William Odom collection of book endpapers, before 1942
KA.0036

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard
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## Collection Overview

**Repository**  
Kellen Design Archives

**Creator - Collector**  
Odom, William Macdougal, 1884-1942

**Title**  
William Odom collection of book endpapers

**Date [inclusive]**  
before 1942

**Extent**  
2.8 linear ft: 2 boxes, 1 oversize

**Abstract**  
William Odom (1884?-1942) attended the New York School of Art (later, Parsons School of Design) around 1909. He returned to teach at Parsons for many years, eventually heading the department of Interior Design, and, in 1930, succeeding Frank Alvah Parsons as president of the school. In 1930, Odom succeeded Frank Alvah Parsons as president of the New York School of Fine and Applied Art. He served in this capacity until his death. The collection consists of Odom's research collection of decorative book endpapers.
Biographical note

William Macdougal Odom was born in Columbus, Georgia in 1884 or 1886. He attended the New York School of Art (later, Parsons The New School for Design) in approximately 1907-1908, where he became a protegé of Frank Alvah Parsons. Parsons was impressed by Odom's aptitude for scholarship and interior decoration and hired him to teach in the Interior Decoration Department. Odom was the founder and first director of the Paris Ateliers, the French branch of Parsons, in 1921. Following Frank Alvah Parsons' death in 1930, he became president of the school, in which capacity he served until his own death in January 1942. The name of the school officially changed to "Parsons School of Design" under Odom's presidency.

In addition to his role as school administrator, Odom researched and wrote the two-volume *A History of Italian Furniture* (1918-1919). For his decorative arts scholarship, he was decorated as a chevalier of the French Legion of Honor. Odom also acted as European agent for Eleanor McMillen Brown's interior decoration firm. He traveled extensively in Europe and had numerous social connections that facilitated the purchasing of fine furniture and objets d'art.

Scope and Contents note

The collection consists of marbled and patterned endpaper samples collected by William Odom. Samples are not identified by origin, date, or manufacturer, although some appear to have been produced in France, one of Odom's primary residences throughout the 1930s. The endpapers may be a residual collection from a now-discontinued decorative arts samples library maintained by Parsons School of Design for student use.

Publication Information

Kellen Design Archives August 2, 2010
Conditions Governing Access note
Collection is open for research use. Please contact archivist@newschool.edu for appointment.

Use Restrictions
To publish images of material from this collection, permission must be obtained in writing from the New School Archives. Please contact: archivist@newschool.edu.

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Probably transferred to the archives from Parsons School of Design's Adam and Sophie Gimbel Art and Design Library circa 1994.

Related Materials
The Stanley Barrows papers (KA.0002) include a reproduction of a black and white photographic print of Odom's Pierre Hotel salon, along with Barrows' annotations regarding Odom's importance to Parsons and to the history of interior design. Barrows can also be heard discussing Odom's impact on the school in an oral history recording conducted with Martica Sawin, available in the New School Archives' Parsons School of Design Centenary oral history project (PC.07.01.01).

Photographs of William Odom will be found in the Parsons School of Design Alumni Association records (PC.03.02.01).

Keywords for Searching Related Subjects

Genre(s)
- Decorated papers.
- Endpapers.
- Marbled paper.

Subject(s)
- Book ornamentation.

Collection Inventory
Collection of Book endpapers 1
OSxx-1

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