Rogers Family Collection

Michael J. Spinelli, Jr. Center for University Archives and Special Collections, Plymouth State University, Plymouth, NH

Local Identifier: SA001
Repository Identifier: NhPlS
Country Identifier: US

Date of Creation: 1779-1963

Extent: 1 box

Creators: John Alexander Rogers; John Bond Rogers

Scope and Content

The Rogers Family Collection is comprised of the family papers of the ancestors and the creators, John Alexander Rogers and his son, John Bond Rogers. The collection focuses on the accomplishments of their professional careers, their involvement in civic affairs, their educational backgrounds and their personal family matters spanning thirteen generations. Topics covered include international affairs, the entertainment industry, and their philanthropic involvement.

The material in the collection consists of: correspondence, primary and legal documents, photographs, military records, awards and certificates of merit, songbooks, sheet music, radio program schedules, playbills, copies of speeches, books, and magazine and newspaper clippings, attached within six scrapbooks. Most of the pages within the scrapbooks are not numbered but generally follow the dated sequence captured in thousands of newspaper clippings.

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Language and Scripts of the Material: English

Administrative/Biographical History
The Rogers Family Collection represents thirteen generations of the Rogers family from John Rogers, the Martyr of Smithfield, to the descendants that settled in Plymouth, New Hampshire. The Rogers were active members of their communities and represented all walks of life including: doctors, lawyers, ministers, teachers, poets, musicians and merchants. Most were financially successful respected members of their communities and were elected to positions of leadership in local governments. Throughout the collection there is evidence of the family’s commitment to the importance of education, civic responsibility, religious freedom, and social activism.

John Rogers the Martyr of Smithfield

Two Rogers family members were controversial and chose paths that challenged authority, thus compromising themselves for their beliefs. The first was John Rogers, the Martyr of Smithfield (1500-1555). He was the first of sixty-two Protestant ministers martyred during the counter reformation of Queen Mary’s reign. There are references to him throughout the collection of scrapbooks. He is credited with assisting William Tyndale in translating the Old Testament into English and later, after Tyndale’s death, completing it. He was burned at the stake for his outspoken defiance of the Catholic Church. His wife, children, and a throng of 7,000 supporters are said to have accompanied him when he was taken from Newgate Prison through the streets to the place of his death.

Dr. John Rogers

The first permanent physician in Plymouth, New Hampshire was Dr. John Rogers (1755-1814). He was born in Leominster, Massachusetts and graduated from Harvard University in (1776). He married Betsey Mulliken (1760-1848) of Bradford, Massachusetts in 1782. They settled in Plymouth, N.H. in 1781 or early 1782, and there had eleven children.

Besides his position as doctor, he was the first Post Master in Plymouth, served on school committees, as a trustee of the Holmes Plymouth Academy, and as a delegate at the Convention to Revise the Constitution of New Hampshire. On July 4, 1812, two years before his death, he gave a speech to the Washington Benevolent Society as “A call to arms to men to defend our country from those who would take it by force...” Men were needed to do their part by fighting in the War of 1812.

John Rogers

John Rogers (1790-1864), the fifth child of Dr. John Rogers, was born in Plymouth, New Hampshire. He married Nancy Russell (1819-1876) also of Plymouth and, like her husband, one of eleven children. She was the daughter of another prominent figure in Plymouth’s history, Moor Russell. John was a successful merchant and had had stores in Plymouth, Campton, Campton Hollow, West Campton, Thornton, and Hebron. They lived in Campton from 1816-1827 but returned to Plymouth. During the financial slump of 1837, he lost his businesses and
moved to New Bedford, Massachusetts where he opened a tea shop and later another in New York. He continued to maintain his legal residency in Plymouth, N.H. and finally retired there. He was known for being a generous man to all in need and served as a trustee of Holmes Plymouth Academy and was a director of the Pemigewasset Bank. He is remembered as an avid reader.

Nathaniel Peabody Rogers

Nathaniel Peabody Rogers (1794-1846) the seventh child of Dr. John and Nancy Rogers was born in Plymouth, New Hampshire. He graduated from Dartmouth College in 1816 and married Mary Porter Ferrand (1796-1890) of Burlington, VT in 1822. They resided in Plymouth for the next 20 years where Nathaniel had a very successful law practice. He later became a passionate anti-slavery journalist and, with other residents, established the Plymouth Anti-Slavery Society, the first in the state. He wrote many articles, sometimes writing under the pen name “The Old Man of the Mountain”. These were published in the Herald of Freedom, an anti-slavery newspaper published in Concord, N.H.

