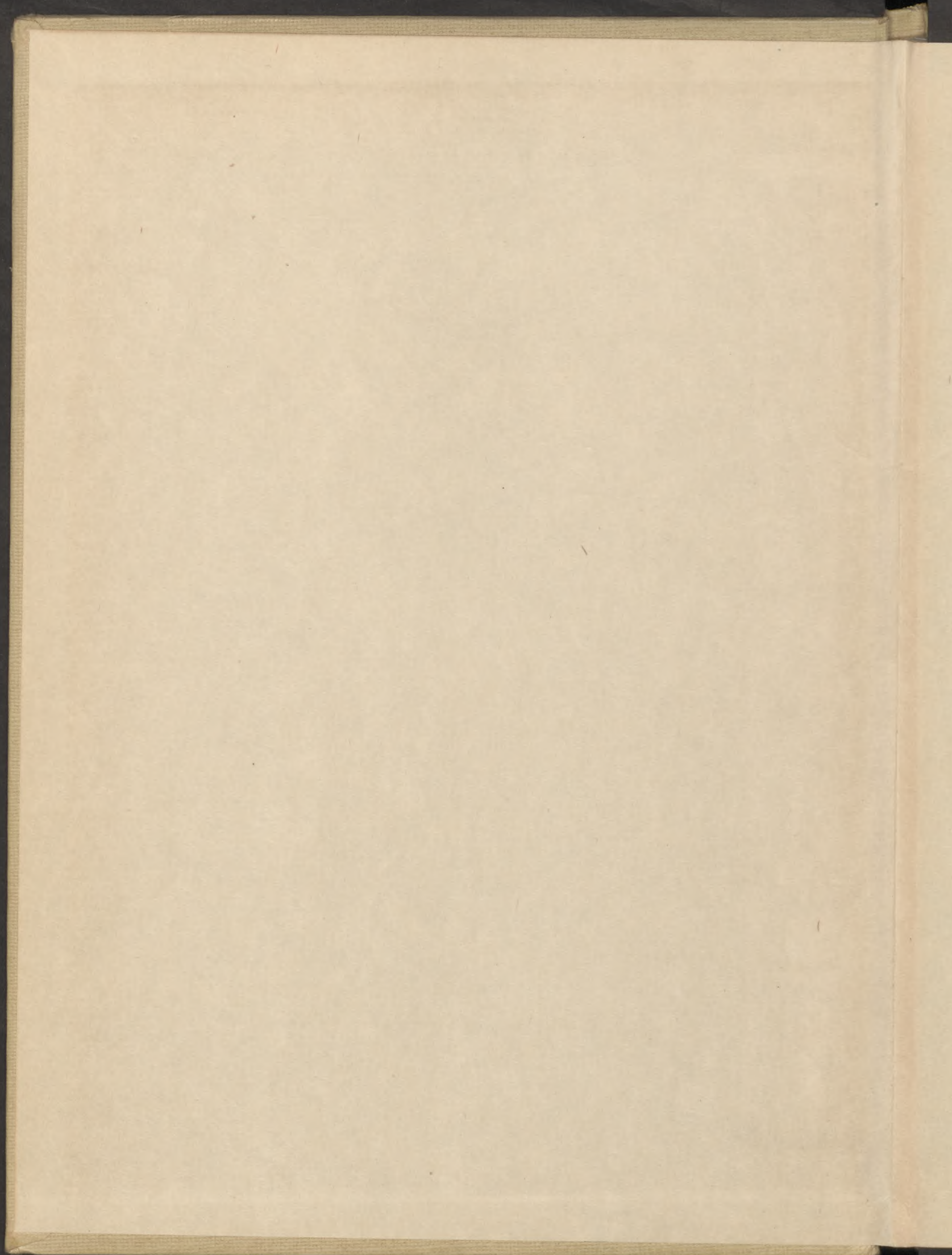


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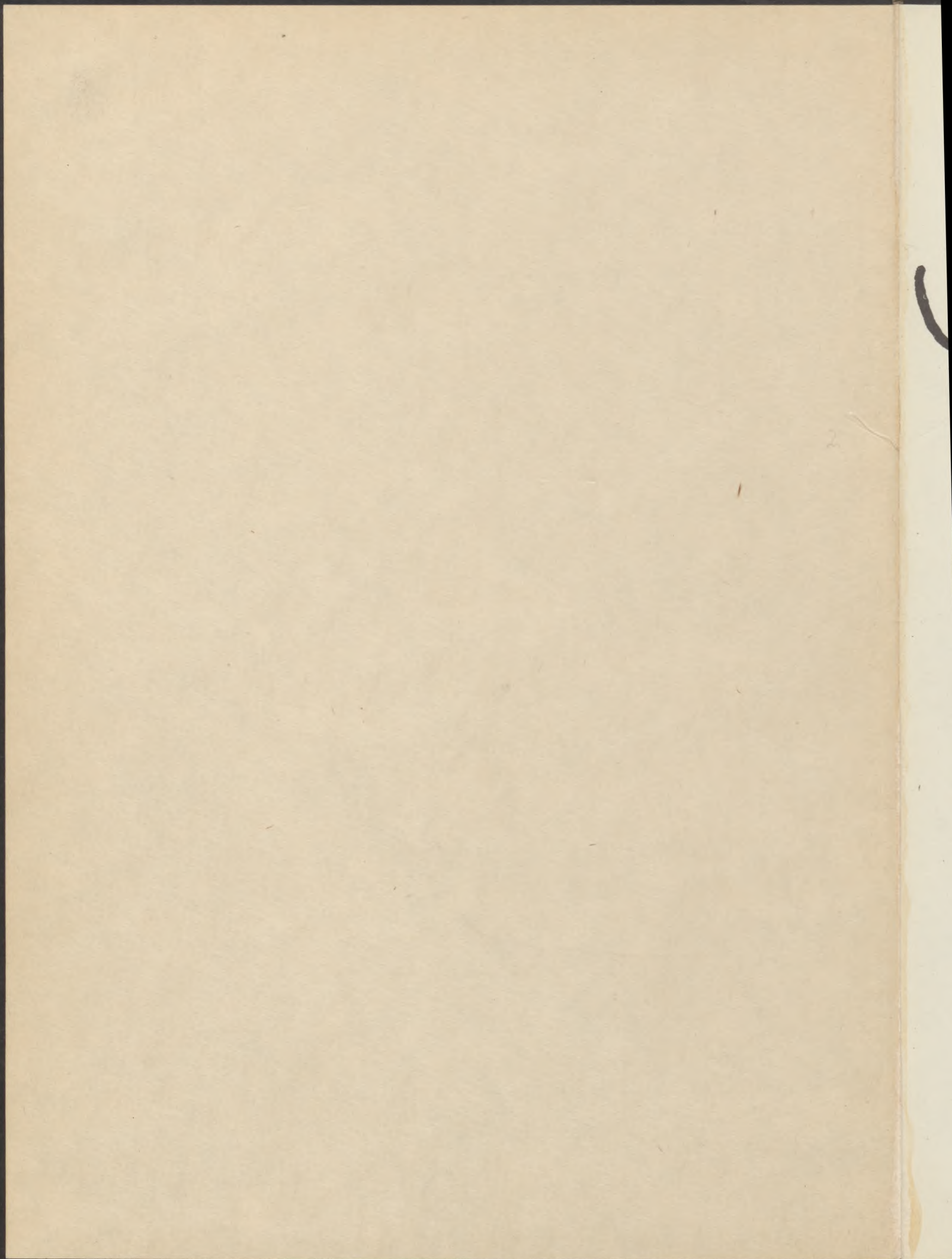














