

# Preliminary Guide to the Bradbury Thompson Papers

MS 1794



compiled by staff of Manuscripts and Archives

April 2002

Yale University Library  
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(203) 432-1735  
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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
(203) 432-1735  
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beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 1794

**CREATOR:** Thompson, Bradbury

**TITLE:** Bradbury Thompson papers

**DATES:** 1945-2002

**BULK DATES:** 1945-1993

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 127.5 linear feet

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The papers consist of correspondence, design work products, publications, and visual materials documenting the professional career of Bradbury Thompson.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1794>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1794>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

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

Gift of Deen Dodge Thompson, 2003 and 2005.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

Copyright for unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by Bradbury Thompson has been transferred to Yale University. These materials may be used for non-commercial purposes without seeking permission from Yale University as the copyright holder. For other uses of these materials, please contact [beinecke.library@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu).

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## Preferred Citation

Bradbury Thompson Papers (MS 1794). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

James Bradbury Thompson, prominent graphic designer, was born in Topeka, Kansas, on March 25, 1911. He began designing books in high school, where he designed yearbooks, and designed his college yearbook at Washburn College, where he obtained a B.A. in economics in 1934. Thereafter he worked in New York City as a designer, and served as art director for the Office of War Information's publications division from 1942-1945. Thompson was well-known for his long association with the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company (Westvaco), for which he designed the American Classic Book Series. He was art director of *Mademoiselle* for fourteen years, and throughout his career, he designed or redesigned more than thirty five magazines, including *Business Week* and the *Smithsonian Magazine*. In 1969, Thompson was commissioned by Marshall Field IV to design a Bible similar to the Gutenberg folio edition. Four hundred copies of The Washburn College Bible were published in 1979 by Oxford University Press, and it became an instant classic. Thompson received many awards and honors during his lifetime, including gold medals from the American Institute of Graphic Arts, and the National Society of Art Directors. For many years he was a visiting critic and visiting professor at the Yale University School of Art and Architecture. He married Della Deen Dodge in 1934 and they had four children. Bradbury Thompson died on November 1, 1995.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers consist of correspondence, design work products, publications, and visual materials documenting the professional career of Bradbury Thompson.

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## Arrangement

Arranged in thirteen series and one addition.

## Collection Contents

### Series I: Works by Thompson

b. 1	Westvaco Christmas books	1975-1983
b. 2	<i>The Art of Graphic Design</i>	
b. 3	<i>Famous Artists Magazine</i> ; Famous Writers School; <i>Set to Fit, UCLA Extension</i> English	1970-1990
b. 4	Bell Laboratories; Famous Writers School study guides, Westvaco Christmas books	1971-1980
b. 6, 5	Famous Artists Advanced Program	
b. 7	AIGA; exhibition brochure; First Congregational Church; Pitney Bowes; Greenwich Arts Council; Westvaco Christmas books	1965-1982
b. 8	<i>Washburn College Bible</i> ; David Wynne exhibition; Westvaco	1972-1980
b. 10, 9	Famous Artists courses	
b. 14, 13, 12, 11	Famous Writers School; Famous Photographers Course/School; <i>Famous Artists</i> <i>Magazine</i> , Famous Artists Course; American Institute of Graphic Arts	1950s-1970s
b. 15	<i>Art News Annual</i> English	1945-1971
b. 16	Portfolio; AIGA; Westvaco	1959-1977
b. 17	Westvaco	1963-1973
b. 18	Gibson; AIGA; Cornell; Famous Artists Course; Handbook; <i>Washburn College Bible</i> ; <i>Art of Graphic Design</i>	
b. 19, 22, 20-21	Portfolio; <i>Art News Annual</i>	1946-1972
b. 23-24	Office of War Information pamphlets; miscellaneous	
b. 25	Early works, yearbooks, miscellaneous	
b. 26	Greeting cards; Pitney Bowes; Lindemeyer	
b. 27	Dutch Treat Club; miscellaneous	
b. 28	Annual report; corporate; Jones park; misc	
b. 29	Menninger; AIGA; colleges	
b. 30	<i>Art News</i> ; miscellaneous publications English	
b. 31	Westvaco; NSAD award; correspondence; miscellaneous publications	
b. 32	Miscellaneous publications	
b. 33	Elizabeth Dodge; Westvaco; miscellaneous publications	

b. 34	Sample books Office of War Information; cut copies; annual reports; miscellaneous reports
b. 35	Miscellaneous publications, book plates
b. 36	Original art work for Office of War Information; miscellaneous publications
b. 37-38	Miscellaneous publications
b. 39, 43, 41-42, 40	Miscellaneous
b. 44	Project Correspondence
b. 51-52, 49-50, 47-48, 46, 45	Miscellaneous
b. 53	Miscellaneous magazines
	Clients
b. 54	American Institute of Graphic Arts [AIGA]; American Machinist; American Paper Institute; Art Directors Club
b. 55	Bell Laboratories; CGF Industries
b. 56	Colleges and universities
b. 57	Container Corporation; Cooper Union [exhibition]
b. 58	Davis Delaney, Inc
b. 59	Dutch Treat Book Club; Ford Today; Fortune; Gibson; G.A. Yearbook [Graphic Arts?]; Greenwich
b. 60	Hallmark; Harvard Business Review
b. 61	Jesn Risom Design; Pimny Exhibit; Pitney Bowes
b. 62	Printers Industries; Progressive Architecture; Rand Associates
b. 63	Readers Digest
b. 64	Saturday Review; Smithsonian
b. 65	Society of Illustrators; Stephen Colhoun
b. 66	Textile World; Time-Life; Troug Nichols
b. 67	Advertising
	Books general; book jackets
b. 68-69	Homage to the Book
b. 70	Calendars; holidays; fashions
b. 72, 71	Framed designs
b. 73	Layouts

