

Guide to the Howard Lee Haag Papers

MS 621



compiled by Janet Elaine Gertz

February 1982

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 621

CREATOR: Haag, Howard Lee, 1893-

TITLE: Howard Lee Haag papers

DATES: 1916-1967

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2.75 linear feet (7 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Correspondence, reports, writings, printed matter, memorabilia and photographs relating chiefly to Haag's stay in Manchuria where he worked as the General Secretary of the Harbin YMCA, aiding Russian refugees fleeing the Revolution. Of particular interest are the eye-witness descriptions of conditions in Manchuria and Siberia during that period as well as of the Russian refugee community in Harbin. A smaller amount of material documents Haag's work in the Philippine Islands (1935-1941), in Japan (1950-1954) and in Bridgeport, Conn. from 1942 to 1950 and again from 1954 to 1961. Information on the work of the YMCA is included both in reports and memoranda (1921-1961) and in letters from colleagues in China, Japan, and the Soviet Union. A series of travel notebooks (1921-1935) contain observations on local conditions in Manchuria, China, Japan, Korea and some of the major cities of Europe.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0621>

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.0621>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to 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

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Howard Haag, 1971.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for 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.

Preferred Citation

Howard Lee Haag Papers (MS 621). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

(Retired General Secretary, Y.M.C.A. of Bridgeport, Conn.)

Born: Rockford, Michigan

Father and mother (Laura Ester Stoddard) were children of most early settlers of Michigan. Childhood was spent in a log cabin built by his grandfather.

Education: Early grades in little one room school; High school, Rockford, Michigan. Entered University of Michigan, graduated in 1917 having majored in psychology and minored in English and public speaking and drama. Post graduate work 1929 and 1930 to complete Masters degree in educational psychology; thesis: "The Measurements of Racial Prejudice in High School Children". Elected to Honorary Educational Fraternity, Phi Delta Kappa.

Married: 1916 to Florence Adella Haines of Muskegon, Michigan, a student of the University.

Service and Employment:

- 1917 ○ Accepted position as instructor of English, high school, Battle Creek, Mich.
- 1918 ○ Accepted position as Membership Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. of Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- 1919 ○ Promoted to Executive Secretary of East Grand Rapids Branch Y.M.C.A.
- 1920 ○ Asked to prepare for foreign work of the Y.M.C.A. and was sent to Cleveland, Ohio to study the Russian language.
- 1921 ○ Was assigned to the General Secretaryship of the Harbin, Manchuria Y.M.C.A. to work with Russian refugees who had fled from Communistic Russia into Manchuria.

Service and Employment:

- 1921 ○ Service in Harbin continued through 1935. During these years (15 in all) established a grade school, a high school, an English speaking Junior College and a Technical Institute. Became the Principal of the grade and high schools and the President of the colleges.
- 1921 ○ Became proficient in the use of the Russian language, and lectured in the Teachers Training School in Russian on the subject of educational psychology.
- 1935 ○ Was requested to accept the position of Associate National General Secretary for the Y.M.C.A. of the Philippines, Served there until 1941. War broke out while home on furlough so could not return as had planned.
- 1942 ○ Accepted the position of General Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. of Bridgeport, Conn. This position held until 1950. In 1946 was loaned to the International Committee of the Y.M.C.A. to help organize the World Youth Fund on the Pacific Coast. Returned to Bridgeport after nine months.
- 1950 ○ Resigned from the Bridgeport Y.M.C.A. to accept the call of the International Committee to become the Senior Fraternal Secretary of the Y.M.C.A.s of Japan for a period of three years. Remained in that position until 1954.
- 1954 ○ Again called to the General Secretaryship of the Bridgeport Y.M.C.A., a position which he held until retirement in April 1961.
- 1961 ○ Upon retirement from Bridgeport was asked by the International Committee to take temporary interim assignment to the Y.M.C.A.s of Korea. When that assignment was finished in February 1962, retired for the second time to return to home at 18 Placid Street, Trumbull, Conn.

