

Guide to the Rolland and Lottie Welch Papers

RG 224



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2009

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Yale Divinity Library
409 Prospect Street
New Haven, CT 06511
(203) 432-5301
divinity.library@yale.edu
<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

CALL NUMBER: RG 224

CREATOR: Welch, Rolland

TITLE: Rolland and Lottie Welch Papers

DATES: 1900-1970

BULK DATES: 1917-1923

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 6 linear feet (7 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The work of medical missionary Rolland Welch and his wife Lottie in Hunan, China from 1917 to 1923 is documented by letters, writings, photographs, lantern slides, printed material, and memorabilia.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.224>

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.224>.

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

- b. box
- f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Mabel Welch Schroeder, 2009.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Preferred Citation

Rolland and Lottie Welch Papers (RG 224), Special Collections, Yale Divinity Library.

Processing Information

Place names were modernized in the description, with the name originally used in the collection material or in an older version of the finding aid in parenthesis: e.g. "Beijing (Peking)" or "Benin (Dahomey)".

Biographical / Historical

Rolland Aretus Welch was born on November 16, 1884 in Shepherd, Michigan, the son of Russell and Isabella Asenath Welch. He attended public schools and graduated in 1908 from Spring Arbor Seminary, an academy founded by leaders of the Free Methodist Church. Rolland then trained for one year at the American Missionary Medical College before beginning work at the Battle Creek Sanitarium in Michigan. Raised in a religious family, Rolland became a professing Christian at age ten, Sunday School Superintendent by age fourteen, and a licensed preacher by age seventeen.

Lottie Belle McClain was born April 23, 1885 in Centerville, Michigan, the daughter of Reuben and Clementine Carr McClain. Her mother died when she was a toddler so her father's brother and wife (William McClain) raised her. Her aunt died when she was thirteen years old and she lived with her cousin before going to work in the paper mills in Three Rivers, Michigan. In order to be closer to work, she found a room with Will and Mary Bridgman, who provided a family relationship for her in future years. Lottie moved to Battle Creek, Michigan in 1902. She became a Christian in 1904 and united with the Free Methodist Church in 1904. She began nurses training at the Battle Creek Sanitarium in 1907, where she met Rolland Welch.

Rolland and Lottie married on August 19, 1909. The couple went to Washington, Kansas where Rolland served as a minister for one year. They returned to Battle Creek in August 1910. Their first child, Rolland William, was born on September 9, 1912 but lived for only ten days, due to injuries related to birth trauma. Their daughter, Mabel, was born on May 31, 1914. Rolland resumed his medical training at the University of Illinois, into which the American Missionary Medical College had merged, and received his M.D. in 1915. Rolland worked as a physician and surgeon at the Battle Creek Sanitarium until April, 1917, when he was appointed as a medical missionary under the United Evangelical Mission. The United Evangelical Church was created in 1891 when some members of the Evangelical Association, also known as the Albright Brethren, left to form the new church. In 1922 the two groups reunited in Detroit and renamed themselves "The Evangelical Church."

Lottie completed the "First Standard Teacher Training Course" given by the Teacher Training Board of the Free Methodist Church in May 1917 but required additional education in order to join the United Evangelical Mission in China. After Rolland sailed for China, Lottie and Mabel remained in Greenville, Illinois where she attend the Greenville College Preparatory School, graduating in June 1918. Lottie and Mabel sailed for China in September, 1918. They remained in Nanking for a few months for language study before joining Rolland because women and children were not allowed to go Yuhsien at that time, due to war conditions. During the summer months Lottie and Mabel lived at the missionary resort in Guling (Kuling). Rolland was Superintendent of Emma Dubs Memorial Hospital in Yuhsien, Hunan province until 1923. The Emma Dubs Memorial Hospital was built in 1919-1920 under the direction of Rev. C.C. Talbott and Dr. Rolland Welch, who had earlier opened a dispensary in Yuhsien.

Rolland suffered from acute ill health in late 1922 and early 1923 and the Welches returned to the U.S. for furlough in the fall of that year. They had expected to return to China, but were not reappointed by the mission board. Rolland practiced medicine in Bellevue, Michigan from 1924 until his death in 1934.

Scope and Contents

Though the Welches were missionaries in China for a relatively brief time, this collection provides valuable documentation about their missionary experience, the development and operations of a hospital in Hunan Province, and the work of the United Evangelical Mission (later known as the Evangelical Mission). Letters exchanged between Rolland and Lottie during the times of separation when Lottie was in the U.S., Nanjing (Nanking), or at the missionary resort of Guling (Kuling) provide interesting detail regarding their daily life. Relationships established with both missionary and Chinese colleagues remained influential in the Welches' lives well after their return from China. Their own letters and the letters that the Welches received from missionary colleagues in China after their return to the U.S. in 1923 describe political unrest, banditry, tension within the mission, and the medical work of the mission.