# Willy Pogány's Water-Color Lessons

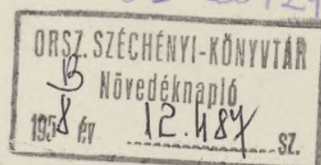
INCLUDING GOUACHE



DAVID McKAY COMPANY  
NEW YORK



TO  
*Elaine*



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## INTRODUCTION

There is scarcely anyone who would not like to paint pictures.

Many people believe that only those who are specially gifted can paint; therefore, some people never try, and some who do give it up after a few disheartening failures.

It might be surprising to learn that there is no valid reason why anyone with reasonably good eyesight should not be able to produce some creditable, and occasionally, even fine pictures.

So don't be one of those who says "I can't" without ever having tried, or one of those "of little faith" who gives up too easily. **Try** to paint and have fun doing it!

After all, the only chance you take is to spoil a sheet of paper. If you do, then take another sheet and begin all over again.

Painting with water color can be a delightful experience, and the aim of this book is to acquaint you with the character and technique of this medium.

Water color is the oldest and the most generally used of all painting methods. It has a universal appeal, and no wonder that not only professional artists but amateurs and even children are fascinated by its lovely qualities.

Water-color painting has freshness and delicacy. Its materials are easily obtained, and it does not require cumbersome equipment. Another advantage of water-color painting is that a picture can be finished in a comparatively short time.

Follow the advice and instructions in this book, and I am sure they will help to make your adventures in picturemaking more enjoyable and less hazardous by showing you how to go about it and what pitfalls to avoid.

Naturally, to begin a water-color painting you must first draw the outlines of the objects to be painted; otherwise you would not know where to place your colors.

Do not begin to paint until you are well satisfied with your drawing.

Good drawing is an important factor in making a good painting.

If you have difficulty with drawing, you should study and practice.

I suggest as a guide my book "WILLY POGANY'S DRAWING LESSONS," which will teach you drawing in a simple and easy way.

Be patient, have courage. Remember that even a spoiled picture is not a waste of time, because very often you can profit greatly by learning from your mistakes.

The beauty of color and their endless variations are a challenge to your ability and imagination.

So enjoy your adventure in picturemaking, and let this book be a compass to guide you.



## CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction .....                       | 3  |
| Materials                                |    |
| The Paper .....                          | 5  |
| Brushes .....                            | 6  |
| Sponges .....                            | 7  |
| Knife .....                              | 7  |
| Paint Boxes and Palettes.....            | 8  |
| Color .....                              | 10 |
| Your Paints .....                        | 13 |
| Warm and Cold Colors.....                | 16 |
| Color Mixes .....                        | 17 |
| Washes .....                             | 20 |
| The Flat Wash.....                       | 21 |
| The Gradated Wash.....                   | 26 |
| Wiping Out .....                         | 27 |
| Scraping Out .....                       | 30 |
| Drawing In .....                         | 30 |
| Blending Control .....                   | 31 |
| Reflected Images .....                   | 32 |
| Methods of Water-Color Painting          |    |
| The Classical or Traditional Method..... | 34 |
| The Modern or Spontaneous Method.....    | 35 |
| The Wiping-out Method.....               | 36 |
| Quick Sketches .....                     | 37 |
| Gouache or Body Color.....               | 40 |
| Conclusion .....                         | 48 |

### Color Plates

|                                  |    |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Flat Wash .....                  | 14 |
| Gradated Wash (sky).....         | 15 |
| Sketching in .....               | 18 |
| Figure Sketch .....              | 19 |
| Nude and Drape.....              | 22 |
| Nude and Drape (detail).....     | 23 |
| Head (wiping-out method).....    | 38 |
| Head (spontaneous method).....   | 39 |
| Figures (wiping-out method)..... | 42 |
| Nude .....                       | 46 |
| Head (Building-up method).....   | 47 |



## MATERIALS

### The Paper

For water-color painting the paper should be **heavy** and **strong**.

It should be **somewhat absorbent**, but not like blotting paper.

It should be **neither too smooth nor too rough**.

A heavy paper is preferable because if the paper is too thin it will buckle when wet, making it difficult to control your paint on the uneven surface.

The paper should be strong because it might have to withstand washing, scrubbing, rubbing, scraping or dabbing without losing its surface quality.

If paper is too absorbent your paint will spread (bleed) uncontrollably and your brush will become constantly dry.

Water-color paint will not hold on paper that is too smooth. It will run off as from a sheet of glass.

If paper is too rough, you will have difficulty in sketching your outlines.

To keep your paper flat you should pin down or tape down edges on a board or a stretcher.

You can buy water-color pads, in which the edges of sheets are glued together, or water-color boards with paper of various textures mounted on cardboard.

