Descriptive Summary

Creator: Paul & Kitty Baker
Title: The Paul & Kitty Baker Papers
Dates: 1911-1999 (Bulk dates: 1942-1976)
Abstract: The Paul & Kitty Baker collection spans 1911-1999 with the bulk of the material relating to Paul Baker’s career as a director and educator. The collection also contains correspondence between the Baker family.

Identification: Collection 035
Extent: 22 boxes (16 linear feet)
Language: English, Icelandic, Romanian
Repository: Southwestern Writers Collection, Special Collections, Alkek Library, Texas State University-San Marcos
Biographical Sketch/Historical Sketch

Noted theater director and educator Paul Baker was born in 1911 in the West Texas town of Hereford to Retta Chapman Baker and William Morgan Baker. He was the son and grandson of Presbyterian ministers, and the youngest of five children. When Baker was eight years old, his father moved the family to Waxahachie, Texas where Baker and his older siblings would eventually attend Trinity University, then located in Waxahachie.

In 1932, Paul Baker earned a bachelor’s degree in drama at Trinity University. Baker then spent a year at Yale University working toward a master’s in drama, but for financial reasons he was unable to continue his studies. He spent the summer of 1934 in England, and while there, he received the offer of a teaching position at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. He began teaching there in 1934. At Baylor, Baker met Sallie Kathryn Cardwell (Kitty), a college math professor and artist. Kitty Cardwell had received her undergraduate degree at Randolph-Macon Woman’s College in Lynchburg, Virginia. She always had an interest in art, but chose math as her major, and went on to receive her Masters of Science in Math from the University of Chicago, where she spent a year working toward her doctorate before coming to Baylor. On December 21, 1936 – three months after they met – Paul and Kitty were married.

The Bakers had three daughters, Robyn Cardwell Baker in 1938, Retta Chapman Baker in 1942, and Sallie Kathryn Baker in 1947. Kitty Baker began teaching a children’s art and drama class for Robyn and her friends in 1941, basing her teachings on the same ideas that Paul Baker was using in his drama classes at Baylor. This class would eventually grow into the Baylor Children’s and Teenage Theater.

In 1939, with the help of a Rockefeller Foundation Scholarship, Baker returned to Yale and completed his master’s degree in drama. In 1941, Baker received a Rockefeller Grant to
write about his travels during the summer of 1936 to England, Germany, Russia, and Japan where he studied theater design and production. Also in 1941, Baker returned to Baylor and helped design a new theater called Studio One. In Studio One, the audience was seated in swivel chairs and surrounded by six stages. Five of the stages formed a semi-circle around the audience and the sixth was located in the rear. This marked the beginning of Baker’s many innovative contributions to theater and theater education.

Paul Baker was one of the first theatrical specialists to join the United States Army during WWII, serving as a Special Services Entertainment Officer in Iceland and Paris, France. He directed theatrical performances at the Iceland base. Baker had no trouble finding a variety of men who were talented actors, but he needed actresses. He put in a request for four actresses to perform at his theater. His request led to the formation of the Civilian Actress Technician Corps (CATS), which continued to provide actresses for performances throughout Special Services. In 1945, Baker was awarded the Legion of Merit for the re-organization of the Entertainment Branch of the European Theater of Operation.

Back in the United States, Baker continued to receive recognition for his involvement in education and drama. Baker was the recipient of two more Rockefeller grants in 1946 and 1959. He received the first of these to make a study of leisure time problems as related to community. In 1958, Baker received an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Trinity University. Baker also served as President of the Southwest Theater Association in 1956 and as President of the National Theatre Conference from 1958 to 1961.

In 1952, Baker took a group of Baylor acting students and staff to present Green Grow the Lilacs by Lynn Riggs at the Theater Babylone in Paris. While visiting the Paris Museum of Modern Art, Baker became interested in the works of the cubists. During this time, Baker was
beginning to feel that the progress of theater was lagging behind the other arts. Inspired by the
idea of translating modern art techniques into drama, Baker went back to Baylor to produce an
updated version of Othello in which these new ideas were expressed. He translated the cubist
technique of presenting subjects from more than one point of view into drama by having three
actors play the different parts of one character’s personality. Henry Hewes, Drama Critic for the
Saturday Review, said that Baker had “accomplished what Orson Wells’ motion picture tried and
failed to do – applied the visual arts to a great play without allowing them to inundate it” (Cory,
23). Charles Laughton called Baker’s production of Othello “the most exciting piece of theater
in America,” and called Baker “a man absolutely without fear” (Cory, 23). In 1956, Baker used
this method again in Hamlet with actor Burgess Meredith playing the main speaking role of
Hamlet and three other actors representing the war-like, jovial and introspective sides of the
character.

