



ArchivesSpace

Isabella (Pansy) Alden collection, 1942

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Maine Women Writers Collection

Abplanalp Library
University of New England
716 Stevens Avenue
Portland, Maine 04103
cmiller10@une.edu
URL: <http://www.une.edu/mwwc>

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical/Historical Note	3
Collection Scope and Content	4
Arrangement	4
Administrative Information	4
Controlled Access Headings	5
Collection Inventory	5

Summary Information

Repository:	Maine Women Writers Collection
Creator:	Hill, Grace Livingston, 1865-1947
Title:	Isabella (Pansy) Alden collection
ID:	0009
Date [inclusive]:	1942
Physical Description:	1 folder
Language of the Material:	English

Preferred Citation

Isabella (Pansy) Alden collection, Maine Women Writers Collection, University of New England, Portland, Maine

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical/Historical Note

Isabella Macdonald Alden was born in 1841 in Rochester, New York to well-educated parents. She was the sixth of seven children and was initially home-schooled by her father. She developed her writing skills early: as a child, she kept a daily journal, which her father critiqued, and had her first story, *Our old clock*, published in the village paper when she was only ten. Alden authored around 100 books between 1865 and 1929 under the pseudonym Pansy, a nickname bestowed upon her by her father. She wrote until shortly before her death in 1930, leaving behind an unfinished autobiography which her niece, Grace Livingston Hill, completed and edited. Alden met her husband, Reverend Gustavus Rosenberg Alden, while teaching at Oneida Seminary in New York. His work took the couple to various parts of the country, including Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Washington D.C. After her marriage, Alden divided her time among writing, participating in church activities, teaching at several of the Chautauqua sessions, and raising her son Raymond, who was born in 1873. By 1900, the family had three residences: a home in Philadelphia, a summer residence in Chautauqua, New York, and a winter home in Winter Park, Florida. Throughout her life, Isabella Alden combined her writing and her religion. She did much work with Christian periodicals, writing serialized stories for the *Herald* and *Presbyter* from about 1870 until 1900; editing *The Pansy*, a Sunday juvenile, from 1874-1894; editing the *Primary* quarterly and producing the primary grade Sunday school lessons for the Westminster teacher for twenty

years; and working on the editorial staff of *Trained motherhood* and *The Christian endeavor*. From 1865 to 1929, Alden authored about 100 books. Most of her works are didactic fiction, heavily salted with religious principles, which concentrate on translating Biblical precepts into acceptable Christian behavior in a modern world. Several of her books, such as her most popular work *Ester Ried*, were based on personal experiences; others, such as the Chautauqua girls series, were motivated by her interest in the Chautauqua movement. She and her niece, Grace Livingston Hill, even make a brief appearance in the final chapter of the last book in the series, *Four mothers at Chautauqua*. Alden's books were enormously popular during the late nineteenth century; in 1900, sales were estimated at around 100,000 copies annually. Some titles were translated into several languages, including French, German, Russian and Japanese. After the deaths of her husband and son in 1924, Alden moved to Palo Alto, California, where she made her home with her daughter-in-law. She continued writing until shortly before her death on August 5, 1930, leaving an unfinished autobiography, *Memories of yesterday*, which was completed and edited by her niece, Grace Livingston Hill.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Collection Scope and Content

The collection contains two letters from Isabella Alden's niece to Anna Hooper of Portland, Maine.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

This collection is organized as a single series.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Access

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[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Portland (Me.)
- Correspondence
- Hill, Grace Livingston, 1865-1947
- Alden, Isabella Macdonald, 1841-1930

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence TLS from Grace Livingston Hill (Pansy's niece) to Anna S. Hooper, 1942	box 1	folder 001