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**Edmund G. Gress Papers
1915 - 1934**

**Michala Biondi
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Summary

Main entry:	Gress, Edmund G. (Edmund Geiger)
Title:	Edmund G. Gress papers, 1915 - 1934
Size:	.8 linear feet (3 boxes)
Source:	Gift of Mrs. Evelyn [Gress] Hammersley, 1962.
Abstract:	Edmund Geiger Gress, an authority on typography, was editor of <i>The American Printer</i> , a monthly magazine of the printing arts. He retired from the magazine in 1930, and worked as a consultant for two years. He died in 1934. His papers include general correspondence, letters of congratulations, subject files, meeting minutes and correspondence documenting his participation in the American Institute of Graphic Arts' Committee on Special Services.
Access:	Apply in the Special Collections Office for admission to the Manuscripts and Archives Division.
Preferred citation:	Edmund G. Gress Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

Biographical note

Edmund Geiger Gress was born in Easton, Pennsylvania in 1872. He began his career as a compositor, reporter and special feature writer for *The Easton Daily Free Press*. Later he became manager of the paper's job printing department. In 1903 he went to New York as foreman of the composing room of *The American Printer*, a monthly magazine devoted to the printing arts. He in turn wrote for the publication, edited special issues, and served as editor until 1930 when he retired. For the next two years he headed a printing consultant firm. Among his peers he was considered to be an authority on typography.

Gress, a self-proclaimed "pioneer in a new typographic movement," developed what he called the Fresh Note American Period Typography. It was a reaction to the use of old school European layout styles and to those who disregarded well-fashioned older type faces for modern ones simply because they were new, but not necessarily well formed or appropriate for a particular piece of printing. Gress advocated using a stylistically appropriate type face, one that was similar to the type used in the period of the piece, "...but give it a fresh handling that fits it in [to] the present day scheme of things," (*Fashions*, p.180) by using modern stylistic devices, borders and space arrangement.

His published works include *The American Manual of Typography*, *A Dash through Europe*, *Fashions in American Typography, 1790-1930*, *The Art and Practice of Typography*, and *Type Designs in Color*. He belonged to the American Institute of Graphic Arts of which he was a former director and a member of the Committee on Special Services, and to the Bushwick Memorial Church in Brooklyn. He had a fine collection of miniature books and a collection of typographic signatures set in the type face most favored by its designer. He frequently lectured on printing.

Gress was married to Mabel Stoneback. They made their home in Floral Park, New York. They had two daughters, Evelyn and Margaret. Gress died of pneumonia at his home in Floral Park on September 30, 1934 at 62 years of age.

Sources:

Gress, Edmund G. *Fashions in American Typography, 1790 - 1930 (Fashions)*
New York Times, Oct 1, 1934 (Obituary)

Scope and content note

The papers of Edmund G. Gress consist of correspondence, letters of congratulations, subject files, and meeting minutes that document Gress's role in the world of the book arts. The papers are primarily correspondence files, either general correspondence discussing day to day issues or correspondence regarding the celebrated sesquicentennial issue of *The American Printer* (boxes 1 & 2), and the traveling exhibit of historical prints from the publication.

The general correspondence (Series I; 1915 - 1934; box 1) is divided into incoming and outgoing folders. Incoming correspondence is arranged by author's name; outgoing is arranged by date. A good deal of the correspondence is his solicitations for typographic signatures from various persons of note in the graphic arts field. Many of the letters, which come from all over the world, are on fine or handmade papers and have original printer's devices and fine examples of letterhead styles of the era.

The American Printer magazine materials (Series II; 1926; box 2) consist primarily of congratulatory letters for the sesquicentennial issue of the magazine and the subsequent touring exhibit of all the historic prints it published. Comments on other special issues published under Gress are also included. No other records from the publication are included here, except for an occasional note or order among the general correspondence.

The American Institute of Graphic Arts material (Series III; 1925 - 1929; box 2) was generated by Gress' election to the Committee for Special Services, and is primarily correspondence regarding this committee's work. There is also a map of the United States that identifies A.I.G.A. membership across the country and a file of reports and miscellaneous printed items.

The Subject Files (Series IV; 1920s - 1930s; boxes 2-3) includes miscellaneous items of interest to Gress and some of the most interesting items in the collection, including an 1896 article by the noted American printer, Theodore DeVinne (b.2, f.16), a short essay by Charles Jacobi (b.2, f.17), along with some other notes, an attendance roster for a class or lecture on Gress' Fresh Note American Period Type and slide captions or lists of slides for his other lectures. A list of names for what appears to be the systematic requesting of typographic signatures and examples of printed materials and typographic styles are also found here, along with some photographs.

Significant signatures in the collection include: Frederick Goudy, Bruce Rogers, Arctic explorer Richard E. Byrd, Robert Grabhorn, W. A. Dwiggins, Richard W. Ellis, Burton Emmett, Horace Hart, W. E. Rudge, T.M. Cleland, and Elbert Hubbard III of Roycrofters fame.

Arrangement note

The Edmund G. Gress Papers are organized in the following series:

- Series I. General correspondence, 1915 - 1934
- Series II. The American Printer magazine, 1926
- Series III. American Institute for Graphic Arts, 1925 - 1929
- Series IV. Subject files, 1910s - 1930s

Series descriptions and container list

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
		Series I. General correspondence, 1915 - 1934
1	1-23	Incoming, A-Z, 1915 - 1934
	24-25	Outgoing, 1921 - 1933
		Series II. The American Printer magazine, 1926
2	1-3	Correspondence re: the exhibit of historical prints from <i>The American Printer</i> magazine, A-W, 1926
	4-5	Correspondence re: congratulations on sesquicentennial issue of <i>The American Printer</i> , 1926
	6	Correspondence re: congratulations on sesquicentennial...from significant individuals, 1926
	7	Sesquicentennial issue <i>The American Printer</i> magazine - printed and miscellaneous materials
		Series III. American Institute for Graphic Arts, 1925 - 1929
2	8-12	Committee for Special Services - correspondence, 1925 - 1929
	13	Membership and exhibit map
	14	Reports and miscellaneous printed items
		Series IV. Subject files, 1910s - 1930s
2	15	Clippings
	16	DeVenne, Theodore - "The Century's Printer on the Century's Type." <i>Century</i> , March 1986
	17	Jacobi, Charles T.
3	1	Miscellaneous items
	2	National Board of Type Faces - Advertising Typographers of America - meeting minutes, 1930 Jan 16
	3	Photographs
	4	Printed items
	5	Slide captions from lecture delivered January 25, 1927 by EGG
	6	Slide lists by time period
	7	Speeches, articles, etc. by EGG
	8	Study and Development Group on the Fresh Note American Period Typography - roster, n.d.
	9	Typographic examples
	10	Typographic signature request list