

Grand Rapids History & Special Collections

Archives

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Finding Aid for the

Grand Rapids Public Library Furniture Design & Designers Collection

Collection # 276

February 2009 version

GRPL Furniture Design & Designers Collection
Collection #276

Abstract

The Grand Rapids Furniture Design & Designers Collection brings together small and unknown accessions of materials under this general topic. It also contains research materials identified by staff through reference requests, gathered together as biographical files or files on other topics, related specifically to the furniture designers of Grand Rapids. As a collection recently defined, the holdings are small, but are expected to grow over the years. Additional information on area furniture designers can also be found in many other GRPL archival collections.

Collection #: 276

Accession #:00.[726].1; 00.[669].1 ; 00.[1993].1-6 ; 1993.016

Donor:

Span dates:

Processor: R. Mayne

Size:

Box Summary

Box No.	Description of Contents	Box Description
1	History & Publications	Blue standard w handles
2	Charles Witman designs Misc. oversized.	Clam
3	Holmberg manuscript	standard
Boxing revised 11/23/2004		
B1	Biographies	Standard
Added 9/21/2006		

Related Collections

Information on individual furniture designers can be found on many other GRPL Archival Collections, and other types of departmental references.

- Books and periodicals on the public service floor. See staff for assistance with the library catalog or indexes to locate relevant materials.
- Archival image collections. Several photo collections exist which may contain information on furniture companies, furniture designers, or furniture. A few of these are:
Coll. 054 the GRPL Photo Collection.
Coll. 125, the Robinson Studio Collection.
Coll. 230, the Rooks Studio Collection.

Ask staff for indexes or finding aids for better access to this information.

- Coll. 204, Grand Rapids Furniture Designers Association Records. This collection includes actual historical documents which original belonged to this organization. Scrapbooks provides some information on numerous designers. Some of the information gathered by the Designers Association or overlap or duplicate reference information found by staff, and filled in Coll. 276.
- Collections on or from individual furniture designers. See Coll. Xxx Sobota, for example, which provides general information on/from this designers family.
- Collections from particular furniture companies, which may or may not include documents that reference the designer. For example, Coll. 017 is the Widdicomb Company Collection. The materials in this particular collection tend to be early, so they probably do not includes documents with information on T.H. Robsjohn Gibbings, who worked for the Widdicomb Co., and John Widdicomb, a separate company, in later years.
- Collections related to the furniture industry.
 - Coll. 084, Furniture Manufacturers Association. Focus on the buildings and manufacturing, with little information on designers.
 - Coll. 232, GRPL Furniture Trade Catalog Collection. Some trade catalogs give the names of the designers, many do not.
 - Coll. 233, GRPL Furniture Industry Collection. Includes mostly publications from the companies which may refer to or give information on the designers. Also includes miscellaneous periodicals which may refer to the designers.

History

Scope and Content

Series Descriptions

Series I. Grand Rapids Design / Designers in general.

Series II. By or about designers

A. Biographies

B. Publications by or about designers

Includes instruction documents related to location design instruction institutions.

Series III. Original design documents.

Subseries I. Witman

Contents

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Description</u>
		Series I. GR Designers in General Histories
1	x	Grand Rapids Furniture Designers Association / C.T. Witman. 1955. 00.[2139].1 Added 11/23/2004 1 folded sheet. Lists past presidents
1	x	History of Grand Rapids Furniture Designers' Workshop, 1976 / Charles T. Witman. 2007.075 Added 7/9/2007
		Directories
		Grand Rapids Furniture Designers Association. Directory.
1	x	1953 00.[2884].1 Formerly R749.048 G762d Still in pam binder.
1	x	1953 c. 2 00.[2137].1 Original in good condition. Has not on first page "Cover design by C.B. Andrews".
1	x	1970's ● Dec. 1971 ● April 1973 00.[5260].1-2 Added 3/22/2008
		Diamond Jubilee Directory
1	x	Association Membership Directory. [1995] 00.[2138].1 ● Includes Past Presidents to 1994. ● Includes "A Short History of the Grand Rapids Furniture Designers Association" / by Charles T. Witman, 1969, Edited by Scott Dergins, with update by Deb Kimberlin. ● Includes Constitution and By-Laws, listed the various revision dates, to march 1995.
		See also the separate Coll.

