



DELAWARE ART MUSEUM

Katharine Pyle Letters, 1927-1936 and undated

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

Acquisition Information

Gift of Howard Pyle Brokaw, March 1984

Extent

.2 linear feet

Contents

Correspondence from Katharine Pyle to Marion Code, Grant Hyde Code, and Eva Robin, 1927-1936 and undated

Access Restrictions

Unrestricted

Contact Information

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Preferred Citation

Katharine Pyle Letters, 1927-1936 and undated, 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 by Katharine Pyle, 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.

Description of the Letters

Box 1

Folder

1 Correspondence, August 1, 1927-December 29, 1928

Katharine Pyle to Mr. [Grant] Code, August 1, 1927 – from 2317 West 17th Street, Wilmington (1 leaf)

Katharine Pyle to Mr. [Grant] Code, August 28, 1927 – Owings Mills, Maryland (1 leaf)

Katharine Pyle to Grant [Hyde Code], [Summer 1928] (transcript: 1 leaf; original: 1 leaf)

Katharine Pyle to Grant [Hyde Code], [December 13, 1928] (3 leaves)

Katharine Pyle to Marion and Grant [Hyde Code], [December 29, 1928] – 1616 Rodney Street, Wilmington (transcript: 3 leaves; original: 2 leaves)

2 Correspondence, January 12-August 7, 1929

Katharine Pyle to Marion and Grant [Hyde Code], January 12, 1929 (2 leaves)

Katharine Pyle to Marion [Code], February 17, 1929 – from 1616 Rodney Street, Wilmington (transcript: 4 leaves; original: 3 leaves)

Katharine Pyle to Grant [Hyde Code], July 24, 1929 – 1616 Rodney Street, Wilmington (2 leaves)

[Grant?] to Katharine Pyle, August 2, 1929 (typescript) (2 leaves)

Katharine Pyle to Grant [Hyde Code], August 7, 1929 – Owings Mills, Maryland (2 leaves)

3 Correspondence, January 23-December 3, 1930

Katharine Pyle to Marion and Grant [Hyde Code], January 23, 1930 – 1616 Rodney Street, Wilmington (4 leaves)

Katharine Pyle to Marion [Code], June 1930– 1616 Rodney Street, Wilmington (studio 1) (2 leaves)

Katharine Pyle to Grant [Hyde Code], June 11, 1930 – 1616 Rodney Street, Wilmington (transcript: 3 leaves; original: 2 leaves)

Katharine Pyle to Grant [Hyde Code], November 28, 1930 – Owings Mills, Maryland (3 leaves)

Katharine Pyle to Grant [Hyde Code], December 3, 1930 – Owings Mills, Maryland (typescript: 1 leaf; original: 1leaf)

4 Correspondence, January 19, 1931-June 1936

Katharine Pyle to Marion [Code], January 19, [1931] – 917 Gilpin Avenue, Wilmington (transcript 3 leaves; original 3 leaves)

Katharine Pyle to Grant [Hyde Code], May 20, 1931 – 917 Gilpin Avenue, Wilmington (transcript 2 leaves; original 2 leaves)

Katharine Pyle to Marion [Code], January 5, 1932 – 917 Gilpin Avenue, Wilmington – (1 leaf)

Katharine Pyle to Grant [Hyde Code], August 4, 1935 – illustrated – Arden, Delaware (1 leaf)

Katharine Pyle to Grant [Hyde Code], August 16, 1935 – Arden, Delaware (1 leaf)
Eva to Marion, [June 1936] (transcript) (1 leaf)

5 Correspondence, no date

Katharine Pyle to Grant [Hyde Code] (1 leaf)

Katharine Pyle to [Mrs.] Eva [Robin] (1 leaf)

Katharine Pyle to Grant [Hyde Code] – from Rehoboth Beach, Delaware (1 leaf and envelope)

Ellen B.T. Pyle to Mrs. [Eva] Robin – from Greenville, Delaware (1 leaf)

Ellen B.T. Pyle to Mrs. [Eva] Robin (1 leaf)

6 Miscellaneous

List of persons mentioned in correspondence