Ruth Crocker

“A major accomplishment...Prof. Crocker has done what many of us who studied the Russell Sage Foundation thought was impossible - to find untapped manuscript sources that reveal the active and crucial role played by Olivia Sage (a.k.a. Mrs. Russell Sage) in the creation and early management of America’s first social welfare philanthropic foundation...This is a story of strength and intentionality, and it is exceptionally well-told. Finally, we understand who Olivia Sage, the first important American philanthropist, was!” - Stanley N. Katz, Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton, University.

“Through this engaging biography of one of the most intriguing women of the Gilded Age, Mrs. Russell Sage, Ruth Crocker illuminates the critical role that female philanthropy and philanthropists played in the advancement of women in the twentieth century. Mrs. Russell Sage, is a wonderful read and a major contribution to the literature on class and gender in American history.” - Nancy Hewitt, Professor of History and Women’s Studies, Director, Institute for Research on Women, Rutgers University.

“In this age of towering figures like Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett, it is illuminating to examine the life of a woman who, a century ago, became one of the most noted philanthropists of her day...Ruth Crocker’s sensitive, richly documented, and beautifully written biography brings Sage and her times alive, reminding us that there is, indeed, value in visiting the neglected ‘upstairs’ of women’s history.” - Sonya Michel, Director, Nathan and Jeanette Miller Center for Historical Studies, University of Maryland.

“This is a model biography. Mixing empathy with historical acumen, Ruth Crocker has uncovered the life of a woman who left few personal papers and hid behind her husband’s name, but managed to emerge in her old age as one of the influential philanthropists of the 20th century...Here is finally the other side of the street, the upstairs long missing from a woman’s history long focused on the downstairs...Most impressive is Crocker’s ability to fuse big historical themes with an individual story.” - Eileen Boris, Hull Professor of Women’s Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Ruth Crocker is Professor of History at Auburn University and author of Social Work and Social Order: The Settlement movement in Two Industrial Cities, 1889-1930.