Series II. Biographies

Lost City site

<http://www.lostcityarts.com/?id=SEATING&logo=circle>

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| B1 | x | 1 st dibs International Creators Directory 7/2007
http://www.1stdibs.com/creators.php |
| B1 | x | William A. Balbach |
| B1 | x | Robert Blaich
Website biographies <ul style="list-style-type: none">● IDSA Industrial Designers Society of America
http://new.idsa.org/webmodules/articles/anmviewer.asp?a=1970
http://new.idsa.org● New Orleans Build Better Project
[bad link]● Philips Electronics web pages
[bad link]● Reddot Design Award web pages
http://en.red-dot.org/191+M57eedde9313.html |
| B1 | x | J. Stuart Clingman |
| B1 | x | Eames. Ray Eames. Charles Eames

1 st dibs
http://www.1stdibs.com/furniture_search.php?type=3&i_creator=Eames+Ray+Charles |
| B1 | x | Frederick E. Hill , Jr. |
| B1 | x | Otto J. Jiranek |
| B1 | x | Arthur Kirkpatrick |
| B1 | x | Charles Limbirt
Arts & Crafts <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Arts & Crafts Society Web page
http://www.arts-crafts.com/archive/limbert.shtml |

Series II. Biographies

Forrest Emerson **Mann** (Forest)

See biographical information in Coll. 224

Arts & Crafts

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| B1 | x | George Nelson. Web pages
1 st dibs
http://www.1stdibs.com/furniture_search.php?type=3&i_creator=George+Nelson |
| B1 | x | William Pahlmann
Objects in the Loft site
http://objectsintheloft.1stdibs.com/search.php |

Series II. Biographies

T.H. Robsjohn Gibbings (Terence Harold Robsjohn-Gibbings, 1905-1976)

Note: This section includes copies of some of the items cited. But, in other cases, users will need to see the location or item referenced on the following list of sources.

B1 x
B1 x

Misc. Biographical
T.H. Robsjohn Gibbings. Web Bios

Answer.com

<http://www.answers.com/topic/t-h-robsjohn-gibbings>

Lost City Arts

<http://www.lostcityarts.com/designers/showcase/gibbings.htm>

Time. Jan. 30, 1950.

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,856508,00.html>

Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T._H._Robsjohn-Gibbings

Istdibs

[bad link]

Books

Photocopy of cover only located here.

B1 x

Good-bye, Mr. Chippendale / T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings. Illustrated by Mary Petty. N.Y., Knopf, 1944.

This item is currently in the departments book collection under: M749.2.R576, and also in general library storage.

● Photocopy of book jacket & copy of online catalog entry.

● **Furniture Manufacturer**. March 1944. Book Review.

● Article from Pilastered.com website.

<http://www.pilastered.com/reviews/good-bye-mr-chippendale>

See also items listed in the online catalog for the Furniture Room, and for the general library collections.

Series II. Biographies

T.H. Robsjohn Gibbings (Terence Harold Robsjohn-Gibbings, 1905-1976)

Periodical Articles

Furniture Age

- Dec. 1953

B1 x

Furniture Forum

- All-American Gal? Jan. 5, 1948? [newspaper type clipping, only part of the article found]

B2 x

Furniture Manufacturer & Artisan

June 1, 1944

- Mar. 1944. pg. 29 where

233-2
084-50

Grand Rapids Furniture Forum (Report of the Grand Rapids Furniture forum) / Grand Rapids Furniture Exposition Association. Jan. 5, 1948.

- Where is Madame X? / by T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings. pg. 6-9
This item is a Coll. 233-2 and Coll. 084-50

Home Furnishings

- Feb. 1954 Where

B1 x

Newspaper clippings (photocopies)

Grand Rapids Herald

- Jan. 9, 1947
- Jan. 6, 1948
- Aug. 11, 1950
- Jan. 4, 1954
- Feb. 16, 1954
- June 24, 1959 where

Grand Rapids Press

- Jan. 3, 1950 where
- July 2, 1956

Series II. Biographies

T.H. Robsjohn Gibbings (Terence Harold Robsjohn-Gibbings, 1905-1976)