Rogers eventually gave up practicing law in Plymouth, N.H. and moved to Concord. He felt strongly that northern churches should disassociate themselves from their southern counterparts and was angered when both the Congregational and Methodist churches in Plymouth refused to allow the use of their facilities for William Lloyd Garrison to speak on the issue of anti-slavery. In Concord he became the editor of the Herald of Freedom a position he held for eleven years. His articles were also published in The New York Tribune and the Lynn Pioneer. He was a talented public speaker on issues of anti-slavery, temperance, and women’s rights. However, his strong convictions eventually cost him his position as editor of that publication, the support of many of friends, and excommunication from his church.

The Rogers mansion, his home in Plymouth, N.H. where the Silver Center for the Arts now stands, is known to have been a “safe house” on the Underground Railroad: having a hidden room in the attic and a trap door with a ladder leading to the basement. When a reporter from the Plymouth Record (June 1954) asked about living there, his children remarked, “it was not uncommon to come home and find escaped slaves sleeping in their beds or hiding in darkened rooms”.

Walter Mulliken Rogers

Walter Mulliken Rogers (1830-1909), son of John, was born in Plymouth, N.H. and graduated from the Plymouth Holmes Academy. He moved to Massachusetts in 1848 where he was a successful merchant. In 1884, he married Helen Greeley Byron (1855-1927). During his lifetime he was also a poet of note, often writing about the beauty of nature. His poem, “Plymouth”, is found in the first volume of Ezra S. Stearns’, The History of Plymouth, New Hampshire. Another piece was published in the August 1, 1891 issue of Good Housekeeping Magazine, “Childhood’s Charms”.
John Alexander Rogers

Not all of the subjects of the collection were born or resided in Plymouth. Walter and Helen were living in Massachusetts when their son, John Alexander Rogers (1888- ) was born. He married Mildred Bacon Bond ( - ) of Pilgrim Road in Swampscott and Commonwealth Avenue in Boston. Shortly after, they moved to New York City where he became a successful banker by day and an opera singer by night and on weekends. His rich baritone voice was applauded by the music critics of his day. He also composed music, often collaborating with lyricists to produce songbooks. “Dolls of Friendship” (1928) a song written to represent the children of America, was presented to Ambassador and Madame Matsudaira of Japan at the World Friendship Among Children and Doll Presentation Ceremony committee meeting to continue the tradition of American children exchanging dolls with Japanese children. The song became very popular all over the United States. Two more were, “When Children Sing” (1928) and “A Calendar In Song” (1943), with the latter receiving a personal thank you letter, from First Lady, Margaret Truman, written from the White House. In 1944, he received a letter from Lt. Comdr. Nelson T. Levings, USNR, requesting him to compose “a fine fighting song”. “Antietam” (1944) was written for the newly commissioned ship, the U.S.S. Antietam (CV-36). He also collected and performed Negro spirituals and work songs inspired by anti-slavery writings of his great uncle, Nathaniel Peabody Rogers. In 1926, John performed in a new form of entertainment - the radio play, designed for listeners. A Carnival at Seville was the first of its kind.

John Alexander and Mildred Bond lived in New York City during the “café society” era. At that time, luncheons, teas, committee meetings and cocktail parties were held in chic restaurants and hotels such as The Ritz Carlton, The St. Regis Promenade, and in private homes, in support of favorite charities. John was often asked to contribute to these programs by performing. These social gatherings were indicative of the lifestyles of wealthy, famous, and successful people. Announcements of forthcoming events or reviews of ones already held were found in the society and gossip columns of the day. It was important for the patrons’ names and pictures to be seen and noted. The newspapers also reported the travel plans of the wealthy, listing where they were going and when they were coming back, etc. Mildred’s name and picture was found in hundreds of these. Two charities she was affiliated with were the Girls’ Vacation Fund, sponsoring underprivileged girls to attend two-week vacations at Camps Manitou and Talako in upstate New York, and the Relief for Fatherless Children of Greece, Inc.

