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Reginald Humphrey Helfferich papers6277192

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on January 14, 2025.
Description is written in: English.

Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

3041 Broadway

New York, NY 10027

Telephone: (212) 851-5606

burke@library.columbia.edu

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

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Summary Information

Repository:	Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary
Creator:	Hefferich, Reginald H (Reginald Humphrey), 1905-1981
Title:	Reginald Humphrey Helfferich papers
ID:	6277192
Date [inclusive]:	1832 -- 1982
Physical Description:	7.25 linear feet 7.25 linear feet; 11 boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	Helfferich was a pastor of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and served the Church World Service of the National Council of Churches of Christ from 1949-1970. This collection contains Reginald Helfferich's correspondence, diaries, family and biographical material, publications, and other personal materials; professional materials including information about Heifer Project International, photographs, materials related to Helfferich's ministerial work as pastor of Christ Evangelical and Reformed Church of Bath, Pennsylvania, and materials related to Helfferich's work with Church World Service (CWS); as well as audio and visual memorabilia from both Helfferich's personal and professional life, primarily Kodachrome diapositive slides, photographs, and postcards from Helfferich's travels in Europe, Africa, India, South America, and beyond.

Preferred Citation

Item description, WAB: Reginald Humphrey Helfferich 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

Reginald Humphrey Helfferich was the fifth generation in a family of clergymen who had led the parish of Christ Evangelical and Reformed Church in Bath, Pennsylvania for 182 years. The first generation, Rev. Johann Heinrich Helfferich, was sent to the United States as a missionary by the synods of North and South Holland in 1791. Reginald and his twin brother were born on June 15, 1905 to William Ursinus Helfferich and Nora Schuler Helfferich. Reginald attended Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut for three years before transferring to Ursinus College, the school his grandfather helped start, and from there he received his B.A. in 1929. In 1932 he received his Bachelor of Divinity from the Theological Seminary of the University of Chicago. That same year he married Virginia Merritt, daughter of the first woman in the Connecticut State Senate, Alice Patterson Merritt. He took his first job as the pastor at the Reformed Church in Butler, but when his father died two years later in 1934, he moved to Bath to take over the family parish. In 1946, Reginald led a failed campaign in the parish to raise money for European war relief. This forced him to reconsider his own prejudices against foreign aid. Confused by all the stereotypes, his wife finally suggested, "Why don't you go overseas and find out?" And so he began his first tour abroad as a volunteer field worker, assisting with the European church's refugee resettlement efforts after World War II. For this, he would later be awarded the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit by Germany in 1961. World service ministry became the focus of Reginald's work and life, and over the next 35 years he traveled to 161 countries, working in 41 of them to provide aid. He served as General Secretary of the Division of World Service for the Evangelical and Reformed Church, which later merged into the United Church Board for World Ministries, from 1946 until his retirement in 1971. He also helped to create the Church World Service (CWS) of the National Council of Churches (NCC), for which he served as special representative from 1949 to 1972. Reginald served on the policy boards of 27 organizations, including several that he helped to found: Heifer Project, for which he was Treasurer until 1973; Meals for Millions Foundation, for which he served as Vice President until 1975; CROP; International Voluntary Service; Interchurch Medical Assistance; the Tibetan Foundation; CODEL; PACT; Technoserve; and the Interchurch Aid Committee, which later became the Commission on Interchurch Aid, Refugee, and World Service of the World Council of Churches. Committed to service and action, Reginald was known for moving forward impatiently on projects, despite the hesitations of his committees and superiors. Once with a mischievous smile he admitted, "I'm the stinker of the whole organization." His primary goal was to "help people help themselves" with the aid of tools, seeds, poultry, animals, and training. After retiring in 1971 he served the Connecticut Conference as minister of missions until poor health forced him to retire again. He died on June 28, 1981. He was survived by his second wife, Ruth Ernest Helfferich (married in 1963), his son, Merritt Helfferich, his two daughters, Alice Orsini and Deborah Scranton, and eight grandchildren.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains Reginald Helfferich's correspondence, diaries, family and biographical material, publications, and other personal materials; professional materials including information about Heifer Project International, photographs, materials related to Helfferich's ministerial work as pastor of Christ Evangelical and Reformed Church of Bath, Pennsylvania, and materials related to Helfferich's work with Church World Service (CWS); as well as audio and visual memorabilia from both Helfferich's personal and professional life, primarily Kodachrome diapositive slides, photographs, and postcards from Helfferich's travels in Europe, Africa, India, South America, and beyond.