Trade Literature

See Coll. 225-

See Coll. 232-

Web Illustrations

B1 x

T.H. Robsjohn Gibbings. Webpages

cDecor.com

Magazine. Jan. 2001

An American in Paris

<http://www.cdecor.com/magazine/eric.asp>

Lost City Arts

<http://www.lostcityarts.com/designers/showcase/gibbings.htm>

1stdibs : the decorative arts source

http://www.1stdibs.com/furniture_search.php?type=3&i_creator=T.H.+Robsjohn-

[Gibbings](#)

See the following:

- His archive at the Smithsonian
- Contact the Public Museum of Grand Rapids, Chris Carron, RE possible Widdicomb drawings associated with this designer.
- Coll. 125-H009604. Robinson Studio Collection. Herald Series negatives. Jan. 6, 1948. And perhaps also a newspaper article on microfilm for that date.
- Coll. 204-
- Coll. 232-
- Coll. 225-
- Coll. 233
- Departmental furniture periodicals and indexes.

Series II. Biographies

Bill Stumpf

B1 x

GR Press. Sept. 1, 2006.

Designer made office more comfortable : Bill Stumpf created Herman Miller's iconic Aeron, other ergonomic chairs.

GR Press Business Section C. Added 9/21/2006.

B1 x

Ralph Hewitt Widdicombe

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Series II. Biographies

Publications by or about Designers

- 1 x A Brief Outline of Furniture History during the 18th Century / by Leon W. Hall, designer. G.R., Mi. 1937.
00.[726].1 Formerly R749.092.H144b
- 1 x Design Piracy : plan adopted by the Furniture Code Authority for make effective section 4, article VIII, the Design Piracy Clause of the furniture Manufacturing Industry Codes. May 15, 1934.
- 1 x Details of Furniture Construction : a study ... / Arthur Kirkpatrick, Instructor, GR School of Designing. In **Furniture Manufacturer & Artisan**. Nov. 1920. p. 230+
00.[3993].1 Added 12/28/2004
"Rod making."—cover title/subject matter
- 1 x The Eames Lounge Chair : an Icon of Modern Design / Martin Eidelberg, Thomas Hine, Pat Kirkham, David A. Hanks, C. Ford Peatross. London ; N.Y. : Grand Rapids Art Museum in assoc. with Merrell, 2006.
P2006.047.1 Added 10/16/2006
- 1 x Four Original Sources of Inspiration for Designs of Furniture / Arthur Kirkpatrick.
00.[669].1 Formerly M749.K63
- 1 x Full Instructions in the Art of Parchment Shade Making and Decorating. G.R. : Home Institute of Trades, 1921.
Formerly MKG751.G76
00.[3179].1 Added 11/23/2004
Formerly bound with "Instructions in the Ar of Creating Oil ..."
- 1 x History of Furniture Designing ... / by Stephen M. Wirts. Detroit : Wolverine Manufacturing Co., 1915. ...Summary of an Address ... National Table Assoc. at Pittsburgh, Oct. 15, 1915. Univ. of Mich. Mar. 22, 1915, and Detroit Museum of Art, March, 26, 1915.
Formerly R749.09.W748
00.[0545].1 Added 11/23/2004
- x x An Illustrated Story of Furniture and ornamentation / by Herman Holmberg, instructor of Furniture Design and Furniture Craft, George Davis Vocational and Technical High School.
1993.016 Added 11/23/2004
Oversized binder with typed sheets and pasted illustrations.

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Series II. Biographies

Publications by or about Designers

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | x | Instructions in the Art of Creating Oil Colors and Color Blends for Parchment Shade Decorating. G.R. : Home Institute of Trades, 1921.
Formerly MKG751.G76
00.[3173].1 Added 11/23/2004
Formerly bound with "Full Instructions in the Art of parchment ..." |
| 1 | x | Nelson, Eames, Girard Propst : the design process at Herman Miller. Design Quarterly 98/99
00.[2198].2 Added 10/4/2005
Accompanied by a Checklist of the Exhibit, Walker Art Center 25 November 1975-18 January 1976.
00.[2198].2a Added 10/4/2005
See also 233-2 |
| 1 | x | Salute to Grand Rapids Designers / by Jay Gary. Furniture Age , Dec. 1953.
Includes a picture and brief information on 14 Grand Rapids, Michigan designers:
T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings
Renzo R. Rutili
Paul T. Frankl
John B. Wisner
Hendrik Van Keppel and Taylor Green
William K. Kleaver
Herbert Ten Have
Warner Rains Cleveland
William Millington
William H. Eggebrecht
Carl H. Eggebrecht
Michael E.C. Taylor
Paul Tuttle |
| B2 | x | Oversized copy |
| 1 | x | The Symbolic Interpretation of Our Playing Cards / by Arthur Kirkpatrick. 1925. |

