

Adirondack Experience Library

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Guide to the Arto Monaco Papers (MS 18-004)

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Arto Monaco
Title:	Arto Monaco Papers
Collection Number:	MS 18-004
Accession Number:	2011.066
Extent:	22 record boxes [14 cubic feet]
Inclusive Dates:	1940-2002
Abstract:	Personal papers of the artist, Arto Monaco, who designed most of the early theme parks of the Adirondacks in the mid-20 th century.

Biographical Note

Arto Monaco was an artist, theme park designer, toy designer, and cartoonist from the Adirondacks. He was born on November 15, 1913 in Elizabethtown, NY and was the son of Ida Martin and Louis Monaco, an Italian immigrant. Monaco got his start in design after Rockwell Kent noticed his artwork in his father's restaurant. Kent helped him get into the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn where he eventually graduated in 1937. After graduating, he went to California to pursue a career in Hollywood. He worked at several big studios including MGM, Paramount, Disney, and Warner Brothers over the course of four years. During that time he also did work as an interior decorator for Fannie Brice, Dorothy Parker and others. In 1941, he went back home and married Gladys "Glad" Burrell before enlisting in the army. While in the army, he developed training aids and helped set up the first Training Aids Division. After the war, Monaco worked on a variety of projects before deciding to open his own business, Arto Monaco's Toy Company, in Upper Jay. He designed and built toys that were sold across the United States. In 1947, a man named Julien Reiss came to Monaco with an idea to build a theme park near Wilmington that eventually came to be known as Santa's Workshop. Monaco designed the entire park and after its great success, went on to assist with other parks including Old McDonald's Farm, Storytown (later Great Escape), and Frontier Town, among others. But his biggest project was his own theme park that he built in Upper Jay. He opened the Land of MakeBelieve in 1953 and ran the park until 1979 when he had to close it due to continuous flooding from the Ausable River. After this time Monaco struggled financially, but continued to design toys and games. He had a close friendship with Jim Becker, the founder of Anjar Co., a company that sold toy prototypes to major manufacturers such as Mattel and Ideal. As a result, Monaco was behind the designs of many of the toys these companies produced. He continued to work on design projects for the rest of his life, until his death on November 21, 2003 in Upper Jay, NY.

Scope and Content

This collection contains a variety of documents relating to the artist, Arto Monaco. It consists of his personal correspondence, sketches and drawings, and other materials involved with his design projects for toys and theme parks. The majority of the materials date from 1940 through 2002.

System of Arrangement

The collection is arranged into three series:

Series 1: Scrapbook Binders

Series 2: Project Materials and Ephemera

Series 3: Sketchbooks and Drawings

Series Description

Series 1: Scrapbook Binders, 1940-2002. Boxes 1-6.

This series consists of binders that have correspondence, articles, project designs, comics and cartoons, Land of Make Believe info, and some tax information.

Series 2: Project Materials and Ephemera, undated. Boxes 7-10.

Included in this series are materials associated with the projects Arto Monaco worked on. This includes a full listing of projects he designed within the Adirondack Park, and the toys/games he worked on. There are also materials and ephemera from his park, Land of MakeBelieve, and miscellaneous ephemera.

Series 3: Sketchbooks and Drawings, undated. Boxes 11-22.

This series includes many of Arto Monaco's original drawings and sketches for theme parks, toys, the army, and other various projects.

Access Points

Monaco, Arto, 1913-2003.;

Adirondack Park (N.Y.)--History.;

Artists.;

Land of Makebelieve.;

Art and design.;

Art.;

Drawing.;

Amusement parks.;

Santa's Workshop.;

Upper Jay, NY.;

Toys.;

Frontier Town (North Hudson, N.Y.);

Cartoons and comics.;

Great Escape.;

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access:

Access to this collection is unrestricted.

Conditions Governing Use:

Fair use copy permitted for research, study, or investigational purposes citing the Adirondack Experience. Any other use requires written permission.

Custodial History:

This collection was donated as a gift by the Arto Monaco Historical Association in 2011.

