



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

**A Finding Aid to the Peggy Bacon
Papers, 1893-1973(bulk 1900-1936),
in the Archives of American Art**

by Megan McShea

Funding for the processing and digitization of this collection
was provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Creator:	Bacon, Peggy, 1895-1987
Title:	Peggy Bacon papers
Dates:	1893-1973 , bulk 1900-1936
Quantity:	3.6 linear feet
Abstract:	The papers of printmaker, illustrator, caricaturist, and writer Peggy Bacon measure 3.6 linear feet and date from 1893 to 1973, with the bulk of materials dating from 1900 to 1936. Much of the collection consists of family correspondence, although writings, photographs, artwork, and personal business records from Bacon's late career are also found.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The collection was donated by Peggy Bacon in 1973. The bulk of the collection was microfilmed on receipt.

Related Material

Among the other resources relating to Peggy Bacon in the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview with Bacon, May 8, 1973; and letters to Bernice and Harry Lurie from Peggy Bacon, 1969-1977. Additional Peggy Bacon papers are available at Syracuse University.

Alternative Forms Available

The papers of **Peggy Bacon** were digitized in 2006 by the Archives of American Art, and total 6,623 images.

Printed materials, photographs of works of art, and papers primarily relating to Bacon's relatives have not been digitized and are available on 35 mm microfilm reels 892-899 at Archives of American Art offices, and through interlibrary loan.

Processing Information

The collection was originally processed for microfilming upon accession on reels 892-899. The entire collection was fully processed, arranged and described by Megan McShea in 2006, and scanned, with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art. Researchers should note that the final arrangement of the collection as described in this finding aid may not reflect the order of the collection on microfilm.

Preferred Citation

Peggy Bacon papers, 1893-1972 (bulk 1900-1936). Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

The bulk of this collection has been digitized and is available online via AAA's website.

Ownership and Literary Rights

The Peggy Bacon papers are owned by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Literary rights as possessed by the donor have been dedicated to public use for research, study, and scholarship. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

Biographical Note

Peggy Bacon was born in 1895 in Ridgefield, Connecticut, and grew up an only child after the death of two younger brothers in infancy. Her parents, Charles Roswell Bacon and Elizabeth Chase Bacon, had met at the Art Students League, where her father had studied with Robert Henri. Her father pursued a career in painting and writing until his suicide in 1913, and her mother painted miniatures.

A child of artists, Bacon began to draw at a very early age, and by age ten she was already earning money for her illustrations, drawings of literary characters made for dinner place cards. She did not attend school until 1909, when her parents sent her to a boarding school in Summit, New Jersey. She began her formal art training shortly after her father's death, enrolling in the School of Applied Arts for Women at the end of 1913. In the summer of 1914, she attended Jonas Lie's landscape class in Port Jefferson, Long Island, and continued private studies with him in New York City. Lie gave Bacon her first solo exhibition in 1915. From 1915 until 1920, she studied at the Art Students League under John Sloan, Kenneth Hayes Miller, George Bellows, Mahroni Young, and others. In the summers, she took classes first in Provincetown, Massachusetts, and then in Woodstock, New York, where she studied with Andrew Dasburg.

Bacon's circle was formed at the Art Students League, and the League's summer school in Woodstock. She met her husband, Alexander Brook, in Woodstock, and they were married in 1920. Both were active in the Woodstock Artists Association. Other artists in their close-knit group included Dorothea Schwarz (Greenbaum), Anne Rector (Duffy), Betty Burroughs (Woodhouse), Katherine Schmidt (Kuniyoshi Shubert), Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Molly Luce, Dorothy Varian, Edmund Duffy, Dick Dyer, David Morrison, and Andrew Dasburg. Many from this group were involved in the short-lived satirical magazine at the League called *Bad News*, published in 1918 with several of Bacon's earliest satirical drawings. Her first book, *The True Philosopher and Other Cat Tales*, was published in 1919. Brook and Bacon traveled to England in 1920, where their daughter Belinda was born. A son, Sandy, was born in Woodstock in 1922. In the early 1920s, Brook worked with Juliana Force at the Whitney Studio Club, and they were involved in the cultural life that sprang up around the gallery, which featured up-and-coming artists. For many years, Bacon and her family split their time between New York and Woodstock, and later summered in Cross River, NY. After divorcing Brook in 1940, Bacon spent summers in Ogunquit, Maine.