Series II. Biographies

Publications by or about Designers

- 1 x The Waddell Book of Projects : Designs of Furniture You Will Like to Build, c. 1931.
P2002.026
Includes attached inside front cover:
1. Student Context (pink sheet)
2. Letter. "To Instructors and Teachers"
- 1 x Waddell Manufacturing Co. illustrated trade letters, n.d. 00.[1993].1-6
Includes designs by Arthur Gommesson, Randolph R. Mohlhenrich (Baltimore)?, Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, Henry Warren Jr., Mr. Guenaux, and illustrations by Oakley V. Weeks.
- 1 x What is Beautiful in Furniture and Why, or the Historical Development of Furniture as Compared with the Passions of men / by Arthur Kirkpatrick. GR School of Designing. Illustrated by Lyle Newman. GR : Mills Printing Co., [1910]
Formerly MKG749.K63
00.[3175].1 Added 11/23/2004
See also copy in school vertical file.
Other illustrations included:
● Arthur Kirkpatrick. Sketched by student Frank Johnson, Chicago.
● Suggestion for Cigar Store Outfit / R.B. Leibius, Jr. (Robert Leibius, the Designer for Kansas City Show Case Works). Interior Perspective showing counter set up and wall treatment.
● A Detail and sketch of rocker. A cut from one of our lesson plates. Source not given.
- 1 x What the Furniture Designer Sees in Mythology / by Arthur Kirkpatrick, Instructor & Designer of the GR School of Designing. G.R. : Duhamel Printing Co., n.d.
00.[5611].1

Series II. Biographies

Publications by or about Designers

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | x | Why are Period Styles Evolved? / A. Kirkpatrick. Grand Rapids School of Designing.
Formerly MKG740.K63
00.[3176].1 Added 11/23/2004
Note: Bound with the two items below. |
| 1 | x | What Suggested Form or Design of figures / by Arthur Kirkpatrick. GR School of Designing, n.d.
Formerly MKG740.K63
c.1 00.[3177].1 Bound with "Why are Period Styles Evolved?"
c.2 00.[3177].2 Separate folder |
| 1 | x | What Suggested Form or Design of figure seven (7) / by Arthur Kirkpatrick. GR School of Designing, n.d.
Formerly MKG740.K63
00.[3178].1 Bound with "Why are Period Styles Evolved?" |

Series III. Original Designs

Subseries A. Witman.

Original designs of library furniture by Chas. T. Witman, Grand Rapids.
(Formerly R 849.212 .W781)

2	1	Charging Desk. Colonial Design. A.
2	2	Charging Desk. Colonial Design. B.
2	3	Charging Desk. Colonial Design. B.
2	4	Charging Desk. Colonial Design. A.
2	5	Dictionary Stand. Colonial Design. A.
2	6	Rectangular Table. Colonial Design. B.
2	7	Dictionary Stand. Colonial Design. B.
2	8	Magazine Rack. B.
2	9	Magazine Rack. Colonial Design. A.
2	10	Periodical Rack and File. Colonial Design. B.
2	11	Periodical Rack and File. Colonial Design. A.
2	12	Table. 30 ½
2	13	Periodical Rack and File. 33.
2	14	Periodical Rack and File. 34.
2	15	Magazine Rack. 27.
2	16	Magazine Rack. 28.
2	17	Table. 31
2	18	Magazine Rack. 28 ½
2	19	Dictionary Stand. 26.
2	20	Dictionary Stand. 25.
2	21	Table. 29.
2	22	Table. 30.
2	23	Wainscot Table. Colonial Design. 32.
2	24	Straight Charging Desk. 1.
2	25	Straight Charging Desk. 2.
2	26	Straight Charging Desk. 3.
2	27	Straight Charging Desk. 4.
2	28	Straight Charging Desk. 5.
2	29	Straight Charging Desk. 6.
2	30	Octagonal Charging Desk. 7.
2	31	Octagonal Charging Desk. 8.
2	32	Odd Chairs. 23.
2	33	Odd Chairs. 24.
2	34	Octagonal Charging Desk. 9.
2	35	Octagonal Charging Desk. 10.
2	36	Octagonal Charging Desk. 11.
2	37	Octagonal Charging Desk. 12.
2	38	Shelving. 13.
2	39	Shelving. 14.

