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Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

# Guide to the James Reid Parker Papers

YCAL MSS 371



by Ellen Doon

March 2010

P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** YCAL MSS 371

**CREATOR:** Parker, James Reid, 1909-1984

**TITLE:** James Reid Parker papers

**DATES:** 1879-1991

**BULK DATES:** 1930-1984

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 3 linear feet (11 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The collection documents the career of twentieth-century American writer James Reid Parker, including his collaboration with cartoonist Helen E. Hokinson and his trusteeship of her estate. It includes drafts and printed versions of Parker's writings for *The New Yorker* and *Woman's Day*, as well as correspondence documenting his professional work, and personal correspondence and papers documenting his family relationships, family history, and military service with the Publications Branch of the Military Intelligence Service during World War II. In addition to correspondence regarding Hokinson's estate, the collection includes approximately forty-five drawings by Hokinson, chiefly for *The New Yorker*.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.parkerjr>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.parkerjr>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box  
f. folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Nesheim, 1998.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The James Reid Parker Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

James Reid Parker Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## James Reid Parker (1909-1984)

James Reid Parker was born in Jersey City, New Jersey, on June 2, 1909, to James A. and Rebecca Ives Parker. He received his B.A. from Lafayette College, and an M.A. in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia University in 1931. He became a regular contributor of light humorous pieces to *The New Yorker* magazine beginning in 1930, and wrote a column entitled "Small World," for *Woman's Day* from the 1940s to the early 1960s. Many of his *New Yorker* stories were published as anthologies, including *Academic Procession* and *Attorneys at Law*, and he published a novel, *The Merry Wives of Massachusetts*, in 1959. At *The New Yorker*, he worked closely with cartoonist Helen E. Hokinson, writing captions for her cartoons from the 1930s until her death in a plane crash in 1949. Parker served as one of the executors and trustees of Hokinson's estate, and as such published a collection of her work entitled *The Hokinson Festival* in 1956.

Parker married Ruth Lerrigo in 1940, and served in the Army Intelligence Service in Washington during World War II. Following the war, the Parkers lived on Nantucket for some years before moving to New York City. In the 1960s they moved to Hamden, Connecticut, where Parker died on January 27, 1984.

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## Scope and Contents

The collection documents the career of twentieth-century American writer James Reid Parker, including his collaboration with cartoonist Helen E. Hokinson and his trusteeship of her estate. It includes drafts and printed versions of Parker's writings for *The New Yorker* and *Woman's Day*, as well as correspondence documenting his professional work, and personal correspondence and papers documenting his family relationships, family history, and military service with the Publications Branch of the Military Intelligence Service during World War II. In addition to correspondence regarding Hokinson's estate, the collection includes approximately forty-five drawings by Hokinson, chiefly for *The New Yorker*.

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## Arrangement

Organized into four series: I. Correspondence, 1918-1967. II. Writings, 1919-1991. III. Personal Papers, 1879-1984. IV. Helen E. Hokinson Estate and Artwork, 1925-1990.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, 1918-1967

0.84 linear feet (2 boxes)

Series I. Correspondence documents Parker's relationships with publishers, with his collaborator Helen Hokinson, and with his family. A significant volume of letters and postcards to his wife document his experiences in Washington, D.C. during World War II. Correspondence with Helen Hokinson includes a series of postcards from Parker containing ideas for captions and cartoons gleaned from overheard conversations on a trip to California, Seattle, and Alaska in 1938. Correspondence with *The New Yorker* includes pay stubs and contracts.

Additional correspondence is filed with Series II. Writings, and includes exchanges with publishers and fan mail concerning specific works.

Series I. is arranged alphabetically by correspondent, with one folder of general correspondence filed at the end.

b. 1, f. 1	Doubleday and Company, Inc.	1944-1964
b. 1, f. 2	Hokinson, Helen E. (Helen Elna)	1938-1944, undated
b. 1, f. 3-8	<i>The New Yorker</i>	1930-1964, undated
b. 1, f. 9	Parker, James A.	1956 May 3
b. 1, f. 10	Parker, Lydia	1923-1926
b. 1, f. 11	Parker, Rebecca Ives	1918-1937
b. 1, f. 12-16	Parker, Ruth Lerrigo	1940-1943
b. 2, f. 17-22	Parker, Ruth Lerrigo	1943-1945
b. 3, f. 23	Parker, Ruth Lerrigo	1959, undated
b. 3, f. 24	<i>The Stage</i>	undated
b. 3, f. 25	Wodehouse, P. G. (Pelham Grenville)	1966
b. 3, f. 26	General Correspondence "A-Z"	1934-1967

**Series II: Writings, 1919-1991***1.7 linear feet (4 boxes)*

Series II. documents Parker's writing career, and includes drafts and printed versions of stories, articles, and plays; correspondence from publishers and fans; contracts for books anthologizing his stories; notebooks; and some early poems and school essays.

Series II. Writings is arranged alphabetically by title, with some miscellaneous material filed at the end.

