

Selection of books from Thomas Nason's studio library

Florence Griswold Museum
Gift of Janet Eltinge

After serving in the Army during World War I and various jobs in civil service and business, Nason's intellectual curiosity turned him toward art. He taught himself the discipline of printmaking through books, observation, and the laborious process of trial and error. He collected prints and voraciously read histories of printmaking and practical manuals, but also read extensively on art history, including the modern movements of Europe. The books on display from Nason's own studio library, show the wear of frequent reading and reference.

In 1965, Nason recounted how his self-study came about:

"I tried to do something with oils but became more intrigued with the possibilities of wood engraving and it was in 1921, I think, that I first tried to do anything in this medium. These first attempts were very crude of course, but a lot of fun. I had seen some contemporary woodcuts at Goodspeed's Bookshop and other places and reproductions in magazines. These were not at all like the old reproductive wood engravings, in technique; they were boldly handled, with solid black and white contrasts, and were original in conception. They fascinated me and I got hold of a few tools and wood blocks and in the Boston Public Library found a copy of "A Treatise on Wood Engraving" by Chatte and Jackson, published in London in 1838. I spent many hours studying this and other books on printmaking in various media. At that time I knew of no book dealing with modern wood engraving; they were to come later."