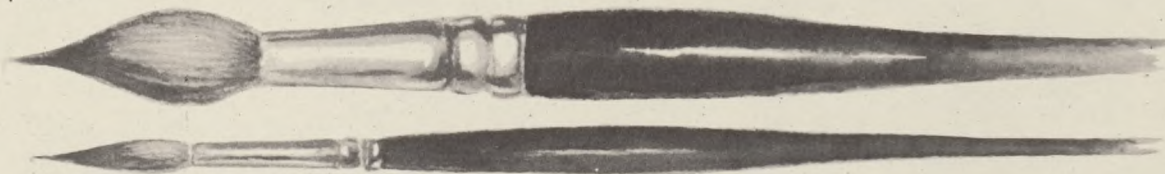




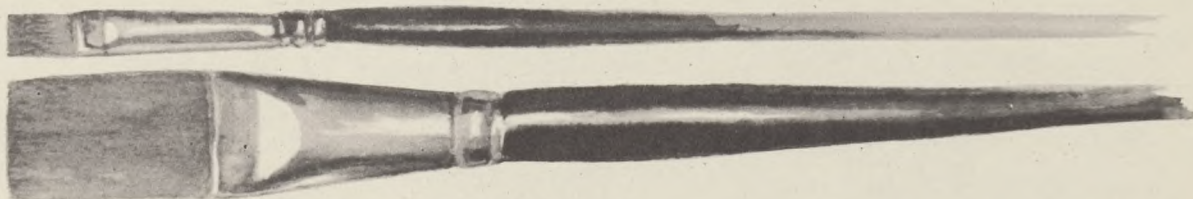
## Brushes

For water-color painting it is important to have brushes of good quality. Sable-hair brushes are the best for general use. They are resilient and do not get limp in water.

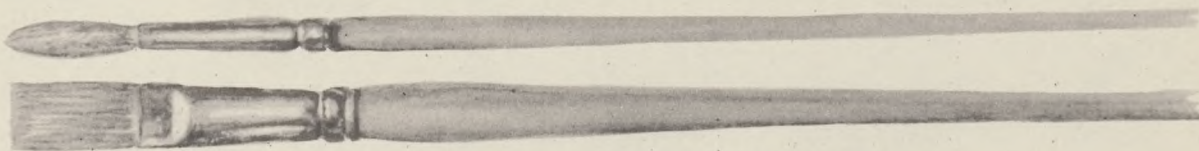
You will need a few well-pointed sable-hair brushes of various sizes. When dipped in water and shaken out, even the thickest one should come to a fine point.



Flat camel-hair brushes are excellent for broad washes. They are also good for details when used edgewise.



A few bristle brushes of various sizes will be useful for "scrubbing" or washing out.



To your collection, add a good fat dabber. You will find it very useful.

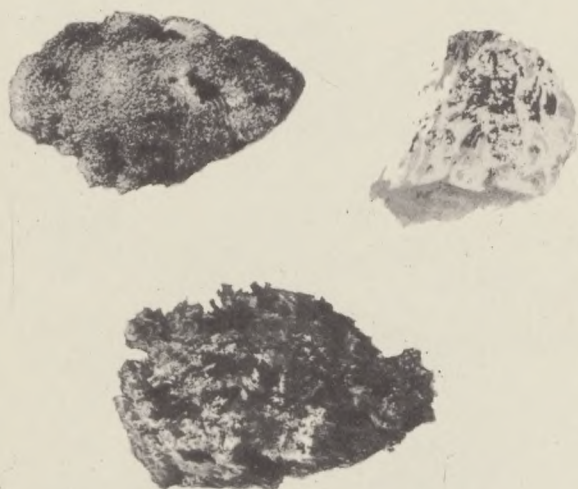


Your brushes and sponges should be scrupulously clean at all times.



## Sponges

A very useful and necessary part of your water-color painting equipment is the sponge. Get a few sponges of different sizes and textures.



You will find them extremely useful in painting textures such as: stone texture (see illustration), foliage, tree trunks, rocks, etc. The sponges illustrated on this page are painted with a **sponge**. Your sponge should be squeezed half dry. Use a dabbing motion — do not wipe.

## Knife

A good penknife and a single-edged razor blade should be added to your tools.



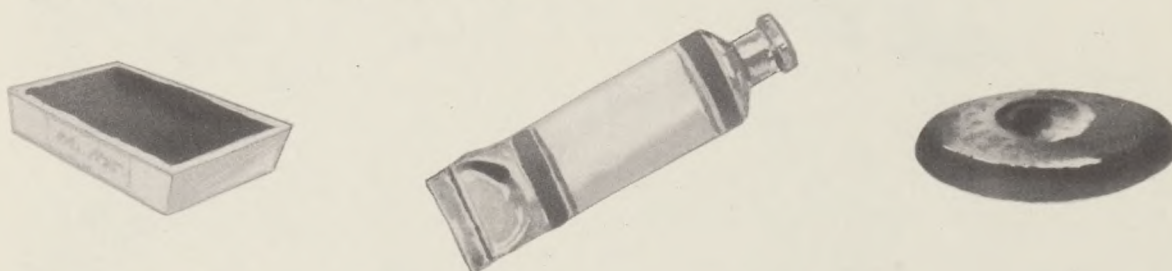


## Paint Boxes and Palettes

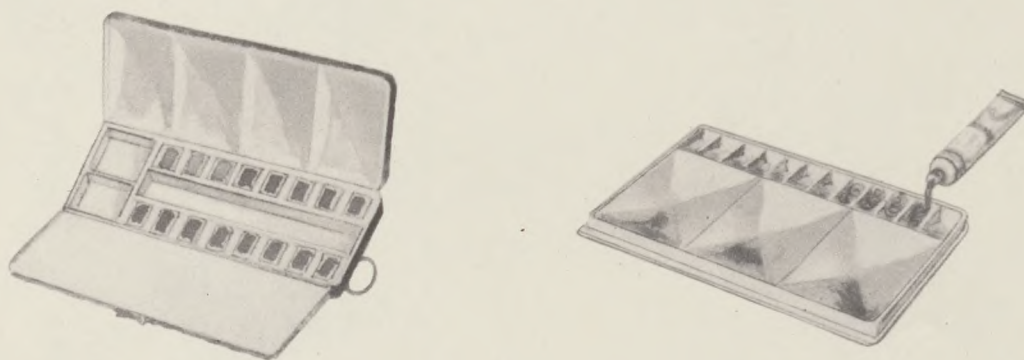
Transparent water colors are pure pigments generally mixed with a little gum and glycerine. The gum keeps them together and the glycerine retards drying.

Water colors are chiefly used on paper but can be used also on other water-absorbent surfaces.

Water is the medium used with these paints. The more water that is used, the more transparent the colors become.



Water-color paints come in tubes, or in cake form.

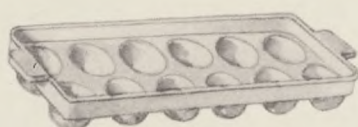


The tube paints are more practical because you can squeeze out just as much or as little as you need, thereby always having fresh paint. Tube paints are quicker and easier to mix than the cakes, which have a tendency to become hardened.



There are hundreds of different color pigments, but you need only comparatively few to paint a good picture. Many very fine pictures have been painted with the use of only three or four colors.

To carry your paints you will need a paintbox. For the average palette a box with twelve to sixteen color pans, or spaces for colors, should be quite large enough.



