

Leech, John watercolor sketches

John Leech watercolor sketches
undated, circa 1840

Title Statement

Leech, John watercolor sketchesGuide to the John Leech watercolor sketches MSS 16912

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS 16912

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1798

Unit Date

undated, circa 1840

Mixed Materials [X032668462]

BW 58 (box)

Container

001 (folder)

Language

English

Creator

Leech, John, 1817-1864

Extent

.04 Cubic Feet 1 legal folder

Condition Description

Good

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was purchased from Jarndyce Antiquarian Booksellers by the Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia on 18 September 2024.

Preferred Citation

MSS 16912, John Leech watercolors, Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia.

Biographical Note

John Leech (1817–1864) was an English caricaturist known for his contributions to *Punch* the weekly humor and satire magazine, as well as the first illustrator of Charles Dickens' 1843 novella *A Christmas Carol*. Leech was born in London in 1817, the son of the landlord of the London Coffee House on Ludgate Hill. He studied at Charterhouse School, where he met his life-long friend, the novelist, William Makepeace Thackeray. He continued his studies of medicine, at the age of sixteen, at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, before leaving his studies to pursue an artistic profession. His first publication was 'Etchings and Sketchings, By A Pen, Esq.' (1835) and he joined *Punch* in 1841, regularly contributing to the magazine until his death. His illustrations included political cartoons, social caricature, scenes of everyday life and sporting works. Aside from *Punch*, he contributed to many other illustrated periodicals including *The New Monthly Magazine*, *The Illustrated Magazine*, *The Illustrated London News* and *The Field*. He died at the age of forty-seven in London.

Resources

"Leech, John." *Benezit Dictionary of Artists*. 31 Oct. 2011; Accessed 11 Jul. 2025.

<https://www.oxfordartonline.com/benezit/view/10.1093/benz/9780199773787.001.0001/acref-9780199773787-e-00106434>.

"John Leech." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, revised March 21, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Leech>.

"John Leech." *Lambiek Comiclopedia*. Lambiek, revised October 6, 2024. https://www.lambiek.net/artists/l/leech_john.htm.

Content Description

This collection contains eight original pen, ink, and watercolor sketches with initials by the English caricaturist John Leech (1816-1864). Illustrated roughly around 1840, each illustration depicts his observations of daily British life of the lower and middle classes: on the street, in taverns, and at home. All contain captions related to the image, and some have titles in addition to their caption. These titles include "A Speculation," "On the Boulevards," "A Toothless Trio," "A Learned Trio," and "The Moustache Movement."

Related Materials

Leech's caricatures relate to the Lea Iselin Collection of Humor at the University of Virginia.

Keywords

cartoons (humorous images)

drawings (visual works)

Illustrators

England -- History