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged in three series: Series 1: Personal materials; Series 2: Professional materials; and Series 3: Audiovisual materials.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

PDF converted to EAD and description updated by Leah Edelman. 2023-04-13

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

Onsite storage.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The exact provenance of this collection is unknown.

Custodial History

The papers are part of the William Adams Brown Ecumenical Library Archives, which was founded in 1945 by the Union Theological Seminary Board of Directors.

Processing Information

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. 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 Melissa Lemons in 2007, updated by Kristen Leigh Southworth in 2013 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, and edited by Leah Edelman in 2023.

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

WAB: Church World Service records, 1925-1969, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Hefferich, Reginald H (Reginald Humphrey), 1905-1981 -- : Archives

- Evangelical and Reformed Church

Burke Library record group:

William Adams Brown Ecumenical Library Archives

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Collection Inventory

Series 1: Personal materials, 1832 -- 1981

Physical Description: 1.75 linear feet 1.75 linear feet; 4 boxes

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is unarranged.

Scope and Contents

This series contains Reginald Helfferich's personal correspondence, including a collection of love letters from his first wife in 1930, his diaries from 1942-1946, stamped passports from 1946-1959, as well as travel documents, war rations, newspaper clippings, and materials related to his memorial service in 1981, including extensive biographical material compiled and written during the time of his death. This series also contains a collection of historical materials from the Helfferich family, including correspondence, a marriage certificate, and other documents from Reginald's paternal grandparents, William A. Helfferich and Amanda H. Fogel; seven German prayer books dated from 1835 to 1912; Virginia Merrit's baby book; and expense records from 1916 to 1921 that presumably belonged to Reginald's father, William U. Hellferich. Also in this section are correspondence related to the Helfferich family genealogy, as well as notes, drafts, and final copies of Reginald's published work entitled, "In the Footsteps of the Fathers: A Short History of Five Generations of Helfferich ministers in the Service of the Reformed Church in the New World," which was prepared in 1939 for the two-hundredth anniversary of Christ Evangelical and Reformed Church of Bath, Pennsylvania.

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence, 1891 -- 1970	box 1	folder 1-2
Correspondence from Helfferich's wife, 1930	box 1	folder 3-4
Diaries, 1942 -- 1946	box 1	folder 5-7
Travel Documents and War Rations, 1942 -- 1959	box 2	folder 1
Passports, 1946 -- 1959	box 2	folder 2-3

Pamphlets, circa 1940 -- 1944	box 2	folder 4-8
Scope and Contents		
The Evangel; The Month at Goodspeeds		
Articles and News Clippings, 1915 -- 1967	box 2	folder 9-10
R.H. Helfferich's Memorial Service, 1981	box 2	folder 11
Historical Family Documents and Correspondence, 1832 -- 1889	box 3	folder 1-2
"Erklärung der Offenbarung Johannis" [Explanation of the Revelation to John], 1889	box 3	folder 3-4
German Prayer Books, 1835 -- 1912	box 3	folder 5
Virginia Merritt's Baby Book, 1906 -- 1915	box 3	folder 6
William U. Helfferich's "Parables of Petro the Penman," 1932 -- 1933	box 3	folder 7
Expense Record Books, 1916 -- 1919	box 3	folder 8-9
Expense Record Books, 1920 -- 1921	box 4	folder 1
Genealogy Correspondence, Notes, and Drafts, 1937 -- 1975	box 4	folder 2-3

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Series 2: Professional materials, 1887 -- 1974

Physical Description: 1.25 linear feet 1.25 linear feet; 3 boxes

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is unarranged.