Included in the collection is a set of lantern slides, with descriptions, which were used by Rolland Welch to give presentations about the China mission in churches in the U.S. following their return.

Some documents in the collection are photocopies or scans made from albums that had been compiled by the donor. The original albums were returned to the donor. The photocopies have been integrated into the chronological or alphabetical sequence of the series into which they fit.

Arrangement

- I. Family Correspondence, 1917-1925
- II. General Correspondence, 1914-1970
- III. Biographical Documentation, 1917-1923
- IV. Photographs and Lantern Slides, 1917-1923, n.d.
- V. Collected Material and Memorabilia 1900-1947, n.d.

Collection Contents

Series I: Family Correspondence, 1917-1925

Rolland to Lottie		
b. 1, f. 1	Enroute to China	1917 Apr-May
b. 1, f. 2	From China	1917 Jun-Jul
b. 1, f. 3-5	From Yuhsien	1917 Aug - 1918 Mar
b. 1, f. 6	From Yuhsien and Guling (Kuling)	1918 April-June
b. 1, f. 7	From Guling (Kuling), anticipating the arrival of Lottie and Mabel from the U.S.	1918 July-September
b. 1, f. 8	From Yuhsien, to Lottie and Mabel in Nanking	1918 Oct-Nov
b. 1, f. 9	From Yu Xian (Yuhsien); from trip to Beijing (Peking) where he attended a medical conference	1920 February - June
b. 1, f. 10	From Yuhsien	1920 Jul
b. 1, f. 11	From Yuhsien to Lottie and Mabel in Nanking; from visit to Dr. Dubs in Liling and from Shanghai to Lottie and Mabel in Yuhsien	1920 Aug- Nov
b. 1, f. 12	From Hankou (Hankow) and Beijing (Peking) to Lottie and Mabel in Yuhsien; from Yuhsien to Lottie and Mabel in Guling (Kuling)	1921 February-June
b. 1, f. 13	From Yuhsien to Lottie and Mabel in Guling (Kuling)	1922 May-September
b. 1, f. 14	Family back in the U.S.; from Bellevue, Michigan and Chicago	1924 Jul, 1925 Jul
Lottie to Rolland		
b. 1, f. 15-20	From Greenville, IL to Rolland in China. Lottie was taking courses, graduating in June 1918	1917 May-1918 Jul
b. 1, f. 21	From Nanking Lottie was attending Language School	1918 Nov-Dec
b. 1, f. 22	From Guling (Kuling)	1919 June-September
b. 1, f. 23-25	From Guling (Kuling)	1920 May-August
b. 1, f. 26	From Yuhsien to Rolland in Liling and Shanghai	1920 Oct-Nov
b. 1, f. 27	From Guling (Kuling)	1921 May-June
b. 1, f. 28	From Guling (Kuling)	1922 June-September

Series II: General Correspondence, 1914-1970

b. 2, f. 29-30	Letters to be read by Rolland during voyage to China from colleagues and friends in the U.S	1917 Apr
b. 2, f. 31	Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Anderson to the Welches in the U.S., primarily from Yuhsien Including regarding the sale and shipment of the Welches belongings and tensions within the mission community	1924 Apr- 1927 Mar
b. 2, f. 32	To Lottie from Jennie Armstrong, a friend in Illinois	1918 Dec- 1924 May
b. 2, f. 33	B	1918-1922
b. 2, f. 34	Lottie to the Bridgman family, from Nanking, Yuhsien, and Guling (Kuling) The Bridgmans acted as family for Lottie, including providing supplies for the Welches in China and doing financial transactions.	1918 October - 1920 December
b. 2, f. 35	Lottie and Mabel to/from the Bridgman family Including Lottie's commentary on missionary work	1921 Jan-1923 Oct
b. 2, f. 36	To Welches from A.H. and Lora Butzbach, primarily written from Guling (Kuling) Including regarding bandits and kidnapping, and mission affairs	1923 October -1926 April
b. 2, f. 37	C Including from Teofile Corpus, District Health Officer, Philippines, and from missionary colleagues in China	1923-1924
b. 2, f. 37a	To Welches from Cowles family	1925 Jul -1965 Dec
b. 2, f. 38	To Welches from Mabel Cook Mabel Cook was the office secretary of the General Missionary Board of the Free Methodist Church, to which the Welches owed some money.	1918 Sep-1924 Apr
b. 2, f. 39-40	To Welches from Chinese students	1922 Sep-1930 Mar
b. 2, f. 41	To Welches from Homer and C. Dubs	1917 Apr-1918 Nov
b. 2, f. 42	To Lottie from Iva Dunlap Iva Dunlap taught at the Evangelical Mission in Changsha; letters include information about woman and girl apparently supported by Lottie	1923-1925, n.d.
b. 2, f. 43	E-G Including from G. Epp, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Missionary Society of the Evangelical Church re. childrens' allowance and medical bill.	1917-1924
b. 2, f. 44	To Welches from Hang family The Hang family were friends and co-workers with the Welches in Yuhsien. Mr. Hang was the principal of the Le Teh Boy's Middle School. The letters describe loss of trust in the staff of the Emma M. Dubs Memorial Hospital and unrest in the school population because of anti-missionary propoganda in the period after the Welches left China.	1924 May-1926 Jun

