

The Olive Allen Biller Collection
Rare Books and Special Collections
UBC Library

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Prepared by:

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The Olive Allen Biller collection. – 1890 – [ca. 1950]. 22 cm of textual records. - ca. 85 paintings and drawings. - ca. 250 photographs. – ca. 65 examples of published work.

Biographical sketch:

Olive Allen Biller (nee Allen) was born on October 17, 1879 in Ormskirk, England, the youngest of seven children. As a child, Allen vacationed with her family at Trebarfoot, a farmstead on the Cornish Coast. Scrapbooks from these family vacations show Allen's artistic and creative beginnings, through illustrations, photographs, plays and poems that she contributed. She pursued similar endeavours at home, producing plays within her community and in the school that her parents ran. She attended the Slade School of Art in London (1900-1903), where her instructors included Herbert MacNair. Before immigrating to Canada, Allen's illustrations were published in at least ten books, and wrote and illustrated stories for children's annuals and magazines such as *Blackie's* and *Girl's Realm*. In 1912, Allen immigrated to Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan, to marry her long-time sweetheart Jack Biller. In 1915, Allen returned to England while Jack fought in the First World War. Jack was killed in 1916, so Allen returned to Canada as a widow with her two children, John and Jill, in 1919. They moved to James Island, near Victoria, BC, to be near her brother George. While on James Island, she was a correspondent for the *Sidney Review*, where she sometimes published poems and described plays that she wrote for the children to perform. In 1927, the family relocated to Oak Bay, Victoria. A lack of opportunities for illustrating turned Allen Biller toward landscape painting, and while in Victoria she showed with the Vancouver Island Arts and Crafts Society. In 1934, the family relocated once again, to Vancouver, so that her children could attend university. While in Vancouver Allen Biller took classes at the newly opened BC College of Art, studying with F.H. Varley, Jock Macdonald and Tonschek Ustinov. Between 1935 and 1947 her work was shown several times at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Allen Biller passed away in Vancouver in October of 1957.

Sources:

The Life and Work of Olive Allen Biller / Jaleen Grove
Catalogue Raisonne of Olive Allen Biller. / Jaleen Grove

Custodial history:

The materials in this collection were brought to Rare Books and Special Collections by Jaleen Grove, through donation by Jill Sims (Allen Biller's daughter) in January 2007.

Scope and content:

Collection reflects Allen's early life in England, including artistic pursuits and hobbies such as photography, poetry and writing, as well as her later artistic works from her time in Canada. The records also document her day-to-day and family life, in both England and Canada. Textual records include journals and clippings, and graphic material includes drawings, paintings, and photographs. The collection is divided into two series: Journals and Artwork.

Notes:

Title based on the provenance of the collection.

Much of the artwork and the journals are brittle; all material in this collection must be handled with care.

Catalogue Raisonne of Olive Allen Biller, compiled by Jaleen Grove, is available with the collection at Rare Books and Special Collections.

1. Journals. – 1890 – 1934. 22 cm of textual records. - ca. 250 photographs. – ca. 150 drawings and paintings.

Scope and Content:

Journals reflect Allen's day-to-day and family life in England, summer vacations with her family to Trebarfoot, a painting trip to Italy, examples of her playwriting, and documents several years of her life in Canada, from 1930 to 1934. Within the journals are family photographs, drawings and sketches, many by Allen, others contributed by various family members. The journals are as follows: Trebarfoot Vol. 1 (1890 to 1894); Trebarfoot Vol. 2 (1895 to 1898); Trebarfoot Vol. 4 (1901 to 1904); Daily diary (1898); Daily diary (1900, 1903, 1911); Italy journal (1904); Little Female Academy (no date); Auntie McAssar (no date); 1930's diary (1930-1934).

Notes:

Title is based on the content of the series.

The journals are brittle and must be handled with care.

Digital copies of the journals on CD-R, courtesy of Jaleen Grove, are available with the collection.

Files: Box 1

- 1.1 Trebarfoot Vol. 1 (1890 to 1894)
- 1.2 Trebarfoot Vol. 2 (1895 to 1898)
- 1.3 Trebarfoot Vol. 4 (1901 to 1904)
- 1.4 Daily diary (1898)
- 1.5 Daily diary (1900, 1903, 1911)
- 1.6 Italy journal (1904)
- 1.7 Little Female Academy (no date)
- 1.8 Auntie McAssar (no date)
- 1.9 1930's diary (1930-1934).