Scope and Contents

This series contains general work papers, including information about Heifer Project International, photographs of the reconstruction work of Bangladesh Ecumenical Relief and Rehabilitation Service, a small copy of the 1895 constitution of Helfferich's church in Bath, Pennsylvania, and a 1887 copy of The New England Primer that also includes The Assemblies of Divines and Mr. Cotton's Catechism. This series also contains materials related to Helfferich's ministerial work as pastor of Christ Evangelical and Reformed Church of Bath, Pennsylvania, including handwritten notes and drafts of talks and sermons, correspondence related to the estate of Harold J. Horn, planning documents and articles about the church's bicentennial celebration, and correspondence, receipts, and other documents related to the church's administration, as well as materials related to Helfferich's work with Church World Service (CWS), particularly his work with the United Clothing Appeal and his travels to Africa. This includes a collection of newsletters and other promotional materials, as well as correspondence, travel reports, notes, and articles from Africa. Also in this section are the travel receipts, correspondence, and other

documents related to Helfferich's 1974 trip to Haiti, including information about the Bellevue Sewing Project and other non-profit organizations.

Title/Description	Instances	
General Work Papers, 1887 -- 1971	box 5	folder 1
Church Ministry: Correspondence and receipts, 1930 -- 1950	box 5	folder 2-4
Scope and Contents		
Including re: Harold J. Horn Estate		
Church Ministry: Sermons for Special Days and notes and drafts for talks, 1929 -- 1961	box 5	folder 5-7
Christ Evangelical Reformed Church 200th Anniversary Event, 1939	box 5	folder 8
"The Shuttle" Songbook and Bach's Passion Program, 1962	box 5	folder 9
Church World Service: Africa: correspondence, reports, notes, 1965 -- 1973	box 6	folder 1-4
Church World Service: Africa: Botswana Health Reports and Minutes, 1971 -- 1972	box 6	folder 5
Church World Service: Africa: Namibia Correspondence and Articles, circa 1971 -- 1972	box 6	folder 6
Church World Service: Africa: Uganda Correspondence and Reports, 1970 -- 1972	box 6	folder 7
Church World Service: Haiti trip, 1973 -- 1974	box 6	folder 8
CWS Brochures and Promotional Materials, 1953 -- 1964	box 7	folder 1
World Service Representative Reports, 1954 -- 1960	box 7	folder 2
United Clothing Appeal Promotional Materials, 1958 -- 1967	box 7	folder 3-4
Certificate of Appreciation, 1961	box 7	folder 5

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Series 3: Audiovisual materials, 1947 -- 1982

Physical Description: 4.25 linear feet 4.25 linear feet; 4 boxes

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged in original order by format.

Scope and Contents

This series contains audio and visual memorabilia from both Helfferich's personal and professional life, primarily Kodachrome diapositive slides, photographs, and postcards from Helfferich's travels in Europe, Africa, India, South America, and beyond. Additionally, this series contains several Gray Audograph recordings and blank discs, a printing plate diagram for an unidentified schoolroom, and three filmstrips, one of which is entitled "Ease Their Burden," a 1966 film about ministries in New Zealand.

Title/Description	Instances	
Filmstrips, circa 1966	box 8	folder 1-2
Scope and Contents		
Including "Ease their Burden," New Zealand		
Audographs, circa 1958 -- 1963	box 8	folder 3-6
Scope and Contents		
Including Safari, Bed Testers, Horror Story, VW Rally		
Printing plate: schoolroom diagram, circa 1947 -- 1968	box 9	folder 1
Slides, circa 1962 -- 1967	box 9	folder 2-10
Scope and Contents		
Including Latin America, Africa, Asia, Middle East, and conferences		
Photographs, circa 1957 -- 1968	box 9	folder 11-13
Scope and Contents		
Including Germany, and Takana Farm High School, Punjab, India		
Photographs, circa 1947 -- 1951	box 10	folder 1-14
Scope and Contents		
Including Europe and Latin America		
Postcards, circa 1947 -- 1969	box 10	folder 15-23
Scope and Contents		
Including to family, unaddressed, and blank		
Oversize materials, circa 1972 -- 1982	box 11OS	

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