The inside cover of your box is generally enameled white and can be used for mixing colors. Colors should always be mixed on a nonabsorbent white surface.

For an extra mixing surface you may use a plate, a slab of glass or china, or a shallow white-enameled pan.

You can also buy water-color slabs and palettes in many convenient sizes and shapes at your art store.



Have a good-sized jar or bowl of clean water handy at all times.



## COLOR

The artist is mainly interested in color as seen by the eye.

The amount of colors we see all around us is somewhat bewildering.

How can we learn about these colors? How can we "capture" them?

Very easily: by knowing something about them.

First let us classify them in simple, descriptive terms:

A color—red, green, blue, orange, yellow, etc.—is known by the term "hue."

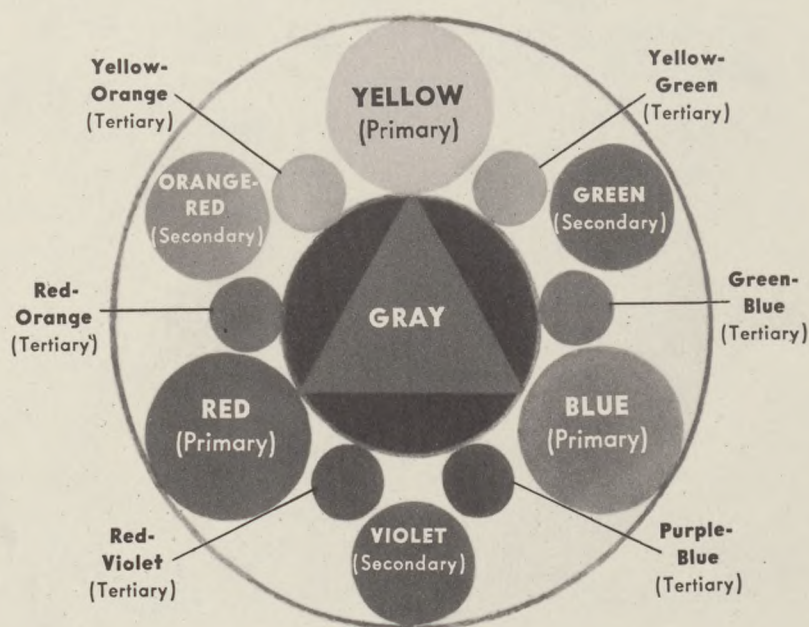
The intensity and purity of a hue is called "chroma."

Two or more objects, even though of the same hue, can be different in shade if one is stronger and the other weaker. This difference in shade is called "value."

All the wonders of color, the endless variations and combinations, have their origin in these three basic colors:

RED      YELLOW      BLUE

We call these "primary colors."





When we mix the primary colors:

|                  |        |        |
|------------------|--------|--------|
| Red with Yellow  | we get | Orange |
| Yellow with Blue | we get | Green  |
| Blue with Red    | we get | Purple |
| ORANGE           | GREEN  | PURPLE |

We call these secondary colors.

Now let us continue to mix:

|                    |        |               |
|--------------------|--------|---------------|
| Red with Orange    | we get | Orange-Red    |
| Orange with Yellow | we get | Orange-Yellow |
| Yellow with Green  | we get | Yellow-Green  |
| Green with Blue    | we get | Blue-Green    |
| Red with Purple    | we get | Red-Purple    |
| Blue with Purple   | we get | Violet        |

There are three primary, three secondary, and six tertiary colors.  
Below we find these 12 hues rotated around a circle.





The colors **directly opposite** each other on the circle are complementary colors. In other words, one color has what the other color has not, therefore they complement one another, making a harmony or completeness. Your eyes demand this harmony. As an example turn to page 14. There you will see a red-orange color spot. Try this exercise: Keep your eyes focused on this spot for about half a minute. Then suddenly cover the spot with a clean sheet of white paper. On this paper there will appear a luminous Blue-Green spot. This Blue-Green spot is the complement to the Orange-Red.

Try this test with other hues. Make your own color spot on a piece of white paper, using a strong chroma. The after image that appears will be the complement.

It is important to know about complementary colors, because only by the knowledge and proper use of these can you get brilliance and harmony in your pictures.

If you place a color **beside** its complement both of the hues will become more brilliant. If you **mix** a color with its complement you will get a dull grayish brown.

(See triangle on chart page 10.)

Black and white are not included in the Color Circle.

A good gray can be obtained by mixing every fourth color.

Black can be used, however, for "graying" your hues.

White should not be used in transparent water-color painting—your paper is your white.



## YOUR PAINTS

When you go to buy your paints from the art store, you will be confused about just which colors to choose.

There are many beautiful and alluring colors; but may I warn you not to be fascinated by these in the beginning.

Try first to paint with only one color. Practice doing brush strokes, washes, shading, wiping out, etc.

Then take two colors and practice as above, also try mixing the colors.

Then proceed to increase your palette to three, four, and so on.

Here are a few suggestions for your choice of pigments:

**One Color:** light red, burnt sienna, orange-yellow, vermillion, burnt umber, or any single color. A single color combined with black (black is no color) will give you plenty of variations to paint a good picture.