2. Artwork. [ca. 1898] – [ca. 1950]. ca. 85 drawings and watercolours, oil paintings, ca. 65 examples of published art work.

Scope and content:

The artwork in this collection was created by Allen Biller during her earlier years in England as well as during her time in Canada. Her earlier works, particularly those completed before immigrating to Canada, were often illustrative commercial works, intended for publication in books or periodicals, as well as for other commercial purposes such as Christmas cards and book plates. Her later works include more landscapes. The Artwork series is divided into 5 files: Original drawings, Published works, Significant unpublished works, Landscapes, and Other artwork.

Notes:

Title is based on the content of the series.

Much of the artwork is brittle and must be handled with care.

The arrangement is based upon the classification supplied by Jaleen Grove in the Catalogue Raisonne of Olive Allen Biller, available with the collection.
Digital copies on CD-R of all artwork, as well as many other published works, courtesy of Jaleen Grove, are available with the collection.
Index is available to cross-reference works in the collection to the Catalogue Raisonne.

Files: Box 2

Published work: Folders 2.1 – 2.15

Original drawings, possibly for published works: Folders 2.16 – 2.37

Significant unpublished works: Folders 2.38 – 2.49

Files: Box 3

Landscapes: Folders 3.1 – 3.25

Other: Folders 3.26 – 3.50

Index to works in the Catalogue Raisonne of Olive Allen Biller

Based on the January, 2007 version of the Catalogue. For published items (PUB), in cases when multiple images appear in the same set or book, they have one entry number in the catalogue and an extension of a letter added to the end of the catalogue number. For original drawings or landscapes (DR or LS) an extension of a letter on the catalogue number indicates that the work has a second image on the back. The Landscapes and Others do not at this time appear in the Catalogue Raisonne and therefore appear here without titles or catalogue numbers.

Title	Entry number	Catalogue number	Location (Box-File)
<i>Published works</i>			
Tanglewood Tales	022	PUB126a	2.1
Tanglewood Tales	022	PUB126b	2.1
Tanglewood Tales	022	PUB126c	2.1
Tanglewood Tales	022	PUB126e	2.1
Tanglewood Tales	022	PUB126g	2.1
Tanglewood Tales	022	PUB126a	2.2
Tanglewood Tales	022	PUB126h	2.2
Tales from Hans Christian Anderson	023	PUB127a	2.2
Tales from Hans Christian Anderson	023	PUB127d	2.2
Unknown	020	PUB062	2.3
O Gather Me the Roses	037	PUB041	2.3
File cover design	006	PUB147	2.4
Greeting card	013	PUB048	2.5
Christmas card	014	PUB046	2.5
Greeting card	015	PUB045	2.6
Gift plate	016	PUB044	2.6
Ex libris: Stanley Maxwell	019	PUB042	2.7
Christmas card	032	PUB043	2.7
North Hall Christmas card	011	PUB049	2.7
The Birthday Present	030	PUB051	2.7
The Birthday Present	030	PUB051b	2.7
The Birthday Present	030	PUB051c	2.7
The Birthday Present	030	PUB051e	2.7
The Birthday Present	030	PUB051f	2.7
The Birthday Present	030	PUB051g	2.7
The Birthday Present	030	PUB051h	2.7
Holiday House	031	PUB074a	2.9
Holiday House	031	PUB074b	2.9
Holiday House	031	PUB074c	2.9
Holiday House	031	PUB074d	2.9
Holiday House	031	PUB074g	2.9

