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Clarence Richmond Thayer papers4492680

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Description is written in: English.

appm

Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

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New York, NY 10027

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URL: <https://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke.html>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary
Creator:	Thayer, C. R. (Clarence Richmond), 1901-1986
Title:	Clarence Richmond Thayer papers
ID:	4492680
Date [inclusive]:	1947 -- 1974
Physical Description:	3 linear feet 3 linear feet; 7 boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	Clarence Richmond Thayer was a United Presbyterian Psychologist who spent his life studying and testing missionaries in attempts to predict the success of potential missionaries. Various boards and thousands of missionaries from Foreign Missions Conference of North America (FMCNA) participated in studies. The collection includes correspondence about studies as well as information about the donation of the collection to the Missionary Research Library; annotated copies of Dr. Thayer's PhD Thesis from the University of Pittsburgh; as well as records from the studies including results and data tables and the complete set of computer cards from the 1972 study.

Preferred Citation

Item description, MRL 12: Clarence R. Thayer papers, series #, box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Biographical / Historical

Clarence Richmond Thayer was born on June 11, 1901 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He attended Linden Public School, Peabody High School, the University of Pittsburgh, and Western Theological Seminary. He received a Master of Theology degree from the Pittsburgh-XeniamTheological Seminary. Thayer was a life-long member of the United Presbyterian

denomination. He focused his life's work on the study of missionary testing. Training and preparing missionaries for the field was a costly and time-consuming job. Various missionary boards hoped to create a test that would predict the success of potential missionaries. This would allow appointments to be made on more than the evaluation of references and papers by missionary boards. The Committee on Missionary Personnel, part of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America (FMCNA), formed a subcommittee in 1929 to "study the aid which might be given by such tests as the intelligence, interest, emotional stability and social adjustability tests." A five-year experimental study program was designed by the subcommittee. In 1931, 1932 and 1933 a series of conferences focusing on outgoing missionaries were held by the FMCNA. During these conferences, with the aid of a local psychological examiner approximately 200 missionaries were tested. The scores from the tests were made available to the boards after the data was analyzed. Dr. Thayer used this data from the 1930s for his PhD thesis, *The Relationship of Certain Psychological Test Scores to Subsequent Ratings of Missionary Field Success*. The results were inconclusive. Thayer continued to test new missionaries, including conducting three major studies in 1966, 1969 and 1972. Along with an effort to re-test the original group of 200, Thayer went on to test over 4,000 further subjects. The tests were the same for each missionary – two interest tests: Strong Vocational Interest Blank and Kuder Preference Record; four personality adjustment tests: the Bell Adjustment Test, the Bernreuter Personality Inventory, the Guildford-Martin STDCR Test and the Cornell Index; and the sentence completion test by Kelly and Fiske. Dr. Thayer died on March 5, 1986 in Irwin, Pennsylvania.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains correspondence about studies as well as information about the donation of the collection to the Missionary Research Library; annotated copies of Dr. Thayer's PhD Thesis from the University of Pittsburgh; as well as records from the studies including results and data tables and the complete set of computer cards from the 1972 study.

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in three series: Series 1: Correspondence; Series 2: PhD Thesis; and Series 3: Studies.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

PDF converted to EAD and description updated by Leah Edelman. 2024-02-27

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Onsite storage.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Originally part of the independent Missionary Research Library, these records were donated by Thayer to MRL in 1971. Thayer made further donations over the next few years to add to his personal papers. In 1976 the records were accessioned by the Burke Library archives with the closure of the MRL.

Processing Information

Some papers and computer cards were cataloged by Lynn A. Grove on 1988-08-04. Folded items were flattened and materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed. Any items in an advanced state of deterioration were placed in Mylar envelopes. The finding aid was created by Brigette C. Kamsler in 2012 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, and edited by Leah Edelman in 2024.

Conditions Governing Use

Some material in this collection may be protected by copyright and other rights. Information concerning copyright, fair use, and reproduction requests can be consulted at Columbia's Copyright Advisory Office.

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Related Materials

Related Materials

MRL12: Missionary Research Library collection of Missionary Personnel records, series #, box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Related Materials

MRL12: Missionary Research Library collection on the preparation of missionaries, 1920-1963, box #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Missionaries
- Psychological tests

Burke Library record group:

Missionary Research Library Archives: MRL12, Ecumenical/World Missions

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Collection Inventory

Series 1: Correspondence, 1947 -- 1974

Physical Description: 6 folders

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged roughly chronologically.

Scope and Contents

This series contains correspondence about the studies as well as information about the donation of the collection to the Missionary Research Library. Thayer was a firm believer that the Missionary Research Library was important, and had used the resources for his own PhD thesis published in 1951. Thayer offered copies and details on the studied missionaries and their results to the Boards of Missionary Organizations and this series also contains that correspondence.