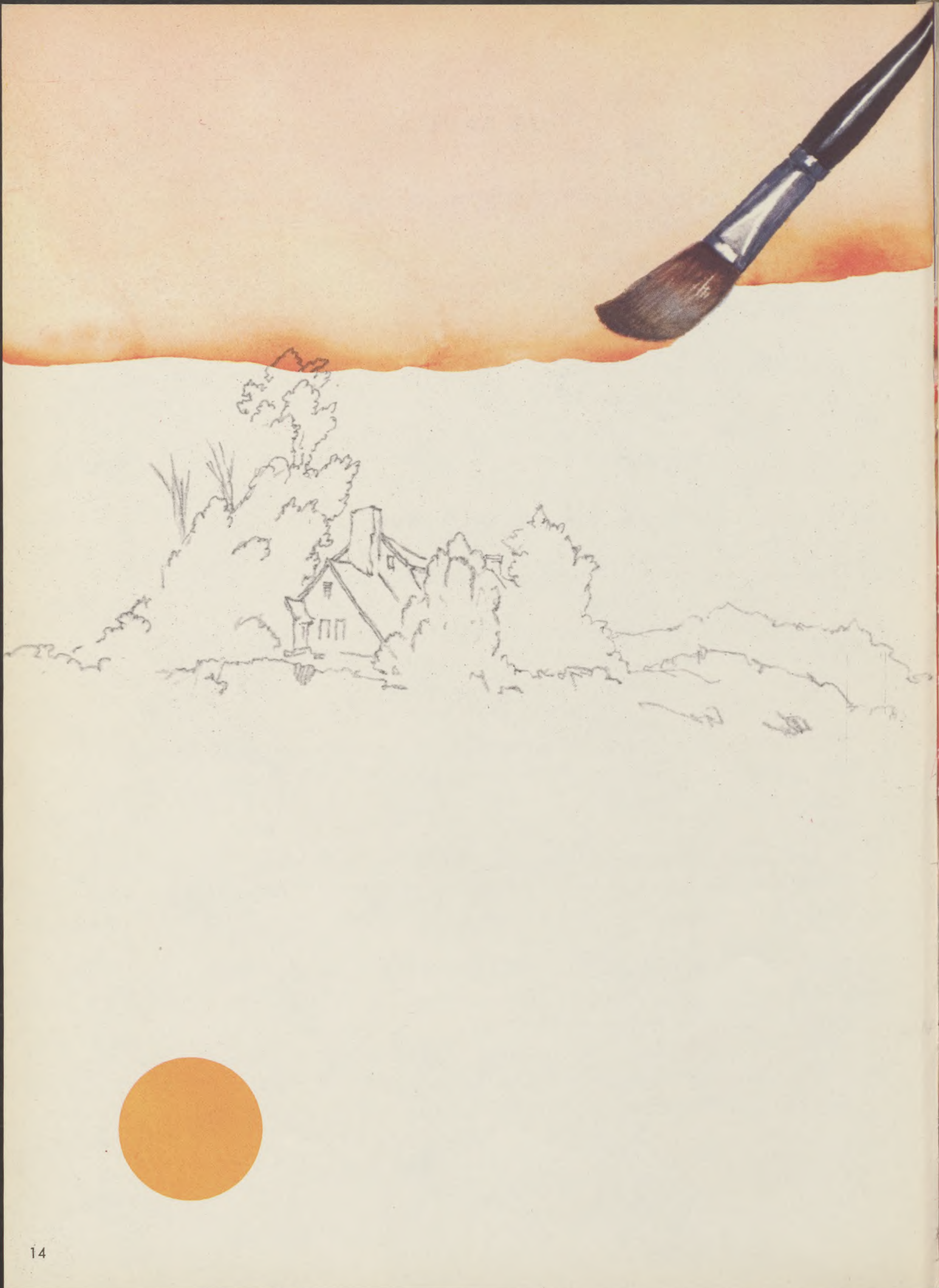
**Two Colors:** light red-ultramarine blue, burnt sienna-Payne's gray, burnt umber-ultramarine blue, vermillion-Hooker's green #2, and any other warm and cold color combinations.

**Three Colors:** ultramarine blue-raw sienna-vermillion; Hooker's green #2-burnt umber-alizarine crimson; burnt umber-ultramarine blue-vermillion. Try a few more combinations of your own.

**Four Colors:** cobalt blue-yellow ochre-vermillion-Payne's gray; ultramarine blue-light red-Hooker's green #2-burnt umber. You can add black to your palette if you have no Payne's gray.

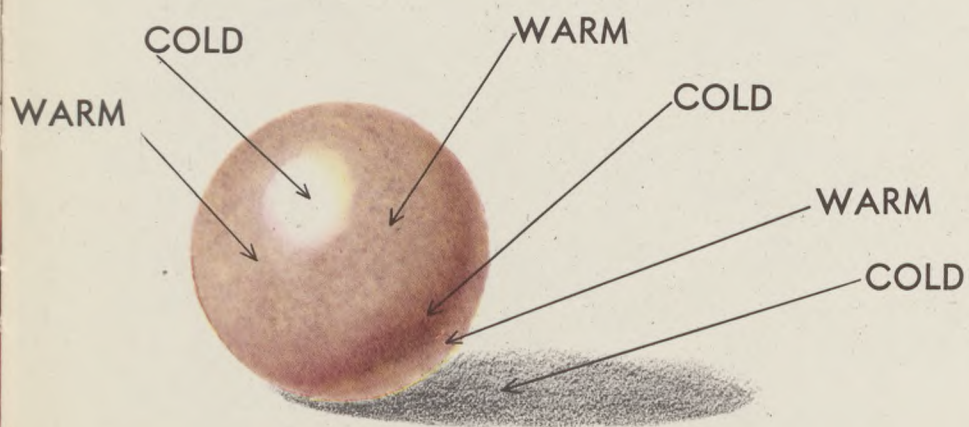
You can gradually increase the number of your colors, but it is scarcely necessary to go beyond **16** colors including your black.





WAR







It is a good idea to practice painting a series of washes on separate pieces of paper.

Mix your colors anew for each one, carefully noting just which colors you took to attain that particular shade.

Try to match them as exactly as you can.

This practice not only trains the eye, it perfects your wash technique and also helps your "color memory."

Remember that water colors always become lighter when they dry.

### **Warm and Cold Colors**

We classify colors as "warm" colors and "cold" colors.

However, everything is relative; therefore, even a **cold color** in juxtaposition to a **colder color** might seem **warm** by comparison.

Warm colors seem to come forward. Cold colors seem to recede.

The hues on half of the Color Circle: red, red-orange, orange-yellow, yellow, yellow-green, are the **warm** colors.

On the other half are the **cold** colors: green, blue-green, blue, violet-blue.

In nature there seems to be a constant alternation of warm and cold colors.



An object lighted by a warm light will have its lighted surface **warm**, shadows **cool**, reflections **warm** and cast shadows **cool**. Naturally, on a warm surface the highlight is cold (page 15).

In case the light is cool, like moonlight, the sequence appears in reverse.

The rule of warm and cold colors in conjunction with complementary colors is one of the most important lessons to be learned by all those who want to paint.



### Color Mixes

Get acquainted with your colors. It is a good idea to make up a card index of color washes.

Take every hue on your palette and paint a dark and a light sample wash on a small square card.











Then mix two different colors. Make sample washes, marking them with the names of the hues you used for the mix.

Next, using three colors, do the same.

Index all these samples.

You will find it handy to refer to your index for the right shades of things you would like to paint, like: skies, trees in sunlight and shade, skin tones, buildings, rocks, etc.

In other words, when in doubt about what colors to use to get a certain shade, just go to your files and select the combination you need for that purpose.

However, later on when you have had plenty of experience, you will not have to resort to your files because you will have acquired a knowledge of color and your eyes will become so trained that you will be able to match any color without hesitation.

## **WASHES**

Except for the detail, water-color painting consists of a series of "washes." To master the technique of laying a wash does not require any special talent or superhuman effort on your part. It just requires practice and more practice, until it can be done with sureness and without hesitation.



