



INVENTORY TO THE BRUCE ROGERS PAPERS, 1889-1957

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Descriptive Summary

Creator Rogers, Bruce, 1870-1957

Title Bruce Rogers Papers

Date Span 1889-1957, bulk 1900s-1957

Abstract Correspondence, examples of work, photographs and ephemera

relating to the life and career of typographer and book designer

Bruce Rogers

Quantity 3.2 cubic feet

Language English

Repository Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries

Administrative Information

Access Collection is open for research. The collection is stored offsite; 24

hours notice is required to access the collection.

Preferred Citation Bruce Rogers Papers, Archives and Special Collections, Purdue

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Subject Headings

Persons

Rogers, Bruce, 1870-1957 McCutcheon, John T. (John Tinney), 1870-1949 McCutcheon, Evelyn Shaw Hepburn, William Murray, b. 1874 Elliott, Edward C. Moriarty, John H. Hovde, Frederick L., 1908-Ross, David, 1871-1943 Johnston, Paul

Organizations

Purdue University Riverside Press William Edwin Rudge Montague Press Harvard University Press Oxford University Press

Topics

Typography Book Design Printing Bibles

Form and Genre Types

Artifacts
Manuscripts
Correspondence
Black-and-white Photographs

Occupations

Book Designers Typographers Illustrators

Biography of Bruce Rogers

Albert Bruce Rogers was born the younger of two brothers in Linwood, Indiana (now part of Lafayette) on May 14, 1870. His parents were Ann Eliza Gish Rogers and George Rogers, a local baker and confectioner. Growing up, young Bert (as he was called until he went to college) developed an interest in drawing. He also spent a lot of time at his uncle's carpentry shop, learning the finer points of woodcarving and gaining a familiarity with the tools of the trade. His first attempt at fine printing occurred sometime in his early teenage years, when he hand-illustrated a copy of William Cullen Bryant's poem "Forest Hymn" and added his own etchings with the help of his mother's iron.

In 1886, at the age of sixteen, Rogers enrolled as a freshman at nearby Purdue University, hoping to one day become an illustrator. He and another local boy, John McCutcheon, were the only two male students in Purdue's Art Department at that time. Not interested in sports or other social engagements, Bruce spent his time providing illustrations for various Purdue publications, such as the *Exponent* and the *Debris*. He did enjoy boating on the Wabash River, however, and a love of boats and sailing would follow him all of his life.

Rogers graduated from Purdue with a degree in Science in 1890. His first job was as an illustrator for the *Indianapolis News*. After that he tried his hand at painting landscapes, then working in a railroad office with his brother in Kansas. He briefly returned to Indianapolis and illustrating, then in 1895 took a job as a designer at L. Prang and Company in Boston. His first published design work appeared there in *Modern Art*, which was produced by Prang. In 1896, Rogers made the acquaintance of George H. Mifflin, who invited him to join the Riverside Press.

After four years of learning the general printing trade, Rogers was given charge of the new limited editions division at Riverside in 1900. This was also a time of personal happiness in Bruce's life—he married Anna Embree Baker, a Purdue woodcarving instructor, that same year. Their daughter and only child, Elizabeth, was born in 1901. The new family set up residence in Massachusetts, and Bruce got to work.

One of the highlights of Rogers' notable fifteen-year career at Riverside was the development of the Montaigne type, which Bruce redesigned from a fifteenth-century Roman typeface. He also produced over one hundred limited editions before he left the Press in 1912, first for a dreamfulfilling trip abroad, then for a career as a freelance "tramp" designer in New York.

During the years 1912-1935, Rogers worked on a variety of projects for a variety of presses, both in England an America, including among them Carl Rollins' Montague Press, Emery Walker's Mall Press, Cambridge University Press, William Edwin Rudge, and Harvard University Press. Rogers was already gaining recognition as a typographer and book designer, but he had never been very happy with his Montaigne type. He began to tinker again with it and, in 1914, christened the redesigned type "Centaur." The first book printed in Centaur type was, appropriately, *The Centaur*, for which Anna Rogers herself set the type.

