

# Guide to the Alice Rogers Smith Papers

YCAL MSS 29



by Karen V. Peltier

March 1988

P. O. Box 208330  
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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** YCAL MSS 29

**CREATOR:** Smith, Alice Rogers, 1883-1971

**TITLE:** Alice Rogers Smith papers

**DATES:** 1880-1971 (inclusive)

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 2.75 linear feet (4 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The papers contain correspondence and personal papers, including photographs, writings of Amy Margaret Smith, and art work of George Plank.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.smith>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.smith>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

- b. box
- f. folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

The bulk of the material was donated to The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library in 1973-74 (through the good offices of Norman Holmes Pearson) by Gertrude Traubel, who was the executrix of Alice Smith's estate. Bryher also donated some correspondence from Vita Sackville-West to Alice Smith in July 1973.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Alice Rogers Smith Papers are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

Alice Rogers Smith Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## Scope and Contents

The Alice Rogers Smith Papers contain correspondence addressed to Alice Smith; her personal papers, including photographs; the writings of twin-sister Amy Margaret Smith; and art work of the Smiths' friend, George Plank. The papers span the dates 1880-1971.

The twins were born on May 26, 1883 in Baltimore, Maryland, to Samuel and Florence Rogers Smith. The two sisters are best known for their editorship, together with George Plank and Margaret H. Scott, of *The Butterfly Quarterly* from 1907-09. The Smiths, who lived on Walnut Street in Philadelphia, never married. Amy died in 1928 and Alice Rogers Smith on December 17, 1971.

The papers are divided into two series: *Correspondence* (Box 1) and *Related Papers* (Boxes 2-3), plus two boxes of oversize papers. [Series I](#) contains the correspondence of Alice Smith. Her primary correspondent was George Plank, whose first letter on September 24, 1928 commiserates with her concerning the death of her sister, Amy Smith. From 1940-43 he wrote to Smith about serving in the Home Guard, about war drills and food rationing, and on March 17, 1942 he wrote about Ezra Pound, who "is in Rome Hee-hawing for Musso!!! I always thought he was bogus, but now I'm sure of it." In the fifties, Plank wrote about their mutual friends, including Charlie Brimer, James Whitall, Sir Trevor and Lady Bigham, and Plank's sisters, "Ady" and Amy. The writers, H.D. and Bryher, were also his close friends. One January 20, 1954 letter describes Bryher's first husband, Robert McAlmon, as "a drunken American," and also mentions her second husband, Kenneth Macpherson, who has a photographer boyfriend and "seems to have given up his black boys." An undated excerpt at the end of his correspondence has a design for H.D.'s bookplate on the verso (Box 1, folder 19).

Bryher's first letter to Smith is a 1942 Christmas card of a bulldog designed by Plank (Box 1, folder 5). Her correspondence from the late fifties and sixties concerns her estate in Switzerland, Plank's four-week visit to Kenwin in January 1961, and H.D.'s illnesses and death in 1961. H.D. wrote thank-you letters to Smith for her presents of balsam cushions, and she sent Moravian beeswax candles from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in return.

The remaining letters from Lady Bigham, Edy Craig, Vita Sackville-West, and other mutual friends often mention Plank. Violet Gordon-Woodhouse's October 29, 1947 letter about "Sachie Sitwell dedicating his new Book to me" was actually written to Plank, and it was passed along to Alice because she was mentioned in it. Gwen Parkes, who was Plank's housekeeper, wrote about Plank's death on May 4, 1965 and the Australian novelist, Patrick White, wrote on May 23, 1965 to thank Smith for telling him of Plank's death: "he had a very good and long life--one of the best lives I can think of, as everybody liked him, and he doesn't seem to have been touched by jealousy, ambition, or any of the more destructive lusts."

[Series II, Related Papers](#), is divided into three subseries and begins with the personal papers of Alice Smith. Her papers contain early family photographs and an album (Box 2, folders 29-37) of the twins and George Plank in their twenties at Asbury Park, Deal Lake, and the Shark River. A 1907 photograph shows the editors of *The Butterfly Quarterly* holding the first edition of their magazine (Box 2, folder 34). Later Smith photographs include pictures of friends, such as Olive Percival and Georges Cote (Box 2, folders 37-38); their house, "Willow Way," in Christiana, Pennsylvania; and the Fifth Church garden in Philadelphia.

Folder 41 contains a 1941 photograph of Plank in his Home Guard uniform; a picture of his sisters, Alice and Ada; views of Marvells; and Plank's English friends, such as Lady Sackville ("BM"), Vita Sackville-West, Edy Craig, and Clare Atwood. A small collection of art work contains one of Atwood's engravings as well as an engraving of Notre Dame by L. Robin (Box 2, folder 26).

The second subseries (Box 3, folders 48-55) contains two diaries of Amy Smith's trip to Europe in 1925-26 to visit Fred Allen, an old Philadelphia friend, and George Plank. There are also typescripts of her essays and poetry, as well as printed articles and poetry from the 1928-29 *Philadelphia Record* and *Christian Science Monitor*.

The third subseries of *Related Papers* houses material of George Plank. His first bookplate, which he designed for Alice Smith, is in folder 56. Over forty printed Christmas cards, which Plank designed for the twins, are included, as well as a pen and ink drawing for Alice Smith's last card in Box 3, folder 59.