## The Flat Wash

A uniformly even tone is often required to cover your paper or an area of it. This is called a flat wash.

To paint a flat wash first mix out your paint with water to the shade you desire.

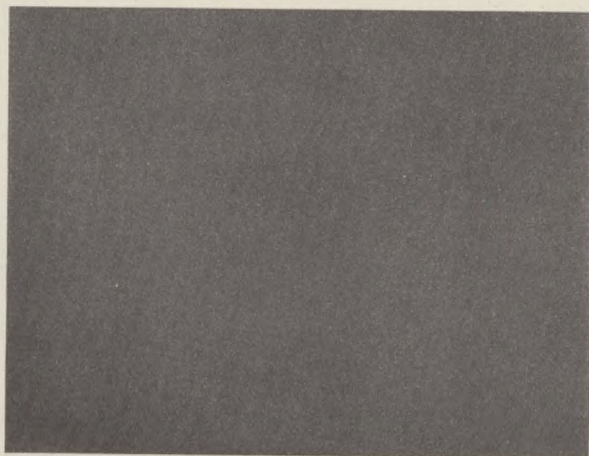
Always mix out more color than you think you need. A wash must be an uninterrupted procedure. Once it is begun, you cannot stop in the midst of it to mix more paint.

When your paint is mixed and ready, you next prepare your paper in the following way:

Dip a sponge or heavy brush in clean water and lightly wash over your paper.

Squeeze out the sponge or brush and take up the residue of water leaving paper damp, but **not wet**.

This procedure eliminates dirt and grease spots and, by dampening the paper, helps to spread your wash evenly.













Have your paper or board tilted slightly toward you. You are now ready to begin to lay the wash.

Dip a good-sized brush in your color and **slide** it freely across the top of the space you intend to cover. Hold your brush lightly, well above the metal cap and almost at right angles to your paper. The overflow from your brush will form a goodly puddle along the bottom edge of your brush stroke. Carry this puddle along with each stroke always overlapping the edge of your previous stroke.

Continue in this way, thus adding to your wash and at the same time absorbing some of the puddle as you go along.

When you come to the bottom of your wash, dip your brush in **clean** water. Shake it out well, and with your half-wet brush pass lightly over the bottom puddle. Repeat this until you have absorbed all superfluous color.



Here are a few "don'ts" you should remember:

Don't use dirty paper, dirty brushes, or dirty water.

Too **much** paint might run down your paper too fast.

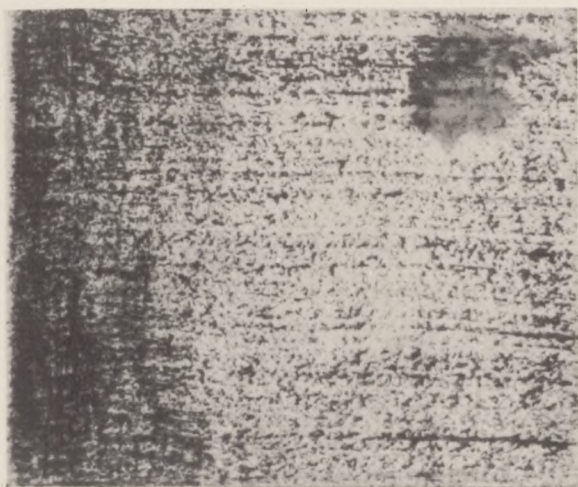






It you use too **little** paint, your wash will be streaked.

Don't drop water or paint on your wash.



Don't try to **correct** the wash when wet. Going over it might leave a scar.





Don't try to paint a flat wash on wet, crinkled paper. It cannot be done.

Don't either turn your board or lay it flat when still wet. The color will run back and dry "marbled."

## THE GRADATED WASH

A gradated wash is one that is shaded from dark to light (or vice versa).

In shading from **dark** to **light**, start the same way as when painting a flat wash.



However, after the first one or two strokes of color, replenish your brush with **clear water** instead of paint.

Continue your strokes with the **clear water**. Dip your brush repeatedly, always overlapping the previous stroke and carrying the puddle along until you reach the bottom.

Take up excess water at bottom edge with brush that has been dipped in clean water and well shaken out.

When shading from **light** to **dark** start your first brush stroke with **clear** water containing **no color**. Thereafter, dip your brush in color, repeatedly replenishing it as you go along. Continue strokes until area is covered.



## WIPING OUT

Let us suppose, as is often the case, that there are areas in your picture that you do not wish to have covered with the wash.

Here are several methods showing how to wash out these spots or leave them out:

When mixing the paint for your wash, add a few drops of glycerine. This will retard the drying long enough to paint around the areas you wish to leave out.



(Avoid using paints containing aniline dyes as they sink into the paper and are not easy to remove.)

Another method, also mixing a few drops of glycerine in your paint to retard drying: Use a clean brush or sponge with plenty of clean water to wipe out the necessary spots or areas.



Soak up the washed-out paint with blotting paper, paper tissues, or cheesecloth.

If your painting is absolutely dry, you can also use an eraser to lighten certain areas.





Here is a good wiping-out technique for a hard, smooth surface (hot-pressed paper). Put a few drops of gum water (gum arabic) into your paint. Bravely put on your wash and wait until it is **absolutely dry**. Then proceed leisurely to "wipe out" or "wash into" your work all the details you wish.



You can also cut scotch tape to cover the spots or areas to be left out. Then proceed with your wash in the usual way. When dry, remove scotch tape.



Using rubber cement to cover the left-out areas or spots is another good method. When wash is thoroughly dry, remove the rubber cement by gently rubbing and rolling off with finger.







## SCRAPING OUT

"Scraping out" is done with a sharp knife or a razor blade. This method is very useful in getting effects like shimmering light on the surface of water, light on tree trunks, on rocks, highlights on faces; or for thin lines like rope, thin branches of trees, blades of grass, etc.; and for numerous details that cannot be "painted around" or washed out successfully.



For this method a coarse, heavy, unpressed paper is best. "Scratching out" should be done only when your painting is bone dry. Do not overdo scratching. Remember you cannot paint successfully over the scraped surface.

## DRAWING IN

When drawing in a water color use as few details as possible.

Only outlines are necessary. Draw with a soft pencil.

Lines should be light and of equal value.

Use a soft rubber (art gum or kneaded rubber).

Do not erase too much or you will spoil the surface of your paper.



## BLENDING CONTROL

Try the following exercises. They will develop your skill in the blending of colors, to fuse them softly or to keep them sharply separate when in contact with each other.

### Sharp Edges:

On dry paper paint some brush strokes of different colors. Strokes should touch or overlap. However, to get sharp edges, each stroke must be completely dry before applying the next one.