Though she initially thought of herself as a painter, she built her reputation on her drawings and prints, which often satirized the people around her in their natural habitats - artists in life classes, at dances, and in social situations, or a throng of people in a museum, on a city sidewalk, or a ship's deck. She became sought after for her illustrations and witty, topical verse in magazines such as *Dial*, *Delineator*, *The New Yorker*, *New Republic*, *Fortune*, and *Vanity Fair*. She helped to establish the American Print Makers, an artists' organization based in the Downtown Gallery which sought greater exhibition opportunities for printmakers. Bacon illustrated over sixty books, nineteen of which she also wrote, between 1919 and 1966, including many children's books and a successful mystery novel called *The Inward Eye* (1952). In 1933 she received a Guggenheim Fellowship and used it to complete a collection of caricatures of art world figures called *Off With Their Heads* (1934), the success of which prompted a spate of commissions for caricatures. Bacon stopped making caricatures in 1935, but they include some of her best-known work.

Bacon exhibited frequently, in New York and in major museum exhibitions nationally, showing her prints, drawings, pastels, and watercolors. She had over thirty solo exhibitions at such venues as Montross Gallery, Alfred Stieglitz's Intimate Gallery, and the Downtown Gallery, and was represented by Rehn Galleries and later Kraushaar Galleries. Bacon also taught extensively in the 1930s and 1940s, at the Fieldston School, Art Students League, Hunter College, Temple University, the Corcoran Gallery, and other places. In the 1950s, she returned to painting. She made her last prints in 1955. In the early 1970s, Bacon's eyesight failed, and she eventually went to live with her son in Cape Porpoise, Maine. She died in 1987.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of printmaker, illustrator, caricaturist, and writer Peggy Bacon measure 3.6 linear feet and date from 1893 to 1973, with the bulk of materials dating from 1900 to 1936. Much of the collection consists of family correspondence, although writings, photographs, artwork, and personal business records from Bacon's late career are also found.

Correspondence is found between Peggy Bacon and her parents, Elizabeth and Charles Roswell Bacon. Letters to her mother describe in detail her life as an art student and artist at the Art Students League; summer schools in Port Jefferson, Long Island and Provincetown, Massachusetts; the Woodstock artists' colony; and her early years in New York City. Letters from her husband, Alexander Brook, to her mother are also present. Letters to Bacon include letters from her early teacher Jonas Lie, and from friends and fellow artists Catherine Wiley, Dorothy Varian, Katherine Schmidt, Anne Rector Duffy, and others. Her parents' extensive correspondence includes letters to her father from the artists Jules Adler, Rudolph Bunner, Ira Remsen, and Charles Downing Lay.

The collection also contains Peggy Bacon's school reports and writing assignments, a marriage certificate, scattered poetry manuscripts and notes by Peggy Bacon, and fiction manuscripts by Charles Roswell Bacon. Personal business records date from the 1960s and 1970s and include publisher's royalty statements, gallery sales statements, and scattered business correspondence with Antoinette Kraushaar and other staff at the Kraushaar Galleries. Photographs depict Bacon and her family, friends, homes, and works of art. Artwork includes several original drawings and sketches by Bacon, as well as artwork by Alexander Brook, Charles Roswell Bacon, and others.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 7 series:

Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1893-1913 (Box 1; 2 folders)

Series 2: Correspondence, 1893-1939, 1969-1972 (Boxes 1-3; 3 linear feet)

Series 3: Personal Business Records, 1897-1934, 1963-1972 (Box 4; 0.2 linear feet)

Series 4: Writings, 1905-1920 (Boxes 4-5; 0.3 linear feet)

Series 5: Printed Material, 1905-1935, 1973 (Box 5; 3 folders)

Series 6: Photographs, circa 1900-1963 (Box 5, OV 6; 4 folders)

Series 7: Artwork, undated (Box 5, OV 6; 6 folders)

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Archives of American Art under the following terms:

Subjects:

Art--Study and teaching

Types of Materials:

Drawings

Photographs

Works of art

Names:

Alder, Jules

Art Students League (New York, N.Y.). -- Students

Bacon, Charles Roswell, 1868-1913

Brook, Alexander, 1898-1980

Bunner, Rudolph Francis

Kraushaar Galleries.

Lay, Charles Downing, 1877-1956

Remsen, Ira, 1846-1927
Schmidt, Katherine, 1898-1978
Varian, Dorothy, 1895-1985

Series Descriptions/Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1893-1913

2 folders; Box 1

Biographical materials a marriage certificate for Peggy Bacon's parents, Elizabeth and Charles Roswell Bacon, Peggy Bacon's report cards from her secondary school, Kent Place School in Summit, NJ, and a note from the New York School of Applied Art and Design.