b. 2, f. 45	To Welches from Heidenreich family Including from Elsie Heidenreich, missionary in Yuhsien and Guling (Kuling)	1918 July-1926 October
b. 2, f. 46	To Lottie from Mrs. Robert Hess, a friend from Woodbine, IL	1918 Jul-1924 Jan
b. 2, f. 47	To Lottie from Cora Hobein, primarily written from Yuhsien and Changsha Cora Hobein worked at the Emma Dubs Memorial Hospital. Her letters describe the ongoing mission work as well as soldiers and bandits in the area.	1918 Sep-1926 Dec
b. 2, f. 48	To Welches from Hoffman and Hubly	1920-1925
b. 2, f. 49	To Welches from Rose Holtzman, a friend in Illinois	191 Jan-1925 Jul
b. 2, f. 50	To Welches from Jespersens, Battle Creek Sanitarium	1922 Jan
b. 2, f. 51	To Welches from D.R. and Martha Kauffman The Kauffmans served under the United Evangelical Church in Hunan province	1919 Dec-1927 Jan
b. 2, f. 52	L	1919-1966
b. 2, f. 53	To Welches from Herman Lambert	1917 Apr-1920 Nov
b. 2, f. 54	To Welches from Emma and Horace Lequear The Lequears were missionaries under the Reformed Church in Hunan province	1921 Jan-1925 Aug
b. 2, f. 55	To Welches from Algie and Mabel Lehman The Lehmans were missionaries under the United Evangelical Church in Hunan	1920 Dec-1926 Nov
b. 3, f. 56	To Welches from Ralph Li-hsiao Ralph Li-hsiao was a student supported by the Welches in Yuhsien; he addresses them as "mother and father."	1922 Apr-1926 Jun
b. 3, f. 57	M	1918-1970
b. 3, f. 58	To Welches from B.H., B.E. and Alice Niebels B.E. Niebels was a medical doctor at the United Evangelical Mission Hospital in Lilung, Hunan province	1918 Aug-1924 Mar
b. 3, f. 59	To Lottie from Mabel Petersen, a friend in Illinois	1919 Feb-1922 Sep
b. 3, f. 60	To Lottie from Mattie Peterson Mattie Peterson was a missionary serving under the American Free Methodist Mission in Henan (Honan) province. This correspondence refers to funds being paid by the Welches to the mission.	1920 March-1922 May
b. 3, f. 61	To Welches from Ida Rice Ida Rice, a missionary in Inhambane, East Africa was encouraging the Welches to come serve in Africa.	1914 Nov-1916 Jan
b. 3, f. 62	To Welches from Daisy and M.E. Ritzman	1919 Dec-1921 Oct
b. 3, f. 63-64	To Lottie from Effie and Emmeline Root, friends in Illinois	1914(?) -1925 Nov

b. 3, f. 65	To Welches from Arthur and Molly Sanders The Sanders were missionaries under the Evangelical Mission in Changsha	1920 Jan-1925 Feb
b. 3, f. 66	To Lottie from Ignatia Schoch Ignatia Schoch was a missionary under the Evangelical Mission in Changsha	1923 Oct-1925 Feb
b. 3, f. 67	To the Welches from the Shambaugh family	1918 Aug-1965 Dec
b. 3, f. 68	To Welches from Edward and Ruth Shelton Includes news about the Kuling Estate	1920 December - 1926 June
b. 3, f. 69	To Welches from Rachel and S.M. Short	1924 Jun-1934 Jun
b. 3, f. 70	To Lottie from Grace Somerville	1922 Jun-1933 Jul
b. 3, f. 71	To Welches from Ralph Spreng Ralph Spreng was a medical doctor at the Emma Dubs Memorial Hospital in Yuhsien	1922 Dec-1924 Nov
b. 3, f. 72	To Rolland from Mary Stone Written from Shanghai, this letter concerns Dr. Welch's request for a graduate nurse. Mary Stone was a medical doctor at Danforth Memorial Hospital.	1919 Aug
b. 3, f. 72	To Lottie from Elvina Strunk	1920 Jan-Nov
b. 3, f. 73	To the Welches from Theodore and Esther Suhr The Suhrs were missionaries serving under the Evangelical Church in Liling, Hunan province. According to a letter written by Theodore Suhr in May, 1924 the Welches were asked to resign by the Board of Missions. Colleagues on the field were surprised by this action.	1921 Feb-1925 Jun
b. 3, f. 74-75	To the Welches from C.C. and Carrie Talbott The Talbotts were missionaries under the United Evangelical Church in Yuhsien. Letters from C.C. Talbott refer to tensions between Rolland Welch and Dr. Dubs, Superintendent of the China mission.	1918 Sep-1959 Sep
b. 3, f. 76-77	To Lottie from Elizabeth Teeter, a friend in Illinois	1918 Aug-1926 Dec
b. 4, f. 78	To/ from the Van Antwerps Includes descriptive letter written by Lottie from Nanking	1918 Nov-1919 Mar
b. 4, f. 79	To Welches from H.E. and Sadie Voss The Vosses were missionaries under the Evangelical Church in Yuhsien. Their letters refer to anti-Christian protests and unrest in the area.	1921 Jun-1927 Feb
b. 4, f. 80	W	1922, 1935

