



# DELAWARE ART MUSEUM

## **Katharine Pyle Files**

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the  
Helen Farr Sloan Library & Archives, Delaware Art Museum

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### **Acquisition Information**

Material collected internally by Delaware Art Museum staff and gifts of Phyllis Aerenon in 2006 and 2019, Diane K. Wilson in 2015, and various other donors

### **Extent**

4 linear feet

### **Contents**

Correspondence, tear sheets, photographs, manuscripts, research materials

### **Access Restrictions**

Unrestricted

### **Contact Information**

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### **Preferred Citation**

Katharine Pyle Files, Helen Farr Sloan Library & Archives, Delaware Art Museum

## Biography of Katharine Pyle

Born in Wilmington, the youngest child of the Pyle family, Katharine Pyle was encouraged by her brother, Howard, to pursue a career in writing and illustration. While still a child, her poem "The Piping Shepherd" was published in *Atlantic Monthly*. Howard Pyle asked her to contribute drawings and verses to his book *The Wonder Clock*, published in 1888.

Katharine Pyle studied art at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women and in her brother's illustration class at Drexel Institute. Two of her drawings were exhibited in the first exhibition of Pyle's School of Illustration at Drexel in 1897. While living in New York for four years, she wrote a play published by *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1896 and the book *The Counterpane Fairy*, published in 1898. During her career she wrote and illustrated about thirty books and illustrated a number of books by other authors, including Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty* in 1923. In 1924 her serialized article "The Story of Delaware" appeared in the Wilmington newspaper, the *Sunday Morning Star*.

Many of her stories were drawn from fairy tales, ancient myths, nursery rhymes, and stories about animals. In 1900 a series of poems about young children, written by Katharine Pyle and illustrated by Sarah S. Stilwell, appeared in *Harper's Bazaar*. In 1902 she and Bertha Corson Day, a friend at Drexel, collaborated on a book of fairy tales, *Where the Wind Blows*; Katharine Pyle provided the text and Bertha Day the pictures.

In 1923 the editor of *Child Life* magazine expressed concern about two fairy tales that Katharine had submitted for publication. The editorial policy was to keep out "the horror element and the adult experience from *Child Life* stories as much as possible." Katharine argued that in traditional fairy tales evil always defeated itself and that in the end good always triumphed. However, the *Child Life* editor argued that "lurid picturization of the hideousness of evil is usually more impressed upon the child than is the great truth that good finally triumphs." However, she continued to re-tell and illustrate fairy tales and stories from Greek and Norse mythologies throughout her career.

Katharine Pyle was an intense, public-spirited person who pressed for change in the field of social reforms. Her deep concern for troubled young people led to her involvement in the Juvenile Court of Wilmington. As a champion of the underdog, she was responsive to anyone in need, often at her own expense. Her niece Ellen Pyle Lawrence has described her as "a brilliant and vital individual and a woman well ahead of her time." Though raised in a Quaker faith, she, like her brother, became an active member of the Swedenborgian Church.

Pyle relatives fondly recall her curious distinction of having one blue and one brown eye.

By Elizabeth H. Hawkes

Source: Elzea, Rowland and Elizabeth H. Hawkes, eds. *A Small School of Art: The Students of Howard Pyle*. Wilmington: Delaware Art Museum, 1980.

## **Organization of the Files**

Series I. Biographical

Series II. Correspondence

Series III. Illustrations, Books

Series IV. Illustrations, Periodicals

Series V. Manuscripts and Writing

Series VI. Miscellaneous

Series VII. Photographs

Series VIII. Wilson Research Materials

## Description of the Files

### Box 1

#### Series I. Biographical

##### Folder

- 1 Biographical material
- 2 Autobiography: "When I Remember" by Katharine Pyle
- 3 Clippings
- 4 Research material compiled by Phyllis Aerenson

#### Series II. Correspondence

##### Folder

- 5 Correspondence (photocopies): Archives of American Art, microfilm roll #0710, 477-488, Pierpont Morgan Library, Harper Collection
- 6 Transcript of correspondence between Pyle and Mr. Dutton regarding *The Counterpane Fairy*, July 1897 – April 1929. From E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc. Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library
- 7 Correspondence (photocopies): from University of Delaware Library Special Collections, Delaware Art Museum Katharine Pyle Letters, and personal collection of Phyllis Aerenson (compiled by Phyllis Aerenson)
- 8 Correspondence (photocopies): 21 letters by Katharine Pyle; 4 letters about Katharine Pyle, received from Howard P. Brokaw, March 22, 1984 (originals in Katharine Pyle Letters)

