
HARRIS, Mary Packer, 1891-1978

PRG 657
Series List

Mary Harris was born at Middlesbro, Yorkshire in August 1891, but grew up in Scotland. She graduated from the Edinburgh College of Art in 1913 followed by teacher-training with the Scottish Education Department. In 1915 she accepted a position as art mistress at Buckie, Banffshire, Scotland, a position she held until the end of the war. In 1918 she moved to another position as art mistress, this time at the Ayr Academy.

In 1921, Mary Harris and her parents travelled to Australia, where her brother and his family were already settled. The following year she accepted a teaching position at the School of Arts and Crafts where she taught for the next 30 years.

Mary Harris joined the Quakers, produced and published several books (including Art: The Torch of Life), lectured for 9 years at the Art Gallery, was actively involved in the peace movement and other activities while still maintaining her role as an artist.

Much of her work was stimulated by personal events – The Skyline was written after her elder brother's death at Flanders in 1916 and various paintings were created in response to a need to create a visual impact about something she felt was important.

Her autobiography (series 1) gives an insight into the sort of person Mary P. Harris was. She died in 1978, creating up to the last. A Midsummer Night Dream in a Cat Sanctuary (Series 4) was her last published work.

Manuscript of her autobiography written by Miss Harris. 1
Entitled In One Splendour Spun. Autobiography of a Quaker Artist, the typescript copy is divided into 14 chapters.
c.1970. 1.5cm.

Writings of Mary Harris including: 2

- The Skyline, a one act play in four scenes written after the death of her brother in World War I. c.1920. 0.5cm.
Typescript copy.
- A Trophy. n.d. 13 folios. Typescript copy.
- Painting. n.d. 12 folios. Typescript copy.
- Art, The Torch of Life. n.d. 0.5 cm. Typescript copy. [Also included in the same folder are notes on various famous paintings (9 folios, typescript copies), and hand-written notes on a review of Art, The Torch of Life].
- Untitled book on the history of art, mainly manuscript with a few chapters in typescript. n.d. 2 cm.
c.1920-? 4 cm.

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- Papers relating to Mary Harris' role as a teacher at the School of Arts and Crafts (the Girls' Central Art School). Included are newspaper clippings, programmes and photographs. All but two of the photographs have some form of identification. 1932-1946 and n.d. 12 items. 3
- Published booklet by Mary P. Harris entitled A Midsummer Night's Dream In a Cat Sanctuary. 1977 or 1978. 0.5cm. 4
- Newspaper clipping with photo of Miss Harris lecturing a group of students at the Art Gallery. 4/11/1938, 1 folio. 5
- Scrapbook, consisting of a collection of printed art and design works by Mary Harris, and articles about her. n.d. 4.5cm. 6
[Formerly D6756(Misc)1.
(Compiled by Mrs. M. Burden).