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John Horton Daniels and Helen (Dunn) Daniels papers8513545

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Description is written in: English.

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:	Daniels, John Horton, 1891-1974
Creator:	Daniels, Helen (Dunn), 1892-1978
Title:	John Horton Daniels and Helen (Dunn) Daniels papers
ID:	8513545
Date [inclusive]:	1919 -- 1959
Physical Description:	1.5 linear feet 1.5 linear feet; 4 boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	John Horton Daniels, a doctor based in Nanjing 南京, China and his wife Helen Daniels, were both missionaries with the Presbyterian General Board of Missions 長老會 and worked for medical missions in Nanjing China. This collection contains correspondence covering the period during which they lived and worked in China, including the final years leading up to the establishment of the People's Republic and the eviction of the missionaries, and John Horton Daniels's internment in the Philippines. This collection also contains clippings and publications related to the Daniels' work in China, as well as the Nanking Massacre of 1937.

Preferred Citation

Item description, MRL 6: John Horton Daniels and Helen (Dunn) Daniels papers, 1919-1959, series #, box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Biographical / Historical

John Horton Daniels was born on September 22, 1891 in Minneapolis, MN, the son of Frank Birchard Daniels and Florence Louisa Farrington. He graduated with a B.A. from the University

of Minnesota in 1914 and entered the medical school that fall, but transferred to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University in 1916, receiving his M.D. in 1918. Helen Dunn was born on May 11 1892 in Minneapolis to Frederic Earle and Harriet Augusta (Lewis) Dunn. She received her B.A. from the University of Minnesota in 1915, and was involved with the YMCA at the University of Wisconsin. She and John Horton were married on August 14, 1919, and later that year went to China as missionaries under the auspices of the Presbyterian General Board of Foreign Missions. The two initially studied at the Language School at the University of Nanking, and John Horton worked as a member of the medical staff of the University Hospital. During the 1927 "Nanking Incident," when troops of the National Revolutionary Army assaulted the warlord armies controlling Nanjing, the couple had to flee to the safety of an American gunboat. They were eventually brought home to Minneapolis where Helen gave birth to their first child, John Horton. The elder John Horton worked at the Student Health Service at the University of Minnesota from 1927 to 1930, after which the family returned to Nanjing. He was appointed head of the University Hospital, while Helen researched a history and guidebook for the city, which was never published. The family was on furlough during the Nanjing Massacre of December 1937, but returned to the city in August 1938 and remained for three years. In January 1941, the growing military threat from Japan prompted most of the family to return to Minneapolis while John Horton remained in Nanjing. In the fall of that year Helen became ill and John Horton intended to return to her, but was en route in Manila when Pearl Harbor was attacked. He was interned as a civilian by the Japanese military, and managed to do some work as a physician in the camp. He was eventually released in 1943 as part of a prisoner exchange with the United States. After the end of the war, the couple returned to Nanjing to resume their work, but nearly a decade of conflict had drained the resources of the hospital. After working for one year under the new People's Republic of China, the couple returned home in 1950. John Horton served as director of the Associated Mission Medical Office of the National Council of Churches' Division of Foreign Missions, part of the NCCCUSA. He retired in 1960 and died in Los Angeles in 1974. Helen died in Los Angeles in 1978.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains correspondence written by John Horton and Helen Daniels covering the period during which they lived and worked in China, including the final years leading up to the establishment of the People's Republic and the eviction of the missionaries, and John Horton Daniels's internment in the Philippines. This collection also contains clippings and publications related to the Daniels' work in China, as well as the Nanking Massacre of 1937.

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in two series: Series 1: Correspondence; and Series 2: Clippings and publications.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

PDF converted to EAD and description updated by Leah Edelman. 2022-02-24

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Onsite storage.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Formerly part of the independent Missionary Research Library (MRL), these records were accessioned by the Burke Library at the time of the MRL's closure in 1976.

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 photocopied on to acid-free paper, and the fragile originals separated 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 Gregory Adam Scott in 2010, reviewed and updated by

Brigette C. Kamsler in 2014 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, and edited by Leah Edelman in 2022.

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

MRL6: Matilda Calder Thurston Papers, 1902 – 1958, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Missions, Medical -- China
- Daniels, John Horton, 1891-1974 -- : Archives
- Daniels, Helen (Dunn), 1892-1978 -- : Archives

Burke Library record group:

Missionary Research Library Archives: MRL6, China

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Collection Inventory

Series 1: Correspondence, 1919 -- 1950

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 arranged chronologically.

Scope and Contents

This series contains correspondence written by John Horton and Helen Daniels to family and friends in the United States. It covers the period during which they lived and worked in China, including the final years leading up to the establishment of the People's Republic and the eviction of the missionaries. Most of this correspondence is of a personal nature, reporting and reflecting on their experiences in China. Several of the letters are significant because they were sent by John Horton Daniels to his wife and family from internment in the Philippines. There are also official communications between government agencies and the Daniels' family regarding his status as an interned civilian.

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence, 1919-03 -- 1931-12	box 1	folder 1-20
Correspondence, 1932-01 -- 1941-12	box 2	folder 1-15
Correspondence, 1942-04 -- 1950-05	box 3	folder 1-9

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Series 2: Clippings and publications, 1920 -- 1959

Physical Description: 0.25 linear feet 0.25 linear feet; 1 box

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 clippings and publications related to the Daniels' work in China. The bulk of this material is from the 1930s and 40s, and includes a number of documents relating to the Nanking Massacre of 1937. Two local publications, The Nanking Bulletin of Church and Community and its continuation, Notes and Notices of the Nanking Union Church and Community, are represented here by

a very comprehensive collection of issues. The 1949 Nanking Bulletin directory offers a unique glimpse into the foreign community of the Chinese capital only months before the establishment of the People's Republic, and the subsequent exodus of most of the Christian missionaries and Western diplomats.

Title/Description	Instances	
Student Volunteer Movement Bulletin; Nanking Station Report, 1920; 1931	box 4	folder 1
Clippings, Correspondence, Reports, Photograph, 1922 -- 1939	box 4	folder 2
Nanking Bulletin of Church and Community, 1930 -- 1933	box 4	folder 3
Notes and Notices of the Nanking Union Church and Community, 1933 -- 1935	box 4	folder 4
Nanking Massacre: Correspondence, Reports, 1937 -- 1938	box 4	folder 5
Nanking Notes and Notices, 1935 -- 1940	box 4	folder 6
Clippings, 1938 -- 1948	box 4	folder 7
Mao Tze-Tung on People's Democratic Dictatorship 論人民民主專政, circa 1940 -- 1949	box 4	folder 8
International Woman's Club, Nanking, China; Hu Hsiao-Shih, The Position of Nanking in Chinese Literature, 1947 -- 1949	box 4	folder 9
Nanking Bulletin: Directory of Foreign Residents, 1949-07	box 4	folder 10
Clippings, circa 1950 -- 1959	box 4	folder 11
Reports on Christianity and Communism, 1950 -- 1952	box 4	folder 12
Clippings from People's China, 1952	box 4	folder 13
Lilian Caldwell Williams, Grandmother's Story of an Ohio Childhood; Yesterdays in China, 1956	box 4	folder 14

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