

# Biography of Robert Hogg Nisbet (1879 – 1961)

By Robert A. Nisbet Jr.  
And  
William Nisbet Ross

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Robert Hogg Nisbet was born in Providence, Rhode Island on August 25, 1879. His parents were William Douglas Nisbet and Isabella Hogg. He entered the Rhode Island School of Design when he was eight. He later studied in New York and abroad. He taught at Brown University and was president of the Art Students League of New York, where he served as president from 1909-1910.

He was elected an Associate Member of the National Academy of Design in 1920 and a National Academician (N.A.) in 1928. He was an Artist Life member of the National Arts Club. One of the incorporators of the Society of American Etchers, he was also a member of the Philadelphia Society of Etchers. During the early 1900's, Nisbet summered in Old Lyme, Connecticut, and eventually settled in Kent, Connecticut where he founded the Kent Art Association whose members included Willard Metcalf.

His work won him three National Academy awards, several etching awards, and the National Arts Club (Painting) prize. His etchings and paintings were exhibited in Paris, France, Yale University, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York Library, National Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, and Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The Smithsonian Institution has a database with references to fourteen of his works. Paintings and etchings by Robert H. Nisbet sell for from hundreds of dollars to more than \$10,000.

He took up rifle shooting as a boy, and during World War II was a commissioned rifle instructor. He won a number of shooting competitions. He was also interested in archery, and he owned collections of minerals and sea shells.

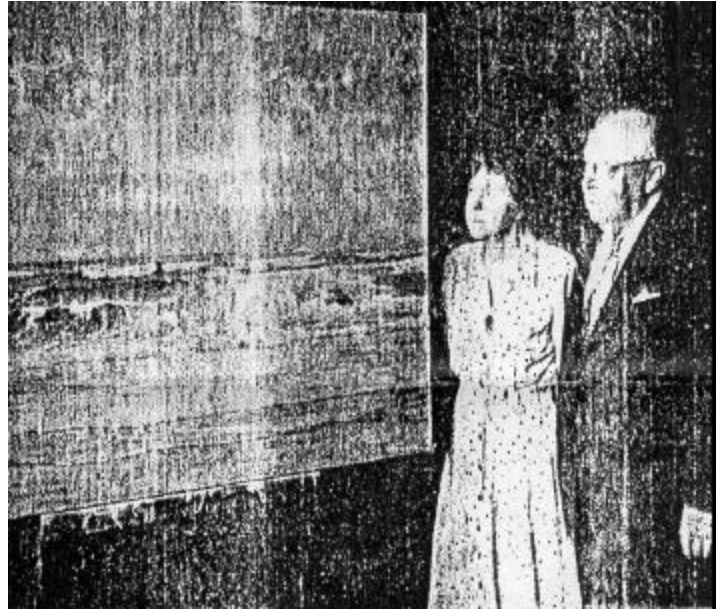
In 1951 he lived in South Kent, Connecticut in a house in the country with his wife, Mrs. Marguerite Nisbet. When they were married is not known, and they had no children. They had a large house and studio, and he was considered quite wealthy. He had a collection of four thousand books. He was a member of the Masons, and was the Deputy Grand Master of the Masons of Connecticut.

His final life was a tragedy as his wife became a complete invalid following a stroke about 1953 and required 24 hour-a-day nursing care which just about bankrupted him. On Robert's death, April 20, 1961, she was put in a Masonic home where she died nine days later.

Photos from the New Haven, Connecticut 1951 Newspaper article



Robert H. Nisbet with target rifle



Mr. And Mrs. Nisbet view "Chatham Shoals" oil painting, which he won a prize for.



Relaxing in his home with some of his 4000 books



Demonstrating to the reporter how to square a circle, a secret of the old cathedral builders.