In 1959, while still teaching at Baylor, Baker helped found the Dallas Theater Center,
which acted as the graduate school for the Baylor Drama Department. Frank Lloyd Wright
designed the Dallas Theater Center, his last building and the only public theater ever built from
his design. Baker also contributed to the design of the theater, working closely with Wright and
sometimes disagreeing with him over such issues as lighting installation and backstage ramps.
Playwright Gene McKinney described his own response to the designs for the Dallas Theater
Center the first time he saw them, by saying “I realized this was going to be a different kind of
theater. The whole approach to the total space, with its lack of right angles, gave freshness to the
idea of theater.” (Cory, 88) Baker would stay with the Dallas Theater Center for twenty-three
years.
Baker’s innovations in theater continued to receive praise from across the nation, and in 1961, he was given the first Rogers and Hammerstein Award for outstanding contribution to theater in the Southwest. However, Baker was not without critics. In 1962, he obtained the amateur rights from Eugene O’Neill’s widow to produce O’Neill’s play *Long Day’s Journey into Night* at Baylor. The contract with Mrs. O’Neill was to do the play intact with no editing of the script. A local Sunday school teacher, who brought her class to see the play, was offended by some of the language. She began a campaign against the production, and the Baylor President ordered Baker to close the play. In response, Baker and his entire department, including assistant professor Robert Flynn and graduate student Preston Jones, moved to Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. Baker split his time between Trinity and the Dallas Theater Center, which then began to serve as the graduate school for the Trinity Drama Department.

Preston Jones not only followed Baker to Trinity, but also worked with him at the Dallas Theater Center. While there, Jones took to heart Baker’s philosophy of non-specialization, and worked in a variety of positions, including actor, director, stage manager, and ticket taker. Jones credited these experiences with making him a successful playwright. As an actor Jones appeared in several plays at the Dallas Theater Center, including *Journey to Jefferson* by Robert Flynn, a stage adaptation of William Faulkner’s novel *As I Lay Dying*. Under Baker’s direction, this Dallas Theater Center production of *Journey to Jefferson*, won the jury prize at the Theater of Nations in Paris in 1964.

In 1972, Baker appointed Preston Jones managing director of Down Center Stage, a smaller workshop theater within the Dallas Theater Center. Jones’ desire to present new works, combined with a lack of good material available, led him to begin writing his own plays, the first of which was *The Knights of the White Magnolia*. In 1973, it was produced at the Dallas Theater
Center under Baker’s guidance, and inaugurated Jones’ classic *Texas Trilogy*. Jones and Baker would continue to have a close working relationship at the Dallas Theater Center until Jones’ death in 1979.

In 1972, Baker wrote the book *Integration of Abilities*, in which he illustrated the teaching techniques he had used in a class of the same name at Baylor and Trinity. In class, Baker taught his students to use all five senses to experience and express their surroundings. Believing that a theater artist should be introduced to all facets of the arts, Baker gave his students assignments in painting, writing, and music composition. During the process of producing a play, he strove to involve the members of the production -- including playwrights -- in all aspects of theater work, such as taking tickets and helping in areas outside their usual sphere, in order to round out their experience of the theater. Baker explained that with this teaching philosophy he was trying to help students “discover their creative abilities,” and at the same time “help the theater catch up with the progress made in the other arts” (Cory, 20).

Baker retired from his position as Professor of Drama and Chairman of the Drama Department at Trinity University in 1976, but continued his work as Director at the Dallas Theater Center. In 1978, he received both a Distinguished Alumnus Award from Trinity University and an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities from the Texas Christian University.

By 1982, Baker and the Board of Directors at the Dallas Theater Center had begun to hold different views about the direction the Center should take. Baker wanted it to remain an educational theater, maintaining a resident company of actors, writers and directors as it had since its inception. The Board was interested in making the Center a more commercially dynamic venue, and envisioned touring productions featuring nationally-known actors who could attract audiences simply by the presence of their names on the marquee. In March 1982, Baker,
after twenty-three years of service as Artistic Director, turned in his resignation. After Baker’s resignation, the Center slowly moved away from its former experimental educational approach, and its role as a graduate school came to an end. However, Baker’s methods in drama continued in the Dallas Children’s Theater, founded by his daughter Robyn Baker Flatt, and at Dallas’ Booker T. Washington School for the Performing Arts, founded by Paul Baker himself in 1976, at the request of the Dallas Independent School District.

