

I.R. Brussel:

An Inventory of His Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Brussel, I.R. (Isidore Rosenbaum), 1895
Title	I. R. Brussel Papers
Dates:	1903-1973 (bulk 1929-1970)
Quantity	1.5 boxes (.62 linear feet)
Abstract	Papers consist mainly of incoming correspondence from the many authors, book dealers, and book collectors who were both colleagues and friends of Brussel, with very few responses by Brussel present. The collection highlights Brussel's work in the book trade over five decades.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-00569
Language:	English.
Access	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition	Purchase, 1974 (R6470)
Processed by	Sarah R. Demb and Jennifer Peters, 1996
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Isidore Rosenbaum Brussel was born in Minsk, Russia, in 1897 (according to the Old Russian calendar), and later moved to Brooklyn, New York, with his family. Brussel attended Brooklyn Polytechnic and worked for three years as a civil engineer before becoming a self styled “book scout,” specializing in nineteenth-century English and American literature. Known to his customers simply as “Ike,” his lively imagination, infinite persistence, and his wide acquaintance in the book trade, both in his own country and in England, established him as the scout of choice for such discriminating collectors as Oliver Brett (Lord Esher), Morris Parish, Michael Sadleir, and Carroll Wilson, and for many other dealers from London to New York. He earned the bulk of his living by finding stock on all subjects for public, school, and research libraries.

Brussel contributed two volumes to Sadleir's Bibliographica series: *Anglo-American First Editions, 1826-1900, East to West* (1935), and its counterpart *West to East*, (1936) which described and analyzed English editions of books by American authors. Brussel died on March 16, 1972, in Brooklyn, at the age of 74.

Scope and Contents

One and a half document boxes highlight I. R. Brussel's career as a book scout. Containing mainly correspondence, the collection also includes clippings, illustrations, invoices, printed materials, and a very few photographs. The collection is arranged into three series: I. Individual Correspondence, 1925-1969 (bulk 1929-1935); II. General Correspondence, 1930-1972 (bulk 1950-1970); and III. Other Materials, 1903-1973. Although the date range of the collection spans seventy years, only a single printed item dates from earlier than 1929.

The I.R. Brussel papers consist mainly of incoming correspondence from the many authors, book dealers, and book collectors who were both colleagues and friends of Brussel, with very few responses by Brussel present. Taken as a whole, the collection highlights Brussel's work in the book trade over five decades. The papers illustrate Brussel's varied activities within the literary community, from his attempts to bring together authors and illustrators such as James Branch Cabell and Frank C. Papé for literary ventures, to his work tracking down rare and unique items on behalf of collectors and scholars. Particularly well illustrated in this collection is Brussel's connection with the book scene in London, although he was based in Brooklyn. A small amount of printed materials relating to the book trade is also found in this collection. Little, if any, documentation pertaining to Brussel's personal life is present.

Series I and II contain correspondence from book designers, collectors, writers, bookstores, bibliographers, libraries, and other dealers. The correspondents in Series I had relatively long-term connections with Brussel; their letters are arranged alphabetically by name, and chronologically within each folder. Found in this series are letters from author James Branch Cabell and his wife, novelist Dorothy Richardson,

illustrators Frank C. Papé and Alan Odle, collectors William White and Clark Wikle, and literary contacts Francis and Grace Norman. Most of the correspondence in this series tends to be rather perfunctory and business-like; for example, the correspondence from Dorothy Richardson generally pertains to the dispersal of her manuscript and book collection, with some references to literary rights and new editions of her work. The Normans, however, wrote chatty letters, describing their recent activities and those of mutual acquaintances. Most of the letters in this series date from the early 1930s. The correspondence in Series II consists mainly of single or short exchanges with Brussel, and these letters have been arranged alphabetically within two folders. Most of these letters date from the 1950s to 1970, and pertain largely to business matters, with an emphasis on Brussel's ability to track down rare materials. Correspondence with a few authors of some renown, such as A. E. Housman, Sir Hugh Walpole, and Sylvia Townsend Warner, is present in this series, but their letters tend to be very short replies to requests from Brussel.

Series III, Other Materials, contains printed materials, notes, clippings, reprints, and cards relating to books, the book trade community, and travel. Of note in this series is a photocopied typed note on Brussel's letterhead relating the disappearance of a manuscript by his father. It seems to reflect his speaking style, and is one of the only items in the collection to offer insight into Brussel's personality. Two pen and ink illustrations by Frank C. Papé, one a bookplate design, are also part of Series III.