On May 14, 1920 Plank painted a watercolor of the twins (Box 5) which was printed as a *Vogue* cover in late November. The collection includes more than forty printed magazine covers by Plank for *Collier's*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Vogue*. The first four issues of *The Butterfly Quarterly* are also found in the papers, as well as a 1933 article from *Modern House & Garden* about Marvells (designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens), in which Plank made "an intriguing use of book-end and other papers for covering the walls" (Box 4, folder 64).

## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, 1912-71

0.25 linear feet (1 box)

Box 1 holds Series I, *Correspondence*, which is arranged alphabetically by correspondent and then chronologically. Individual correspondents of ten or more letters are marked with an asterisk.

b. 1, f. 1	Ashby, Mary and mother, Maye	1919-65
b. 1, f. 2	Barnes, Hilda	1953-71
b. 1, f. 3	Bigham, Dorothy, Lady	1953-71
b. 1, f. 4	Bourbon, Marceline	1941-65, n.d.
b. 1, f. 5	Bryher	1953-68
b. 1, f. 6	Coopman, Alec and Grace	1971 Oct 31
b. 1, f. 7	Cope, Kristin Ashby	1965 May 31
b. 1, f. 8	Craig, Edith	1939-59
b. 1, f. 9	Gordon-Woodhouse, Violet	1947 Oct 29
b. 1, f. 10	H.D. (Hilda Doolittle)	1945-59, n.d.
b. 1, f. 11	Leoy, Dorothy	1954 Jan 14
b. 1, f. 12	Parkes, Gwen	1965 May-Dec
b. 1, f. 13	Parrish, Anne	1951
b. 1, f. 14-19	Plank, George	1928-65, n.d.
b. 1, f. 20	Pym, Vi	1965 May 22
b. 1, f. 21	Sackville, Victoria Josephine Sackville-West, Lady	1927 Dec 14
b. 1, f. 22	Sackville-West, V. (Victoria)	1933-47, n.d.
b. 1, f. 23	Westgate, Arthur and Amy	1942-65
b. 1, f. 24	White, Patrick	1957-69
b. 1, f. 25	Unidentified	1940-58

**Series II: Related Papers, 1880-1956***1 linear foot (2 boxes)*

Boxes 2-3 hold Series II, *Related Papers*, which is divided into the personal papers of *Alice Rogers Smith*, *Amy Margaret Smith*, and *George Plank*. Each subseries is arranged alphabetically by type of material.

ALICE ROGERS SMITH		
b. 2, f. 26	Art work of others	n.d.
b. 2, f. 27	Memorabilia	n.d.
	Photographs	
b. 2, f. 28	Smith family	1880-95, n.d.
b. 2, f. 29-37	George Plank, Alice and Amy Smith, and friends	1904-10, n.d.
b. 2, f. 38	Alice and Amy Smith and friends	1917
b. 2, f. 39	"Willow Way," Christiana, Pennsylvania	n.d.
b. 2, f. 40	Fifth Church garden, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	n.d.
b. 2, f. 41	George Plank, Alice Smith, and friends	1931-52, n.d.
b. 2, f. 42	Alice Smith and friends	1955, n.d.
b. 2, f. 43	Postcards	1956, n.d.
	Printed material	
b. 3, f. 44	<i>The International Studio</i>	1901 Oct
b. 3, f. 45	Program	1934 Sep 2
b. 3, f. 46	<i>Stanislaw Wyspianski</i>	n.d.
b. 3, f. 47	<i>Vision</i>	1911 spring
AMY MARGARET SMITH		
b. 3, f. 48	Articles	1928-29, n.d.
b. 3, f. 49-50	Diaries	1925-26
b. 3, f. 51	Essays	1907-28
b. 3, f. 52	Passport	1926
b. 3, f. 53-54	Poetry	1921-23, n.d.
b. 3, f. 55	School notebook	1899-1900
GEORGE PLANK		
b. 3, f. 56	Bookplates	n.d.

## GEORGE PLANK (continued)

	Cover designs <a href="#">See: Box 4, folders 66-70</a>	
b. 3, f. 57-59	Christmas cards	1909-27, n.d.
	Memorabilia <a href="#">See: Box 4, folder 71</a>	
	Printed material	
b. 3, f. 60-63	<i>The Butterfly Quarterly</i> See also: Box 4, folder 72	1907-08
b. 3, f. 64	"Marvells" from <i>Modern House &amp; Garden</i>	1933
b. 3, f. 65	Prints	n.d.
b. ART, f. 65a	Watercolor (November 1920 <i>Vogue</i> cover)	1920 May 14



**Oversize, 1909-25***1.5 linear feet (1 box)*

The *Oversize* material contains papers from Series II and is arranged in the same order as material in that series.

## GEORGE PLANK

## Cover designs

b. 4, f. 66	<i>Collier's</i>	1911 Apr 29
b. 4, f. 67	<i>Vanity Fair</i>	n.d.
b. 4, f. 68-70	<i>Vogue</i>	1911-25
b. 4, f. 71	Memorabilia	n.d.

## Printed material

b. 4, f. 72	<i>The Butterfly Quarterly</i>	1909 summer
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## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### Subjects

Authors, American  
Bookplates, American  
Christmas cards  
Illustrators  
Magazine covers  
World War, 1939-1945 -- Social aspects

### Geographic Names

Suffolk (England) -- Civil defense

### Genres / Formats

Bookplates  
Drawings (visual works)  
Greeting cards  
Periodicals  
Photoprints

### Names

Bryher, 1894-1983  
H. D. (Hilda Doolittle), 1886-1961  
Plank, George  
Smith, Alice Rogers, 1883-1971  
Smith, Amy Margaret, 1883-1928