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Yale Divinity Library

Henry Winters Luce Family Papers

RG 203



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2007

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	3
Requesting Instructions	3
Administrative Information	3
Immediate Source of Acquisition	3
Conditions Governing Access	3
Conditions Governing Use	4
Preferred Citation	4
Biographical / Historical	4
Scope and Contents	4
Arrangement	5
Collection Contents	6
Series I: Family Correspondence, 1887-1951	6
Correspondence of Henry Winters Luce and Elizabeth Root Luce	6
Letters to parents	6
HWL to/from ERL	6
Correspondence with children	6
Correspondence with Mary Wood: ERL's cousin	7
Other family members with others	7
Series II: General correspondence, 1877-1948	9
Henry Winters Luce to/from others	9
Elizabeth Root Luce to/ from others	10
Series III: Writings and notes, 1897-1948	11
Of Henry Winters Luce	11
Of Henry R. Luce	11
Series IV: Collected materials, 1894-1941, no date	12
Related to Chinese Christian Colleges	12
Miscellaneous	12
Series V: Biographical documentation, 1897-1948	13
Selected Search Terms	14

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Yale Divinity Library
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<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

CALL NUMBER: RG 203

CREATOR: Luce, Henry Winters, 1868-1941

TITLE: Henry Winters Luce Family Papers

DATES: 1877-1951 1910-1941

BULK DATES: 1910-1941

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 5 linear feet (9 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Correspondence, journals, diaries, writings, and printed material document the life and work of Henry Winters Luce, who served as a missionary in China, as well as the lives of his wife, children, and other family members.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.203>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.203>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

- b. box
- f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Peter Paul Luce, 2006.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright has been transferred to Yale University

Preferred Citation

Henry Winters Luce Family Papers (RG 203), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

Biographical / Historical

Henry Winters Luce (HWL) was born on September 24, 1868, son of Van Rensselaer William and Adelia (Tedrick) Luce. He received a B.A. from Yale in 1892. Luce gave up his original plan for a career in law and enrolled in Union Theological Seminary in New York City in order to train for the parish ministry. There he came under the influence of the Student Volunteer Movement and decided to offer himself as a missionary to China. In 1894 he interrupted his theological education for a year of service as one of three traveling agents of the Student Volunteer Movement, visiting colleges in the South and Southwest while two fellow Yale alumni and Union classmates--Sherwood Eddy, who had volunteered for India, and Horace T. Pitkin, another China volunteer--toured the East and Midwest. At the conclusion of this mission Luce transferred to Princeton Theological Seminary with his friend Eddy for the final year of ministerial training and was granted the B.D. degree in 1896. He married Elizabeth Middleton Root in 1896, and in 1897 they went to China under the Presbyterian Foreign Mission Board, sponsored by the Lackawanna Presbytery in Scranton, PA. Luce occupied various key roles in the management and establishment of Shantung Christian University (ca. 1897-1917), Peking University (ca. 1921-1925, later known as Yenching University), and the China Christian Educational Association. He corresponded with hundreds of people in regards to support, cooperation, and fundraising for university buildings and programs, and for relief programs in China. Following his return from China, Luce served as Professor in the Chinese Department at Kennedy School of Missions, Hartford, Connecticut.

All of the Luce's children were born in China. They were: Henry Robinson Luce (1898-1967), Emmavil Luce (Severinghaus) (1899-1985), Elisabeth Middleton Luce (Moore) (1903-2002), and Sheldon Root Luce (1911-1985). Henry Robinson Luce (HRL), was founder and editor of TIME, Fortune, LIFE, and Sports Illustrated magazines.

Henry Winters Luce had a close relationship with his children, often offering advice to them, especially his sons. For example, he prepared a long list of reading material (The Koran, The World's Living Religions, A Short History of China, etc.) for Sheldon's 6-week passage from Genoa to the U.S., even suggesting specific reading materials for specific points on the journey.

