



Eola Willis papers, 1857-1951
SCHS 1174.00
Containers 21/66-72

Creators: Willis, Eola, 1856-1952.
Willis, Edward, 1834 1910.

Description: 3 linear ft.

Biographical/Historical Note: Charleston, S.C. writer, artist, historian, and cultural leader. She studied art, singing, and other subjects in Paris (France) and New York (N.Y.) and established an art studio in Charleston. Willis was active in many patriotic and cultural organizations, and it was through her efforts that an Art Commission was added to Charleston's civic government. She was the daughter of Edward Willis (1834-1910) and Elizabeth Louise Hammond Willis (1835-1917), whose other children included Azalea H. Willis (d. 1930), Louise H. Willis (later Louise Snead), and Theodore H. Willis (d. 1944). She was the author of "The Charleston Stage in the 18th Century" (1925) and numerous articles.

Scope and Content: Papers consist of correspondence, writings, diaries, a scrapbook, and other items.

Correspondence (1884-1951) includes some family letters and concerns European travel and social life, sales of artwork by Willis, her writings, personal and family matters, art, and other topics. Correspondents include William A. Courtenay, John Bennett, David D. Wallace, Thomas R. Waring, Jr., Burnett R. Maybank, and many others.

Writings include poems; and notes and manuscripts of articles on Charleston history, theater, and guest houses, heraldry and illumination, early American theater, dance, and other subjects. Included are a series of articles entitled "When Charleston was Young"; manuscripts of a book on Alexander Placides and a book entitled "Mansions of Ease"; and notes, clippings, and manuscript fragments concerning Charleston theater.

Scrapbook (1892-1902) contains letters, clippings, invitations, and other memorabilia pertaining to Willis' artwork, family, and membership in organizations, as well as the Paris Exposition and the S.C. Interstate and West Indian Exposition. Diaries include a diary (1906) of Eola Willis and a fragment of a diary (1893) of Elizabeth L.H. Willis.

Other items include invitations; biographical material on Willis; letters, notes, and clippings concerning the Charleston Arts Commission, Preservation Society, and the Colonial Dames; genealogical material on the Willis family and related families; an address book; family photographs; reminiscences (1937) by Willis; and obituaries, poems, clippings, and other material pertaining to Azalea Willis and other family members.

Preferred Citation: Willis, Eola, 1856-1952. Eola Willis papers, 1857-1951. (1174.00) South Carolina Historical Society.

Search terms:

Placide, Alexander.
Willis, Azalea Howard, d. 1930.
Willis, Elizabeth Louise Hammond, 1835-1917.
Willis, Eola, 1856-1952.
Willis family.
Charleston (S.C.). Art Commission.
Preservation Society of Charleston.
South Carolina Society of the Colonial Dames of America.
Exhibitions.
Heraldry.
Illumination of books and manuscripts.
Theater -- South Carolina -- Charleston.
Women artists -- South Carolina -- Charleston.
Women authors, American -- South Carolina -- Charleston.
Women historians -- South Carolina -- Charleston.
Charleston (S.C.) -- History.
Charleston (S.C.) -- Intellectual life -- 20th century.
South Carolina -- History.
Clippings.
Diaries.
Letters (correspondence)
Photographs.
Poems.
Scrapbooks.
Writings.
Artists.
Authors.
Historians.

Series and container outline:

1174.01 Eola Willis papers

21/66-67	Correspondence, 1884 1951 (1 linear ft.).
21/68/01-25	Writings, 1920s 1940s (0.5 linear ft.).
21/69-70	Theater writings, 1920 1945 (0.5 linear ft.).
21/70/04/12	Art papers, 1900 1940 (9 items).
21/71/01	Scrapbook, 1892 1902 (1 v.).
21/71-072	Biography papers, 1893 1950 (100 items).
21/72/05-12	Papers, 1920 1945 (100 items).

1174.02 Willis family papers

1174.02.01	Edward Willis papers, 1857 1914. 0.25 linear ft.
21/66/01-02	Letters, 1857 1880. 24 items.
21/71/02-04	Quartermaster papers, 1862 1914.

