Finding Aid to the Virginia Lee Burton *Maybelle the Cable Car* Collection
1952-2019
BASC 4

Finding aid prepared by Susanne Mari Sakai
Book Arts & Special Collections
July 2019
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URL: http://sfpl.org/index.php?pg=0200000201
Title: Virginia Lee Burton Maybelle the Cable Car Collection
Date (inclusive): 1952-2019
Identifier/Call Number: BASC 4
Creator: Burton, Virginia Lee
Physical Description: 3 pamphlet boxes, 1 oversize folder (3 linear feet)
Contributing Institution: Book Arts & Special Collections, San Francisco Public Library
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Abstract: The collection contains the original manuscript and illustrations for the popular children's book Maybelle the Cable Car written and illustrated by Virginia Lee Burton. Published in 1952, Maybelle the Cable Car tells the story of the 1947 fight to save the cable cars in San Francisco.
Physical Location: Collection is stored onsite.
Language of Materials: Collection materials are primarily in English, but includes Japanese.
Conditions Governing Access
Collection is open for research and is available for use during Book Arts & Special Collections hours.
Conditions Governing Use
Original artwork and photographs are fragile and may not be photocopied.
Publication Rights
Copyright is retained by Aristides Burton Demetrios and Eleanor Demetrios.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item>Title of folder], Virginia Lee Burton Maybelle the Cable Car Collection (BASC 4), Book Arts & Special Collections, San Francisco Public Library.
Provenance
The original manuscript and illustrations for Maybelle the Cable Car were donated by Virginia Lee Burton to the San Francisco Public Library on December 19, 1967. The exhibition catalogs, A Life in Art, The Little House, and Japanese articles on Burton were added to the collection in December 2011. The Valentine and Holiday cards were added in July 2019.
Biographical Note
Virginia Lee Burton (1909-1968), also known by her married name Virginia Demetrios, was an artist, author and illustrator of children's books. She wrote and illustrated seven children's books, including The Little House (1943), which won the Caldecott Medal. She was born in Newton Centre, Massachusetts where she lived until she was about eight when her family moved to California, first to San Diego, then to Carmel-by-the-Sea the next year. When she was sixteen, she was sent to live in Sonora, California.
In her junior year of high school, she won a state scholarship to the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco. While attending art school she lived across the bay in Alameda with a school friend named Mabel. Without any bridges in those days, she used her long commute by train, ferry, and cable car to train herself in making quick sketches from life and from memory. A year later, in 1928, she returned east to help care for her father, who, before retiring was the first dean of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Although she attended art school for only a year, her studies would lay the foundation for her artistic career to come, and her memories of her time in San Francisco would become the basis for Maybelle the Cable Car.
Back in New England, she got a job as an illustrator for the Boston Transcript newspaper, and in the fall of 1930, enrolled in a drawing class at the Boston Museum School. The following year, she married her instructor, George Demetrios, a sculptor and teacher. They had two sons together and lived in a section of Gloucester, Massachusetts, called Folly Cove until her death.
Burton also founded the textile collective, Folly Cove Designers, and designed some of their textiles. From 1941 to 1955 the group participated in sixteen museum exhibits and sold their designs in thirty retail stores.
Scope and Content
The collection contains Virginia Lee Burton's original artwork for Maybelle the Cable Car. The artworks consist of a mock-up of the book, complete with watercolor artwork and copy set in type, as well as rough watercolor and ink sketches. The
collection also includes copies of Burton's biographical sketch, photos and a press release from when she donated her manuscript to San Francisco Public Library in 1967, two autographed copies of Maybelle the Cable Car, and a Japanese language copy of Maybelle the Cable Car. Box 3 contains other works by Burton such as the 1965 Horn Book Calendar and a Japanese language copy of The Little House, as well as publications regarding the life and work of Burton, including the Folly Cove Designers exhibit catalog and her biography by Barbara Elleman.

