

# Guide to the Luther Anderson Papers

MS 36



compiled by Sharon Bishop Laist

February 1982

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
(203) 432-1735  
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 36

**CREATOR:** Anderson, Luther, 1880-1940

**TITLE:** Luther Anderson papers

**DATES:** 1899-1940

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 6 linear feet (8 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Teacher and journalist. Correspondence, writings, scrapbooks and photographs relating to his career as a journalist in Peking (1911-1914) and his post as teacher of English and aesthetics at the American International College in Springfield, Mass. (1928-1940). He also lectured on Scandinavian culture and on Chinese politics. Manuscripts and advertising brochures document this aspect of his life. Although his correspondence is mostly routine, there are a number of letters of interest from William Lyon Phelps and Sven Birger Sandzen, head of the art school at Bethany College (Kansas) where Anderson had studied.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0036>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0036>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

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

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Helen Carlson Anderson, 1967.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

Unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by the creator(s) of this collection are in the public domain. There are no restrictions on use. Copyright status for other collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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### Preferred Citation

Luther Anderson Papers (MS 36). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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### Existence and Location of Copies

Scrapbooks also available on microfilm (402 frames on 1 reel, 35 mm) from Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, at cost. Order no. HM128.

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## Biographical / Historical

Luther Anderson was born on March 20, 1880 to a Swedish farming family in Salina, Kansas, one of the few Swedish land grant settlements in this country. He attended Bethany Academy and earned his B.A. at Bethany College, both Swedish institutions. After receiving his three year teaching certificate, he taught in a district school near Lindsborg, Kansas and in 1901 became principal of the Lindsborg high school. He entered the senior class at Yale, received his B.A. in 1903, his M.A. in English and history in 1904 and his Ph.D. in history in 1906. His dissertation, "History of the Salzburg Germans in Georgia" was published in the *German American Annals* monograph series.

Anderson married Helen Marie Carlson of Meriden, Connecticut, on September 8, 1907. Following a visit to Kansas, the couple left for Peking, China where Luther had accepted a three year position as professor of European history at the Imperial University, an institution established by the Chinese government and conducted according to western ideas. The Andersons had one child, Ida Lillian, born July 29, 1908 at Rocky Point, Peitaiho, their summer cottage in China.

In July, 1911, he returned to America to lecture on far eastern politics and diplomacy at the University of Illinois. With the outbreak of the Chinese revolution (October, 1911), Anderson returned to Peking as special correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*. In this position, he travelled extensively throughout the Chinese Empire and the Philippines until 1915.

Anderson returned to the United States in 1915 and settled in Springfield, Massachusetts where he became head of the department of history and economics at the High School of Commerce in Springfield (1915-1920). In 1920 he began working as a special agent for the Pennsylvania Mutual Life Insurance

Company and teaching evening classes in economics and business subjects at the Springfield branch of Northeastern University.

In 1928 he began teaching English and aesthetics at the American International College in Springfield. The American International College was originally a school for foreign students but changes in immigration laws brought a shift in the school's population to American students. While at A.I.C., he developed a school of Fine Arts modeled on the School of Art in Bethany College and the work of Sven Birger Sandzen, who had been head of the art school since 1894. Anderson remained active as a writer, teacher and lecturer, participating in the civic, cultural and religious life of the community until his death in 1940.

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## Scope and Contents

The Luther Anderson Papers consist of correspondence, writings and photographs, of which the most interesting material relates to the years Anderson spent in the Far East. Anderson's correspondence is mostly routine, relating to speaking engagements, articles for publication and terms of employment. There are a few letters from former students at the Imperial University, including a short note from Yuan Yuen Tai, the son of Yuan Shi Kai, who was responsible for restructuring the Chinese government after the Manchu dynasty was overthrown. A few letters of note are Anderson's to Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1933 and 1934), advising the president to study the Chinese classics for precepts of good government, correspondence with William Lyon Phelps of Yale who remained a life-long friend of Anderson's, and with Birger Sandzen from the School of Art at Bethany College, which discuss Sandzen's career and goals as well as Anderson's plans for A.I.C. There is one folder of unidentified Chinese letters and receipts from 1906-11.

