

Al Parker Collection, 1933-1985 RC.2008.7

Finding aid prepared by Margaret Cherin, Intern

Norman Rockwell Museum Archival Collections

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Processed 2010



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Descriptive Summary

Title

Al Parker Collection

Collection Number

RC.2008.7

Repository

Norman Rockwell Museum Archival Collections

Language

English (eng)

Physical Description

15.0 Cubic feet

Date

1933-1985

Contact

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Abstract

Alfred Charles Parker (1906-1995) was an illustrator whose works regularly appeared in popular women's publications such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Ladies Home Journal* from the 1930s - 1960s. He was a celebrity in his time for his trend setting artworks that depicted stereotypical American women from an idealized point of view. While this collection is not comprehensive of Parker's work it does provide a substantial overview of his career as well as a window into the representation of women in illustrated materials from this era. The collection holds story illustrations, editorial work of women's fashion, advertisements and magazine covers, as well as tear sheets of press about Al Parker that appeared throughout his career. It also includes materials related to Al Parker's association as a founding member of the Famous Artists School in Westport, CT. The collection was compiled by Parker and donated to the Norman Rockwell Museum by his son, Kit Parker.

creator

Alfred Charles Parker, 1906-1995

Biographical/Historical

Al Parker was a founder of the "modern glamour aesthetic" in American magazine illustration starting in the 1930s. His trendsetting artworks created for mass circulation were sought after by art directors and editors for their contemporary look and feel. Parker was born in St. Louis, Missouri in 1906 where his earliest passion was music. Parker spent many summers as a teenager on riverboats playing the saxophone in his own jazz band which helped to fund his formal art training at the St. Louis School of Fine Arts at Washington University beginning in 1923. While in art school he met fellow student Evelyn Buchroeder who became his wife in 1930.

His earliest professional assignments were for fashion illustrations but when he received his first fiction assignment in 1934 from *Women's Home Companion*, it started a stream of work and years of successful collaborations with *American*, *Collier's*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *McCall's*, *Vogue* and *Pictorial Review*. In 1936 Parker moved his family to New York City to be closer to the publishing world. By 1938, seeking more space and less distraction, Parker had moved outside the city to Larchmont and rented studio space in nearby New Rochelle. That same year the first of his famous "mother-and-daughter" covers for *Ladies Home Journal* was commissioned. Over the next thirteen years Parker's "mother-and-daughter" covers chronicled the idealized American family as they prepared for holidays, homecoming from the war and birth.

From 1940-1955 Parker and his family lived in Westport, CT during which time he was a founding member of the Institute of Commercial Art.

Initiated by fellow illustrator Albert Dome, it became a popular correspondence course which came to be better known as the “Famous Artists School” with several celebrities on faculty. In 1965 Parker was elected to the Society of Illustrators Hall of Fame.

Parker settled in Carmel Valley, CA in 1955 where he continued to work and to play music until his death in 1985.

Sources: Ephemeral Beauty: Al Parker and the American Women’s Magazine 1940-1960, Norman Rockwell Museum, 2007

The Illustrator in America 1860-2000, Walt Reed, New York : Society of Illustrators, 2001

Also see Finding Aid to the Al Parker Collection at Washington University Modern Graphic History Library. <http://digital.wustl.edu/m/mghl>

Scope and Content

The Al Parker Collection primarily consists of tear sheets of story illustrations, advertisements and covers illustrated by Al Parker between 1933 – 1985. The earliest tear sheets are from 1933 in Cosmopolitan, Ladies Home Journal and McCall’s and the latest cover was made in 1985 for Boy’s Life. The collection also includes tear sheets from various journals with editorial press about Al Parker and materials concerned with the Famous Artists School.

Arrangement

The Al Parker Collection is arranged into eleven series based on the names of journals for which Al Parker illustrated and series based on subject matter, such as press about Al Parker and materials he collected based on his association with the Famous Artists School.