<i>Academic Procession</i>		
b. 3, f. 27	Correspondence and background material	1937-1952
b. 3, f. 28	Reviews	circa 1937
b. 3, f. 29	Fan mail Includes letters from Harold W. Ross and Katharine S. White.	1937-1938
<i>Attorneys at Law: Forbes, Hathaway, Bryan &amp; Devore</i>		
b. 3, f. 30	Correspondence and documents	1940-1991
b. 3, f. 31-32	Reviews	circa 1941
b. 3, f. 33-34	Fan mail Includes letters from Harold W. Ross, Katharine S. White, and Alexander Woollcot.	1941-1945
b. 4, f. 35-36	"Friends, Americans, Countrymen!", typescript draft	undated
b. 4, f. 37	"The Happier We'll Be," contract	1959 April 14
b. 4, f. 38-39	"Madame President: A Comedy in Three Acts", drafts, typescript, corrected, and typescript carbon	1933
<i>The Merry Wives of Massachusetts</i>		
b. 4, f. 40	Correspondence and documents	1958-1960
b. 4, f. 41	Reviews	circa 1959
b. 4, f. 42	Fan mail	1961
b. 4, f. 43-44	<i>The New Yorker</i> , tearsheets and drafts	1931-1945
<i>Open House</i>		
b. 4, f. 45-46	Reviews	circa 1951
b. 4, f. 47	Fan mail	1951
<i>The Pleasure Was Mine</i>		
b. 4, f. 48	Correspondence and documents	1945-1946
b. 4, f. 49	Reviews	1946
b. 5, f. 50	"Problem Child," drafts, typescript and typescript, corrected	1953

b. 5, f. 51	"Remember that You are not in America," typescript draft	undated
b. 5, f. 52	"The Social Satire in the Savoy Operas," Master's thesis, Columbia University, bound typescript	1931
	"Small World" column in <i>Woman's Day</i>	
b. 5, f. 53-54	Drafts, proofs, tearsheets, reprint, and 1 full issue (December 1949)	1948-1963
b. 5, f. 55	Illustration, pen and ink	1947 October
b. 5, f. 56	Correspondence including fan mail	1951-1954
b. 5, f. 57	"State of Grace", typescript draft, contract, and correspondence	1942
b. 5, f. 58	"The Way to Behave", typescript draft	1930
b. 5, f. 59	Miscellaneous tear sheets	1935-1951
b. 5, f. 60-65	Miscellaneous drafts	undated
b. 6, f. 66-72	Notebooks	undated
b. 6, f. 73	School essays	undated
b. 6, f. 74-75	Poems	1919, undated

**Series III: Personal Papers, 1879-1984***0.84 linear feet (2 boxes)*

Series III. Personal Papers consists of legal and financial documents, photographs of Parker (chiefly publicity head shots), and genealogical information. Most extensively documented in this series is Parker's service in the Publications Branch of the Military Intelligence Service during World War II. These papers include a copy of a 1942 report on "The German Campaign in Norway," accompanied by photographs.

Series III. is arranged roughly chronologically.

b. 6, f. 76	"The Revolutionary Adams Ancestry of Rebecca Ives Parker" Includes photographs of family homes and unidentified women.	1879, undated
b. 6, f. 77-79	Photographs of James Reid Parker Also stored in: Box 9	1911-1961, undated
b. 6, f. 80	"The Queen's Husband," review of dramatic performance	1930
b. 6, f. 81-85	Military service (Military Intelligence Service: Publications Branch)	1942-1947
b. 6, f. 86	Tax forms and other financial documentation	1942-1947
b. 6, f. 87	Estate of Rebecca Ives Parker	1948
b. 7, f. 88	Leases, New York and Nantucket	1950-1959
b. 7, f. 89	Estates of Edmund Parker, James A. Parker, and Lydia Parker	1958-1963
b. 7, f. 90	Notes and ephemera from trip to Great Britain	1959
b. 7, f. 91	Miscellaneous notes and ephemera	1963-1983, undated
b. 7, f. 92	Passports	1967-1979
b. 7, f. 93	Social Security Administration	1974, undated
b. 7, f. 94	Obituaries	1984



## Series IV: Helen E. Hokinson Estate and Artwork, 1925-1990

0.6 linear feet (3 boxes)

Series IV. consists of estate paperwork and drawings. Estate paperwork documents the work of the executors and trustees to disperse and manage Hokinson's assets and to manage the rights to her artwork. It includes information about exhibits of Hokinson's work and the estate's publication of a compilation of her cartoons, *The Hokinson Festival*, in 1956. Artwork includes a mix of preliminary sketches, drafts, final versions, and proofs for New Yorker covers and cartoons. Captioned cartoons are chiefly ink and wash drawings, while drawings intended for the cover are watercolors.

Series IV. is arranged by format and size.

b. 7, f. 95-100	Estate of Helen E. Hokinson, legal correspondence and documents	1949-1956, 1990
b. 7, f. 101	Obituaries	1949
	Artwork	
b. 7, f. 102-103	Sketches and Christmas cards	1943, undated
b. 7, f. 104	Captioned cartoon	undated
b. 8, f. 105-121	Captioned cartoons	undated
b. 9, f. 122-135	Cover art for <i>The New Yorker</i>	1932-1949, undated
	Other artwork	
b. 9, f. 136-139	Uncaptioned cartoons and sketches Includes sketch published in the July 4, 1925 issue of <i>The New Yorker</i> , and one cartoon not by Hokinson.	1925, undated
b. 9, f. 140	"Personal sketch of Chilean Pianist Claudio Arrau, not in the New York[er]"	undated

## Oversize

b. 9, f. 141

Photographs of James Reid Parker (in Series III)

undated

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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Preferred Titles**

*New Yorker (New York, N.Y. : 1925)*

*Woman's Day*

### **Subjects**

Authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives

Cartoonists -- United States

World War, 1939-1945 -- Military intelligence --

United States

### **Genres / Formats**

Cartoons (humorous images) -- United States

-- 20th Century

Drawings (visual works) -- United States --

20th Century

### **Names**

Hokinson, Helen E. (Helen Elna), 1893-1949

Parker, James Reid, 1909-1984

Parker, Rebecca Ives Kidder

Parker, Ruth Lerrigo

### **Contributors**

Parker, James Reid, 1909-1984

Hokinson, Helen E. (Helen Elna), 1893-1949