Box	Folder	
1	1	Parents' Marriage Certificate, 1893 <i>(not scanned)</i>
1	2	School Reports, 1911-1913, undated

Series 2: Correspondence, 1893-1939, 1969-1972

3 linear feet; Boxes 1-3

Correspondence includes letters written by Peggy Bacon, her husband, Alexander Brook, her parents, and various other family members, friends, and associates. Peggy Bacon's letters from 1913 and earlier are mostly correspondence with schoolmates, parents, and other family. Beginning around 1914, Bacon wrote regular, detailed letters to her mother about her life as an art student and artist at Port Jefferson, Long Island (1914), at the Art Student's League in New York City (1915-1920), summers in Provincetown, Massachusetts (1915-1917), and the Woodstock artists' colony (1919-1927). Letters also describe her time living in England and France (1920-1921), and her early years in New York City (1920s-1930s). Letters received by Bacon include letters from the artist Lucia Fairbanks Fuller (1903-1909) her teacher Jonas Lie (circa 1915), and her friends and fellow artists Catherine Wiley, Dorothy Varian, Katherine Schmidt, Anne Rector, and others (circa 1914-1919). Letters are occasionally illustrated.

Alexander Brook's letters to his mother-in-law, Elizabeth Bacon, span the early years of his relationship with Peggy Bacon, recounting family and career matters during their Woodstock years, their travel abroad, and their early years in New York City.

Letters written to Bacon's father, Charles Roswell Bacon, include letters from the artists Jules Adler, Rudolph Bunner, Ira Remsen, and Charles Downing Lay. The rest of the correspondence series consists mainly of family correspondence and Elizabeth Bacon's personal and business correspondence.

This series is arranged by correspondent and/or recipient. Undated correspondence is filed either by approximate date derived from the content of the letters, or at the end of the folder series. Under folder headings with multiple correspondents, undated letters are alphabetized by their authors.

Additional correspondence can be found with Personal Business Records.

Box	Folder	
1	3	Peggy Bacon to Grandmother, Mrs. S. C. Bacon, 1902-1905, undated
1	4-9	Peggy Bacon to Parents, Elizabeth and Charles Roswell Bacon, 1904-1913, undated <i>(6 folders)</i>
1	10-21	Peggy Bacon to Elizabeth Bacon, 1914-1920, undated <i>(12 folders)</i>
1	22-29	Peggy Bacon to Elizabeth Bacon, 1921-1925, undated <i>(8 folders)</i>

1	30-37	Peggy Bacon to Elizabeth Bacon, 1928-1936, undated (8 folders)
1	38-40	Alexander Brook to Elizabeth Bacon, 1919-1922 (3 folders)
1	41-48	Various to Peggy Bacon, 1895-1913, undated (8 folders)
1	49-54	Various to Peggy Bacon, 1914-1919, undated (6 folders)
1	55	Various to Peggy Bacon, 1931, 1934
1	56-57	Various to Peggy Bacon, 1969-1972, undated (2 folders)

Box	Folder	
2	1-12	Elizabeth and Charles Roswell Bacon to Peggy Bacon, 1906-1913, undated (12 folders; not scanned)
2	13-17	Elizabeth Bacon to Peggy Bacon, 1914-1920, undated (5 folders; not scanned)
2	18-23	Charles Roswell Bacon to Elizabeth Bacon, 1897-1911, undated (6 folders; not scanned)
2	24-27	Elizabeth Bacon to Charles Roswell Bacon, 1895-1911, undated (4 folders; not scanned)
2	28-30	Elizabeth and Charles Roswell Bacon to Margaret Chase (EB's Mother), 1894-1908, undated (3 folders; not scanned)
2	31-33	Elizabeth and Charles Roswell Bacon to Mrs. S.C. Bacon (CRB's Mother), 1904-1908, undated (3 folders; not scanned)
2	34	Elizabeth and Charles Roswell Bacon to Francis Colt (CRB's Sister), 1904-1905, undated (not scanned)
		Various to Charles Roswell Bacon
2	35-40	Dated Correspondence, 1894-1913 (6 folders)
2	41	A-Bryce, undated
2	42-44	Bunner, undated (3 folders)
2	45	Colt, undated
2	46	C-K, undated
2	47	Knox, undated
2	48	L-W and illegible, undated

Box	Folder	
		Various to Elizabeth Bacon
3	1-25	Dated Correspondence, 1893-1939 (25 folders)

3	26-42	A-W and unidentified, undated (17 folders)
3	43	Various to Margaret Chase, 1895-1908
3	44	Various to Francis Colt, 1898-1935, undated
3	45	Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1906-1917, undated

Series 3: Personal Business Records, 1897-1934, 1963-1972

0.2 linear feet; Box 4

This series includes records of Peggy Bacon's transactions with various publishers and with Kraushaar Gallery. Publisher records include royalty statements, agreements for publication, and scattered correspondence related to publications Bacon wrote and illustrated. Gallery records include sales receipts, inventories, and scattered correspondence with Antoinette Kraushaar and other gallery staff. Also found are miscellaneous business records of Peggy Bacon's parents.