Related Materials:

For other materials relating to Arto Monaco, see the Adirondack Experience database online at <http://adirondack.pastperfectonline.com/>.

Preferred Citation:

Arto Monaco Papers, MS 18-004, Adirondack Experience Library, Blue Mountain Lake, NY

Processing Note:

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Container List**Series 1 - Scrapbooks****Box 1: Scrapbook Binders**

Binder 1: Toy Articles (1980s)

Binder 2: Army Correspondence (1940s)

Binder 3: Army Misc. Letters and Articles (1940s)

Binder 4: Design Requests (1950-1983)

Binder 5: Correspondence with Charles Wood (C.R. Wood) and Stoney (Bob) Morrow (1954-1995)
-also some pamphlets for StoryLand N.H.

Binder 6: Toys, Miscellaneous Projects Finished (1972-1985)

Binder 7: Christmas Card Designs (1962-1992)

Binder 8: Toy Projects for James Becker - Anjar Toys and Games Co. (1966-1989)

Binder 9: Miscellaneous Correspondence (1950-2000)

Box 2: Scrapbook Binders

Binder 1: Miscellaneous Theme Park Articles (1960s)

Binder 2: Editorial Cartoons

Binder 3: Editorial Cartoons

Binder 4: Editorial Cartoons

Calvin and Hobbes Comic Booklet

Binder 5: Miscellaneous Comic Strips

Binder 6: Cartoon Comic Strips

Binder 7: Cartoons

Binder 8: Grim, Mutts, Marmaduke [Cartoons]

Binder 9: Gaar Williams

Box 3: Scrapbook Binders

Binder 1: Arto Personal Letters and Documents (1949-1995)

Binder 2: Land of Make Believe Publicity (1960s-1970s)

Binder 3: Land of Make Believe Publicity (1960s-1970s)

Binder 4: Articles and Memorabilia for Land of Make Believe

Binder 5: Correspondence with Friends (1980s-1990s)

Box 4: Scrapbook Binders

Binder 1: Special Correspondence (1945-1994)

Binder 2: Special Correspondence (1952-2002)

Binder 3: Special Correspondence (1951-1990)

Binder 4: Letters of Interest (1952-1991)

Binder 5: New Shop Studio Costs, 1998

Binder 6: Billabong Belle Log Book (Land of Make Believe boat)

Binder 7: Various Correspondence

Binder 8: World War 2 – Army Diary Letters

Binder 9: Letters from Arto Monaco's Father, Louis Monaco, 1940s

Box 5: Scrapbook Binders

Binder 1: Special Correspondence (1950-1991)

Binder 2: Thank You Letters (1948-1985)

Binder 3: Taxes (1980s)

Binder 4: Taxes (1990s)

Binder 5: Floods in Land of Make Believe (1955-1992)

Binder 6: Correspondence with Federal, State, County, and Town Officials (1956-1990)

Binder 7: Correspondence with Cartoonists, Artists (1945-1986)