A perpetual student, Luce studied Chinese in the early years, apparently taking even a course in Physics as part of his language study. He was an avid reader throughout his life. In his letters, he sometimes wrote in Chinese characters, "E loo ping-ahn" (all the way, peace), to speed a parting guest. Luce lived simply, "like a 'Quaker', with rigor and a strong sense of purpose. He died at age 73 on December 8, 1941. His wife Elizabeth died in 1948.

Scope and Contents

This collection of Henry Winters Luce Family papers consists mainly of manuscript and typescript correspondence, (family, general and professional) as well as journals, original compositions, printed matter, clippings and a few photos. The papers trace Henry Winters Luce's work as a missionary in China and also follow the lives of his wife, his children and other family members. The collection provides a valuable resource for research related to Protestant higher education in China and the Luce family.

The papers were originally organized by archivists hired by the Luce family. The order in which the papers were received has been altered somewhat to meet Yale standards. The family's archivists compiled an index to correspondents, which is available in Box 1, Folder 1.

These papers should be consulted in conjunction with two other collections at the Yale Divinity Library: Record Group No. 11, Archives of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, contains extensive complementary documentation related to Henry Winters Luce's work at Shantung Christian University and Peking (Yenching) University. Also of interest is Microfilm Ms43, which includes Henry Winters Luce letters held by the Hartford Seminary Foundation. This microfilm includes 14 items from the period 1914-1916 and circa 136 items from 1928-1941, chiefly correspondence re. Kennedy School of Missions and Silver Bay seminars.

Series I, Family Correspondence, is divided into three subseries. The first subseries includes correspondence of Henry Winters Luce and his wife Elizabeth Root Luce to their parents, with each other, with their children, and with Mary Wood, cousin of Elizabeth Root Luce. Henry Winters Luce would often correspond with his son Henry's secretary, Corrine Thrasher, to confer about certain matters before taking up Henry's time. The second part of Series I includes correspondence of family members that is neither to nor from Henry Winters Luce or Elizabeth Root Luce. This section includes extensive thank you letters to HRL for the HWL Memorial volume that he had sent to many people.

Series II, General Correspondence, is divided into two subseries: correspondence of Henry Winters Luce with others, arranged chronologically, and correspondence of Elizabeth Root Luce.

Series III, Writings and Notes, includes writings by Henry Winters Luce and his son, Henry R. Luce. The Collected Materials of Series IV primarily relate to China, including documentation of Shantung Christian University and Peking (Yenching) University. Of particular note in Series V, Biographical Documentation, are a compilation of letters tracing the activities of the Luce family from 1897 to 1904 and the tributes gathered for the memorial booklet published after HWL's death.

Arrangement

- I. Family Correspondence, 1887-1951
- II. General Correspondence, 1877-1948
- III. Writings and Notes, 1897-1948
- IV. Collected Materials, 1894-1941, no date
- V. Biographical Documentation, 1897-1948

Collection Contents

Series I: Family Correspondence, 1887-1951

Correspondence of Henry Winters Luce and Elizabeth Root Luce

Letters to parents

b. 1, f. 1	Letters en route and arrival in China; see also compilation of letters in Biographical Documentation	1887 Sep- Nov
HWL to/from ERL		
b. 1, f. 2	HWL traveling to U.S. via Europe	1905 Aug- 1913 Apr
b. 1, f. 3	HWL in U.S. fundraising for Peking University	1913 May- Nov
b. 1, f. 4	HWL in U.S. fundraising for Peking University	1914 Apr- Oct
b. 1, f. 5	Henry Luce in U.S. fundraising for Peking University	1914 November - 1915 March
b. 1, f. 6	Concerns for ERL's health: return to U.S.	1923 Dec- 1926 Oct
b. 1, f. 7	HWL at Kennedy School of Missions	1931 Apr- 1932 May
b. 1, f. 8	ERL in Europe and PA: HWL at Kennedy School of Missions	1932 Jun- Nov
b. 1, f. 9	HWL traveling to India via China	1935 Nov- 1936 Jan
b. 1, f. 10	HWL trip around world: visiting Christian colleges	1936 Feb- Jun
b. 1, f. 11	Letters and fragments	1941 Jul -Sep
Correspondence with children		
b. 1, f. 12	HWL and ERL to "family"	no date
b. 1, f. 13	To/ from Henry R.	1914 Sep-Dec
b. 1, f. 14	To/ from Henry R.	1916 May- 1917 Aug
b. 1, f. 15	To/ from Henry R.	1929 Mar- 1932 May
b. 1, f. 16	To/ from Henry R.	1934 Oct- 1937 Dec
b. 1, f. 17	To/ from Henry R.	1938 Jan- 1942 Oct
b. 1, f. 18	To/ from Lila: first wife of HRL	1922 Jun- 1941 Oct

