

# Jessie Willcox Smith papers

MS.026

Finding Aid prepared by Hoang Tran

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PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY  
OF THE FINE ARTS

The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts  
118-128 North Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

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215-972-2066

Updated by Hoang Tran, January 2016

## **Summary Information**

<b>Repository</b>	The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Dorothy and Kenneth Woodcock Archives
<b>Creator</b>	Jessie Willcox Smith (1863-1935)
<b>Title</b>	Jessie Willcox Smith papers
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1901-1931; undated
<b>Extent</b>	1 document box, 2 flat boxes (15")
<b>Location note</b>	
<b>Language</b>	
<b>Language of Materials note</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	The papers are comprised mainly of correspondence and photographs. The correspondence includes numerous letters from admirers of her work, correspondence with publishers and authors, letters about other business matters, and letters from friends and relatives. Smith kept very few copies of her outgoing letters. The photographs, almost exclusively of children, are undated and unidentified.

### **Preferred Citation note**

[identification of item], Title of Collection, Collection ID#, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Dorothy and Kenneth Woodcock Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

## **Historical note**

Jessie Willcox Smith, a native of Philadelphia, was a well known illustrator. Her depictions of children appeared frequently in juvenile books and on the covers of *Good Housekeeping* and similar publications. She also painted children's portraits. Always fond of children, Smith was a kindergarten teacher before beginning her art studies.

She attended the Philadelphia School of Design for Women very briefly, before enrolling at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, where she studied from 1885 to 1888. When Howard Pyle started teaching illustration at the Drexel Institute in 1894, Jessie Willcox Smith was among his first pupils. It was in Pyle's class that she met Violet Oakley and Elizabeth Shippen Green. Both women became lifelong friends with whom Smith shared a home and studios for many years.

From 1888 until her death in 1935, Smith exhibited frequently in the Academy's annual exhibitions. For entries in these shows she was awarded the Mary Smith Prize in 1903, and the Beck Watercolor Prize in 1911. A memorial exhibition of her work, organized by the Fellowship, was held at the Pennsylvania Academy in 1936.

## **Scope and Contents note**

The papers are comprised mainly of correspondence and photographs. The correspondence includes numerous letters from admirers of her work, correspondence with publishers and authors, letters about other business matters, and letters from friends and relatives. Smith kept very few copies of her outgoing letters. The photographs, almost exclusively of children, are undated and unidentified. Almost all are arranged in albums with titles of unexplained meaning. In addition, there are miscellaneous items including notes, invoices, printed matter such as postal and greeting cards, and clippings about the artist.

The collection, except for the 3 scrapbooks, has been microfilmed by the Archives of American Art on reel 3657:731-1354, and reel 3658:4-104.

## **Arrangement note**

## **Administrative Information**

### **Conditions Governing Access note**

Collection is open for research.

The archives reserves the right to restrict access to materials of sensitive nature. Please contact the department for further information.

### **Conditions Governing Use note**

The collection is the physical property of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Archives. The Museum holds literary rights only for material created by Museum personnel or given to the Museum with such rights specifically assigned. For all other material, literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. Researchers are responsible for obtaining permission from rights holders for publication and for other purposes where stated.

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition note**

#### **Provenance note**

The provenance of the papers is unknown, but the collection has been in the Academy's archives since at least 1960.

#### **Processing Information note**

## **Controlled Access Headings**

**Person(s)**

**Corporate Name(s)**

**Genre(s)**

**Geographic Name(s)**

**Subject(s)**

## **Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements note**

## **Collection Inventory**

<b>Folder title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Correspondence: about illustrations and business matters		1	1
Correspondence: about illustrations and business matters	1901-1907	1	2
Correspondence: about illustrations and business matters	1908-1909	1	3
Correspondence: about illustrations and business matters	1910-1923	1	4
Correspondence: about illustrations and business matters	1924-1931	1	5

Jessie Willcox Smith papers (MS.026)

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Correspondence: with friends and relatives	1904-1926, undated	1	6
Correspondence: Letters addressed to Smith's relatives	1902-1908	1	7
Correspondence: Letters from Lily J.R. to Kate (possibly Smith's sister, Mrs. Jennings?)	1908	1	8
Clippings and one typescript copy of an article about Jessie Willcox Smith		1	9
Postcards		1	10
Greeting cards, calling cards, invitations, etc.		1	11
Invoices, notes, and miscellaneous printed matter.		1	12
Unidentified photographs.		1	13
Album "People" Vol. 1. - contains illustrations clipped by Smith from magazines, and photographs of unidentified children.  Archives of American Art on reel 3657:731-1354, and reel 3658:4-104		2	
Album "Sictuate" Vol. 2 - contains photographs of unidentified children at the seashore and in nurseries.  Archives of American Art on reel 3657:731-1354, and reel 3658:4-104		3	
Album "Lloyd and Day" Vol. 3 - contains photographs of unidentified children.  Archives of American Art on reel 3657:731-1354, and reel 3658:4-104		3	