### Separate Edges:

Paint some brush strokes of different colors and shapes. Do not wait for paint to dry but leave a thin line between each stroke. Make sure strokes do not touch or overlap; otherwise there will be a sudden fusion at the point of contact. This should be done on **dry** paper.



Soft Edges:

Use **dry** paper. Make your brush strokes, allowing the different colors to touch and even overlap one another while still wet.



Fading Edges:

Now use **damp** paper. Do not let your brush strokes touch. The colors will "fade" toward each other, leaving the edges floating.



## REFLECTED IMAGES

When an object is reflected on a water surface on a polished table, a wet pavement, or in a mirror, etc., the reflected reverse image should be drawn in correct perspective.

When painting a reflection, you will observe that all points of the reflected image are directly opposite the same points of the object.

The image lengthens or shortens according to the angle from which you look at it.



(You will find the more important rules of perspective fully and simply explained in my book "WILLY POGANY'S DRAWING LESSONS.")

On a still, smooth surface there is an almost perfect reverse replica of the reflected object.

However, on an uneven surface like rippling, moving water, the reflection is "broken up" by the many horizontal facets of the water surface.

In color, the reflection is always lower in value, grayer, and tinged with the local color of the reflecting surface.







## METHODS OF WATER-COLOR PAINTING

### The Classical or Traditional Method

This type of painting is smoother and more detailed than the "modern" or "spontaneous" method.

Use a hot-pressed, reasonably smooth paper.

Begin to "build up" your painting. Start with the lightest tones and gradually, by successive washes, add the stronger values.

Finally, you finish the picture with the deep shadows and strong hues.





### **The Modern or Spontaneous Method**

In this technique details are sacrificed for brilliancy, strength, and broad effect.

Use a rough, heavy paper.

Start with the dark shades first.

Continue with the next values, always getting lighter.

Leave out spaces on your white paper for the high lights.





### The Wiping-out Method

We have discussed, on pages 27 and 28, the technique of this method.

A "tone" is given to the painting by covering the subject with a wash. The modeling and details are done by "washing out" or "wiping out" the lighter sections.

When the light and shade is worked out and the modeling completed, the additional colors are lightly painted in.



## QUICK SKETCHES

Assemble a few objects to sketch. Do not make any pencil outlines. Study and plan before you paint.

Sum up deliberately. Paint boldly and quickly.

Start with dark shades and work up to light.

Try different subjects: look out of your window, arrange some fruit or flowers, get someone to pose for you.

Be sure to arrange your subject with interesting **light** and **shade**. It is difficult to discern values in a flat light.

Quick sketches are good practice and can be very attractive. Do them as often as you can.

Don't forget that old cliché: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."













## GOUACHE, OR "BODY COLOR"

Gouache paints are opaque water colors.

Because of the thickness or "body" that gouache contains, it is also called "body color."

Gouache can be bought in tubes like transparent water colors.

It is not necessary to use white paper. You can paint with gouache on any color paper, even on black.

It is preferable to use a paper that is not too shiny. Body color will stand out boldly even on the most absorbent cardboard.

To get acquainted with gouache, get some tinted papers or boards — gray, brown, or any shade — and practice your washes on them.

The more water you use in your paint, the thinner your wash will be, and the more you will see the tinted paper through it.

Practice with thick and thin washes.

Sketch up your subject, then outline it with body color or waterproof ink.

Make thick contours. They can be easily eliminated if so desired.







Put in your dark colors first. When painting with gouache, you can cover the darkest colors with even the lightest shades.

You will need large quantities of color with lots of white to build up your light tones.

Leave the lightest details and highlights to the very last.

Keep your brush well filled with paint.

Now try gouache, using thinner paint.

When using **thin** gouache paint, do not make heavy contours.

Use some tinted paper, thinning your color so that the tint of the paper will show through your thin wash. This will give a rich and interesting effect.

To get your lightest values you will need to use several thin layers of paint, allowing each coat to dry before applying the next.

Use heavy contours for thick, very opaque washes.

Use finer contours for thin washes.









Let your outlines fade out here and there, unless you want a flat, stencil-like effect as in a **poster** or a **decorative design**.

To soften contours use clean brushes with clean water.

Your touch should be quick and sure.

Try to work while your painting is still damp.

If your painting dries out while you are working, spray it very finely with an atomizer and clean water, or lay wet blotting paper over it to dampen it.



Do not use **thick** paint in your shadows or darker shades. It will spoil the "quality" of your picture, and besides, it might crack and flake off when dry.













## A FEW WORDS IN CONCLUSION

I have kept this book strictly limited in scope to the technical parts of water-color painting, carefully avoiding artistic pros and cons or "personal style."

I leave these matters entirely to the temperament and personal inclination of the pupil. To foist a "style" on an individual would be a grave mistake, not only taking the joy out of the adventure of painting, but perhaps even frustrating his or her artistic ability.

I have tried to convey to you in this book an understanding of the character of water color, the materials, methods, and techniques used.

With this knowledge and practice as a foundation, the pupil can go as far as his personal talents will allow.

There are many little "tricks" and techniques that you will discover as you progress, but they are left out here because they become self-evident as you go along.

Just try to master all points of technique that you find in this book, and with courage and love for your work you will be richly rewarded for your struggle.





