Guide to the Helen Hyde Papers MS 1085

Finding aid prepared by California Historical Society staff; revised by Mary Morganti, 2009.
California Historical Society
678 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA, 94105
415-357-1848
reference@calhist.org
2001, 2009
Collection Summary
Title: Helen Hyde papers
Date (inclusive): 1881-1953
Collection Number: MS 1085
creator: Hyde, Helen, 1868-1919.
creator: Gillette, Edwin F.
Physical Description: 3 boxes (1.75 Linear feet)
Contributing Institution: California Historical Society
678 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA, 94105
415-357-1848
reference@calhist.org
Physical Location: Collection is stored onsite.
Language of Materials: Collection materials are in English with small amount of Japanese.
Abstract: Contains two diaries (1881-1882) kept by Hyde at age 13, which primarily focus on everyday life of a well-educated daughter of a prosperous family, including social visits, art and dancing lessons, birthday and holiday celebrations as well as the death of her father and President Garfield's assassination. Also includes letters written to her family while living and working in Japan (1912-1914), sketches and sketchbooks (1892-1917), and etchings (1898), along with records of her prints and exhibits, account books for prints sold, printed catalogs and art journals, Hyde's Tokyo guest book (1906-1914) and other personal memorabilia, and newspaper clippings.
Access
Collection is open for research.
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Helen Hyde Papers, MS 1085, California Historical Society.
Related Collections
Separated Materials
Photographs shelved as MSP 1085.
Engraving tools transferred to Cultural Materials Collection, CHS.Certificate transferred to the Certificate Collection, CHS.
Original print by Taylor & Taylor transferred to the Kemble Collection, CHS.
Certificate transferred to the Certificate Collection, CHS.
Accruals
No accruals are expected.
Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
Account books.
Americans--Foreign countries.
Artists.
Diaries.
Acquisition Information
The Helen Hyde Papers were given to the California Historical Society by William Hyde Irwin in 1972.

Accruals
No additions are expected.

Processing Information
Processed by California Historical Society staff.

Biographical Information
Helen Hyde was born in Lima, N.Y. and spent her girlhood in San Francisco. As a young woman, she lived in France, Germany and Japan, either studying art or as a practicing artist. She died in Pasadena, Calif., in 1919 and is buried at Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland, Calif.

During her early years as an artist, Hyde maintained a studio in the home of her “Aunt Gussie” at 2845 Pierce, on the corner of Pierce and Union Streets. She was a member of a prosperous and talented family. Her grandfather, Oliver Hyde, Jr. (1814-1901) was a self-taught engineer who traveled overland to California in 1852 and settled in Benicia. He established the first foundry in the Territory of Nevada. His son, William Birelie Hyde, married Marietta Butler of Lima, N.Y. and later settled in California, where he worked as an engineer during the years 1870-1880. He died in Idaho at the age of 40, when Helen was 13 years old. Following his death, his sister Augusta Hyde Storer Bixler (“Aunt Gussie”) helped to keep the Hyde family together and financed Hyde’s interest in art. Mrs. Bixler accompanied Hyde to New York, where she began her first formal study at the Art Students’ League.

Hyde continued her studies in Berlin under Skarbina; in Paris under Raphael Collins and Albert Sterner; and in Japan under Kano Tomonoki, a master of brush painting. With the exception of a print of the Golden Gate Bridge made from her Pierce St. studio, Hyde confined her work to Chinese, Japanese and Mexican subjects, with particular emphasis on women and children. She worked in many media, including etchings, woodcuts, aquatints, oils, watercolors, and pastels. Hyde’s application of color to woodcuts and etchings attracted attention and enhanced her reputation. Etched prints were limited to runs of 100, each printed, signed and numbered by the artist.

The letters which Hyde sent home from Japan during the Russo-Japanese War were also printed in the San Francisco Argonaut. In collaboration with her sister Mable Hyde Gillette, she wrote and illustrated a child’s nonsense book patterned after Lewis Carroll’s work. It was published in San Francisco by A. M. Robertson but was lost in the fire that followed the earthquake of 1906. She illustrated another book, Moon Babies, with verses by G. Orr Clark, as well as Jingles from Japan, with verses by Mabel Hyde Gillette.

Nearly complete sets of Hyde’s work can be found in the California State Library, the Carnegie Library in Pittsburg, PA, and the Library of Congress. There are also collections in the New York Public Library, the Chicago Art Institute, and the University of Oregon.

Scope and Contents
Contains two diaries (1881-1882) kept by Hyde at age 13, which primarily focus on everyday life of a well-educated daughter of a prosperous family, including social visits, art and dancing lessons, birthday and holiday celebrations as well as the death of her father and President Garfield’s assassination. Also includes letters written to her family while living and working in Japan (1912-1914), sketches and sketchbooks (1892-1917), and etchings (1898), along with records of her prints and exhibits, account books for prints sold, printed catalogs and art journals, Hyde’s Tokyo guest book (1906-1914) and other personal memorabilia, and newspaper clippings.

Includes papers of Hyde’s brother-in-law, Edwin F. Gillette, pertaining to the management of Hyde’s estate after her death. These include her estate book, institutional gifts negotiated by him (1919-1936), catalogs, and sales and exhibits of Hyde’s work, primarily arranged by Gillette.

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Including “The Borrowed Umbrella,” “Plum Blossom,” “Little One Two,” “The Mandarin,” and “Cat and The Cherub”