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Series III. Original Designs

Subseries A. Witman.

Original designs of library furniture by Chas. T. Witman, Grand Rapids
(Formerly R 849.212 .W781)

- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| 2 | 40 | 60 Tray Cabinet with leg base. 15. |
| 2 | 41 | 60 Tray Cabinet. Special Design. 16. |
| 2 | 42 | 60 Tray Cabinet with leg base. 17. |
| 2 | 43 | 60 Tray Cabinet with leg base. 18. |
| 2 | 44 | 60 Tray Cabinet, cupboard base. 19. |
| 2 | 45 | [Chair] 22. |
| 2 | 46 | Pennsylvania Type Windsor. Reproduction. 21 |
| 2 | 47 | [Chairs] 20. |
| 2 | 48 | Filing Equipment Bureau. Product Sheet. |
| 2 | 49 | Twelve blueprints. These have A-B lettering, and may correspond to the first 11 drawings above. |
| 3 | x | Designs & sketches for Furniture in the Neo-Jacobean & other styles / by Bernard E. Smith, arch. Strand : 8 Buckingham St. ; London, printed by C.F. Kell, 1876. Reprint?
(Formerly R749.222.Sm52) Accession 102857
Nov.1908 |
| 3 | x | One Hundred Designs with Full details of 'Easy-to-make' furniture / issued by Crater & Holt. G.R., Mich. N.d.
(Formerly R 849.084 .C85) Accession 151451 "Copyrighted"—stamped on intro page. |

List of Grand Rapids Furniture Designers
In Process

Guido Alessandrini (Mr. & Mrs.)

William R. Balbach
Barnes, Victor S.
Baxter, Bob
Bebalacqua, Aurelio
Berg, Hans
Bjorncrantz, Carl
Blickley, Ed
Borneman, Louis
Boukma, John
Briggs, Sandy
Brower, John
Burton, Frank
Buzzitta, Giacomo "Jack"

Cameron, Thomas
Chatfield, Charles B.
Clark, Earl
Warner Rains Cleveland
Clingman, J. Stuart
Colleen, Mrs. Robert
Colleen, Robert

Frank Davidhazy
Deryke, Donald
DiFiglia, Joseph (Mr & Mrs)
Dryden, E.E

Eddy, George
Carl H. Eggebrecht
84-2-22
William H. Eggebrecht

Ford, Mrs.
Paul T. Frankl
Fry, Frank
Fry, Frank (Mr & Mrs)

List of Grand Rapids Furniture Designers
In Process

Goebel, Jack
Graham, Charles
Green, Stanley
Taylor Green

Hall, Harvey
Hall, Leon
Handley, Tom
Hawk, Clayton
Hill, Fredrick
Hoffman, William
Hohnberg, Herman
Holt, William
Hompe, Alexander

Jiranek, Otto
Johnson, Phil
Johnson, Thomas

Kendall, David W.
Kimerly, William L
Kirkpatrick, James Russell
Kirkpatrick, Marie
Kirkpatrick, Mrs.
William K. Kleaver
Kohlstedt, Donald
Krause, Max
Kuppel, Fred

Latto, Donald
LeDonne, Gerard
Loewy, Raymond

Mailloux, Lawrence O.
Margantin, Adrien
William Millington
Morgan, Guy
Morton, John

List of Grand Rapids Furniture Designers

In Process

Nieuwenhuis, Mike

Orr, Edgar

Pike, George

Pischner, Barry

T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings

Ruppel, Fred

Rutili, Renzo

Sobota, Ray

Samuelson, John

Schmidt, Karl

Somes, Edgar

Stekette, Frank

Stuart, Claude

Michael E.C. Taylor

Teal, Arthur

TenHave, Herbert

Thompon, Donald

Thompon, Mrs. Donald

Tourre, Steve

Paul Tuttle

Hendrik Van Keppel

VandenBout, Adrian

Veen, James

Veen, Mrs. James Sr.

Vennell, Jesse

Warren, Henry

Westveer, Ray

Widdicombe, Harry

Widdicombe, Ralph

John B. Wisner

Witman, Charles

Witman, Charles (Mr & Mrs)