Detail container list:

21/66/1-2 Willis, Edward, d. 1914

Letters, 1857-1880. 24 items

Charleston businessman. Letters and documents of Edward Willis. Correspondents include Varina (Mrs. Jefferson) Davis regarding family, financial matters (1866, 10 items), General P.G.T. Beauregard, New Orleans LA, regarding business matters; also letter regarding fortifications around Charleston (1/1861), Edward Willis's pardon, papers of the SC Order of Oddfellows (1857-1858)

21/66-67 Willis, Eola, 1870-1956

Correspondence, 1884-1951. 1 ft

Charleston writer. Correspondence of Eola Willis with some letters of her father, Edward Willis. Correspondents include William A. Courtney, Newry, Archibald Anderson and Howard Mumford Jones, Chapel Hill NC; Ambrose E. Gonzales, Columbia, John Bennett, Hervey Allen, David D. Wallace, Warrington Dawson, Thomas R. Waring Sr., Varina S. Eden, Eleanor Roosevelt, Burnett R. Maybank, other SC politicians and many others regarding European travel and social life from London, England, France and Italy (ca. 1890-1905); sales of Eola Willis's artwork; publication of her book *The Charleston Stage in the 18th Century* (1925), the death of family members, theatre research, personal and family matters, the Paris Exposition (1900) and other social and artistic concerns. Also many undated social invitations to weddings, parties, gardens, etc. Chronologically arranged

21/70/4-12 Willis, Eola. 1870-1956

Art papers, ca. 900-1940. 9 items

Charleston writer. Writings and scrapbooks of Eola Willis regarding art, artists, and art in Charleston. Writing subjects include beauty, English art, busts, Sicilian painters, James M. Whistler, art in the Civil War, and other subjects. Some material regarding Eola Willis's career in art including accounts of art work sold and commissioned and an account book of art lists with records of art and artists at the 1901-1902 South Carolina, Interstate and West Indian Exposition, Charleston.

21/69-70 Willis, Eola, 1870-1956

Theatre writings, ca. 1920-1945. ½ ft

Charleston writer. Writings of Eola Willis on the theatre include early dramatic performances; beginnings of drama in America; Charleston's contributions to dramatic composition; the dance: religious, tribal, and social; the Dock Street Theater, Charleston; early European drama; an 18th century French theatre in Charleston, articles on the future of American theater (ca. 1920-1930s); the little theater movement; and a book length ms, "Peerless Placides," regarding the acting troupe of the Placide Family and Alexander Placide who performed in Charleston in 1791. Also ms. fragments, lists of purchasers and a scrapbook of Eola Willis's *The Charleston Stage in the 18th Century, With Social Settings of the Time* (1925).

21/71/1 Willis, Eola, 1870-1956

Scrapbook, 1892-1902. 1 item

Charleston author. Scrapbook (1892-1902) of Eola Willis with letters, clippings of Eola Willis's and other writings, invitations, and other ephemeral regarding artwork in Charleston; family matters; the art students league of NY; music in NY; the Reunion of the United Confederate Veterans (1899) in Charleston; the Paris, France Exposition of 1900 and much on the South Carolina Interstate and West Indian Exposition (1901-1902) in Charleston.

21/71/2-4 Willis, Edward, d. 1914

Quartermaster's Account books and papers. 1862-1914

CSA and US Army Quartermaster, Charleston businessman. Account book (1862-1863) of Edward Willis as Confederate States of America (CSA) quartermaster with list of soldiers paid, Edward Willis' accounts with the CSA, bounty money paid; amount of purchases and expenditures by companies and soldiers, list of discharged soldiers, company pay rolls including several SC regiments and other expenditures. Tissue copies (1899) of letters and receipts of Edward Willis, depot quartermaster, Charleston during the Spanish-American War regarding orders and shipments of supplies. Biographical notes of Edward Willis with list of books he owned.

21/71-72 Willis, Eola, 1870-1956

Biographical papers, 1893-1950. Approx 100 items

Charleston writer. Eola Willis's diary (1900-1906) and biographical material regarding Eola Willis's career as writer, artist, singer, promoter of the arts. Also diary (1893) and writings of Elizabeth H. Willis.

21/68/1-25 Willis, Eola, 1870-1956

Writings, ca. 1920s-1940s. ½ ft

Charleston writer. Writings and notes of Eola Willis concerning Charleston's old wines, history notes on Charleston, colonial guest houses in Charleston, Charleston church adornments, a series of articles on "When Charleston Was Young;" Langrave Thomas Smith; "Mansions of Ease" regarding Charleston aristocracy; Ladies Court Costumes, conquistadores, heraldry and illumination; poetry of Eola Willis and others, Colonial SC constitutions, notes on SC baronies, "The Court Circle of Colonial Carolina" regarding beginnings of Carolina; story of Mt. Vernon, Old Williamsburg and other misc. subjects. Alphabetically arranged.

21/72/5-12 Willis, Eola, 1870-1956

Papers, ca. 1920-1945. Approx 100 items

Charleston writer. Letters, notes, clippings of Eola Willis regarding her participation in the Charleston Arts Commission, Preservation Society and the Colonial Dames. Papers of Eola Willis's family including Theodore, Azelea H. and Edward H. Willis. Genealogy of Willis, Hammond and Howard families. Clippings, guest lists letter regarding Eola Willis's debutant party (1939) for her great niece Elizabeth L. Eden. Other misc. material.