## Selected Art work of Robert Hogg Nisbet



Early Moon Rise



The Fisherman



River Scene



Bathing Nude

## Genealogy

James Nisbet the oldest that I (William Nisbet Ross) have reliable information on, was born 25 Dec 1772. He married Helen Nicol on 9 Sept 1796 at Abbotshall, Kirkaldy, Fife. He was trained as a gardener and worked for some 33 years as the gardener/Land Steward for the Earl of Selkirk on St. Mary's Isle near Kircudbright, which is at the mouth of the river Dee as it empties into the Solway Firth in the Scottish Borders country.

James and Helen had 13 children (no twins), only one of which emigrated to the United States. That was William (born July 21, 1816), who married Catherine Angus (born 1821) March 7, 1842 and immediately emigrated to the US. They settled in Providence, Rhode Island and proceeded to have 7 children. William died June 7, 1886, and Catherine Angus died Jan. 25, 1897.

One was Helen Nicol Nisbet (Grandmother of William Nisbet Ross); another was William Douglas Nisbet (born Oct. 6 1850), who married Isabella Hogg (born 1857) Nov. 12 1878 and settled in at #12 Rhode Island Ave. They had three boys and one girl before William Douglas died on August 20, 1894. Isabella died June 11, 1936.

Robert Hogg Nisbet was the oldest, being born 25 August 1879. His brother, Lewis Dexter b. December 26, 1885, died October 12, 1967. William Douglas Nisbet Jr. b. December 16, 1888, d. February 19, 1960. The girl, possibly named Charlotte Stedm, was the second born but lived only 2 years, maybe 1882 – Aug 6, 1884 (Swan Point Cemetery records).

Robert Hogg Nisbet was married Marguerite Metc De' Portales (born 1878, died Apr. 29, 1961). They had no children. Many of the Nisbet's described above, including Robert Hogg Nisbet and his wife Marguerite, and his parents are buried in the Swan Point Cemetery, Providence, Rhode Island.

### Books that Reference Robert Hogg Nisbet

Year	Author	Title	Sub-Title
2000	AskART.com	<a href="#">The Artists Bluebook:</a>	23,000 North American Artists
1999	Falk, Peter Hastings	Who Was Who in American Art	1564-1975 3 Vols
1990	Gerdts, William H	Art Across America (East)	( Vol 1 )
1990	National Academy of Design	Annual Exhibition Record	1901-1950
1989	Falk, Peter Hastings	Annual Exhibition Record, 1876-1913	Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
1989	Falk, Peter Hastings	Annual Exhibition Record, 1914-1968	Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
1988	Falk, Peter Hastings	Dictionary of Signatures & Monogram	
1986	Opitz, Glen B (editor)	Mantle Fielding's Dictionary	American Painters, Sculptors et al
1985	Falk, Peter Hastings	Who Was Who in American Art	Artists Active 1898-1947
1984	Marlor, Clark S	The Society of Independent Artists	Exhibition Record 1917-1944
1982	Opitz, Glenn	Dictionary of American Artists	

1968	Mattatuck Historical Society	The Connecticut Artists Collection	
1966	Connecticut College for Women	The Art Colony at Old Lyme 1900-35	
1954	Clark, Elliot	History of the National Academy	of Design 1825-1953
1949	Reese, Albert	American Prize Prints	of the 20th Century
1948	Mallett, Daniel Trowbridge	Index of Artists	International Biographical (2 Vols)
1925	National Academy of Design	Commemorative Exhibition	1825-1925
1916	Brinton, Christian	Impressions of the Art	at the Panama Pacific Exposition

### Reference Sources:

Electronic mail from William Nisbet Ross to Robert A. Nisbet Jr., March 18, 1999 and March 22, 1999.

New Haven Register newspaper article, "How to Live on Twenty-Four Hours a Day", Sunday October 28, 1951.

Records of the Swan Point Cemetery, Providence, Rhode Island.

ASKART.COM short biography and list of books that list Robert Hogg Nisbet

**Note on the co-authors:** William Nisbet Ross was a great grandson of William Nisbet and Catherine Angus. Robert Hogg Nisbet was a grandson of the same. William Ross Nisbet died in April, 2000. Robert A. Nisbet Jr. is no relation to the artist, but his family has a long-standing interest in his art.