

Guide to the Marguerite Davis Papers, 1881-1972

Biographical Note

Marguerite Davis (1889-1978) graduated from Vassar College in 1911. She went on to study art for an additional four years at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts under the guidance of William Paxton and Philip Hale. After further study under Henry Hunt Clark and Elizabeth Shippen Green Elliott, she built a successful career as an illustrator of children's books. She illustrated some fifty books for Macmillan, Ginn and Company, Houghton Mifflin and other publishers, including classics such as *A Child's Garden of Verses*, by Robert Louis Stevenson; *Under the Lilacs*, by Louisa May Alcott; and *Heidi*, by Johanna Spyri. Davis maintained a long, fruitful collaboration with her contemporary and fellow Vassar alumna, Elizabeth Coatsworth (VC 1915), illustrating *The Littlest House* (1940), *Plum Daffy Adventure* (1947), and several other of Coatsworth's books. Davis died January 11, 1978, in Portland, Oregon.

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Scope and Content Note

This collection includes original pen and ink drawings (published and unpublished); sketchbooks; correspondence; the artist's own annotated copies of books she illustrated; journals and diaries of Marguerite Davis, her Aunt Flora S. Davis, and her parents Edwin E. Davis and Florence S. Abbott Davis; detailed albums of class notes of art study in Mexico and Arizona in the 1950s; clippings and reviews pertaining to her work; correspondence; publishing trade catalogues featuring her work; creative writing by Davis; dust jackets designed by Davis; Christmas cards designed by Davis; proof printings of her artwork; and family photographs. Selected items include Davis' notes, some dated in the 1960s, recollecting incidents of her life and some of the inspiration for her art.

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Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Marguerite Davis Papers, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.

Processing Information

Processed by Janine St. Germain, December 2020-January 2021.

Acquisition Information

Purchased from Jeffrey H. Marks, Rare Books, 2013 (M2013-005).

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Series I. Correspondence

1.1 Postcards, 1881, 1962-1972 1.2 Miscellaneous, 1834-1917 1.3 Miscellaneous, 1955
1.4 Miscellaneous, 1956-1957 1.5 Miscellaneous, 1959 1.6 Miscellaneous, 1961
1.7-1.9 Miscellaneous, 1962 1.10-1.13 Miscellaneous, 1963 1.14 Miscellaneous, 1964
1.15 Miscellaneous, 1973 1.16 from Coatsworth, Elizabeth, 1963-1968 1.17-1.21 from
Davis, Edwin and Florence, 1920-1926 1.22 from Woodward, Hillie, 1934 1.23 from
Little, Brown and Co., 1928, 1953 1.24 Macmillan & Co. 1942-1971 2.1-2.8 Letters
from Marguerite Davis' father to her mother, 1887 January-June

Series II. Artwork

5.1-5.8 *A Child's Garden of Verses*, by Robert Louis Stevenson, undated 2.12
Christmas card designs, mock ups, 1916-1921 5.9-5.15 Christmas Eve at Reginald's,
1936 7.1 Doll Under the Briar Bush / Jack o Lantern / A Visit to the Farm, undated
7.2 The Horses of the Sea / Sing Song, undated 7.3 Koi Koo Roo Koo, undated
2.9-2.11 Magical Melons, undated 7.4 The Nursery Has Honey for Tea, undated
5.16-5.26 Sing Song, Macmillan Co., undated 6.1-6.4 Skipping Along Alone,
undated 6.5-6.7 Sugar Island, 1937 6.8-6.13 Told Under the Blue Umbrella, undated
6.14-6.20 Trudy and the Tree House, undated 7.5 Questions for a New Moon /
Skipping Along Alone, undated 7.6 Seldom Can't, undated 7.7 Sugar and Spice /
Baby in the Basket / The Story of Dobbin, undated 7.8-7.9 Sing Song, undated

