

# Meredith Sue Willis, Author, Papers A&M 4448

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ca. 1979-2010



## Title Statement

Meredith Sue Willis, Author, Papers A&M 4448

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## Biographical / Historical

Meredith Sue Willis is a novelist and teacher. She teaches novel writing at New York University's School of Professional Studies. Willis was educated in the public schools of Shinnston, West Virginia, where her father was her science teacher. Her mother was also trained as a teacher, and all four of her aunts and uncles on both sides of the family were teachers.

After attending Bucknell University for two years, MSW spent a year as a Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) in Norfolk, Virginia. She fictionalized this experience in the second book of her Blair Morgan trilogy, *Only Great Changes* (1985, 1997). After the year in VISTA, she transferred to Barnard College in New York City where she was involved in work against the Vietnam War as a member of the Students for a Democratic Society. She participated in the 1968 Columbia University anti-war sit-ins, fictionalized in *Trespassers* (1997).

She graduated from Barnard College Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude. She then took a Master of Fine Arts degree from Columbia University, studying with Anthony Burgess, Lore Segal and others. The most important connection she made during her time at the Columbia School of the Arts was a program formed by Phillip Lopate at P.S. 75 that included Karen Hubert, Terry Mack, and others. This program, through Teachers & Writers Collaborative, was one of the earliest of the arts-in-education organizations. At the end of the 1970s, MSW had her first novel accepted for publication: *A Space Apart* (1979). It was followed by *Higher Ground* (1981, 1996), *Only Great Changes* (1985, 1997), and *Trespassers* (1997).

MSW has continued to work as a writer-in-the-schools through various arts organizations, including Teachers & Writers and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. She has given workshops and keynote addresses to teachers and students from Massachusetts to New York, New Jersey, Texas, and California. Teachers & Writers publishes two of her books about writing and the teaching of writing: *Personal Fiction Writing* (1984; 2000) and *Deep Revision* (1993). Her other books about writing are *Blazing Pencils* (1990, 2013) and *Ten Strategies to Write Your Novel* (2012).

She has also written novels for children and young adults, including *Billie of Fish House Lane*, *The Secret Super Powers of Marco* (1994, 1995, 2001) and *Marco's Monster* (1996, 2001), and *Meli's Way* (2015). Other books include *Oradell at Sea* (2002), a collection of short stories, *Dwight's House and Other Stories* (2004), and a science fiction novel, *The City Built of Starships* (2004). Her recent Appalachian short stories are in *Out of the Mountains* (2010). Other recent books include *Re-Visions: Stories from Stories* (2011), *Love Palace* (2014), and *Their Houses* (2018).

MSW has given many workshops and performances of her writing and won many prizes including fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. She has participated in the Circuit Writers program of the West Virginia Humanities Council and presented at many workshops and conferences.

She received the Literary Award of the West Virginia Library Association and was the 1990 West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival Non-Italian Woman of the Year. In May 2004, she received an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters from West Virginia University.

(Adapted from "Biography of Meredith Sue Willis." Meredith Sue Willis Author and Teacher. undated. Accessed February 13, 2020. <https://meredithsuewillis.com/biography.html>)

# Scope and Contents

Papers and manuscript drafts of Meredith Sue Willis, an author from Clarksburg, West Virginia. Willis is known for her fiction based in West Virginia (notably *Higher Ground* [1981], *Only Great Changes* [1985], and *Trespassers* [1997]) and her non-fiction writing guides.

Includes:

Series 1. Fiction Manuscripts, Drafts, and Other Material (boxes 1-2), 1970-2014

Series 2. Children's Fiction Manuscripts, Drafts, and Other Material (box 2), 1994-1996

Series 3. Non-fiction Manuscripts, Drafts, and Other Material (box 2), 1989-2012

## Keywords

Authors, American -- West Virginia

American fiction -- West Virginia

## Description of Subordinate Components

### Series 1. Fiction Manuscripts, Drafts, and Other Material (boxes 1-2)

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/98468

**Unit Date** 1970-2014

**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

#### Scope and Contents

Titles include:

A Space Apart (1979) Higher Ground (1981) Only Great Changes (1985) Trespassers (1997) Oradell at Sea (2002) The City Built of Starships (2005) Love Palace (2014)

#### "Five Galatians" draft (working title for "A Space Apart")

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115290

**Unit Date** 1975

**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 1 (Folder)

#### "Soap Opera" drafts (working title for "A Space Apart")

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115291

**Unit Date** ca. 1979

**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 2 (Folder)

#### "A Threefold Cord" draft (working title for "Higher Ground") [Folder 1 of 2]

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115292

**Unit Date** 1979

**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 3 (Folder)

**"A Threefold Cord" draft (working title for "Higher Ground") [Folder 2 of 2]**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115293