Charles H. and Isabella Bacon Bond

Mildred Bacon Bond’s parents, Charles H Bond (1846-1908) and Isabella Bacon Bond ( -- -1931) were active philanthropists in the support and encouragement of talented young people and organizations. As a young man, Charles had pledged to donate 5%, then 10% of his income towards this goal, and continued to do so throughout his life as his wealth increased from his cigar manufacturing business. After his death in 1908, his wife, Isabella, donated the money for Bond Hall to be built in his honor at the MacDowell Musical Colony in Peterborough, New
Hampshire. Isabella continued her support of music, being president of both the Boston Music School Settlement and the Beneficent Society of the New England Conservatory of Music. Upon her death in 1931, the two organizations gave a memorial concert in her memory. Charles' and Isabella’s continued support, enjoyment, and patronage of young artists, civic responsibility and memberships to nationally recognized organizations was appreciated by the recipients they had endowed throughout their lives.

Isabella was an active member of the Paul Revere Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, having held the office of Vice President General. Her great grandmother, Hannah B. Bacon, was an actual daughter of a Revolutionary soldier. That chapter celebrated its fiftieth year of work coinciding with the first year that Patriots’ Day was observed in 1894. In 1919, Isabella gave a 10-page speech at the National Convention of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Washington D.C, asking for its support of the League of Nations. She was the founder of both the Signal Lantern Society and the Children of the American Revolution.

During the summer of 1924, Isabella advanced her support and interest in world peace. While traveling with her family throughout Europe, they visited many historic battlefields and war memorials. Isabella later left the company of her family and traveled to Geneva, Switzerland. There she attended the League of Nations World Cooperation Convention. The league was formed as a result of the Paris Peace Conference, 1919-1920. While there, she attended a speech advocating universal disarmament and visited the Woodrow Wilson Memorial with a plaque crediting him as the Founder of League of Nations. Upon returning to the United States her Wednesday Morning Club requested she give an account of her summer in Europe which she recorded in a book, *My Summer in Europe*. It is apropos of Charles and Isabella to have named their home in Swampscott “Peacehaven”.

**John Bond Rogers**

John Bond Rogers, the only son of John Alexander and Mildred Rogers and grandson to Charles and Isabella Bond, was born in 1915. He grew up enjoying all of the privileges that his parents’ wealth could offer- attending Middlesex School and the Hun School. During the summers, he accompanied his parents as they traveled to Daytona Beach, Montana, Martha’s Vineyard, Europe and other interesting places. As a young man, his social group dubbed the “jet set” by Cholly Knickerbocker, a syndicated columnist, gathered at popular night clubs such as the Stork Club, El Morrocco, and the Colony Club. John was a popular escort of debutantes and actresses such as Barbara Hutton and Jane Meadows. He was often photographed in the company of beautiful women.

John served in the in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II (1941-1945) as a C-46 pilot in the Air Transport Command. He completed 23 missions flying over “The Hump”, a dangerous, and for a good part of the war, top secret route from Burma to China. He and his squadron transported cargo over the Himalaya Mountains, with elevations as high as 20,000, causing dangerous air currents. They flew with poor visibility and few navigational tools by following deep gorges cut by the Salween, Mekong, and Yangtze Rivers. John and his fellow pilots earned
the respect of their contemporaries and he received the Presidential Citation for his participation in that campaign. His last post served was as aide de camp to Lieutenant General Grunert, the Commanding General of Eastern Defense Command. He left active duty in December of 1945. In 1947, John married former Miss Dorothy Johnson.

Library of Congress Subject Headings

Slavery -- United States -- Controversial literature
New England -- Description and travel
United States -- Politics and government -- 1815-1861

Immediate Source of Acquisition: John Bond Rogers donated the contents of the Rogers Family Collection to the Herbert H. Lamson Library on October 20, 1979.

Notes
Preferred citation: Rogers Family Collection. Michael J. Spinelli, Jr. Center for University Archives and Special Collections, Lamson Library and Learning Commons, Plymouth State University.

Related Collections: Archives also holds a folder containing data on the Nathaniel Peabody Rogers Mansion including photographs, newspaper clippings, purchase and demolition information.