Series III. Printed Material

2.13 Certificate of Merit, Lydia Martin, Davis's grandmother, undated 8.1 Dust
jacket, In Wildness is the Preservation of the World, The Place No One Knew...,
undated 8.2 Dust jacket, Twelve Months Make a Year, House-boat Summer,
undated 2.14 Printer's Proof, Child Life, 1936-1937 2.15 Printer's Proof, The Pirate,
Northern Harvest, The Fishing Fleet, The Lone Cowboy, 1940 8.3 Printer's Proof,
Plum Daffy Adventure, undated 2.16 Printer's Proof, The Robins Nest, The Golden
Box, 1946 8.4 Printer's Proof, untitled, undated 2.17-2.20 Publishing Trade
Catalogues, Macmillan Books for Boys and Girls, 1930-1944 2.21 Reprint, obituary,
Agnes Vaille, 1925 January 14 2.22 Tear sheets, Boys and Girls Pictures and Stories,
1940-1947 2.23 Tear sheets, Christmas Eve at Reginald's, The Holiday Cup,
undated 2.24 Interior and exterior scenes, illustrations printed on newsprint,
undated 2.25 Treasure Trails, The Magazine of the Children's Hour, covers, with
notes, 1956-1957 2.26 Yvonne, color tear sheets from untitled book, 1956

Series IV. Notes and Notebooks

2.27 Art Classwork-Art Institute of Chicago, Both Sides of American Art, undated
2.28 Art Classwork-art school class notes, undated 2.29 Art Classwork-Bill
Schimmel, Guaymas, Mexico, Prescott, AZ, 1951 2.30 Art Classwork-Composing
book dummies, includes pencil sketches, undated 3.1 Art Classwork-Gerry Pierce,
Advanced Class, 1952 3.2 Art Classwork-Gerry Pierce Painting Class, 1957 3.3 Art
Classwork-Phil Paradise, Figure and Casein Painting, 1954 3.4 Art Classwork-

Reading a Story to Construct Pictures, undated 3.5-3.10 Travel-Taos, Colorado, Mesa Verde, Tucson, Durango, Moab, Utah, Santa Fe, Mt. Hood, United Kingdom, Bjorli, Norway, London, 1951

Series V. Diaries

3.11 Davis, Flora, 1889 3.12 Davis, Edwin-travel diary, 1926 3.13 Davis, Florence-travel diary, 1926

Series VI. Writings

3.14 Ode to a Brick, poem, TS, including handwritten edits, undated 3.15 Poem (manuscript), undated 3.16 To a Lily of the Valley, poem (manuscript), 1932

Series VII. Sketchbooks

3.17 Brittany, 1926 7.10 CT, VT, Mexican cemetery, 1950 3.18 Early Sketch Book, undated 3.19-3.20 Heidi, sketches and notes, undated 7.11 The Littlest House, undated 4.1 London, Holland, Belgium, 1925-1926 7.12 Notes and sketches, 1952-1954 4.2 Poses, Children Posing for Me, undated 4.3 Tourists Waiting for Rodeo Parade, Tucson, AZ, 1949 4.4 Unbound sheets, sketches in graphite, undated 7.13 Untitled, undated 4.5-4.7 Untitled, undated 4.8 Watercolor Easton Court Hotel, UK, 1954

Series VIII. Photographs

4.9 Animals, undated 4.10 Family, undated 4.11 Family, Friends, Children, undated 4.12 Filene, Edward A., VanLoon, Hendrik with M. Davis, undated 7.14 Group Photo, includes M. Davis, undated 7.15 Group photo, school play, includes M. Davis, undated 4.13 King Family, wedding, undated 4.14 Landscapes, Boyce, undated 4.15 Travel, Europe, between 1920 and 1930 7.16 Wedding, unidentified, undated

Series IX. Clippings

8.5 Miscellaneous, 1933-1947 8.6 Christian Science Monitor, Heidi, 1943, 1953 8.7 New York Times, Swiss Air, Heidi, 1968 September 8