Arrangement
Collection is organized into four series: Series 1. Mock-up; Series 2. Watercolor and ink sketches; Series 3. Biographical and donation information; and Series 4. Other publications by and about Virginia Lee Burton.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Burton, Virginia Lee, 1909-1968 -- Juvenile literature
Burton, Virginia Lee, 1909-1968 Authors, American -- 20th century -- Biography -- Juvenile literature
Illustrators -- Juvenile literature.
Illustrators -- United States -- Biography -- Juvenile literature
Children's stories -- Authorship -- Juvenile literature
Illustration of books -- Juvenile literature
Cable cars (Streetcars) -- Fiction
Cable cars (Streetcars) -- California -- San Francisco.
San Francisco (Calif.) - Fiction
Folly Cove Designers (Group of artists)

Series 1 Mock-up
Scope and Content
The series contains a mock-up of the cover, end paper, and pages for Maybelle the Cable Car. Pages 3, 6, 7, 23, and 41 are missing.

box 1, folder 1 Title page, Title page verso (copyright), Dedication page, Foreword (p. 1 & 2)
box 1, folder 1 Pages 1-2, 4-5, 8-9
box 1, folder 2 Pages 10-19
box 1, folder 3 Pages 20-22, 24-29
box 1, folder 4 Pages 30-40, 42
oversize-box 1, oversize-folder 1 Double spread of cover, Double spread of end papers

Series 2 Watercolor and ink sketches
Scope and Content
The series contains sketches the author made for the preliminary design of Maybelle the Cable Car.

box 1, folder 5 Watercolor sketch of end papers
box 1, folder 5 Ink artwork of cover
box 1, folder 5 Preliminary design of dedication page in watercolor with typewritten copy pasted on
box 1, folder 5 Ink sketch of dedication page with some watercolor plus carbon typewritten copy pasted on
box 1, folder 5 Alternate design of dedication page in watercolor without type
box 1, folder 5 Preliminary copyright page in watercolor
box 1, folder 6 Rough watercolor sketch (similar to page 1) with typewritten copy (same as page 16)
box 1, folder 6 Rough watercolor sketches of Maybelle on hilly street (similar to page 6) with typewritten copy pasted on (of first paragraph on page 2)
box 1, folder 6 Preliminary watercolor artwork with typewritten copy of pages 2 & 3
box 1, folder 6 Preliminary watercolor artwork - top picture of hilly street similar to page 9; bottom picture of cable car barn similar to page 8 with typewritten copy similar to page 9 through 13
Preliminary watercolor artwork and typewritten copy of page 10 pasted on
Preliminary watercolor artwork of Maybelle and bus (similar to top picture on page 29) on one side and of Maybelle and bus (similar to bottom picture on page 21) on the other
Rough ink sketch of cable car winding down a San Francisco street
Rough ink sketch of three individual cable cars
Folded sheet with rough watercolor sketches of the title page and dedication page
Rough ink sketches of hilly streets (similar to page 9) with handwritten copy (similar to page 8)
Rough ink sketch of street with typewritten copy (similar to pages 4 & 5)
Rough watercolor sketches of green cable car barn with typewritten copy (similar to page 7)
Rough ink sketch of page 25 with typewritten copy
Rough ink sketch of three cable cars - one with gripmen, one with conductor, and one on turntable
Rough ink sketch of cable car showing equipment with typewritten copy
Rough ink sketch with typewritten copy of page 6
Rough ink sketch of Maybelle's route, naming streets
Rough ink sketch of cable cars, horse cars, railroads, and steam cars with typewritten copy of names of transportation companies
Rough watercolor sketch of California Line giving names of equipment and showing turntable
Rough watercolor sketch of street and cable car turntable
Rough ink sketches of cable cars on various streets
Rough ink sketch of page 42
Rough watercolor sketches of horse car, cable cars, horseless carriage, trolley cars, buses, street cars, and trackless trolley
Rough ink sketch of cable car, bus, and cars on street
Rough ink sketch of trolley buses meeting cable car
Rough ink sketch of cable car traveling down the city streets past voting booths
3" x 9" Rough watercolor sketch of cable cars winding between flowers (similar to dedication page)
3" x 9" Rough watercolor sketch of Maybelle traveling through border of fuchsia flowers and leaves
3" x 9 ½" Rough incomplete watercolor sketches of three of the scenes used in end papers. Reverse side - rough watercolor sketches of Ferry Building, City Hall, and Election Day.
3 ¼" x 9 ½" Rough watercolor sketches of three of the scenes used in end papers
3" x 9" Rough watercolor and black-ink sketch of cover and how Maybelle works. Reverse side - views of three cable car lines.
3" x 9" Rough watercolor sketches of three cable cars. Reverse side - rough watercolor sketch of cable car showing the cable, turntable, and conductor.
3" x 2 ¼" Rough watercolor sketch of pattern design consisting of cable cars and streets
3" x 6 ½" Rough watercolor sketch of dedication page detail. Reverse side - rough watercolor sketch of another dedication page detail.
3 ½" x 9 ½" Rough sketch of cable car turntable and horse-drawn trolley
4 ½" x 4 ½" Rough watercolor sketch of cover
5" x 8" Rough watercolor sketch of SF cityscape with cable cars coming down a hill and horse-drawn carriages in the foreground
5 ½" x 9 ½" Rough watercolor sketch of SF cityscape with cable car and horse-drawn trolley in the foreground, bay in the background
5 ½" x 11" Rough watercolor and black-ink sketches of cable cars, houses, and buildings. Reverse side - rough watercolor sketch of cable cars, cable, and fuchsias.
2 ¼" x 5" Rough black-ink sketch of two views of cable car coming down a hill
3 ¾" x 2 ½" Rough watercolor sketch of three flowers
3 ½" x 3 ½" Rough black-ink sketch of title page
Series 2 Watercolor and ink sketches