After leaving the Dallas Theater Center, Baker continued to receive awards for his work in theater, and he remained busy directing plays and writing books and articles. In 1983, Baker received the Tomas De Gàretani Award for outstanding service to American Theater. He directed a variety of plays, including Preston Jones’ *Last Meeting of the Knights of the White Magnolia* in 1984 at the New Mexico Repertory Theater in Santa Fe. Baker also directed a professional production of Preston Jones’ *The Oldest Living Graduate* for Paramount Theater of Austin in 1986, and his own adaptation, *Hamlet ESP*, for the Hyde Park Theater in Austin in 1987. In August of 1990, Baker’s work in drama and education was celebrated by ex-students from Baylor University (1934-63), Trinity University (1963-1975), and the Dallas Theater Center (1959-83), with “The Paul Baker Festival – Second Harvest,” which ran for three days in Waco.

In 1994, Baker was the recipient of the Texas Commission on the Arts Special Merit Award, and in that same year he wrote *Making Sense with Five Senses*, a textbook featuring his Integration of Abilities Technique. Paul and Kitty Baker currently live on a 132-acre ranch near Waelder, Texas, where they are both active in encouraging the application of their Integration of Abilities Technique at the Waelder elementary school.
The Southwestern Writers Collection also houses the papers of playwright/novelist Robert Flynn, playwright/actor Preston Jones and the actor/artist/director Mary Sue Jones, all of whom worked with Baker at Baylor, Trinity and the Dallas Theater Center.
Scope and Content Note

Correspondence, scrapbooks, video cassettes, sound recordings, scripts, clippings, ephemera, photographs, books and periodicals, 1911 to 1999 (bulk 1942 - 1976), created and maintained by Paul and Kitty Baker, document the Bakers’ life long involvement in theater and education, as well as their personal relationship and family life.


These series are based on the original order of the materials when present; order was created by the cataloger for the materials that lacked it.

The bulk of this material is related to Paul Baker’s career as a director and educator. The Scrapbook Series and the Sound Recordings Series are predominately made up of material pertaining to Paul Baker’s drama productions. The Video Cassettes Series documents several of Paul Baker’s productions, and includes interviews with Baker about his career and his perspective on drama and education. Material regarding Kitty Baker and the Baker family, while limited, can be found in the Scrapbook Series and the Correspondence Series. The Correspondence Series documents the Bakers’ early years of marriage, and the issues with which they dealt while they were apart during WWII. Some of the material in the Video Cassettes Series and the Books and Periodicals Series also provides documentation on the Bakers’ recent
educational involvement with Waelder elementary school, and the Bakers’ use of their Integration of Abilities Technique with its students.

Additional Baker archival material can be found at the Dallas Public Library, and Trinity University. The Dallas Theater Center Collection (1954 – 1984), housed at the Dallas Public Library, represents the period from the Center’s founding through Paul Baker’s years of direction. This Collection consists of 152 linear feet plus 25 oversize boxes containing photographs, set and costume designs, building blueprints, programs, newspaper clippings, advertisements, newsletters, scrapbooks, business records, legal documents, financial records, student/school records, and production, business and personal correspondence. The Paul Baker Papers at Trinity University are made up of twenty-two boxes of correspondence, clippings, material on productions directed by Paul Baker, Children’s Theatre material, and ephemera.

Series Description:

Series I: Correspondence (1927 – 1999, undated)
The bulk of this series is comprised of personal correspondence (1942 – 1945) between Paul & Kitty Baker while she remained in the U.S., and he was stationed in Iceland and Paris as a Special Services Entertainment Officer during World War II. This group of correspondence is of particular interest in that it offers great insight into the Bakers’ early relationship as husband and wife. The original chronological order in which the Bakers kept this correspondence has been maintained. The remaining chronological order in which the Bakers kept this correspondence has been maintained. The remaining correspondence in this series is an assortment of letters and cards sent to the Bakers between 1927 and 1999. There was little original order to this correspondence, therefore it has been arranged by the cataloger in chronological order.

