

= Clara Elsen Peck =

Clara Elsen Peck (April 18 , 1883 ? February 1968) was an American illustrator and painter known for her illustrations of women and children in the early 20th century . Peck received her arts education from the Minneapolis School of Fine Arts and was employed as a magazine illustrator from 1906 @-@ 1940 . Peck 's body of work encompasses a wide range , from popular women 's magazines and children 's books , works of fiction , commercial art for products like Ivory soap , and comic books and watercolor painting later in her career . Peck worked during the " Golden Age of American Illustration " (1880s @-@ 1930s) contemporaneous with noted female illustrators Jessie Willcox Smith , Elizabeth Shippen Green and Violet Oakley .

Peck 's work appeared in exhibitions from the Art Institute of Chicago to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts , and she received awards from the New York Association of Women Painters and Sculptors in the 1920s . Peck resided in an art colony in Leonia , New Jersey with her collaborator and husband , artist John Scott Williams . In the 1940s , Peck contributed to Catholic comic books distributed to parochial schools . She focused on watercolor painting in the 1950s and her work was exhibited in Europe and the United States . Her most notable illustrations and artwork were published in three books early in her career : Shakespeare 's Sweetheart (1905) , A Lady of King Arthur 's Court (1907) , and In the Border Country (1909) .

= = Early life = =

Clara Elsen Peck was born in Allegan , Michigan on April 18 , 1883 . Peck spent her youth in St. Paul , Minnesota and later studied art at the Minneapolis School of Fine Arts . She took classes at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts where she studied under American Impressionist painter and teacher William Merritt Chase . Reminiscing about her early years , Peck said : " With me the desire to become an artist has been strong since childhood . Other members of the family in previous generations were artists , making the love and joy in creative expression a natural one to me . "

= = Marriage and later life = =

In 1906 , Peck married British @-@ born illustrator John Scott Williams (1877 ? 1976) , and they produced two children together , Ayvard and Conway . Peck and Williams shared similar styles , leading the two to occasionally collaborate on illustrations together . These works were signed with the first initials of their last names , " P W " . Some of Peck 's works are also credited as Clara Elsen Williams and the press sometimes referred to her as " Mrs. John Scott Williams . "

After illustrator Harvey Dunn founded the Leonia School of Illustration in Leonia , New Jersey in 1915 , Peck and Williams moved to an artist colony in Leonia , joining a group of about 90 professional artists .

They lived in a house originally built by artist Charles Harry Eaton (American , 1850 ? 1901) on Crescent Avenue and were neighbors with artist @-@ couple John Rutherford Boyd (1882 ? 1951) and Harriet Repplier Boyd . The Boyds ' house became a community center of artistic gatherings where many of Leonia 's artists exhibited their works . The marriage between Peck and Williams came to an end , and J. Scott Williams remarried in 1930 .

Peck later resided in Brooklyn , New York and Gettysburg , Pennsylvania . Towards the end of her life , art historian Helen Teri Caro located Peck and acquired over 100 pieces of her artwork on behalf of the Glenbow Museum in Calgary , Alberta . Peck died in Gettysburg in February 1968 .

= = Career = =

= = = Illustration = = =

Peck 's career in illustration began in the early 1900s with her work for publisher George W. Jacobs in Philadelphia , Pennsylvania . This was a period when technological innovations in halftone and color printing engendered the " Golden Age of Illustration " . In addition to illustrations , Peck created decorations and lettering designs for books . Notable works from this period include illustrations for Sara Hawks Sterling 's Shakespeare 's Sweetheart (1905) and A Lady of King Arthur 's Court (1907) , and Josephine Daskam Bacon 's In the Border Country (1909) . Peck eventually illustrated at least four additional books by Bacon .

By 1908 , Peck had designed her first cover for Collier 's . Peck began illustrating women 's magazines during the 1910s and 1920s , contributing to Cosmopolitan , Good Housekeeping , Ladies Home Journal , Today 's Housewife , and Household Magazine . Peck 's magazine illustrations appeared in St. Nicholas Magazine , The Century Magazine , The Delineator , the Pictorial Review , and the The Youth 's Companion . She contributed several cover illustrations to Theatre Magazine in the early 1920s and worked as a commercial artist on advertising campaigns for companies such as Procter & Gamble , Metropolitan Life , the Aeolian Company , and Ivory Soap . Peck also illustrated educational books , educational certificates , sheet music , fiction , and fairy tales .