The creation of the Centaur type brought Bruce Rogers much prestigious attention and opened all sorts of professional doors for him. Always haunted by a touch of wanderlust, Bruce moved his small family several times around the Northeast and even to England, a country he had been fascinated with for some time, in pursuit of various projects. In 1925 he bought a house in New Fairfield, Connecticut, five miles outside of Danbury. Rogers called the place "October House" because of the date inscribed on the cornerstone. Despite the purchase, it would be some time before Bruce settled down long enough to live there permanently.

The development of Centaur won Bruce Rogers much acclaim, but on the heels of his success came great personal tragedy: Elizabeth Rogers Burroughs died in 1924 at the age of twenty-three. Because her marriage to Alan Burroughs had dissolved, her two-year-old son, Bruce, was left to be raised by her parents. Anna Rogers, who had battled serious illness for many years, died in 1931. Rogers was left alone to care for his grandson with only the help of housekeeper, nurse and nanny Myra Pierson, affectionately known as "Pink" or "Pinky." Mrs. Pierson had first been employed as a nurse for the ailing Elizabeth, and after the young woman's death joined the rest of the Rogers family full time.

Despite the loss of his daughter and wife, Rogers' career continued to climb inexorably toward its stunning apex. In early 1929, Oxford University Press was looking for both a typeface and a designer for its new folio Bible. The typeface they chose was Centaur, and the designer Bruce Rogers. The Oxford Lectern Bible, published in 1935, was a massive project, but amazingly Rogers still found time to put out other pieces during its production. But it was the Bible that would leave his largest artistic thumbprint on the world; hailed by critics from around the globe as a masterpiece, the Bible flung Rogers into the realms of typographical immortality. Sixty of his friends, among them George Ade, Edward C. Elliott, John T. McCutcheon and David Ross, donated funds for a special printing of the Bible on a small quantity of unique Japanese paper. This one-of-a-kind treasure was donated to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The Library honored Rogers in turn by putting his printer's emblem on two of its bronze door panels, the first time a living printer had been so recognized.

Even before the Oxford Lectern Bible, Bruce Rogers had already been recognized academically for his impact on the printed word. Yale University awarded him a Master of Arts degree in 1928; Purdue University a Doctor of Humane Letters degree in 1932; and Harvard University a Master of Arts degree in 1939. He received a gold medal for graphic arts from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1948, and the American Institute of Graphic Arts named him an honorary life member. Despite his fame, Rogers never accumulated a great fortune, and continued to live very economically for the rest of his life.

After the furor over the Oxford Bible subsided a bit, Rogers settled down for a quieter life with Pinky and little Bruce at October House. Although his wandering lifestyle slowed down, his pace of work did not; over the next twenty years he produced a steady flow of a variety of material. In 1949, Rogers put out another version of the Bible, this time with the World Publishing Company. He also produced several books for the Limited Editions Club, including a thirty-seven volume series of the works of Shakespeare. But Rogers' secret desire was to produce a series of works of that he could have complete control over, without having to yield to the creative limitations of working on a commission. He laid the groundwork for a set of books

called October House Classics, and produced the first volume in 1957, *The Life of St. George*. Although he had made plans for another title, Bruce Rogers did not live to see it started. He died of pneumonia on May 18, 1957, five weeks after the release of *St. George* and four days after his eighty-seventh birthday.

Scope and Contents of the Collection

The Bruce Rogers Papers (1889-1957; 3.2 cubic feet and two oversized boxes) documents the life and career of typographer and book designer Bruce Rogers. The Bruce Rogers Papers are organized into six series:

- 1. Correspondence, 1915-1957 (.8 cubic feet)
- 2. Creative Works, 1889-1957 (1.6 cubic feet)
- **3. Printed Material, 1926-1956 (.2 cubic feet)**
- 4. Photographs, 1922-1957 (.4 cubic feet)
- 5. Gifts Received, 1935-1957 (.2 cubic feet)
- 6. Oversized, 1937-1946 (two oversized boxes)

Preservation Note

Whenever possible, original order of the materials has been retained. All materials have been housed in polyester sleeves, acid-free folders, and acid-free boxes. All newsprint has been photocopied and in most cases original newspaper clippings have been discarded. Some clippings containing images of people or color graphics, or front pages of newspapers, have been preserved for display purposes, with photocopies made available for research. Photographs and artifacts have been separated and grouped into individual series for preservation purposes.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Correspondence, 1915-1957 (.8 cubic feet)

The series consists of business and personal letters sent between Bruce Rogers and his friends and associates. Types of materials include correspondence, printed material, and ephemera. John T. and Evelyn McCutcheon, Edward C. Elliott, William M. Hepburn, John H. Moriarty and Frederick L. Hovde are notable correspondents. Materials in the series are arranged alphabetically by the last name of the correspondent.