Correspondence of Henry Winters Luce and Elizabeth Root Luce > Correspondence with children
(continued)

b. 1, f. 19	To/ from Emmavail: and husband, Leslie	1908 Jun- 1937 Aug
b. 2, f. 20	To/ from Elisabeth: and husband, Maurice	1925 Aug- 1931 Mar
b. 2, f. 21	To/ from Elisabeth: and husband, Maurice	1931 Apr- 1937 Dec
b. 2, f. 22	To/ from Sheldon	1928 Jun- 1930 Dec
b. 2, f. 23	To/ from Sheldon	1931 Jan- 1934 Mar
b. 2, f. 24	To/ from Sheldon	1936 Mar- 1948 Oct, no date
b. 2, f. 25	To/ from grandchildren: particularly Henry III	1929 Jul - 1941 Feb
b. 2, f. 26	Letters between children	1930 Dec, 1975 Dec
b. 2, f. 27	Condolence letters to ERL from extended family	1941 Dec
Correspondence with Mary Wood: ERL's cousin		
b. 2, f. 28	HWL. to M. Wood	1907 Oct- 1936 Aug
b. 2, f. 29	ERL to M. Wood	1912 Jun- 1927 Dec
b. 2, f. 30	ERL to M. Wood	1928 Jan- Nov
b. 2, f. 31	ERL to M. Wood	1929 Jan- 1931 May
b. 2, f. 32	ERL to M. Wood	1933 Feb- 1934 May
b. 2, f. 33	ERL to M. Wood	1936 Sep- 1948 JCL
Other family members with others		
b. 2, f. 34	Anna Root : ERL's mother and Mary Wood	1898, ?
b. 2, f. 35	Henry R. Luce with others	1930 Jan- 1945 Oct
b. 3, f. 36	HRL thanks for HWL memorial book	1942 Aug
b. 3, f. 37	HRL thanks for HWL memorial book	1942 Aug
b. 3, f. 38	HRL thanks for HWL memorial book	1942 Sep
b. 3, f. 39	HRL thanks for HWL memorial book	1942 Sep

Other family members with others (continued)

b. 3, f. 40	Emmavail Luce Severinghaus	1908 Feb- 1951 Aug
b. 3, f. 41	Elisabeth Luce Moore	1948 Nov

