

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

* Name of collection:

McLoughlin Bros., Inc., Collection, 1858-1920

Location:

Graphic Arts
Mss boxes "M"
Octavo vol "M"
Folio vol "M"
OS folders "M"

Size of collection:

Graphic Arts: 6 manuscript boxes; 21 oversize manuscript boxes;
2 double-oversize manuscript boxes
MSS: 1 manuscript box; 1 octavo volume; 1 folio volume; 1 oversized
folder

Sources of information on collection:

See accompanying sheet(s) for additional information.

Source of collection:

Gift of Herbert Hosmer, 1978

Collection description:

McLoughlin Bros., Inc. was a New York publishing firm that pioneered the systematic use of color printing technologies in children's books, particularly between 1858 and 1920. The firm's publications served to popularize illustrators including Thomas Nast, William Mombberger, Justin H. Howard, Palmer Cox, and Ida Waugh. The artistic and commercial roots of the McLoughlin firm were first developed by John McLoughlin, Jr. (1827-1905), who as a teenager learned wood engraving and printing while working for Elton & Co.--a New York firm formed by his father John McLoughlin, Sr. and engraver/printer Robert H. Elton. Elton & Co. (active 1840-1851) printed and issued toy books, comic almanacs, and valentines. Between 1850 and 1851, John McLoughlin, Sr. and Robert H. Elton retired--giving John Jr. control of the business. He started to publish picture books under his own name, and soon acquired the printing blocks of Edward Dunigan, a New York picture book publisher and former employee of Robert H. Elton.

According to John McLoughlin, Jr.'s obituary in Publishers' Weekly (May 6, 1905), he made his younger brother Edmund McLoughlin (1833 or 4-1889) a partner in 1855. However, the firm was not listed in New York city

directories as McLoughlin Bros. until 1858. During the early years of this partnership, the product line expanded to include non-book toys including games, blocks, and paper dolls.

By 1863, the firm had expanded from its original location at 24 Beekman Street to include 30 Beekman Street. John McLoughlin, Jr. continually experimented with color illustrations--progressing from hand stenciling, to the mechanical relief process of zinc etching, to the planographic process of chromolithography. In light of the firm's commercial and creative development, McLoughlin Bros moved to 52 Greene Street in May 1870, and subsequently moved the main New York office to 71 Duane Street in February 1871. In this same year, the McLoughlin firm opened a color printing factory at South 11th and Berry Street in Brooklyn. This factory employed as many as 75 artists, and is the probable site of the firm's experimentation with color reproduction techniques. By the 1880s, McLoughlin books were regularly featuring titles in folio formats, illustrated by chromolithographs. A number of titles were probably "pirate" editions of picture books issued in England by firms like George Routledge & Sons.

After Edmund McLoughlin's retirement in 1885, the firm's New York office was moved several times over the next twenty years to the following addresses: 623 Broadway (1886-ca.1892); 874 Broadway (1892-1898); 890 Broadway (1899-ca.1920). The firm received some new leadership when John McLoughlin, Jr.'s sons James G. and Charles joined the firm after Edmund's retirement. By 1886, the firm published a wide range of items including cheap chapbooks, large folio picture books, linen books, puzzles, games, and paper dolls.

After John McLoughlin, Jr.'s death in 1905, the McLoughlin firm suffered from the loss of his artistic and commercial leadership. In 1920, McLoughlin Bros., Inc. was sold to Milton Bradley, the Brooklyn factory was closed, and the company was moved to Springfield, Mass. With this sale, McLoughlin Bros. ceased game production, although the publication of picture books continued. McLoughlin Bros. enjoyed some success in the 1930's with mechanical paper toys called "Jolly Jump-Ups," but the McLoughlin division of Milton Bradley stopped production during World War II.

Between 1950 and 1951--apparently amid the threat of liquidation, the McLoughlin Bros. executive officers divided among themselves the firm's archival collection of books, drawings, company correspondence, illustration blocks, paper dolls, free standing wooden dolls, puzzles, and games. In December 1951, the McLoughlin Bros. trademark was sold to New York toy manufacturer Julius Kushner. Under Kushner's leadership, some popular favorites like the Jolly Jump-Ups were reissued. However, the McLoughlin line of children's books was sold to Grosset & Dunlap in June 1954. Since that date, several books bearing the McLoughlin Bros. imprint were issued, but the name dropped out of print by the 1970s. Since 1970, McLoughlin products have enjoyed great popularity with collectors, and their visibility continues through displays at book fairs and in catalogues like New York book dealer Justin Schiller's Catalogue 35 (1978) devoted to McLoughlin wood engraving blocks.

This archival collection was assembled by McLoughlin Bros., Inc. Vice President Charles Ernest Miller (1869-1951). After Charles E. Miller's death on 4 March 1951, the collection was held by Mr. Miller's daughter, Ruth Miller. In 1968, Miss Miller sold the collection to collector Herbert H. Hosmer. Subsequently, in 1978, Mr. Hosmer donated the collection to the American Antiquarian Society.

This collection consists of drawings, proofs, and print samples, 1858-(1880-1900)-1920; watercolor drawings, ca.1880-1900; miscellaneous unidentified watercolor drawings, ca.1858-1900; and miscellaneous unidentified pen and ink drawings, ca.1858-1900. The manuscript collection consists primarily of original manuscripts for McLoughlin titles and correspondence.

See Contents List.

16 August 2010

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Graphic Arts Contents List

Manuscript Boxes	Oversized Boxes	Double Oversized Boxes	Description
1 - 7	1 - 19	1 - 2	Drawings, Proofs, and Print Samples Identified by Illustrator, Title or Subject. 1858 - (1800 - 1900) - 1920.
5, 7	19 - 21		Numbered Watercolor Drawings, ca. 1880 - 1900.
5	21	2	Miscellaneous Unidentified Watercolor Drawings, ca. 1858 - 1900
5	21 - 23		Miscellaneous Identified Pen and Ink Drawings, ca. 1858 - 1900

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Manuscript Contents List

Box	Folder	Description
1	1	Correspondence, 1920, n.d.
	2	Original book manuscripts
	3	McLoughlin Bros. order lists (Muslin Flags)
	4	B.C.T. Annual Banquet program, 1907
	5	Newspaper clippings, 1880, n.d.
	6	Photographs
	7	Miscellaneous
Oversized Folder		
1		Clayton R. Faulkner, photographer, Chicago. <i>Charles E. Miller with a salesman's display of McLoughlin Bros. boxed games, c.1895-1900</i> , albumen photograph mounted on card, 18 x 24 cm, mount 28 x 35 cm. Charles E. Miller was a Vice President for the McLoughlin firm. McLoughlin manuscript collection, gift of Herbert Hosmer, 1978.
Octavo volume		
1		McLoughlin Bros. notebook of costs and specifications
Folio volume		
1		Original book manuscript: Hochstein, Anthony, Flower Legends.