Box 1

Correspondence, 1915-1957

Bartholomew, A.T., 1917-1931
Cammack, Eleanore, 1945-1955
Catherwood, Mrs., 1924
Elliott, Edward C., 1931-1944
Enrico, Mr., 1919-1920
Fague, Norman W., 1939
Granniss, Ruth S., 1915-1949
Hariman, Samuel, 1924
Hepburn, William M., 1930-1952
Hockema, F.C., 1937-1950
Hovde, Frederick L., 1952-1957
Johnston, Paul, 1930-1935
Keynes, Geoffrey, 1919
Kitteredge, W.A., undated; 1945 [envelopes only]
Lutan, Edith, 1927-1952

McCutcheon, John T. and Evelyn, 1935-1945

Box 2

Correspondence, 1925-1957

McCutcheon, John T. and Evelyn, 1946-1952
Moriarty, John H., undated; 1948-1957 [2 folders]
Olds, Nathaniel S., 1936
Scholer, Walter, 1936
Snyder, Mr. and Mrs. Charles M., 1932-1949
Memorial of Anna Baker Rogers
Wien, Mary, 1936-1938
Wilson, Francis, 1951-1952
Wood, Mr., 1925
Unidentified, undated

Creative Works, **1889-1957** (**1.6 cubic feet**)

The series contains materials relating to items designed by Bruce Rogers, as well as original drawings. Types of materials include various examples of typography, items related to book designing, and drawings. Items of particular interest are the proofs, sketches, and ephemera relating to *John McCutcheon's Book* and *A Purdue Tribute to David Edward Ross*, as well as drawings that Rogers did as a student for the Purdue University yearbook, the *Debris*. Materials in the series are grouped by like subject matter, and then are arranged chronologically. The exceptions are the book prospectuses and catalogs, which are arranged alphabetically by title.

Box 3 Personal Printing and Design, 1894-1956

Cards, 1904-1956

Holiday cards, 1904-1956

Christmas Greetings from October House, undated [Christmas Day by Nicholas Breton]

Christmas Greetings from Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Rogers, undated [from the Dyke Mill]

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Bruce Rogers, undated Best Wishes for the New Year from Bruce Rogers, undated

Valentine Greetings from October House, undated

Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Rogers and Elizabeth Wish You a Happy New Year, 1904

Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Rogers and Elizabeth Wish You a Merry Christmas, 1905

Anne and Bruce Rogers Send You New Years Greetings from Cuckoo Mill, 1926

Bruce Rogers, May His Days Be Blest, 1927

[Christmas card from Bruce Rogers and William Edwin Rudge]