**Unit Date** 1979

**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 4 (Folder)

**"South Jenkins" draft (working title for "Only Great Changes")**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115294

**Unit Date** 1968

**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 5 (Folder)

**"South Jenkins: Helping Themselves" thesis-version draft (working title for "Only Great Changes")**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115295

**Unit Date** June 1972

**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 6 (Folder)

**"Helping Themselves" drafts (working title for "Only Great Changes")**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115296

**Unit Date** 1970

**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 7 (Folder)

**Maps, plans, and notes for "South Jenkins" (working title for "Only Good Things")**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115297

**Unit Date** ca. 1970

**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 8 (Folder)

**"Helping Themselves" Masters of Fine Arts thesis draft (working title for "Only Great Changes")**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115298

**Unit Date** September 1972

**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 9 (Folder)

**"Only Great Changes" draft**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115299

**Unit Date** 1976-1977

**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 10 (Folder)

**"Only Great Changes" draft and other material**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115300

**Unit Date** ca. 1985

**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 11 (Folder)

**Drawings from "Only Great Changes" draft**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115301

**Unit Date** ca. 1985

**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 12 (Folder)

**"Love and Chagrin" draft (working title for "Trespassers") [Folder 1 of 2]**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115302

**Unit Date** 1984

**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 13 (Folder)

**"Love and Chagrin" draft (working title for "Trespassers") [Folder 2 of 2]**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115303

**Unit Date** 1984

**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 14 (Folder)

**"Oradell at Sunset" correspondence with agents and publishers and other material (working title for "Oradell at Sea") [Folder 1 of 2]**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115304

**Unit Date** 2001-2004

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 1 (Folder)

**"Oradell at Sunset" correspondence with agents and publishers and other material (working title for "Oradell at Sea") [Folder 2 of 2]**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115305

**Unit Date** 1999-2001

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 2 (Folder)

**Correspondence with agents and others regarding "Oradell at Sunset" (working title for "Oradell at Sea")**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115306

**Unit Date** 1988-2004

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 3 (Folder)

**"Oradell at Sunset" draft and notes (working title for "Oradell at Sea"**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115307

**Unit Date** 1998/06/01

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 4 (Folder)

**"Mauve City of the Oligarch" draft outtakes**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115308

**Unit Date** 1988-1989

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 5 (Folder)

**"Love Palace" blurb and e-book copies**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115309

**Unit Date** ca. 2014

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 6 (Folder)

**"Out of the Mountains" correspondence and manuscript [Folder 1 of 2]**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115310

**Unit Date** 2009

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 7 (Folder)

**Series 2. Children's Fiction Manuscripts, Drafts, and Other Material (box 2)**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/98469

**Unit Date** 1994-1996

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Scope and Contents**

Titles include:

The Secret Super Powers of Marco (1994) Marco's Monster (1996) Billie of Fish House Lane (2006)

**"Marco's Monster" draft**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115311

**Unit Date** 1994/10/18

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 9 (Folder)

**"Marco's Sister Ritzi Runs Away" partial draft**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115312

**Unit Date** ca. 1994

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 10 (Folder)

**"Marco's Sister Ritzi Runs Away" full draft**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115313

**Unit Date** ca. 1994

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 11 (Folder)

**"Jemma of Fish House Lane" drafts and other material (working title for "Billie of Fish House Lane") [Folder 1 of 2]**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115314

**Unit Date** 1996-1997

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 13 (Folder)

**"Jemma of Fish House Lane" drafts and other material (working title for "Billie of Fish House Lane") [Folder 2 of 2]**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115315

**Unit Date** 1996-1997

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 13 (Folder)

**Series 3. Non-fiction Manuscripts, Drafts, and Other Material (box 2), 1989-2012**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/98535

**Unit Date** 1989-2012

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Scope and Contents**

Titles include:

Blazing Pencils: A Guide to Writing Fiction and Essays (1990) Ten Strategies to Write Your Novel (2010)

**Correspondence regarding "Blazing Pencils: A Guide to Writing Fiction and Essays" and writer participation**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115316

**Unit Date** 1989

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 14 (Folder)

**"Blazing Pencils: A Guide to Writing Fiction and Essays" work copy and other material**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115317

**Unit Date** 1990, 2012

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 15 (Folder)

**"10 Strategies to Write Your Novel" drafts and other material [Folder 1 of 2]**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115318

**Unit Date** ca. 2009

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 16 (Folder)

**"10 Strategies to Write Your Novel" drafts and other material [Folder 2 of 2]**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/115319

**Unit Date** ca. 2009

**Mixed Materials** 2 (Box)

**Container** 17 (Folder)