box 2, folder 3
4” x 5” Rough black-ink sketch of cable car on coming down a hill with cars and buses in the foreground

box 2, folder 3
4” x 4 ½” Rough black-ink sketch of cable car arriving at turnaround and leaving

box 2, folder 3
2 ½” x 8 ¾” Rough watercolor sketches of four scenes of cable car on street

box 2, folder 3
6 ½” x 6” Rough watercolor sketch of fuchsias and stylized letters "MA"

box 2, folder 3
5 ½” x 6 ½” Watercolor artwork of part of cover – the cable car and words "The Cable Car by Virginia Lee Burton"

box 2, folder 3
3 ¾” x 5 ¼” Rough watercolor and ink sketch of houses, buildings, horse-drawn carriages, bus, car, horse-drawn trolley, and cable cars

box 2, folder 4
10” x 10” Watercolor artwork of Maybelle coming down hill

box 2, folder 5
Two 4” x 6” Sketchbooks with ink and watercolor rough sketches

Series 3 Biographical and donation information

Scope and Content
The series contains information and materials relating to the gifting of the collection to San Francisco Public Library by the author on December 19, 1967 such as autographed copies of *Maybelle the Cable Car*, Burton's biographical sketch, photos, and a copy of the press release announcing the donation. Also includes a copy of *Maybelle the Cable Car* in Japanese as well as greeting cards made by the Book Arts & Special Collections department of the San Francisco Public Library using the original artwork in this collection.

box 2, folder 6
Autographed copy of *Maybelle the Cable Car* presented to the Children of San Francisco (copy 1 of 2)

box 2, folder 7
Autographed copy of *Maybelle the Cable Car* presented to the Children of San Francisco (copy 2 of 2)

box 2, folder 8
Three copies of Virginia Lee Burton's biographical sketch

box 2, folder 8
5” x 7 ¼” Photo of Virginia Lee Burton provided by Houghton Mifflin Co.

box 2, folder 8
Three copies of the autobiographical sketch published by Houghton Mifflin Co.

box 2, folder 8
8” x 10” Photo of Virginia Lee Burton showing mock-up to children in the San Francisco Public Library Children's Room

box 2, folder 8
8” x 10” Photo of Virginia Lee Burton with Commissioner Callanan and children in the San Francisco Public Library Children's Room

box 2, folder 8
Press release announcing the donation of the original manuscript and illustrations for *Maybelle the Cable Car* to San Francisco Public Library by Virginia Lee Burton

box 2, folder 9
Display props of Maybelle and street signs used in the San Francisco Public Library Children's Room

box 2, folder 10
A copy of *Maybelle the Cable Car* in Japanese

box 2, folder 11
San Francisco Public Library Book Arts & Special Collections *Maybelle the Cable Car* greeting cards - Valentine and Holiday cards were made using original artwork from the collection

Series 4 Other publications by and about Virginia Lee Burton

Scope and Content
The series contains various publications regarding Virginia Lee Burton's other works, including her involvement with the Folly Cove Designers.

box 3, folder 1
1965 Horn Book Calendar by Virginia Lee Burton inscribed to Effie Lee Morris

box 3, folder 2
Folly Cove Designers exhibit catalog, June 27-September 7, 1982

box 3, folder 3
Folly Cove Designers exhibit catalog, May 7-October 31, 1996

box 3, folder 4
Exhibition catalog from *Those Telling Lines: The Art of Virginia Lee Burton* at The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, March 24 - June 21, 2009

box 3, folder 5
*Virginia Lee Burton: A Life in Art* by Barbara Elleman, 2002

box 3, folder 6
A paperback copy of *The Little House* (60th Anniversary ed.)

box 3, folder 7
Three articles on Virginia Lee Burton in Japanese periodicals

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