Christmas Greetings from Anne and Bruce Rogers, 1928

Time Marches On, Wishing You a Happy New Year, 1940

New Year Greetings from October House, 1944

Christmas Greetings from October House, 1955

A Merry Christmas, 1956

Greeting cards, undated; 1937

Apologia of Aldus Manutius, undated

Greetings from October House, undated

Bookmaking on the Distaff Side, 1937

Fonts and Types, 1916-1930

Font sizes and prices: Centaur and Arrighi, undated

Preamble of the Centaur, undated

Specimen sheets, undated

Centaur pattern proofs, 1916

New Series of the Centaur Types of Bruce Rogers, 1930

Diplomas, Certificates and Programs, 1910-1946

Club of Odd Volumes items, 1910-1911

Various Purdue diplomas, notes to graduates, 1930-1942

Double Crown Club Program, 1931

IPI Essay Contest Certificates, 1946

Career Related, 1904-1911

Houghton, Mifflin and Company Grand Prize announcement, 1904

Announcement that Bruce Rogers is leaving Riverside Press, April 1911

Bookplates, undated

Miscellaneous, undated; 1894

Bertha Goudy memorial, undated

Ode by Evaleen Stein, 1894

Box 4

Book Design—Prospectuses, 1894-1954

A, 1894-1918

Abbe Constantin, 1894

Abraham Lincoln: A Biographical Essay, 1907

Albert Dürer's Directions for the Construction of the Alphabet, 1918

Anti-Slavery Papers of James Russell Lowell, undated

Augustus Saint-Gaudens, 1907

Autograph Edition of the Novels and Stories of Willa Cather, undated

B, 1905-1908

Banquet of Plato, undated

Bibliography of James Russell Lowell, 1906

Bibliography of Nathaniel Hawthorne, 1905

Bibliography of Oliver Wendell Holmes, 1906

Bibliography of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1908

Book of Songs and Sonnets Selected from the Poems of Thomas Bailey Aldrich,

Bruce Rogers World Bible, undated

C-D, 1904-1954

Certaine Sonets Written by Sir Philip Sidney, 1904

Champ Rose, 1933

Collection of the Facts and Documents Relative to the Death of Major-General Alexander Hamilton, 1904

Compleat Angler, 1909

Consolatorie Letter or Discourse Sent By Plutarch, 1905

Democracy: an Essay, undated

Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, 1954

Documents Relating to the Purchase & Exploration of Louisiana, 1904

E-G, 1902-1914

Essays of Michael Lord of Montaigne, 1902

Familiar Letters of James Howell, 1906

Famous History of the Life of King Henry the Eight, undated

Fifteen Sonnets of Petrarch, 1903

Franklin and His Press at Passy, 1914

Geofroy Tory, 1908

Georgics of Virgil, 1904

Goddess of Reason, 1907

H-I, 1907

Hanging of the Crane, 1907

Hesperides Series, undated

Hints for Lovers, undated

History of Oliver and Arthur, undated

Hydriotaphia, 1907

Instructions Concerning Erecting of a Library, undated

J, 1907-1925

Jargon of Master François Villon, undated

John Greenleaf Whittier: Memoir and Selected Poems, 1907

Joseph Conrad: The Man, 1925

Journal of a Tour in the Netherlands, undated

Journal of Madam Knight, 1920

L-M, 1903-1915

Letters Written By a Gentleman In Boston..., 1909

Life of Dante, 1904

Love Poems of John Donne, 1905

Montaigne's Essay on Friendship, 1915

My Cookery Books by Elizabeth Robins Pennell, 1903

O, 1904-1925

October House Classics, undated

Odyssey, undated

Old Manse, 1904

On Dry-Cow Fishing As a Fine Art, 1925

Oxford Lectern Bible, undated

Oxford Lectern Bible Prospectus and Library of Congress

Acknowledgement Sheet, undated [located in Oversized Box 2]

P. 1902-1943

Paragraphs on Printing, 1943

Parlement of Foules, 1904

Paul et Virginie, 1906

Peronnik the Fool, 1926

Pi, undated

Pierrot of the minute, undated [page 18]

Poems by Winthrop Mackworth Praed, undated

Poems of Maria Lowell, 1907

Prothalamion & Epithalamion, 1902

R-S, 1903-1932

Ralph Herne, 1923

Sailors Narratives of Voyages Along the New England Coast, 1905

Sentimental Journey Through France & Italy, 1905

Seventy-Five Sonnets by William Wordsworth, undated

Songs and Sonnets of Ronsard, 1903

South Wind, 1932

Spare Your Good, undated

T-W, 1906-1942

Theocritus, 1906

Tremolino, 1942

Voyage Autour de ma Chambre, undated

Woman Reigns, undated [cover]

Work of Bruce Rogers: Jack of All Trades, Master of One, 1939

Box 5

Book Design—Catalogs and Book Lists, 1900-1957

Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1907

Ibis: the Book Arts, undated

Lakeside Press Galleries

[American Type Designers Exhibition], 1947-48

Printers at Play Exhibition, 1952

Exhibition of the Work of Bruce Rogers, 1957

Oxford University Press, 1953

Philip C. Duschnes, undated; 1944

Richard Cady, undated

Riverside Press, 1900-1913

Trovillion Private Press, undated

Typophiles, 1935

William Edwin Rudge, 1929[?]