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence Related to Original 1930s Testing, 1947	box 1	folder 1
Correspondence, 1956 -- 1969	box 1	folder 2
Correspondence with Missionary Boards, circa 1950 -- 1971	box 1	folder 3-4
Correspondence about Collection, 1971 -- 1974	box 1	folder 5
Informational Letter to Boards, 1966	box 1	folder 6

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Series 2: PhD Thesis, 1949 -- 1951

Physical Description: 14 folders

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged in original order.

Scope and Contents

This series contains annotated copies of Dr. Thayer's PhD Thesis from the University of Pittsburgh. There are more appendices than what was included in the bound thesis volume; approximately two full copies of the appendices are available in this series. Each appendix includes different changes, additions and annotations by Thayer which ultimately would be used in the published version from 1951. Thayer also provided a copy of his submission to the overview committee from 1949.

Title/Description	Instances	
Introduction, 1951	box 2	folder 1
Overview Committee Submission, 1949	box 2	folder 2
Appendices, 1951	box 2	folder 3-13

Bibliography, 1951

box 2

folder 14

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This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged roughly chronologically.

Scope and Contents

This series contains records from various studies that became Thayer's life work. Inspired by the original testing done in the 1930s, Thayer held his own major study to be included with his PhD thesis in 1951. When this study proved inconclusive, Thayer continued the testing again. After his thesis, the three major studies conducted were held in 1966, 1969 and 1972. Thousands of missionaries from a variety of boards and backgrounds were studied over the course of these tests. The tests were completed using computers at the University of Florida (1966); the University of West Virginia (1969); and Cleveland State University (1972). The collection offers the results and data tables from these three studies, as well as the complete set of computer cards from the 1972 study.

Title/Description	Instances	
Study of Missionary Candidate Test Scores, 1966 -- 1972	box 3	folder 1
Vocational Interest Form Used in All Studies, circa 1952 -- 1972	box 3	folder 2
1952 Study of United Presbyterian Missionary Candidates Notebook, 1952	box 3	folder 3
1966 Study – Board 1: Women's United Presbyterian Computer Data, 1966	box 3	folder 4
1966 Study – Computer Printouts, University of Florida, 1966	box 3	folder 5-6
1966 Study – Articles and Data Tables based on 1966 Study, University of Florida, 1966	box 3	folder 7-8
1969 Study – Computer Printouts, University of West Virginia, 1969	box 3	folder 9
1969 Study – Data Tables, University of West Virginia, 1969	box 3	folder 10
1969 Study – Data Tables Comparing 1966 and 1969 Studies, 1969	box 3	folder 11
1972 Study – Computer Printouts, Cleveland State University, 1972	box 3	folder 12-13

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1972 Study Information and Notes, 1972	box 4	folder 1-2
1972 Study – Board 1: Women's Board, 1972	box 4	folder 3
1972 Study – Board 2: Christian Missionary Fellowship, 1972	box 4	folder 4
1972 Study – Board 3: Far Eastern Gospel Crusade, 1972	box 4	folder 5
1972 Study – Board 4: Southern Presbyterian, 1972	box 4	folder 6
1972 Study – Board 5: United Presbyterian Foreign Board, 1972	box 4	folder 7
1972 Study – Board 6: Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society, 1972	box 4	folder 8
1972 Study – Board 7: Evangelical and Reformed, 1972	box 4	folder 9
1972 Study – Board 8: Orthodox Presbyterian, 1972	box 4	folder 10
1972 Study – Board 9: Christian and Missionary Alliance, 1972	box 4	folder 11
1972 Study – Board 10: Wesleyan Methodist Church in America, Board of World Missions, 1972	box 4	folder 12
1972 Study – Board 11: Mexican Indian Missions, 1972	box 4	folder 13
1972 Study – Board 12: International Missions, 1972	box 4	folder 14
1972 Study – Board 13: Chicago Medical Mission, 1972	box 4	folder 15
1972 Study – Board 14: Greater Europe Mission, 1972	box 4	folder 16
1972 Study – Board 15: Youth Gospel Crusade, 1972	box 4	folder 17
1972 Study – Board 16: Association of Baptists for World Evangelism, 1972	box 4	folder 18
1972 Study – Board 17: Mid-Baptist Missionaries, 1972	box 4	folder 19
1972 Study – Board 18: Open Bible Standard Missions, Inc., 1972	box 4	folder 20
1972 Study – Board 19: Evangelical Baptists, Canada, 1972	box 4	folder 21
1972 Study – Board 20: Methodist, 1972	box 4	folder 22
1972 Study – Board 21: United Indian, 1972	box 4	folder 23
1972 Study – Board 22: China Inland Mission, 1972	box 4	folder 24
1972 Study – Board 23: Miscellaneous, Various Boards, 1972	box 4	folder 25
1972 Study – Board 25: Sudan Interior Mission, 1972	box 4	folder 26
Articles on Studies by Thayer and Others, circa 1972	box 4	folder 27
Follow-Up Studies, circa 1972 -- 1974	box 4	folder 28
1972 Study Computer Cards: Board 1-8, 1972		

box 5

1972 Study Computer Cards: Board 9-18, 1972

box 6

1972 Study Computer Cards: Board 19-25 and duplicate
cards, 1972

box 7

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