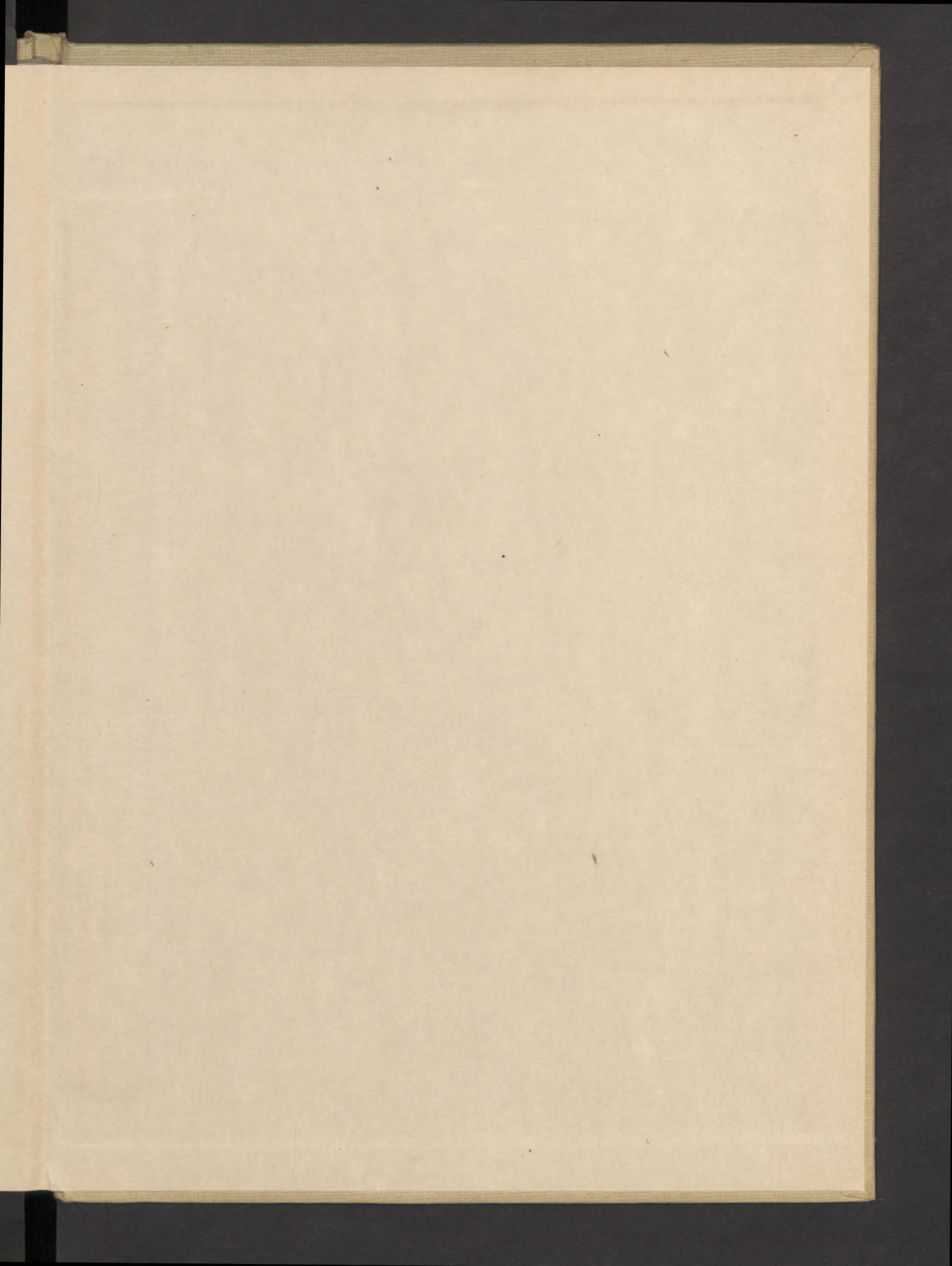




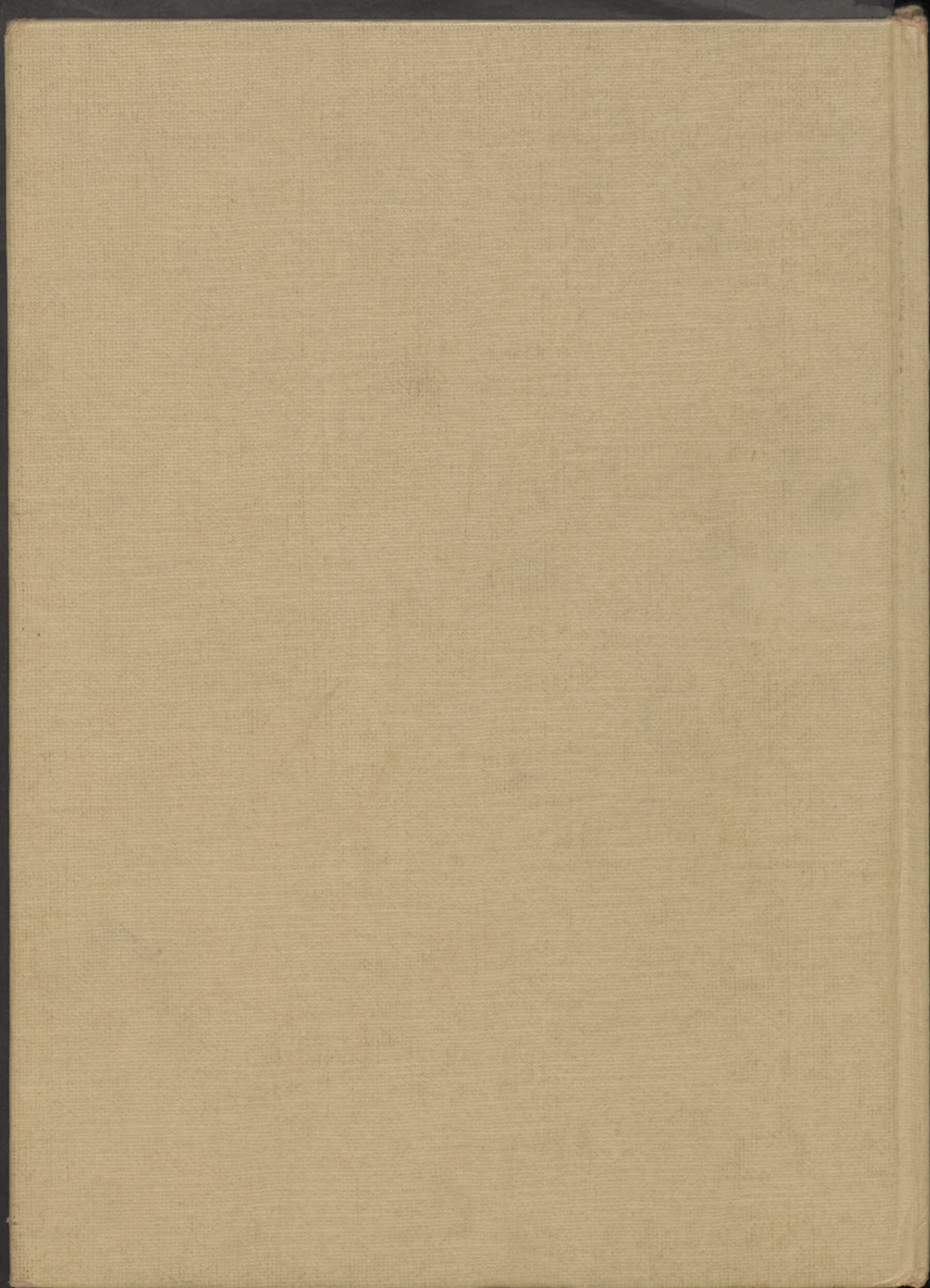
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WILLY POGAMY'S WATER-COLOR LESSONS

MCKAY