Box 6: Scrapbook Binders

Binders 1-4: Various Articles Relating to Adirondacks

Binder 5: Projects for Town of Jay

Series 2 – Projects and Ephemera

Box 7: Projects and Land of Make Believe

Folder 1: Inventory Lists of Various Projects/Designs Done in Adirondack Park

Inventory Lists of Toys/Games Designed

Folder 2: Toys - Order Forms, Brochures

Folder 3: Land of Make Believe - Tickets and Passes

Folder 4: Land of Make Believe - Ephemera

Box 8: Land of Make Believe, Christmas Cards, Disneyland

Folder 1: LOMB Playing Cards

Folder 2: Christmas Cards

Folder 3: Land of Make Believe – Inventory Cards

Folder 4: Disneyland Ephemera

Folders 5 & 6: Miscellaneous Ephemera

Box 9: Land of Make Believe

Folder 1: Several envelopes with promotional materials for LOMB

Box 10: Land of Make Believe Book Materials

-Various materials to be used for a book about the theme park

Series 3 – Sketchbooks and Drawings

Box 11: Various Papers and Drawing Patterns

Folder 1 – Miscellaneous Drawings and Papers

Folder 2 –Miscellaneous Drawings

Folder 3 - Charles R. Wood Glens Falls Theatre, bear and rabbit drawings

Folder 4– Horses, Clowns Cutouts

Folder 5 – Clock Pattern Cutout

Folder 6 – Various Cartoon Cutouts

Folder 7 – Library Book Train Designs

Folder 8 – Train Logger Pattern

Box 12: Sketchbooks

-Arto Monaco Advertisement for Toys

-ADK Sketches for Sue Burdick and George Jakes

-Christmas Card Designs and Other Illustrations

-Cutout Puzzles

-Circus, Toys, Animal Drawings

-Charles R. Wood Foundation – Double H Ranch-Mural, Layout, Storyboard

-Big Animal Cutouts

-Big Toy Cutouts

-Miscellaneous Sketches

Box 13: Sketchbooks

-Folder 1 – Various Colored Illustration Boards

-Folder 2 – Various Paper Illustrations

-Stagecoach Cutout for Charles R. Wood

-Framed Drawing

Box 14: Sketchbooks

-North Pole – Santa's Workshop Designs

-North Pole – Sign Layouts

-Land of Make Believe Sketches

-Land of Make Believe Sketches

-Frontiertown Sketches

-Double H Ranch Cutouts

-Gaslight Village Great Escape Building Sketches

Box 15: Sketchbooks

-Various Animal Cutout Patterns

-Doorstop Animal Cutouts

-Cutouts – Band Elephants

-Small Girl Patterns

-Big Girl Patterns

-Charles Wood Fundraiser Designs

-Great Escape – R.R. People Cutouts

-Great Escape – Misc. Cutout Patterns

-Great Escape – Circus Cutouts

-Great Escape – Bavarian Palace Cutouts

Box 16: Sketchbooks

- Pictorial Maps and Miscellaneous Sketches
- Blue Mountain Lake – Adirondack Museum Coloring Book
- Great Escape Designs
- Charles Wood Gaslight Village Sketches
- Great Escape Murals
- Great Escape – Storytown
- Great Escape – Storytown/Ghost Town

Box 17: Sketchbooks

- Great Escape – Noah's Ark
- Toy Sketches
- Miscellaneous Building Sketches
- Army Drawings
- Kids Drawings (Carry and Rosann)
- Miscellaneous Animals and Clown Sketches
- Various Character Drawings
- Toy Sketches for Jim Becker
- Miscellaneous Souvenirs, Placemats, Logos, Ads etc.
- North End Tavern Mural

Box 18: Military Drawings and Comics

- Folder 1 – Army Training Booklets
- Folder 2 – Military Comics and Illustrations on Paper
- Folder 3 – Military Comics and Illustrations on Boards

Box 19: Sketchbooks

- Restaurant Signs, Cutouts (Mickey's)
- Maria's Restaurant Murals (Mickey's)
- Mickey's Signs, Cutouts, Mural
- Toys for Jim Becker, Misc. Games
- Storyland N.H., Sketches
- Lake Compounce Cutouts and Murals
- Lake Compounce, Boat Buildings
- Lake Compounce, Animals
- Old McDonald's Farm Sketches
- Holiday Harbor Plans
- Book Illustrations for Jack Jingle (Rand McNally Book)
- Girl Sketches
- Bavarian Village – Wilmington

Box 20: Land of Make Believe, Maps of Utility Systems

- Large Book: Land of Make Believe, Maps of Water, Electrical & Sewage Systems

Box 21: Sketchbooks

- Land of Make Believe, Various Sketches
- Land of Make Believe, Various Sketches
- Land of Make Believe, Plans
- Anjar Toys, Leonardo DaVinci Models
- Miscellaneous Castle Plans: Great Escape, Fantasy Island, and LOMB
- Rolled Papers: Layout Plans for "Mickey's" and "Tom Tyler and Saddlemates" Comic

Box 22: Cutout Patterns

- Patterns for Great Escape, Double H. Ranch, and North Pole