Title	Entry number	Catalogue number	Location (Box-File)
Simple Susan	029	PUB066b	2.10
Simple Susan	029	PUB066c	2.10
Simple Susan	029	PUB066d	2.10
Holiday House	031	PUB074d	2.10
Unknown	040	PUB055	2.11
Unknown	042	PUB040	2.12
My Lady Wind	009	PUB060	2.13
Fact and Fable	010	PUB0087a	2.13
Auntie McAssar	035	PUB032	2.14
Unknown	025	PUB033a	2.15
Unknown	025	PUB033b	2.15
Unknown	025	PUB033c	2.15
Unknown	025	PUB033d	2.15
Unknown	025	PUB033e	2.15
Unknown	025	PUB033f	2.15
Unknown	025	PUB033g	2.15
Unknown	025	PUB033h	2.15
Unknown	025	PUB033i	2.15
Unknown	025	PUB033j	2.15
Unknown	025	PUB033k	2.15
Unknown	025	PUB033l	2.15
Tanglewood Tales	022	PUB126b	2.15
Tanglewood Tales	022	PUB126e	2.15
Tanglewood Tales	022	PUB126f	2.15
Tanglewood Tales	022	PUB126g	2.15
Tales from Hans Christian Anderson	023	PUB127a	2.15
Tales from Hans Christian Anderson	023	PUB127f	2.15
Tales from Hans Christian Anderson	023	PUB127g	2.15
Tales from Hans Christian Anderson	023	PUB127h	2.15
<i>Original drawings, possibly for published works</i>			
Aunt Grundy: Archibald & Seraphina	101	DR0047	2.16
Holiday House	093	DR0052a	2.17
Little Female Academy	109	DR0064	2.18
Unknown	083	DR0067	2.19
Rime of the Ancient Mariner	050	DR0080	2.20
Moi, Toi et le Roi	058	DR0084	2.21
Unknown	060	DR0085	2.22

Title	Entry number	Catalogue number	Location (Box-File)
Design for a child's party invitation	097	DR0086	2.23
Aunt Grundy: Fanny and Seraphina	103	DR0091	2.24
Ex Libris	053	DR0092	2.25
A Book of Cures [?]	115	DR0093	2.26
Unknown	106	DR0094	2.27
Simple Susan	077	DR0099a	2.28
Peter Grief	104	DR0103	2.29
Unknown	105	DR0114	2.30
Peter Grief [?]	107	DR0115	2.31
Humpty Dumpty and the Princess	096	DR0125	2.32
Unknown	085	DR0164a	2.33
Unknown	079	DR0164b	2.33
Pigs	046	DR0170	2.34
Humpty Dumpty and the Princess	094	DR0175	2.35
Humpty Dumpty and the Princess	095	DR0177a	2.36
Unknown	047	DR0210a	2.37
<i>Significant unpublished works</i>			
Symphony concert	160	DR0076	2.38
Unknown	154	DR0078a	2.39
Unknown	134	DR100a	2.40
Unknown	135	DR100b	2.41
Unknown	162	DR0127	2.42
Menu	138	DR0128	2.43
Menu	140	DR0129	2.44
Menu	141	DR0130	2.45
Menu	142	DR0131	2.46
Menu	143	DR0132	2.47
Pixie Doll	166	DR0196	2.48
Sand Spit, Sidney Island	165	DR0216b	2.49
<i>Landscapes</i>			
		LS0047a	3.1
		LS0047b	3.1
		LS0077	3.2
		LS0078	3.3
		LS0080	3.4
		LS0087	3.5
		LS0091	3.6
		LS0092	3.7
		LS0098	3.8
		LS0100	3.9

Title	Entry number	Catalogue number	Location (Box-File)
		LS0103	3.10
		LS0104	3.11
		LS0106	3.12
		LS0116	3.13
		LS0117	3.14
		LS0118	3.15
		LS0123	3.16
		LS0125	3.17
		LS0139	3.18
		LS0141	3.19
		LS0144	3.20
		LS0149	3.21
		LS0154	3.22
		LS0155	3.23
		LS0156	3.24
		LS0157	3.25
<i>Other artwork</i>			
		[no number]	3.26
		DR077a	3.27
		DR0126a/b	3.28
		DR0176	3.29
		DR0179	3.30
		DR0181	3.31
		DR0186	3.32
Note: Pixie Doll sketch		DR0187	3.33
		DR0188	3.34
		DR0189	3.35
Note: Pixie Doll sketch		DR0195	3.36
		DR0191/0195	3.37
		DR0192	3.38
		DR0197	3.39
		DR0199	3.40
		DR0202	3.41
		DR0203	3.42
		DR0207	3.43
		DR0208	3.44
		DR0209	3.45
		DR0213	3.46
		DR0220	3.47
		DR0253	3.48
		DR0351	3.49
		CN021	3.50