Guide to the Edith Harvey Heron Collection MSS.2005.01

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Title: Edith Harvey Heron Collection
creator: Heron, Edith Harvey, 1895-1980
Identifier/Call Number: MSS.2005.01
Physical Description: 2 boxes (3 linear ft.)
Date (inclusive): 1895-1980
Abstract: The Edith Harvey Heron Collection includes watercolors, drawings, etchings, miscellaneous art, prints, newspaper articles, pamphlets, photographs, and professional records.
Access
The collection is open for research.
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Preferred Citation
Edith Harvey Heron collection, MSS-2005-01, San Jose State University Library Special Collections and Archives.
Processing History
Biographical Overview
Edith Harvey Heron, the daughter of William S. and Ada Heron, was born January 2, 1895, in San Jose, California. After graduating from San Jose High School in 1914, she attended San Jose Normal School and graduated in 1918. Following a short-term teaching career in art therapy, she attended the California School of Arts and Crafts for two years (1920-22) and in 1929 earned a B.A. degree in art at San Jose State College. Heron spent most of her life in the Bay Area working as an artist.

Heron began her early career as an occupational art therapist and teacher. She first taught pottery and basketry at the Stockton State Hospital from 1918 to 1920. From 1920 to 1922, she taught weaving and furniture design at the Livermore Sanatorium. In the summer of 1926, Heron returned to San Jose State College and in 1929 earned her degree in art. In 1942, the same year that the term “art therapy” was officially coined by British artist Adrian Hill, Heron taught arts and crafts to Japanese-Americans in the Poston, Arizona, internment camp.

Heron became a well-known watercolorist. Her early work focused on the Monterey Peninsula, but travel abroad inspired her to complete some of her most important paintings, including Old Tom, Monterey and Gloucester Fish Wharf, which garnered first-place awards from the National League of American Pen Women in 1937 and 1939, respectively; the latter work received the Logan Medal for Watercolor from the National Society for Sanity in Art that same year. Heron’s work also appeared in several shows and exhibitions, such as those mounted by Seven Arts Gallery, Carmel, 1932; Los Angeles Art Museum, 1932; Bond Street Gallery, London, 1933; Stanford University, 1934; Oakland Art Museum, 1934; Morton Gallery, New York City, 1935; National Association of Women Artists, New York City, 1936; Montalvo Gallery, Saratoga, 1941; Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, 1940; Treasure Island World’s Fair, San Francisco, 1940; and Southside Art Association, Chicago, 1942.

In 1974, Heron donated twelve paintings to the San Jose Public Library and an additional six to San Jose State University, including Old Tom, Monterey. Heron is listed in Artists of the American West (1981), Dictionary of Women Artists (1985), and An Encyclopedia of Women Artists of the American West (1998). She was a life member of the National Association of Women Artists, New York City, and an artist member of the National League of Pen Women, Berkeley branch. She died March 6, 1980.
Scope and Content
The Edith Harvey Heron Collection (1895-1980) documents the California artist’s professional work and history. The collection includes watercolors, drawings, etchings, miscellaneous art, prints, newspaper articles, pamphlets, photographs, and professional records. The materials provide background information on Heron’s artistic interests and development, as
well as on her educational and employment history.
The contents of this series document Edith Harvey Heron’s professional history and range of artistic work. Heron is best
known for her watercolors depicting scenes of Northern California, which are represented here by color-pencil sketches of
forest and seashore settings on the Monterey Peninsula. Of particular note are the nine black-and-white intaglio etchings of
San Francisco and elsewhere. The newspaper articles, pamphlets, photographs, and professional records provide
background information for researchers interested in Heron’s educational and employment, as well as in the various
exhibits in which her paintings were shown.
The framed watercolor, Fisherman’s Hut, depicts the last dwelling in Monterey’s Old Chinatown; it was painted in 1936 and
donated to San Jose State University in 1973.

**Arrangement**
The Edith Harvey Heron Collection is arranged by format.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
Women artists -- California -- Sources.
San José State University. Library. Special Collections & Archives
Heron, Edith Harvey, 1895-1980

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