Box 6

Book Design—John McCutcheon's Book, 1944-1949

Correspondence, 1944-1949

Proofs, layouts, sketches, notes, memos, etc., 1945-1948

Proofs, layouts, sketches, notes, memos, etc., undated [2 folders]

Proofs/sketches for front cover and spine, undated [located in Oversized Box 2]

Hue file, miscellaneous proofs/sketches from the Lakeside Press, undated

[located in Oversized Box 2]

Box 7

Book Design—Purdue Tribute to David Edward Ross, 1937-1938

[located in Oversized Box 1]

Specimen booklet with letter addressed to George Ade, 1938

Specimen booklet with letter addressed to John McCutcheon, 1938

Specimen booklet with no letter, 1938

Proofs and correspondence, 1937-1938 [in commemorative case]

Box 8

Drawings, 1889-1895

Modern Art, undated

Yale Shakespeare Festival Lecture Series, undated

Debris, 1889

Annual Register, 1889-1891

Exponent, 1889-1895

"A Souvenir" [Sigma Chi], 1890

Debris, 1891

Miscellaneous drawings, undated; 1891-1892

Debris, 1892

Printed Material, 1926-1956 (.2 cubic feet)

The series contains articles relating to the life and career of Bruce Rogers, some of which were in his possession. Types of materials include complete issues of various publications dealing with printing, graphic arts, and book collecting. Also included is an issue of the *Purdue Alumnus* magazine. Materials in the series are arranged alphabetically by the title of the publication. If there is more than one issue of a particular publication, they are then arranged chronologically.

Box 9

Publications, 1926-1956

American Printer, v. 92, no. 5, May 1931

Book Collector's Packet, no. 7, Septober [sic] 1932

Du Pont Magazine, v. 39, no. 7-8, Midsummer 1935

Indiana Quarterly for Bookmen, v. 1, no. 111, July 1945

Limited Editions Club—A Shakespeare Commentary, undated

McNaught's Monthly, v. 5, no. 3, March 1926

Monthly Letter of the Limited Editions Club

No. 167, March 1944

No. 212, February 1950

News-letter of the American Institute of Graphic Arts

No. 52, April 1939

No. 53, July 1939

PM, v. 2, no. 5, January 1936 [no. 17 on front cover]

letter to editor from Paul Johnston

Printing & Graphic Arts

v. 3, 1955 [index only]

v. 4, no. 1, February 1956

Purdue Alumnus, v. 33, no. 5, March/April 1946

Photographs, 1922-1957 (.4 cubic feet)

The series contains black-and-white images of Bruce Rogers, as well as his relatives, friends, and associates. The photographs have been split into three subseries: relatives, early years, and late years. Materials in the series are arranged chronologically within their groups, except for the section of relatives, which has been arranged alphabetically by last name.

Box 10

Photographs, 1922-1957

Relatives, undated; 1922

Burroughs, Elizabeth Rogers and Bruce Burroughs, Christmas 1922

[daughter and grandson]

Gish, Rebecca Harshbarger and Elizabeth Nancy Harshbarger Stair, undated

[maternal grandmother and great aunt]

Gish, Rebecca Harshbarger, undated

Rogers, Ann Eliza Gish, undated [mother]

Rogers, George, undated [father]

Rogers, Thomas Hill, undated [paternal grandfather]

Bruce Rogers—Early Years, undated

[nine photos, ages babyhood-late 20s or early 30s], undated

Bruce Rogers—Later Years, 1930-1957

October House cornerstone, undated

Bruce Rogers in the yard at October House, undated

Bruce Rogers at October House, undated

Bruce Rogers on the veranda at October House, undated

Centaur and Arrighi page, undated

Bruce Rogers, Paul A. Bennett, Frederic W. Goudy, undated

Bruce Rogers crayon portrait by A. Burton Carnes, undated

Bruce Rogers, ca. 1930s-1940s

Presentation banquet of A Purdue Tribute to David Edward Ross, 1938

[includes David Ross, George Ade, John McCutcheon, and Edward C. Elliott]

Bruce Rogers and John T. McCutcheon, ca. late 1930s-early 1940s

Bruce Rogers and J. H. Moriarity, ca. 1940s-1950s

Bruce Rogers, "Man Working for C. Prentiss Smith," 1946

[3 copies: 1 negative, 1 print, 1 located in Oversized Box 2]