Box	Folder	
4 (hol)	1-6	Publishers' Royalty Statements and Agreements, 1963-1972 (6 folders)
4 (hol)	7-9	Kraushaar Galleries Records, 1965-1972 (3 folders)
4 (hol)	10	Miscellaneous Contracts, Agreements, Receipts, 1897-1934, undated (not scanned)

Series 4: Writings, circa 1905-1920, undated

0.3 linear feet; Boxes 4-5

Writings include a school notebook of Peggy Bacon's with graded writing assignments, one of which contains an illustration. Also found are poems and notes written by Peggy Bacon, and poems by others. Manuscripts of several short stories and a novel-length work by Charles Roswell Bacon are present, including titles such as "Autobiography of a Failure," "A Minor Memory," and "A Fronting of Fates."

Box	Folder	
4 (hol)	11-14	School Notebook of Peggy Bacon, circa 1909-1912 (4 folders; not scanned)
4 (hol)	15	Notes and Poems by Peggy Bacon, circa 1905-1920
4 (hol)	16	Poems by Others, undated
4 (hol)	17-24	Charles Roswell Bacon Manuscripts, undated (8 folders; not scanned)

Box	Folder	
5 (pam)	1-3	Charles Roswell Bacon Manuscripts, undated (3 folders; not scanned)

Series 5: Printed Materials, 1905-1935, 1973

3 folders; Box 5

This series includes a pamphlet edition of a story illustrated by Bacon, a publisher's catalog listing her first book, *The True Philosopher*, a catalog of her 1973 exhibition of paintings at the Ogunquit Museum, a hand-printed shop catalog from Woodstock, NY, and numerous wedding invitations and announcements.

Box	Folder	
5 (pam)	4	"The Gift of the Magi," Illustrated by Peggy Bacon, 1943 (not scanned)
5 (pam)	5	Catalogs, 1919, 1973, undated (not scanned)
5 (pam)	6	Wedding Invitations and Announcements, 1905-1953, undated (not scanned)

Series 6: Photographs, circa 1900-1963

4 folders; Box 5, OV 6

Photographs in this series include childhood photographs of Peggy Bacon, her mother, and her family home; Bacon, Alexander Brook, and their children at the Maverick festival in Woodstock, NY in the early 1920s; a group photograph of Bacon, Brook, and friends circa 1921; Katherine Schmidt and Yasuo Kuniyoshi; Art Students League faculty in the 1940s; and later photographs of Bacon, her family members, and associates. Also found are photographic reproductions of Bacon's caricatures and paintings, and photographs of two of Alexander Brook's paintings.

Box	Folder	
5 (pam)	7-8	Personal Photographs, circa 1900-1963 (2 folders including negative and copy print; see also OV 6)
5 (pam)	9	Works of Art by Peggy Bacon, undated (not scanned; see also OV 6)
5 (pam)	10	Works of Art by Alexander Brook, 1930, undated (not scanned)

Box		
6 (OV)		Oversized Personal Photograph (See Box 5, folder 7)
6 (OV)		Oversized Photographs of Works of Art by Peggy Bacon (See Box 5, folder 9)

Series 7: Artwork, undated

6 folders; Box 5, OV 6

This series contains two ex-libris drawings, several life drawings, a scene drawing and a cartoon by Peggy Bacon, an ex-libris drawing by Alexander Brook, several drawings of family members which were probably made by Bacon's father, a print signed Morrison (1921), and several paper dolls, which are unattributed, but which may have been made by Bacon or her mother.

Box	Folder	
5 (pam)	11-12	Drawings by Peggy Bacon, undated <i>(2 folders including copy print; see also OV 6)</i>
5 (pam)	13	Drawings, Probably by Charles Roswell Bacon, undated
5 (pam)	14	Print by Morrison, 1921
5 (pam)	15	Drawing by Alexander Brook, undated
5 (pam)	16	Paper Dolls, undated

Box		
6 (OV)		Oversized Drawings by Peggy Bacon <i>(see Box 5, folder 11)</i>