

COLLECTION 2017

5 museums pick their favorite gift of the year

BY KATHLEEN TROOST-CRAMER | [@kstroostc](#)

'JOHN MESSNER CLUNG WITH MITTENED HAND'

ILLUSTRATION BY FRANK SCHOONOVER (1877-1972)

TO: National Museum of American Illustration

FROM: Ruth & Paul Dillon

VALUE: "Priceless, particularly valued for the rarity of Jack London illustrations," according to museum co-founder and Director Judy Goffman Cutler.

This snowy scene is an original oil painting on canvas commissioned as an illustration for Jack London's short story "A Day's Lodging," published in Collier's Magazine in the spring of 1907. It was gifted to the museum by the Dillons in November.

The drawing's title is taken from a line in the story: "John Messner clung with mittened hand to the bucking gee-pole and held the sled in the trail."

Trained by Howard Pyle, the "father of American illustration," Frank Schoonover lived the harsh winter climate firsthand through Pyle's inspiration that "an artist should live what he paints," said Judy Goffman Cutler.

"Schoonover's journeys through

Canada and Alaska are exceptionally remarkable," Cutler explained. "On one trip, he traveled some 1,200 miles entirely by snowshoe, canoe and dogsled. His understanding of rugged, outdoor life in the snowy wilderness allowed him to accurately depict the dog sledding scene" in London's story.

The painting is on view in the museum's Library Gallery as part of the exhibition focusing on Schoonover's mentor, "Howard Pyle, His Students & the Golden Age of American Illustration," running through Dec. 29. But after this exhibit ends, the painting will probably be moved to another gallery where the public can continue to enjoy it, said Office Manager and Administrative Assistant Shelley Shaw.



'John Messner Clung with Mittened Hand'

Frank Schoonover, 1907, oil on canvas