Index Terms

Personal Names

Allen, Reginald
Blanck, Jacob, 1906-1974
Cabell, James Branch, 1879-1958
Cabell, Margaret Freeman, d.1983
Laurence, Dan H.
Norman, Francis
Odle, Alan
Pape, Frank Cheyne, 1878-
Richardson, Dorothy Miller, 1873-1957
Roberts, Morley, 1857-1942
Warner, Sylvia Townsend, 1893-
White, William, 1910-
Wikle, Clark B.

Subjects

Authors

Books and booksellers

Book collectors

Illustrators

Document Types

Pen and ink illustrations

Series I. Individual Correspondence, 1925-19691929-1935

Cabell, James Branch and Margaret, 1925-1967	box 1 folder 1
Norman, Francis and Grace, 1941-48	folder 2
Odle, Alan, 1930-36	folder 3
Papé, Frank C., 1929-1932	folder 4-5
Richardson, Dorothy Miller, 1931-39	folder 6
White, William, 1951-1965	folder 7
Wikle, Clark, Sr., 1965-69	folder 8

Series II. General Correspondence, 1930-1972 (bulk 1950-1970)

A-L, 1930-1972

folder 9

M-W, 1930-1972

box 2 folder 1

Series III. Other Materials, 1903-1973

Artwork, n.d.	folder 2
Cards and printed materials, 1903-1930	folder 3
Notes, reprints and clippings, 1935-1973	folder 4

I.R. Brussel Papers--Index of Correspondents

- Abramson, Ben W.--1.9; see also Argus Books
- Allen, Reginald--1.9
- Argus Books--1.9
- Barrett, Clifton Waller, 1901- --1.9
- Beaudry, Yvonne--1.9
- Bhat, K. S.--1.9
- Blanck, Jacob, 1906-1974--1.9
- Blish, James--1.9
- Boretz, Alvin--1.9
- Brinley, Margaret--1.9
- Brown University--1.9
- Burke, Claire--1.9
- Cabell, James Branch, 1879-1958--1.1
- Cabell, Margaret Freeman, d. 1983--1.1
- Clark, C. E. Frazer--1.9
- Collamore, H. B.--1.9
- Couthard, John--1.9
- D. Arnold Varty, Ltd.--1.9
- Dana, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1881- --1.9
- Davids, Corinne Tennyson--1.9
- Davies, W. L1. (William Llewelyn), 1887-1952--1.9
- E. Mathews (Firm)--1.9
- Epworth Press--1.9
- Feinberg, Charles E., 1899- --1.9
- Francis Edwards (Firm)--1.9
- Fulton, [Deoch, 1894?]-1.9
- Hagstrom, Jack W. C.--1.9
- Hall, Helen--1.9
- Hall, Jim--1.9
- Hamblin, James Basil--1.9
- Housman, A. E. (Alfred Edward), 1859-1936--1.9
- Jacobs, Morris --1.9
- Jacobs, Victor--1.9
- Jones Library--1.9
- Kasegawa, Koh--1.9
- Laurence, Dan H.--1.9
- McConnell, John W.--2.1
- Norman, Francis--1.2
- Norman, Grace--1.2
- Odle, Alan--1.3
- O'Malley, Charles--2.1
- Over, George--2.1
- Papé, Agnes--1.4
- Papé, Frank Cheyne, 1878- --1.4-5
- Parks, Margaret M.--2.1
- Place, James--2.1
- Queens College (Flushing, N.Y.)--2.1
- Randall, David Anton, 1905-1975--2.1
- Richardson, Dorothy Miller, 1873-1957--1.6

- Roberts, Morley, 1857-1942--2.1
- Sadleir, Richard--2.1
- Schiller, Justin G.--2.1
- Schlegel, Dorothy B.--2.1
- Schneider, Raymond P.--2.1
- Seven Gables Bookshop, New York--2.1
- Shorey Book Store--2.1
- Smick, J.J.--2.1
- Spencer, Walter Thomas--2.1
- Thomas Thorpe (Firm)--2.1
- University of Washington--2.1
- Wagenknecht, Edward, 1900- --2.1
- Wainwright, Alexander D.--2.1
- Walpole, Hugh, Sir, 1884-1941--2.1
- Warner, Sylvia Townsend, 1893- --2.1
- Watson, George L.--2.1
- Weinreb, Ben, 1912- --2.1
- White, William, 1910- --1.7
- Wikle, Clark B.--1.8
- Willson, F. C., Mrs.--2.1
- Wilson, Carroll A. (Carroll Atwood), 1866-1947--2.1
- Woodburn, Elizabeth--2.1
- Yale University. Library--2.1