVENTORY: 1 small manuscript box

Phase Box: *Pages from a Tinkers Creak Valley Sketch Book, 1923-1933*

Folder #1: Correspondence, undated

Folder #2: Correspondence, 1984-1992

Folder #3: News clippings, 1980-2005

Folder #4: Two CDs of digital images and printouts of thumbnails of Jesensky's artwork