Bruce Rogers, Mr. and Mrs. O.A. Dickman, Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Ettenberg, and "Pinkie" [Myra A. Pierson] at October House, 1948

October House cornerstone, 1948

Bruce Rogers, Edna Bielenson at William Edwin Rudge Alumni party, 1954

Peter Bielenson, Bruce Rogers, Edna Bielenson at William Edwin Rudge Alumni party, 1954

Bruce Rogers speaks at William Edwin Rudge Alumni party, 1954

Bruce Rogers at William Edwin Rudge Alumni party, 1954

Signatures of Typophiles, 1957

"Congratulations to BR on his birthday...", 1957

Gifts Received, 1935-1957 (.2 cubic feet)

The series contains various cards, notes and ephemera that were produced by Bruce Rogers' friends and associates and given to him on birthdays or other occasions. Materials in the series are arranged chronologically.

Box 11

Tributes and Birthday Wishes, 1935-1957

- "A New BRible Story," undated
- "Bruce Rogers, Printer," undated [sketch by Walter Tittle]
- "The Saga of BRnacle Bruce the Sailor," 1935 [by Earl H. Simmons]
- "A BRookplate for Bruce Rogers," 1936
- "Bruce Rogers At Eighty-Four," 1954 [by S.R. Shapiro]
- "Happy Birthday to You BR from the Between-Hours Press," 1954 [printed by Ben Grauer, wood engravings by John De Pol]
- "85: Bruce Rogers of Indiana," 1955 [by S.R. Shapiro]
- "Happy Birthday to You, Bruce Rogers," 1955
 - [printed by Ben Grauer, wood engravings by John De Pol]
- "All Honor and Good Wishes Bruce Rogers on Your Eighty-Seventh Birthday," 1957 [from Lakeside Press]
- "Happy Birthday to You BR from the Between Hours Press," 1957 [printed by Ben Grauer, wood engravings by John De Pol]

Oversized, 1937-1946 (two oversized boxes)

Items in these boxes are stored separately because of their odd size. Materials are arranged in the order of the series and subseries from which they originally came.

Box 12

Oversized Box 1, 1937-1938

Creative Works—Book Design—A Purdue Tribute to David Edward Ross
Specimen booklet with letter addressed to George Ade, 1938
Specimen booklet with letter addressed to John McCutcheon, 1938
Specimen booklet with no letter, 1938
Proofs and correspondence, 1937-1938 [in commemorative case]

Box 13

Oversized Box 2, undated; 1946

Creative Works— Book Design—Prospectuses
Oxford Lectern Bible Prospectus and Library of Congress Acknowledgement
Sheet, undated

Creative Works—Book Design—John McCutcheon's Book

Proofs/sketches for front cover and spine, undated

Hue file, miscellaneous proofs/sketches from the Lakeside Press, undated

Photographs—Bruce Rogers—Later Years

Bruce Rogers, "Man Working for C. Prentiss Smith," 1946

Related Materials

Collection on Bruce Rogers, 1886-1996

This collection consists of Bruce Rogers-related correspondence, printed materials and artifacts purchased by or donated to the Purdue University Libraries after his death in 1957. Of special importance are the items dealing with the Bruce Rogers Centennial Conference, which Purdue University Libraries organized and hosted in May of 1970.

Bruce Rogers Book Collection

These books, housed in Archives and Special Collections, consist of items donated by Bruce Rogers, items purchase by the Libraries during the lifetime of Bruce Rogers, and items purchased by the Libraries after the death Bruce Rogers. A generous donation that Bruce Rogers left to the Libraries in his will continues to provide for the purchase of books relating to typography, book design, and fine printing in general.

Bruce Rogers and Anna Rogers Vertical Files, 1890-Present

This collection consists of newspaper clippings and other articles relating to lives and careers of Bruce and Anna Rogers. The files are part of the vertical file collection stored in Archives and Special Collections.

Chair, Table and Clock, 1888-1891

These three items were constructed by students under the supervision of Purdue wood carving instructor Anna Embree Baker, the future Mrs. Bruce Rogers.

Oil Painting, 1933

This large portrait of Bruce Rogers was painted by Wilford S. Conrow.