Series III: Biographical Documentation, 1917-1923

b. 4, f. 81	Journal written by Rolland Welch during his trip from Chicago to Liling, China	1917 Apr-Jun
b. 4, f. 82	Biographical sketch re. Lottie Belle McClain and Rolland A. Welch prepared by their daughter, Mabel Welch Schroeder	n.d.
b. 4, f. 82	Articles re. Welches in <i>Missionary Tidings</i> ; newspaper clippings; program from farewell service for Dr. R. A. Welch	1917 Apr-May
b. 4, f. 83	Certification of Mrs. R. A. Welch as missionary of United Evangelical Church	1918 Aug
b. 4, f. 83	Small diary of Lottie recording her daily activities in China	ca. 1921
b. 4, f. 84	Documentation regarding loan from Board of Education of Free Methodist Church and insurance policy	1907, 1920
b. 4, f. 85	School records from Kuling American School and biographical anecdote regarding Mabel Welch (daughter)	1922-1923
b. Ov2	Diplomas of Lottie McClain Welch	1917, 1918

Series IV: Photographs and Lantern Slides, 1917-1923

b. 4, f. 86	Printouts of scans of photographs from albums compiled by donor (originals returned): including portraits of Rolland, Lottie, and Mabel Welch, Welch extended family, the United Evangelical Mission compound in Yuhsien; Emma Dubs Memorial Hospital staff, American School in Kuling, scenes and colleagues	ca. 1917-1923
b. 4, f. 87	Photographs of missionary colleagues, including C. Newton Dubs, head of the mission	ca. 1917-1923
b. 4, f. 88	Photographs of Guling (Kuling)	circa 1917-1923
b. 4, f. 89	Photographs of Beijing (Peking) and the Great Wall	circa 1920
b. 4, f. 90-91	Photographs of Chinese students and colleagues	ca. 1917-1923
b. 4, f. 92	Photographs of damage from Japanese earthquake	1923
b. Ov1	Set of 84 glass lantern slides: people and scenes from the Welches' time in China The digitized slides can be found at: http://findit.library.yale.edu/?f%5Bcall_number_sim%5D%5B%5D=RG+224	circa 1917-1923
b. Ov2	Handmade photograph album: "China as seen from 1917-1923 by Dr. Rolland Welch"; two placards of mounted photographs; oversize photograph of mission conference	1917-1923

Series V: Collected material and memorabilia, 1900-1947, n.d.

b. 4, f. 93	Articles, map, and clippings re. mission in Hunan, including Eleventh Annual Report of The Evangelical Hospital, Liling, Hunan (1926)	1924-1947
b. 4, f. 94	Postcards, poems, programs, menus, receipts, clippings	1917-1921, n.d.
b. Ov2	Tribute banner with "love" character in Chinese	1923
b. Ov2	Books and pamphlets <i>A Mandarin Primer</i> (1919); <i>Analytical Chinese-English dictionary</i> (1900); Chinese language books; announcement of The Kuling School (1921-1922); <i>Hallock's Almanac</i> (1923, 1925); <i>The Linguist</i> (1922); <i>Things Seen in China</i> (Chitty); <i>Evangelical Missions</i> (by Niebel and Dubs, 1919). Two additional books were added to the library's cataloged collection: <i>Footprints on the Sands of China</i> (Grace Cowles Story) and <i>Adventures of a Sower</i> (Minnie Dubs).	1900-1925
b. OV3	Diplomas: Rolland Welch's medical degree diploma from the University of Illinois (1915); Lottie Welch's diplomas from the Teachers' Training Board, Free Methodist Church (1917) and Greenville College Preparatory School (1918)	

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
Missionaries, Medical -- China
Missions -- China

Names

Welch, Lottie McClain
Welch, Rolland

Corporate Body

United Evangelical Church -- Missions