Guide to the Merrill and Lucille Ady Papers

RG 138

Compiled by Shari Laist

1998

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New Haven, CT 06511
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Overview

REPOSITORY: Yale Divinity Library
409 Prospect Street
New Haven, CT 06511
Email: divinity.library@yale.edu
Phone: 203 432-5301

CALL NUMBER: RG 138

CREATOR: Ady, Merrill Steele, 1897-1982.

TITLE: Merrill and Lucille Ady Papers

DATES: 1921–1971

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1.75 Linear Feet (4 boxes)

LANGUAGE(S): In English.

SUMMARY: Letters, writings, and printed material document the personal side of the Ady's missionary work in China and Hong. These records complement documentation held in the archives of the Presbyterian Board of Missions. Merrill Steele and Lucile Meloy Ady were Presbyterian missionaries in China and Hong Kong from 1923 to 1960.

FINDING AID LINK: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, use the following address: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.138.

REQUEST MATERIALS: To view manuscript and archival materials at the Yale Divinity Library, please submit the request form at http://web.library.yale.edu/form/yale-divinity-library-mss-request-form.

Administrative Information

Provenance
Gift of Carolyn Ady Simonson and Donald W. Ady

Information about Access
Open to qualified researchers.

Cite As
Merrill and Lucille Ady Papers (RG 138), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

Biographical Sketch

1897 Dec 15 Born in Omaha, Nebraska
1917-1920 Served in armed forces, WWI
1920 
BA Monmouth College
1923 
BD McCormick Seminary
1923 Aug 3 
Married Lucile Meloy of Evanston, IL who earned her BA degree cum laude at Monmouth and her MA at the University of Illinois. Children: Carolyn (b.1926), Robert (b.1927), Donald (b.1932)
1923 Sep 26
Arrived at Canton, China as Presbyterian Church in USA missionary for a year of language study
1924-1941 
Evangelical work in countryside around Yeung Kong, Kwangtung, So. China
1925 
Evacuated to Philippines when Sun Yat-Sen made his first foray into power from Canton
1928 
Furlough - McCormick Seminary
1929-1936 
Worked under Fifth District Association of the Church of Christ in China (Yeung Kong Station was turned over to CCC in c. 1928)
1936-1937 Aug 
Furlough in Evanston, IL
1941-1949 
Appointed Executive Secretary, South China Mission of the Presbyterian Church (Canton)
1941 Dec 25 
Interned by Japanese with Lucile and Donald; Stanley Prison, Hong Kong
1942 Jul 
Repatriated
1943 
Attempted to get back to his station, but was stalled first in Lourenco Marques and then in Calcutta
1944-1945 
Field agent in Secret Intelligence in the U.S. Army Office of Strategic Services in China
1945-1949 
Worked with Kwangtung International Relief Committee (KIRC)
1946 
Lucile and Donald arrived in Canton - Donald attended Shanghai American School
1949 
Furlough
1950-1960 
In Hong Kong, New Territories for the Sixth District Association of the Kwangtung Synod of the Church of Christ in China
1956 
Furlough
1957 
Organized First Asian Church Women's Association. Lucile taught at True Light Middle School
1960-1965 
In Kowloon, Hong Kong as official representative for Presbyterian Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations (COEMAR)
1966 
Retired to Duarte, CA
1982 Nov 2 
Died

Description of the Papers

The Ady Papers housed at the Yale Divinity School Library represent the personal side of a rather substantial official record of their missionary career. Consisting primarily of family letters, these documents reveal much about the daily life of a missionary family, including references to the larger purposes of their mission as well as descriptions of life on a day to day basis amidst political unrest. For details of Merrill's work under the Presbyterian Board, his position with the Church of Christ in China, or later work with the Kwangtung International Relief Committee, the researcher is referred to documents on file with the Presbyterian Board of Missions in Philadelphia.

The Adys came in contact with numerous missionaries, such as Frank Short, Tracy Jones, Alice Schaefer, the Siddalls, Stewarts, Sauers, Nelsons and Lois Armentrout, but these colleagues are usually mentioned only in relation to social engagements.

Taishen hsien county, Kwangtung province, where the Adys worked, was situated half way between Hong Kong and Hainan. This county was "controlled" by the Presbyterians from the Protestant standpoint; it was also the first location of the Catholic Maryknoll Mission which took over from the French fathers.

The early letters in this collection are of interest for their documentation of the reaction of missionaries freshly arrived from America to Chinese culture. They also document the Adys' evacuation to the Philippines in 1925. The Adys were frequently separated during the war and Merrill's letters to Lucile during 1937-1941 and 1943-1946 contain more substantive descriptions and comments than earlier or later letters. Since the Japanese allowed no letters out of internment camps, there is a gap in documentation during 1942. Included with Merrill's oral history transcript of 1970-1971 is a memorandum about his repatriation experience. Also informative are his summaries and observations about conditions in China in 1950 (folder 49).
Added in 2015 were documents related to Merrill S. Ady’s work for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II, a memoir by the Adys’ son Donald about his World War II experiences as a child in China, and reproductions of high quality, well-identified photographs from the area in Kwantung where the Adys worked.

Arrangement

I. Correspondence, 1923-1968  
II. Printed Material, 1921-1956  
III. Writings, 1941-1971  
IV. World War II Activities  
V. Photographs
### Collection Contents

**Series I. Correspondence**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1-22</td>
<td>Primarily family correspondence</td>
<td>1923-1945</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>23-35</td>
<td>Primarily family correspondence</td>
<td>1946-1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>36-46</td>
<td>Primarily family correspondence</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Illinois in the World War - A history of the 33rd Division</td>
<td>1921</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Miscellaneous newsclippings</td>
<td>1928-1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Reports re. South China</td>
<td>1938-1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Yeung Kong Station Bimonthly</td>
<td>1924</td>
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### Series III. Writings

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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>MSA notes on conditions in China</td>
<td>1950</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>&quot;In Memory of Vella Myrtle Wilcox&quot;</td>
<td>1957</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>South China Mission</td>
<td>1941-1942</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>True Light Middle School</td>
<td>1948</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Claremont Graduate School China Missionaries Oral History Project transcript</td>
<td>1970, 1971</td>
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### Series IV. World War II Activities

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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Photocopies of documents relating to work of Merrill Ady for Office of Strategic Services (OSS), with explanatory notes by Donald Ady (son)</td>
<td>1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Photocopies of documents related to work of Presbyterian medical missionary Robert E. Lynn for Office of Strategic Services (OSS)</td>
<td>1944</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Memoir of experiences during World War II as a missionary child, including at Stanley Internment Camp, by Donald W. Ady (son)</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Reproductions of pages from photograph album with handwritten captions. Scenes, individuals, events in Yeung Kong, Kwangtung, So. China area. (Sheets with transcribed captions and CD of digital copies of photos included)</td>
<td>1920s</td>
</tr>
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Access Terms

Presbyterian Church -- Missions -- China.
Missions -- China.
Missions -- China -- Hong Kong.
Ady, Merrill Steele, 1897-1982.