Series I: Boy’s Life Series II: Cosmopolitan Series III: Good Housekeeping Series IV: Ladies Home Journal Series V. Lithiopinion Series VI: McCall’s Series VII: Advertisements Series VIII: Complete Magazines Series IX: Various illustrations / various journals Series X: Press about Al Parker Series XI: Famous Artists School

Access points

Parker, Alfred, 1906-1985 Magazine illustration - - 20th century

Provenance

Kit Parker (Al Parker’s son)

Adminstrative History

Originally arranged by Curator of Archival Collections, Corry Kanzenberg, in 2008 and further processed by intern Margaret Cherin in May 2010

Preferred Citation

The Al Parker Collection, 1933-1985, Norman Rockwell Archives, Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

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Access Restrictions

The Al Parker Collection is open to researchers.

Collection Contents

Series I: Boy's Life, illustrations and covers, 1965-1985

Mixed materials 1

1.0 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES1

Sub-series I.I: Boy's Life: story illustrations, 1965-1985

Mixed materials 1

0.5 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES1.1

Sub-series I.II: Boy's Life: covers, 1965-1985

Mixed materials 1

0.5 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES1.2

Series II: Cosmopolitan: illustrations, 1933-1964

Mixed materials 2

1.0 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES2

Series III: Good Housekeeping, 1948-1962

Mixed materials 3

1.0 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES3

Sub-series III.I: Good Housekeeping: story illustrations, 1948-1962

Mixed materials 3

0.5 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES3.1

Sub-series III.II: Good Housekeeping: covers, 1953

Mixed materials 3

0.5 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES3.2

Series IV: Ladies Home Journal, 1933-1963

Mixed materials 6, Mixed materials 5, Mixed materials 4

3.0 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES4

Sub-series IV.I: Ladies Home Journal : illustrations, 1933-1963

Mixed materials 5, Mixed materials 4

1.0 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES4.1

Sub-series IV.II: Ladies Home Journal : covers, 1934-1952

Mixed materials 6

0.5 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES4.2

Series V: Lithopinion: illustrations and covers, 1966

Mixed materials 6

1.0 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES5

Series VI: McCall's: illustrations, 1935-1961

Mixed materials 7

1.0 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES6

Series VII: Advertisements, 1948-1980

Mixed materials 8

1.0 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES7

Sub-series VII.I: Various ads in unknown journals, undated

Mixed materials 8

0.25 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES7.1

Sub-series VII.II: American Airlines, 1950-1958

Mixed materials 8

0.25 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES7.2

Sub-series VII.III: Chase and Sanborn, undated

Mixed materials 8

0.25 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES7.3

Sub-series VII.IV: Coca-Cola (Jack Potter), undated

Mixed materials 8

0.25 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES7.4

Sub-series VII.V: Pacific Telephone, 1964-1965

Mixed materials 8

0.25 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES7.5

Sub-series VII.VI: TV Guide, undated

Mixed materials 8

0.25 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES7.6

Series VIII: Complete Magazines, 1939-1964

Mixed materials 9, Mixed materials 11, Mixed materials 10

3.0 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES8

Sub-series VIII.I: Good Housekeeping, 1941-1956

Mixed materials 9

0.5 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES8.1

Sub-series VIII.II: Sports Illustrated, 1964

Mixed materials 9

0.5 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES8.2

Sub-series VIII.III: Ladies Homes Journal, 1939-1949

Mixed materials 11, Mixed materials 10

1.0 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES8.3

Series IX: Various illustrations/ Various journals, 1933-1964

Mixed materials 12

1.0 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES9

Series X: Press about Al Parker, 1936-1959

Mixed materials 13

1.0 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES10

Series XI: Famous Artists School, 1949-1968

Mixed materials 15, Mixed materials 14

2.0 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES11

Sub-series XI.I: Course binders, 1967

Mixed materials 14

1.0 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES11.1

Sub-series XI.II: Informational documents, 1949-1968

Mixed materials 15

0.5 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES11.2

Sub-series XI.III: Various tearsheets, 1949-1968

Mixed materials 15

0.5 Cubic feet

RC.2008.7.SERIES11.3