b. 74	Magazines; newspapers
b. 77, 76, 75	Mounted designs [chronological run]
b. 80, 79, 78	Posters
b. 81-82	Sketches; designs
b. 83	Miscellaneous

## Series II: Works About Bradbury Thompson/Personal

b. 84	High Quality; recent publications; Graphic Design in America exhibition catalog; posters; 40th Annual of Advertising and Editorial Art & Design; Art directing; Exempla Graphica; Illustrators 15; Hurlburt; Novum Gebrauchgraphik; Including Computer Art and Design; Point of Sale	1952-1993
b. 85	Miscellaneous publications	
b. 86	Baseline; Smithsonian; 48th Annual of Advertising, Editorial & Television Art & Design; A History of Graphic Design; Graphic Style from Victorian to Post-Modern; Graphic Design in America; Nine Pioneers in American Graphic Design; Typographic Communications Today; Print; Self; 50 Plus; Town & Country	
b. 90, 89, 87-88	Clippings; Washburn Bible press; press general; miscellaneous	
b. 91	American Typography Today; The Grid; Communication arts; miscellaneous publications	
b. 92	Personal, general	
b. 93	Norman Ives	
b. 96, 95, 94	Personal, general	
b. 97	Photographs	
b. 100, 99, 98	Portfolios	



## **Series III: Stamps**

b. 103, 102, 104- Stamp design materials, miscellaneous publications  
108, 101

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## Series IV: Yale University

b. 109	Course materials for graphic design courses
b. 111, 110	Traveling exhibit materials, Yale library show, correspondence, course materials
b. 112	Books by students in Thompson classes

## Series V: Westvaco

b. 123, 113, 122, Design materials, correspondence, layouts, clippings  
121, 120, 119, 118,  
117, 116, 125, 124,  
133, 132, 127, 126,  
114-115, 131, 130,  
129, 128

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## Series VI: Bibles (mostly Washburn College Bible)

b. 136, 135, 134    Layout sheets, reports, miscellaneous

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b. 137, 139, 138    Correspondence

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b. 140, 142, 141,    Miscellaneous  
145-146, 143-  
144, 147

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**Series VII: Correspondence**

b. 148	General	
b. 149-150	Miscellaneous	1960s-1980s
b. 151	Trip notes and miscellaneous	
b. 152	Greenwich, Arts Council, Perrot Library, 350th	
b. 153	Professional associations	
b. 154	Christmas cards from other artists	
b. 155	Menninger; Westvaco	
b. 159-160, 156-158	Business correspondence and design	

## **Series VIII: Books by Thompson**

The series includes materials relating to two books by Bradbury Thompson: *Art of Graphic Design* and *Design and Typography*.

b. 162, 161      Correspondence, chapters, design materials

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## **Series IX: Privately Published Books**

b. 164, 163      Privately published books

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## Series X: Collected Materials

b. 165            Color samples; designs by others [designs sent by others to Thompson]

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b. 166            Maps

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b. 167            Newspapers

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b. 168            Posters--Finn Typographic Services

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b. 169            Posters--general

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b. 173-174, 171-  
172, 170        Source materials [used for inspiration?]

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**Series XI: *Mademoiselle* Magazine and *Victory* Magazine***Mademoiselle*

b. 175	1945-1947
b. 176	1947-1948
b. 177	1948-1950
b. 178	1950-1952
b. 179	1952-1953
b. 180	1954-1956
b. 181	1956-1958
b. 182	1958-1959

*Victory*

b. 183	Volume I
b. 184	<a href="#">Volume II</a>

## Series XII: Slides

b. 190, 185-189	Westvaco; 100 inspirations; envelopes; anagraphics; Washburn, Yale University class products	1976-1994
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## Series XIII: Samples

b. 191-193      Samples

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**Accession 2006-M-046: Additional Material**

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b. 1, f. 1	Acknowledgment from the White House for gift of Washburn College Bible	1982 January 11
b. 1, f. 2	Scott, Douglass. "Bradbury Thompson, Designer and Teacher, 1911-1995," <i>Print L</i> : III(1996), 110-113	1996 May/June
b. 1, f. 3	Stapp, William F. <i>Portrait of the Art World: A Century of ARTnews Photographs</i> , Washington, D. C. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2002	2002

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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**

Commercial art  
Graphic arts

### **Names**

Thompson, Bradbury

### **Corporate Bodies**

Washburn College  
Westvaco Corporation  
Yale University. School of Art and Architecture