Series II: Scrapbooks (1952 – 1986)
The scrapbooks in this series contain mostly newspaper clippings, and some photographs and ephemera. The bulk of the scrapbooks are about Paul Baker, his productions, and the different theaters at which he worked. The Family (1952 – 1976) scrapbook contains clippings and photographs relating to the Baker children’s activities and achievements, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Bakers’ educational interests and accomplishments. There are also a few clippings about the Baker family in other scrapbooks in the series. This series has been arranged chronologically.
This series, made up of the subseries Tributes and Interviews, Play Productions, Educational, and Miscellaneous, documents the Bakers’ lifelong involvement in theater and education. Within each series the cassettes have been arranged alphabetically by title. Many of the cassettes in the Tributes and Interviews, and Educational Subseries offer insight into Paul Baker’s philosophy of education, while the cassettes in the Play Productions Subseries provide examples of Baker’s work as a director. In this latter subseries, the video cassette of the 1957 Hamlet production has been transferred to DVD.

The majority of the recordings (13 reel to reel tapes, 3 cassettes, and 1 phonograph set, with copies of the cassettes and phonograph set on CD) in this series are of theater productions directed by Paul Baker during his time at Baylor. They are arranged alphabetically.

The bulk of the scripts in this series are from plays directed or written by Paul Baker. Other scripts were written by students, friends or relatives of Baker. Many of the scripts have been annotated and some are in an early or rough stage. The scripts have been arranged alphabetically by author. Highlights in this series include three plays by the Bakers’ daughter, Sallie Baker Laurie, and two versions of Hamlet, one as arranged by Paul Baker and a second, Hamlet ESP, an adaptation by Paul Baker. Several scripts in this series are by playwrights who are also represented in other drama collections at the Southwestern Writers Collection, including The Last Meeting of the Knights of the White Magnolia, and The Oldest Living Graduate both by Preston Jones, As I Lay Dying by Robert Flynn, and Ramsey Yelvington’s Cloud of Witnesses.

This series contains materials compiled by Kitty Baker about the early development of The Baylor Children’s Theater. In 1941, Mrs. Baker began a children’s art and drama class for the Baker’s first daughter and her friends, which would eventually grow into the Baylor Children’s Theater. In this series, clippings, photographs, booklets, workshop materials and ephemera record the activities of the Children’s Theater and Mrs. Baker’s role as its co-founder.

Series VII: Clippings (1942 – 1990, undated)
The small group of clippings in this series highlights periods in Paul Baker’s life from his undergraduate years at Trinity University in Waxahachie, TX, to his work at Baylor University, and his retirement in Waelder, TX.

Series VIII: Theater Brochures and Programs (1929 – 1996, undated)
The brochures and programs in this series come mostly from theaters and productions with which Paul Baker was involved either as a performer or director. They are arranged alphabetically by theater name.

Series IX: Iceland Base Command WWII (1943 – 1945, undated)
Paul Baker collected the material in this series during his time as Special Service Entertainment Officer at Iceland Base Command in World War II. The Iceland Base Command newspaper,
“The White Falcon,” contains several articles about productions directed by Paul Baker at the base. Also included in this series are programs from some of these plays, as well as art works from Iceland. This series is arranged by material type.

**Series X: Photographs (undated)**
This series contains nine studio proofs of Paul and Kitty Baker. Additional photographs can be found in the Scrapbooks series.

**Series XI: Personal Ephemera (1911 – 1942, undated)**
This series is made up of handwritten notes, commencement programs from Trinity and other Universities, booklets about foreign missionary work, calling cards and other assorted ephemera. The material is arranged by material type.

**Series XII: Books and Periodicals (1953 – 1994, undated)**
The material in this series pertains to theater and education, and much of it is by or about Paul Baker. Annotated or unpublished titles have been filed within this series, other titles as listed have been cataloged separately.
Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Open for research.

Preferred Citation

The Paul & Kitty Baker Collection, Southwestern Writers Collection, Texas State University-San Marcos

Acquisition Information


Processing Information

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Correspondence (1927 – 1999, undated)

Box    Folder

Personal correspondence between Paul & Kitty Baker

1    1    1942
1    2-5    1943
1    6    1944

2    1-2    1945
2    3-4    1945

2    5-6    Assorted correspondence 1927 – 1963
2    7    Letter from Paul Baker with the article “Growing Up a Sullen Baptist” by Robert Flynn attached, 1999

21    3    Clipping from magazine of Icelandic art

Series II: Scrapbooks (1952 – 1986)

18    -    1952 -1976, Family
18    -    1956, Hamlet – Burgess Meredith

19    -    1957 – 1960 (Dallas Theater Center)
19    -    1958 – 1961 (Baylor Theater, Dallas Theater Center)