Series II: General correspondence, 1877-1948

Henry Winters Luce to/from others

b. 3, f. 42	Circular letters and greetings	1889 Mar- 1907 Nov
b. 3, f. 43	Including fund-raising for Shantung University	1892 January - 1908 March
b. 3, f. 44	Incl. fund-raising, negotiations with Grinnell College	1912 Dec- 1914 Dec
b. 3, f. 45	Mainly regarding fund-raising in U.S.	Jan-Dec 1915
b. 3, f. 46	Back in China: regarding buildings, curriculum, teachers	1916 Jan- 1918 Feb
b. 3, f. 47	Including offer of presidency of Hangchow College, Hangzhou	1916
b. 3, f. 48	Including resignation from Shantung University to become Secretary of China Christian Education Association	1917 January - May
b. 3, f. 49	Including resignation from Shantung University to become Secretary of China Christian Education Association	1917 June - November
b. 3, f. 50	Incl. form for cooperative survey of schools in China	1918
b. 3, f. 51	Regarding working with CCEA	1919 Jan- May
b. 3, f. 52	Returns to USA	1919 Jun- Dec
b. 3, f. 53	Incl. election to vice-presidency of Peking University	1920
b. 4, f. 54	Regarding work at Peking University	1921-1923
b. 4, f. 55	Returns to U.S.: Fund-raising for Peking University: H.L. has surgery and rest period	1925
b. 4, f. 56	Regarding illnesses in family: plans to live in U.S. permanently	1926-1927
b. 4, f. 57	Regarding search for teaching jobs; studying at Union and Columbia	1928 Jan- Feb
b. 4, f. 58	Job search and appointment to Kennedy School of Missions	1928 Mar- May
b. 4, f. 59	Regarding appointment to Kennedy School of Missions	1928 Jun- Sep
b. 4, f. 60	General letters	1928 Oct- Dec
b. 4, f. 61	General letters	1929 Jan- Feb
b. 4, f. 62	General letters	1929 Mar- May
b. 4, f. 63	General letters	1929 Jun- Aug
b. 4, f. 64	General letters	1929 Sep- Dec
b. 4, f. 65	General letters	1930 Jan- Dec
b. 4, f. 66	Ref. to Harvard-Yenching Committee: Teaching at Mt. Holyoke	1931 Jan- Dec

Henry Winters Luce to/from others (continued)

b. 4, f. 67	Incl. letters to/from Professor Wild: Mt. Holyoke College	1932 Jan- Dec
b. 4, f. 68	General letters	1933 Jan- Dec
b. 5, f. 69	General letters	1934 Mar- Dec
b. 5, f. 70	Incl. retirement from Kennedy School of Missions; begins trips around world	1935 Jan- May
b. 5, f. 71	Traveling in China	1935 Jun- Dec
b. 5, f. 72	Traveling in India, Egypt, Turkey, etc.	1936 Jan- May
b. 5, f. 73	Traveling in U.K.: Returns to U.S.: Account of trip see 8/10/1936	1936 Jun- Aug
b. 5, f. 74	General letters	1936 Sep- Dec
b. 5, f. 75	General letters	1937 Jan- May
b. 5, f. 76	General letters	1937 Jun- Dec
b. 5, f. 77	Incl. report: "Madras and Afterwards"	1938 Feb- Dec
b. 5, f. 78	Inc. re. Pacific Area Seminars	1939 Jan- Dec
b. 5, f. 79	Inc. Re. Pacific Area Seminars	1940 Jan- JCL
b. 5, f. 80	General letters	1940 Aug- Dec
b. 5, f. 81	To/from A..Adams regarding Sliver Bay Seminars	1940 Apr- 1940 Feb
b. 5, f. 82	Incl. re. "Interpreters Institute on South Atlantic"	1941 Jan- Feb
b. 5, f. 83	Incl. re. "Interpreters Institute on South Atlantic"	1941 Apr- May
b. 5, f. 84	Incl. re. "Interpreters Institute on South Atlantic"	1941 Jun- Sep
b. 6, f. 85	"Memorandum on Comparative Literature Questionnaire", Last note written hours before HWL's death	1941 Oct- Dec 1941
b. 6, f. 86	Fragments of letters	no date
Elizabeth Root Luce to/ from others		
b. 6, f. 87	General	1877 Jul - 1940 Dec
b. 6, f. 88	Including condolences on HWL's death	1941 Dec
b. 6, f. 89	Including condolences on HWL's death	1941 Dec
b. 6, f. 90	Including condolences on HWL's death	1941 Dec
b. 6, f. 91	Including condolences on HWL's death, See also Biographical Documentation for contributions to Memorial Book	1942 Jan- May, no date
b. 6, f. 92	Regarding membership New Hartford Presbyterian Church, NY	1945 Oct- 1948 Jun