Sources Consulted During Preparation of Finding Aid

Access Genealogy. Rogers, John, Rev.
http://www.accessgenealogy.com/scripts/data/database.cgi

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2928.html

http://www.pbs.org.wgbh/aia/part4.4pl1561.html


http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/chicago.html


http://www.dar.org/nat

http://www.bible-researcher.com/1911-matthews.html


http://www.loc.gov/rr/ead/

http://www.loc.gov/preserv/care/scrapbk.html


State of New Hampshire Department of Education. (NECAP) and (NHEIAP). http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education

Thoreau, H.D. *Civil Disobedience* and Reformers
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reform_and_the_Reformers

http://sniggle.net/Experiment/index.php?entry=hearald


Whittier, John Greenleaf. *Old Portraits and Modern Sketches (Nathaniel Peabody Rogers)*.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. *Cassini, Igor*.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. *League of Nations*.

Collection processed and finding aid written by Rondi W. Pike and Susan Jarosz, 2007.
Finding Aid

System of Arrangement: The collection is organized into 3 series. Scrapbooks are marked for ease of finding items of interest.

Series 1: (4) Scrapbooks

#1 Scrapbook: John Alexander Rogers

#2 Scrapbook: John Bond Rogers. Book 1

#3 Scrapbook: John Bond Rogers. Book 2

#4 Scrapbook: John Bond Rogers, His Book-Number 5.

Series 2: (4) Books

Rogers, John A. Rogers Family Records.


Series 3: Supplemental Materials

(2) Photographs

Walter M. Rogers-Dartmouth College ’04 And Howard Robie - Plymouth, N.H.

Lt. Colonel John B. Rogers Stockbridge, Massachusetts, Great-great-great-grandson of Moor Russell

Access Terms

Abolitionists-New Hampshire
Anti-Slavery Movements-New England
United States. Army. Air Corps
Bond, Charles H.
Bond, Isabella Bacon
Bond, Mildred Bacon
Counter Reformation
Daughters of the American Revolution
Gossip Column-New York, New York
Garrison, William Lloyd
The Herald of Freedom
Martyrdom Christianity, European History, 16th Century
Martyrs
The Hump
League of Nations
Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920)
Radio Plays, American
Rogers, Dr. John
Rogers, John Alexander.
Rogers, John Bond
Rogers, John (1500-1500)
Rogers, Nancy Russell
Rogers, Nathaniel Peabody
Rogers, Walter Mulliken-Poetry
Russell, Moor
Slavery-New Hampshire
Truman, Margaret
Underground Railroad-New England
Washington Benevolent Society

Items of Interest

John Rogers-The Martyr of Smithfield, 1500-1555
A.1 Article about the John Rogers Bible
A.2 Book of Martyrs, pages 281-284 pasted into scrapbook
A.3 Photograph of John Rogers Bible
A.4 A page taken from The Bible, Cranmer’s New Testament, printed in 1549

John Rogers, 1790-1864
B.1 2 photographs of matching portraits John and Nancy Russell Rogers
Nathaniel Peabody Rogers, 1794-1864
C.1 Handwritten note references a load of wood delivered to Daniel Webster March 1790
C.2 Original Silhouette and signature, circa 1840
C.3 Infamous Quote.

Walter Mulliken Rogers, 1830-1885
D.1 “Plymouth!” Poem
D.2 “Childhood Charms” Poem published in Good Housekeeping Magazine August 1891

John Alexander Rogers, 1888-
E.1 A Calendar in Song Songbook
E.3 New form of Radio Drama
E.4 “Song of Friendship” - Doll Ambassadors of Goodwill
E.5 Letter from Margaret Truman, White House

Mildred Bond Rogers: ______
F.1 Elegant Living Room
F.2 Charities

Charles H. Bond, 1846-1908
G.1 Charles H. and Isabella Bond sponsor Geraldine Farrar, Prima Dona, to sing in the Royal Opera House
G.2 Dedication of Bond Hall at MacDowell Colony 1846-1908

Isabella Bacon Bond, ( - 1931)
H.1 My Summer in Europe Book. 1924
H.2 League of Nations
H.3 Speech-delivered at the 1919 National Convention of the Daughters of the American Revolution, requesting support for the League of Nations

John Bond Rogers,
I.1 “The Hump”, U.S. Army. Air Corps
  Harpers Bazaar, July 1941
  Look Magazine July-1941 Women in Defense