

**Hendrik Willem Van Loon**  
**typescript and illustrations, 1917**  
**FLP.CLRC.VANLOON**

**Finding aid prepared by Garrett Boos**

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This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

November 20, 2013

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Free Library of Philadelphia: Children's Literature Research Collection  
1901 Vine Street  
Philadelphia, PA, 19103  
215-686-5370

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Free Library of Philadelphia: Children's Literature Research Collection
<b>Creator</b>	Van Loon, Hendrik Willem, 1882-1944
<b>Title</b>	Hendrik Willem Van Loon typescript and illustrations
<b>Date</b>	1917
<b>Extent</b>	0.71 Linear feet
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	Hendrik Willem Van Loon (1882-1944) was a journalist, historian, radio personality, writer, and illustrator who published more than fifty books on history for a children and adults. The Van Loon papers include a typescript for <i>A Short History of Discovery</i> (1917) with original color illustrations.

### Preferred Citation note

[Description and date of item], [Box and folder number], Hendrik Willem Van Loon typescript and illustrations, 1917, Free Library of Philadelphia, Children's Literature Research Collection.

## Biographical/Historical note

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Hendrik Willem Van Loon was born on January 14, 1882, in Rotterdam (the Netherlands). As a child, he was interested in both art and history. After emigrating to the United States in 1903, he graduated from Cornell University and got a job at the Associated Press in Washington, D.C. During his lifetime, Van Loon worked as a correspondent for the A.P. throughout Europe; taught history at a number of American universities; and was a well-known radio personality, all in addition to his prolific writing career.

His first book, *The Fall of the Dutch Republic* (1913), was a nonfiction account for an academic audience, but by 1917 Van Loon had also started writing historical works for children. His first book for children, *History with a Match: Being an Account of the Earliest Navigators* was his debut as an illustrator. It was later republished under several titles, including *The Romance of Discovery* and *A Short History of Discovery*. He claimed to have illustrated the book, quite literally, with a match dipped in ink. In 1921 Van Loon's most famous book, *The Story of Mankind*, was published. It won the very first Newbery Medal in 1922. *The Story of Mankind* was adapted into a Marx brothers movie of the same title in 1957, starring Hedy Lamarr, and the book remains in print today.

Van Loon's reputation as a "juvenile author" grew, although not without controversy. Van Loon tired of being considered only an author for children and attempted to write denser historical works, with limited market success. Another Van Loon publication, *The Story of the Bible* (1923), caused some agitation as it portrayed Jesus Christ as a historical figure only. Between Van Loon's histories, books for children, autobiographies, and works as an illustrator, he published more than fifty books. He died of heart failure on March 11, 1944.

### Bibliography:

"Hendrik Willem Van Loon." *Contemporary Authors Online*. Detroit: Gale, 2002.

*Something About the Author*, vol. 18.

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## Scope and Contents note

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This collection consists of an illustrated typescript for *A Short History of Discovery: From the Earliest Times to the Founding of Colonies in the American Continent* (1917) by Hendrik Willem Van Loon.

## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

Free Library of Philadelphia: Children's Literature Research Collection

### Conditions Governing Access note

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

### Conditions Governing Use note

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## Related Materials

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### Related Archival Materials note

Cornell University: Hendrik Willem van Loon Papers, 1884-1972, #3292.

University of Minnesota: Hendrik Willem Van Loon Papers, 1936-1939, CLRC-1666.

University of Virginia: Letters of Hendrik Willem Van Loon, 1922-1945.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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### Genre(s)

- Illustrations

- Typescripts

**Personal Name(s)**

- Van Loon, Hendrik Willem, 1882-1944

**Subject(s)**

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

## Collection Inventory

**A Short History of Discovery: From the Earliest Times to the Founding of Colonies in the American Continent 1917**

**Box**

Illustrated draft, revised typescript with paint and pen and ink on paper illustrations

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