Finding aid of the Harmon Pritchard Papers

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Collection number: MSA.6

Autry Library
Autry National Center of the American West
Los Angeles, California

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Harmon Pritchard Papers
Dates: 1933-1940
Collection number: MSA.6
Creator: Pritchard, Harmon, 1890-1938
Collection Size: 2 linear feet
Repository: Autry National Center. Institute for the Study of the American West
Los Angeles, CA 90027
Abstract: Harmon Pritchard Collection includes samples of his artwork, illustrations, and personal papers.
Physical location: Autry Library, Autry National Center
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English
Access
Collection is open for research. Appointments to view materials are required. To make an appointment please visit http://www.autrynationalcenter.org/research_application.php or contact library staff at (323) 667-2000.

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Preferred Citation
[Item identification] Harmon Pritchard Papers, MSA.6. Autry Library, Autry National Center, Los Angeles, CA

Acquisition Information
The Harmon Pritchard Collection was donated by Sarah M. Pritchard.

Biography / Administrative History
Harmon Pritchard was born Herman Prichep on April 16, 1890, in New York. His parents William and Lena, were Jewish immigrants from Poland. They had four children, three boys and one girl, before William died in 1915. Pritchard graduated from Townsend Harris High School and attended City College of New York for 2 1/2 years, before attending the Pace Institute of Accounting, from which he graduated in 1916.

In 1915, Pritchard married Jessie Roth, and they settled in New York. They had two children, Wilbur in 1923 and Hubert in 1927. Pritchard tried many different occupations, and he worked in retail, as a co-manager of a bakery, and as a paper salesman, always going back to accounting or bookkeeping. In 1920, Pritchard spent a year in California, whetting his taste for the American West, but he returned to New York in 1921. When the Depression began in 1930, Pritchard was out of a job for two years, eventually finding work with the State of New York Tax Bureau.

At this time, Pritchard began to use his skill at drawing. He found some work as an illustrator for Western Pulp magazines. Between 1929 and 1937, his work was sold at the Gallery Robertson-Deschamps, located at 16 E. 48 Street in New York.
When the Rodeo came to Madison Square Garden in 1932, Pritchard approached the manager, requesting permission to draw the animals. He was refused, and told to go work in the stockyards if he liked animals so much. His son remembers that is exactly what he did, returning late at night complaining of the noise and the smells. He took some samples of his work back to the Manager of the Rodeo and received permission to draw at the Rodeo. He became the Rodeo Artist, and sold watercolors, etchings, and drawings in the lobby of Madison Square Garden. During the shows, Pritchard would sit in one of the "bronco stalls, in full regalia, and draw."

Pritchard also tried his hand at writing short stories. He wrote with a woman called Myrtle Juliet Foster, and many of their stories were published in various Western Pulp magazines, including Western Rangers. Pritchard also tried, unsuccessfully, to sell a comic strip called "Sammy Stuart: Boy of the Golden West."

Despite his fascination with the American West, Pritchard visited only twice. He lived in California for a year, and in 1936 spent some time in Centennial, Wyoming. Pritchard created some of his best artwork while living in Wyoming. Also in 1936, he legally changed his name from Herman Prichep to Harmon Pritchard. He had always used this name for his artwork, and he believed the latter name would be better for his career. In September 1938, Pritchard died of leukemia.

**Scope and Content of Collection**

The Harmon Pritchard Papers consists of 50 items ranging in date from 1933 to 1984, the bulk 1934 to 1940. It is organized into five series: Personal Papers, Published Works and Artwork, Other Works, Original Paintings, Drawings, and Illustrations, and Copies of Paintings, Drawings, and Illustrations.

**Arrangement**

Arranged by item type.

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.

**Subjects**

Pritchard, Harmon, 1890-1938.
Autry, Gene, 1907-1998.
Pritchard Family.
*Rodeo magazine.*
Art, American--West (U.S.)
Magazine illustration--United States.
Rodeos in art.
Rodeos--New York.
Artists--United States--Biography.
Accountants--United States--Biography.
Madison Square Garden.
West (U.S.)--History.

**Genres and Forms of Material**

Photographs.
Letters.
Periodicals.
Short stories.
Illustrations.
Comic books, strips, etc.

**Index Terms Related to this Collection**

Prichep, Herman.