The greatest amount of information concerning Anderson's years in China, Mongolia, Japan, Formosa and the Philippines can be found in the Writings section. Writings are arranged chronologically with undated and/or unidentified items at the end. Anderson wrote about revolutionary leaders like Dr. Sun Yat-sen and Yuan Shih Kai, the land and the people of Mongolia and the situation in pre World War I Japan. Other articles describe the living conditions and the political situation as well as cultural events and customs of post Manchu China. The articles from his year in the Philippines (1914-15), discuss the economic situation and the pros and cons of independence for Filipinos.

There is one folder of material about Scandinavian culture and literature and scattered manuscripts on Scandinavian topics throughout the unidentified material. Anderson also wrote articles for Swedish Lutheran and ethnic publications and spoke to church groups and Scandinavian benefit societies.

Scrapbooks containing for the most part clippings of Anderson's articles in the *Chicago Daily News* as well as in other magazines and newspapers such as *Asia, Education, Philippine Monthly* and *Lutheran Companion*, dating from 1907-34, have been microfilmed and are available on MICROFILM HM 128. These scrapbooks have been destroyed.

Teaching material consists of lectures, notes, quizzes and articles used in teaching his various courses or in speaking to civic and religious groups. Where possible they are separated by courses and arranged alphabetically. Proud of his Swedish heritage, Anderson taught the Norse Sagas and Scandinavian literature and lectured on Scandinavian culture in his classes. Manuscripts on these topics can be found scattered throughout his course material.

Miscellaneous material consists of a map of the races of Asia, calling cards, invitations and other printed material, most of which is related to China.

The photographs section contains photographs most of which were taken between 1907-15 while Anderson was in the Far East. Many are unidentified. Some photographs, including those labeled "Temple, beauty spots in China," were removed from the microfilmed scrapbooks.

## Collection Contents

### Inventory, 1899-1940

b. 1, f. 1-4	Correspondence	1899-1940
	Writings	
b. 1, f. 5	Scrapbooks of tear sheets	1910-1934
b. 1, f. 6-9	Manuscripts and newsclippings	1911-1915
b. 1, f. 10	Tear sheets, newsclippings, fragments	1916-34, undated
b. 1, f. 11	Manuscripts (Pennsylvania Mutual Life Insurance Co.)	Circa 1919-1930
b. 1, f. 12	Manuscripts and fragments (Chinese topics)	Undated
b. 1, f. 13	Manuscripts (Scandinavian history and literature)	Undated
b. 2, f. 14-17	Manuscripts	Undated
	Teaching material	
b. 2, f. 18	Advertising	1920-1940
b. 2, f. 19-24	Aesthetics and cultural trends	1920-1940
b. 3, f. 25-26	Aesthetics and cultural trends	1920-1940
b. 3, f. 27-28	Economics	1919-1940
b. 3, f. 29-31	English courses	1928-1940
b. 4, f. 32-34	English courses	1928-1940
b. 4, f. 35-36	Fine arts courses	Circa 1935-1940
b. 4, f. 37	Journalism	Circa 1938
b. 5, f. 38-40	Miscellaneous	Undated
b. 5, f. 41-43	Miscellaneous	Undated
	Photographs	
b. 6, f. 44-46reel 1U	Scrapbooks This material has been microfilmed. Patrons must use HM 128 instead of the originals.	1907-1911
b. 7, f. 47-63	Photographs removed from "Temples, beauty spots in China"	Circa 1911-1914
b. 7, f. 64	Photographs removed from scrapbook	Circa 1911-1914
b. 7, f. 65-70	Miscellaneous loose photographs	Undated
b. 8	Three large photographs of Luther Anderson with class at the Imperial University, Peking	1907-1911

## **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**

Chinese letters  
Educators  
Journalism  
Journalists  
Scandinavian literature

### **Geographic Names**

Asia  
China -- Description and travel  
China -- History -- Revolution, 1911-1912  
Philippines -- Politics and government --  
1898-1935  
United States -- Travelers

### **Genres / Formats**

Photographic prints  
Scrapbooks

### **Names**

Anderson, Luther, 1880-1940  
Phelps, William Lyon, 1865-1943  
Sandzén, Birger, 1871-1954