Women and children in Peck 's work were depicted with great sensitivity in a wide variety of roles and responsibilities . Art historian and illustrator Walt Reed describes Peck 's style as " decorative in composition and sensitive in rendering " . Artistic themes found in Peck 's work include education , child psychology , and the expectant mother . The decorative style of the period was popularized by seminal American illustrator Howard Pyle and his female students . According to Elizabeth H. Hawkes , curator emeritus of the Delaware Art Museum , the style consisted of " using flat , brightly colored figures boldly outlined and placed against a patterned background . They incorporated elements of the popular 1890 's poster style and borrowed motifs from Walter Crane , Kate Greenaway , and the English Arts and Crafts movement style of illustration . "

Peck 's career in illustration was active from the " Golden Age of American Illustration " through the onset of the Great Depression when the careers of illustrators suffered due to the poor economy . The output of magazine illustrations from Peck continued until at least 1935 .

= = = Cartooning = = =

In the 1940s , Peck worked as a cartoonist for Topix Comics and Treasure Chest , a series of Catholic @-@ themed comic books . Topix Comics was launched in 1942 and produced in St. Paul , Minnesota . The comic book featured stories of courageous Christians , Saints , and Biblical narratives , and by 1946 , it had a circulation of over 600 @,@ 000 . Peck 's work was distributed exclusively in parochial schools and appeared throughout most of the title 's nine @-@ year run . She also provided material for early issues of the similarly themed Treasure Chest title , including a few episodes of " The Robinson 's Rumpus Room " feature and the cover for Volume 2 , Number 9 in 1946 .

= = = Painting = = =

Peck participated in several exhibitions in the 1950s , beginning with the American Watercolor Society . From 1956 @-@ 1957 , Peck was part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art 's European traveling exhibition ; In 1958 , Peck 's work appeared at the Washington County Museum of Art , in a solo exhibition at Gettysburg College , at the York Art Center , and in New Canaan , Connecticut . The Brandywine River Museum and the Delaware Art Museum host her paintings . Since 2000 , a few landscape and portrait oil paintings sales have been recorded at various auction houses .

= = Awards and distinctions = =

Peck was a member of several art associations , including the American Watercolor Society (1931 ? 1967) , the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors , National Association of

Women Artists , the New York Watercolor Society and the Society of Illustrators . Along with Florence Scovel Shinn , Rose O 'Neill and others , Peck was one of the first 20 women to become a member of the Society of Illustrators by 1922 , representing about 10 % of the total membership . In 1913 , Peck 's work was featured in exhibitions at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts , and at the National Association of Women Artists and the New York Association of Women Painters and Sculptors where she won awards in 1920 and 1921 . Posthumously , Peck 's works were featured in the seminal 1976 New York exhibition , 200 Years of American Illustration ; In 1985 at the America 's Great Women Illustrators 1850 @-@ 1950 exhibition in New York ; And , in 1986 , at the American Illustration 1890 @-@ 1925 exhibition held in Calgary .

= = Selected illustrated books = =

Phases , Mazes and crazes of love . By Minna Thomas Antrim . Philadelphia : George W. Jacobs and Company , 1904 .

Knocks , Witty Wise and _ _ _ _ . By Minna Thomas Antrim . Philadelphia : George W. Jacobs and Company , 1905 .

Shakespeare 's Sweetheart . By Sara Hawks Sterling . Philadelphia : George W. Jacobs & Co , 1905 .

A Lady of King Arthur 's Court . By Sara Hawks Sterling . Philadelphia : George W Jacobs and Co . , 1907 .

In the Border Country . By Josephine Daskam Bacon . New York : Doubleday Page , 1909 .

The Hallowell Partnership . By Katharine Holland Brown . New York : Charles Scribner 's Sons , 1912 .

The Prince of Mercuria . By Atkinson Kimball . New York : Heart 's International Library Co . , 1914 .

The Diary of an Expectant Mother . By Charlotte Hirsch . Chicago : A.C. McClurg , 1917 .

= = Gallery = =