

William Steig illustrations, circa 1969
FLP.CLRC.STEIG

Finding aid prepared by Lindsay Friedman

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

April 12, 2012

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Free Library of Philadelphia: Children's Literature Research Collection
February 2012
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Philadelphia, PA, 19103
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Summary Information

Repository	Free Library of Philadelphia: Children's Literature Research Collection
Creator	Steig, William, 1907-2003
Title	William Steig illustrations
Date	circa 1969
Extent	0.1 Linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	The collection consists of a piece of preliminary artwork and a dummy by cartoonist and children's author William Steig (1907-2003), for the book <i>Sylvester the Magic Pebble</i> (1969).

Preferred Citation note

[Description and date of item], [Box and folder number], William Steig illustrations, circa 1969, Free Library of Philadelphia, Children's Literature Research Collection.

Biographical/Historical note

William Steig was born on November 14, 1907, in New York City. He grew up in the Bronx and attended City College (now part of CUNY) and the National Academy of Design. The stock market crash put an end to his schooling, and his first cartoon was published in the *New Yorker* a few months later, in June 1930. He worked regularly as a cartoonist, primarily contributing to the *New Yorker*, as well as for various advertising agencies and greeting card companies.

Steig did not write his first children's book until 1968, long after he had become famous as a cartoonist. His third book, *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* (1969), is not only one of his best-loved but also one of his most celebrated. It tells the story of Sylvester, a young donkey who collects unusual pebbles, and one day finds a magical pebble that grants wishes. Sylvester is then frightened by a lion and unthinkingly wishes he were a rock so he could remain safe. Now trapped, Sylvester must wait until his family picnics nearby, finding the magic pebble and restoring Sylvester to donkey form. *Sylvester* received seven honors, including a National Book Award finalist and the 1970 Caldecott Medal. He later received Caldecott Honors for *The Amazing Bone* (1976) and twice received Newbery Honors: first for *Abel's Island* (1976) and later for *Doctor De Soto* (1982).

Steig wrote more than forty books and published hundreds of cartoons over his long career. Today, he is probably best remembered for one of his later books: *Shrek!* (1991) was adapted into an enormously successful film franchise. He continued writing for children well into his nineties, and died in Boston on October 3, 2003.

Bibliography:

Angell, Roger. "William Steig." *The New Yorker*, October 20, 2003.

Something About the Author, vol. 111.

"William Steig." *Contemporary Authors Online*. Detroit: Gale, 2007.

Scope and Contents note

This collection contains one piece of preliminary art and a dummy for the Caldecott award-winning book, *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* by William Steig.

Arrangement note

The collection is arranged in order of probable creation. It is housed in the same box as the Reinhold Weimar Goll writings and the Kristin Hunter Lattany writings.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Free Library of Philadelphia: Children's Literature Research Collection February 2012

Conditions Governing Access note

This collection is open to researchers by appointment. Please contact the Curator for information.

Conditions Governing Use note

The right of access to material does not imply the right of publication. Permission for reprinting, reproduction, or extensive quotation from the rare books, manuscripts, prints, or drawings must be obtained through written application, stating the use to be made of the material. The reader bears the responsibility for any possible infringement of copyright laws in the publication of such material. A reproduction fee will be charged if the material is to be reproduced in a commercial publication.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Gift of Robert Kraus, 1971.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Ohio State University: William Steig 1907-2003 biographical file, CGA.VF.BIO.3517.

University of Minnesota: William Steig Papers, c. 1955-1977, CLRC-1896.

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- Drawings (visual works)
- Dummies (printed matter)
- Watercolors (paintings)

Subject(s)

- Children's authors--20th century
- Children's literature--20th century
- Illustrated children's books--20th century
- Illustration of books--20th century

Sylvester and the Magic Pebble

Collection Inventory

Sylvester and the Magic Pebble 1969

Preliminary art for page 6, pen and ink and watercolor on paper mounted to board circa 1969

	Box	Folder
Graphic materials	1	7

Dummy, pen and ink on paper with text pasted in, 32 pages circa 1969

	Box	Folder
Graphic materials	1	8