20    -    1959 – 1961 (Dallas Theater Center, Baylor Theater, and Baylor Children’s Theater)
20    -    1966 – 1973 (Trinity Theater)

3    1    1974, Jack Ruby, All American Boy: A Pictorial Progression Project of the Theater at Work as photographed by Chastity Fox
3    2    1985 – 1986, The Oldest Living Graduate


Tributes and interviews (1990 – 1995, undated)

3    3    Paul Baker Second Harvest Tribute – 2 hr. 20 min. film featuring individual tributes from Baker’s ex-students – Master of Ceremonies, Mary Sue Jones, 1990
### Series III: Video Cassettes (1957 – 1995, undated), continued

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### Play Productions (1957 – 1978, undated)

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### Educational (1991 – 1993, undated)

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Series III: Video Cassettes (1957 – 1995, undated), continued

Box   Folder

Educational (1991 – 1993, undated), continued

9   4   Enhancing Leadership Skills, January 12, 1993, Waelder

10  1   Final Days ABC Workshop
10  2   Frontline: Teacher, Teacher FRON815K, 59 minutes
10  3   Waelder ISD Arts Program (missing)

Miscellaneous (1994)

10  4   World Cup ’94 Virtual Field Trip

Series IV: Sound Recordings (1957 – 1978, undated)


11  1   Children’s Theater Alice in Wonderland (two reels)
11  2   Hamlet ESP, 1970 (two reels)
11  3   Hamlet ESP Acts I & II, Act III (two reels)

12  1   Hamlet ESP Acts I, II, & III, recorded at Trinity University, 1970 (two reels; one copy on two audio cassettes & one copy on three CD-Rs)
12  2   Of Time and the River, Act I & II (two reels)
12  3   Oldest Living Graduate, 1978, Preston intermission (one reel)
12  4   Speech 304, 1 & 5 (two reels)

Audio Cassettes and LPs (undated)

13  1   Hamlet #1-3 (three cassettes)

21  1   Hamlet, Paul Baker’s Baylor Theater Stage Production on a 3-LP set, with liner notes and script (also available on 3 CD-R copies)


13  3   Baker, Paul and Gene McKinney, Mary Anna Branson, and Ramsey Yelvington Dramatic Images: Plays For the Church, 1959
13  4   Baker, Sallie Sky-Giant
13  5   Byers, Ruth and Malcolm Stewart Fellows Teatru Piese Tigrul Purpuriu Caruia Il Placeau Clatitele Si La Volan, 1969
13  6   Ebersole, Martha Texas Tacky, 1983 (published version)
### Series V: Scripts (1959 – 1992, undated), continued

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### Series VI: The Baylor Children’s Theater Early Development (1966 – 1985, undated)

| 15 | 4-5 | Ms. Kitty Baker’s materials on early development of the Baylor Children’s Theater |
| 22 | - | 3-ring binder with materials on early development of the Baylor Children’s Theater |

### Series VII: Clippings (1942 – 1990, undated)

| 15 | 6 | Article about Paul Baker from the *San Antonio Light*, August 5, 1990 |
| 15 | 7 | Assorted clippings |
| 21 | - | Framed clipping about the Dallas Theater Center which was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright |
Series VIII: Theater Brochures and Programs (1929 – 1996, n.d.)

15 8  Dallas Theater Center brochures
15 9  Trinity University Theater brochures
16 1  Assorted theater brochures

Series IX: Iceland Base Command WWII (1943 – 1945, n.d.)

16 2  Artworks
16 3  Play programs and ephemera

Series X: Photographs (n.d.)

16 4  Nine black and white, three and a half by five inch studio proofs of Paul and Kitty Baker

Series XI: Personal Ephemera (1911 – 1942, n.d.)

16 5  Handwritten notes
16 6  Trinity University and assorted university material

Series XI: Personal Ephemera (1911 – 1942, n.d.), continued

16 7  Foreign missionary material
16 8  Calling cards
16 9  Assorted ephemera


16 10-11 Baker, Paul ABCs of Natural Sensory Abilities Program Handbook (Preliminary Copy), Waelder Independent School District, 1992
17 1  Baker, Paul American Stars, n.d. (unpublished script)

The following titles have been cataloged separately:
Separately cataloged materials, continued:


Cory, Joyce Burke *The Dallas Theater Center: An Idea That Was Big Enough.* 1980. PN2277.D22 D34 1980