Series III: Writings and notes, 1897-1948

Of Henry Winters Luce

b. 6, f. 93	School essays incl. Emilio Castelan, John Woolman, Gregory the Great, others	no date
b. 6, f. 94	Study notes	1903-1904
b. 6, f. 95	Study notes	1926-1927
b. 6, f. 96	Incl. "Arrival at Tengchow", "Do we believe in God", "Why we like the Chinese", "China's need for educators"	1897, 1920, 1921
b. 7, f. 97	Sermon notes	1927-1931
b. 7, f. 98	Notes for talks: General notes on China	no date
b. 7, f. 99	Quotes, notes, address book	1920s
b. 7, f. 100	Original poetry	1897, 1932
b. 7, f. 101	Incl. "Choosing a vocation", Report of traveling secretary for American Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance, Original music	1894, 1897
b. 7, f. 102	Misc. notes, Book review	1907, 1920
b. 7, f. 103	Notes for classes: Kennedy School of Missions	1928-1935
b. 7, f. 104	Notes for autobiography	1913-1931
b. 7, f. 105	Notes for autobiography	1927-29, 1932, 1935
b. 7, f. 106	Notes for autobiography, Including letters to ERL	1935-1937, 1941
b. 7, f. 107	Notes for autobiography	1930s- 1940s
b. 8, f. 108	Notes for autobiography: ERL	1939-1943
b. 8, f. 109	Notes for autobiography	19302-1940s
Of Henry R. Luce		
b. 8, f. 110	"Let it die", "Indispensable men", "This great moment", "America as a world power", others	1928, 1933, 1941
b. 8, f. 111	Incl. "A new measure of patriotism", "The world's need for Church", others	1942, 1944-1948
b. 8, f. 112	Journals of trip through Europe	1938, 1945, 1946

Series IV: Collected materials, 1894-1941, no date

Related to Chinese Christian Colleges

b. 8, f. 113	Reports, minutes, etc.	1929-1935
b. 8, f. 114	Reports, minutes, etc.	1935-1937
b. 8, f. 115	Brochures: Shantung University	1907-1941
b. 8, f. 116	Brochures: Peking University	no date
b. 8, f. 117	Brochures: Yenching University	1929-1930

Miscellaneous

b. 8, f. 118	Articles by others: On prayer	no date
b. 8, f. 119	Articles by others: Misc. topics	1896-1930
b. 8, f. 120	Articles by others: Incl. "Aids to the study of Chinese philosophy", Address by Mme Chang Kai-Shek	1930s
b. 9, f. 121	Articles by others: Incl. Chinese proverbs, etc.	no date
b. 9, f. 122	Student Volunteer Movement conventions: Incl. programs, addresses	1894-1912
b. 9, f. 123	Photographs: HWL, others	1892-1939
b. 9, f. 124	News clippings: Some articles by HWL in Shanghai Daily News	1903-1934
b. 9, f. 125	News clippings and magazine article regarding HRL	1940s
b. 9, f. 126	Artifacts: Chinese coin and knife	no date

Series V: Biographical documentation, 1897-1948

b. 9, f. 127	Incl. re. education, marriage, going to China	1890s
b. 9, f. 128	Family photos, death of HWL's mother, etc.	1902-1930
b. 9, f. 129	Compilation of letters	1897-1904
b. 9, f. 130	Death of HWL: Obituaries, services	1941 Dec
b. 9, f. 131	Gathering tributes and info for book about HWL	1942-1943
b. 9, f. 132	Gathering tributes and info for book about HWL	1942-1943
b. 9, f. 133	Gathering tributes and info for book about HWL	1942-1943
b. 9, f. 134	Memorial book and biography, "One Increasing Purpose"	1942-1943
b. 9, f. 135	Death of Elizabeth R. Luce	1948 Nov
b. 9, f. 136	Biographical information on HRL and Sheldon Luce, See also Writings and Notes for other biographical information	no date

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Missionaries -- China

Missions -- China

Universities and colleges -- China

Names

Luce, Henry Robinson, 1898-1967

Luce, Henry Winters, 1868-1941