## Box 2

### Series III. Illustrations, Books

#### Folder

- 1 *The Counterpane Fairy*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1928, 1931, 1937. (photocopy)
- 2 *Fairy Tales from India*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1926. (dust jacket, upper cover only; photocopy of part of book)
- 3 *Granny's Wonderful Chair and Its Tales of Fairy Times* by Frances Browne. New York: E.P. Dutton & Company.
- 4 *The Katharine Pyle Book of Fairy Tales*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1925.
- 5 *Tales from Greek Mythology*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1928.
- 6 *When Molly was Six* by Eliza Orne White. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1894.
- 7 *White Aprons: A Romance of Bacon's Rebellion, Virginia 1676* by Maud Wilder Goodwin. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1897

### **Box 3**

#### **Series IV. Illustrations, Periodicals**

##### Folder

- 1 *The Century Magazine*, 1897
- 2 *The Circle*, 1910
- 3 *Cosmopolitan*, 1894, 1895
- 4 *Harper's Bazar*, 1883-1910
- 5 *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 1899
- 6 *Harper's Young People*, 1886-1887
- 7 *Harper's Young People*, 1888-1891
- 8 *Harper's Young People*, 1892-1893
- 9 *Hercules Magazine*, 1924
- 10 *Metropolitan Magazine*, 1909
- 11 *The Saturday Evening Post*, 1903, 1904
- 12 *Shooter's Guide*, 1925
- 13 *St. Nicholas*, 1889-1894
- 14 *St. Nicholas*, 1897-1906
- 15 *Wide Awake*, 1888, 1892
- 16 *Woman's Home Companion*, 1911
- 17 *Youth's Companion*, 1912

## Box 4

### Series IV. Illustrations, Periodicals – Oversize

#### Folder

##### 1 Illustrations and Tear Sheets

“When Easter Dawns” from *Harper’s Bazaar*, April 6, 1895

“The Grandmother of the Wind” from *Ladies’ Home Journal*, December 1896

“Post Cards for Children” (source unknown)

“Unexpected Guest” from *Supplement to Boston Sunday Globe*, no date

##### 2 Magazine Covers

*The Circle*, January 1910\*

*Harper’s Bazar*, September 1910\*

*Harper’s Bazar*, July 1911\*

*Woman’s Home Companion*, April 1908

*Woman’s Home Companion*, May 1909

*Woman’s Home Companion*, January 1910

*Woman’s Home Companion*, July 1910\*

*Woman’s Home Companion*, July 1915

*Woman’s World*, July 1909\*

##### 3 “Story of Delaware,” *The Delmarva Star*, 1924 (photocopy)

##### 4 Hour illustrations from *Harper’s Young People* (24)

\*framed

## Box 5

### Series V. Manuscripts and Writing

#### Folder

- 1 Manuscript: "Under the Canvas"
- 2 Article: "Religion in Fairy Tales" (*The New Church Review*, v. 27, no. 1, January 1920)

### Series VI. Miscellaneous Materials

#### Folder

- 3 List of works illustrated
- 4 Inventory from University of Delaware Special Collections
- 5 Exhibition material: *Twenty-Fifth Annual Delaware Show and Drawings by Katharine Pyle* (The Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts, November 7 – 27, 1938)
- 6 Exhibition material: *Cartoon America: Highlights from the Art Wood Collection of Cartoon and Caricature* (Library of Congress, November 2, 2006 – February 24, 2007)
- 7 Exhibition catalog: *Tales of Folk and Fairies: The Life and Work of Katharine Pyle* (Delaware Art Museum, February 18 – September 9, 2012); article: Miner, Katherine L. and Margaretta Frederick. "Tales of Folk and Fairies" in *Illustration* (Issue 32, Summer 2012)

### Series VII. Photographs

#### Folder

- 8 Charles Ryan and Alice McIntyre, models posing for Pyle's mythology book (copies—original negatives owned by Barbara Ryan)
- 9 Photographs of Pyle's works (2) (gift of Richard Layton, 2004)
- 10 Photographs of Pyle's homes and burial site (gift of Phyllis Aerenson)
- 11 Photograph of Katharine Pyle, 1892 (gift of Katherine Carlozzi, 2011)



## **Box 6**

### **Series VIII. Wilson Research Materials** (gift of Diane K. Wilson, 2015)

#### Folder

- 1 "Katharine Pyle: Her Life, Her Work, Her Interests" (research paper)
- 2 Miscellaneous information
- 3 Audio tape interviews with Sophie Pyle and Howard Pyle Brokaw

#### Two research notebooks:

Book 1: Art works, Bibliography, Biographical material, Correspondence (from Katharine, to Katharine, code letters, to Wilson), Fine arts & other information, Genealogy, History/Background, The Homoeopathic Hospital, Howard Pyle, Inventories of Katharine Pyle's works and locations

Book 2: Jingles, Katharine's mother—Margaret Churchman, Persons to contact, Photos, Plays, operettas, etc., Residences (photos, negatives, and slides), Swedenborg, Paper and presentation, Wilmington City Directory covers, Miscellaneous