Some Special Services Rendered

- 1930 ○ During this winter in Manchuria worked with the American Red Cross and other relief organizations to recover over 1000 refugees who had fled across the Siberian-Manchurian border and bring them back to Harbin and through the Nansen Commission of the League of Nations, send them to South America for settlement there.
- 1933 ○ Participated in the First Asian Conference of the Y.M.C.A. as a delegate from Manchuria to the Philippines.
- 1932-1933 ○ Reconstructed the building of the Harbin Y.M.C.A. to house the growing schools of the Association. Established the first Boys Camp for Russian boys in Manchuria.
- 1923-1935 ○ Aided over 1500 Russian refugee students to take examinations for entrance into universities in the U.S.A., Canada, and Europe. Arranged for scholarships for them and aided them in getting to these universities.
- 1952 ○ Organized the Institute for Training and Research of the National Y.M.C.A.s of Japan. Purpose - to train secretaries for Y.M.C.A. work in Japan and Korea.
- 1950-1954 ○ Consultant for the reconstruction program of buildings of the Y.M.C.A. destroyed by the war.

Membership in Organizations:

In the University of Michigan - President of Student Christian Association; Assistant Pastor of the First M. E. Church of Ann Arbor with special attention to Student Work; Glee Club; Choral Union; Varsity Male Quartet; Phi Kappa Alpha Fraternity; and others.

F. & A. M. - St. John's, No. 9, Manila; Tokyo Lodge No. 2, Japan

F. & A. M. - St. John's, No. 9, Manila; Tokyo Lodge No. 2, Japan; Scottish Rite - Tokyo Bodies

F. & A. M. - St. John's, No. 9, Manila; Tokyo Lodge No. 2, Japan; Shrine - Nile Temple

Rotary Club-Harbin, Manila, Tokyo, Bridgeport (Past President)

Chamber of Commerce; Tokyo and Bridgeport

Sons of American Revolution (Past President)

Board of Directors, Inter-Church Residences, Inc.

International Committee Y.M.C.A.s of U.S.A. and Canada

Phi Delta Kappa, Honorary Educational Fraternity.

Church Affiliations

United Congregational Church, Bridgeport (Senior Deacon) Past: Manila Union Church

United Congregational Church, Bridgeport (Senior Deacon) Past:Tokyo Union Church

United Congregational Church, Bridgeport (Senior Deacon) Past:Seoul, Korea Union Church

General

Spent 44 years as Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. Twenty-five years have been spent in the Associations of the Far East.

Have traveled extensively in the Far East. Recent trip took to Japan, Philippines Hong Kong, Bangkok, Malaya, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji Islands, Tahiti, Studied the social and political problems of these countries.

Hunting and fishing have been the major past time. Manchuria provided great opportunities for both. Spent many days in the Hingan Mountains and in Mongolia.

Scope and Contents

The Howard Haag Papers contain correspondence, writings, printed matter, and other papers of Howard Lee Haag, secretary of the Y.M.C.A. in Harbin (Manchuria), Manila, Tokyo, and Bridgeport, Connecticut. The bulk of the papers concern Haag's stay in Manchuria, where he and his wife, Florence Haines, were stationed from 1921 to 1935. The particular interest of the collection lies in eye-witness descriptions of conditions in Manchuria and Siberia during that period, and of the Russian refugee community which grew up in Harbin after the Russian Revolution. It was among these Russians that Haag's work lay, although he also made trips in China and Japan during his fifteen years in Manchuria. The papers describe not only the day to day life of Harbin but also the warfare and political upheaval caused by the struggle for supremacy among the U.S.S.R., Japan, and China.

A smaller amount of material, mostly routine, deals with Haag's work in the Philippine Islands from 1935 until 1941, and in Japan from 1950 until 1954, as well as work with the Y.M.C.A. in Bridgeport from 1942 to 1950 and from 1954 until his retirement in 1961.

The papers are divided into five series: CORRESPONDENCE, WRITINGS, Y.M.C.A. PAPERS, PRINTED MATTER, and MEMORABILIA. CORRESPONDENCE is separated into two chronologically arranged sections, *General Correspondence* (1921-1961) and *Family Correspondence* (1916-1952), the latter being further divided into Outgoing and Incoming. The incoming family correspondence consists of letters to the Haags while they were stationed in Harbin and deals with family matters; the rest of CORRESPONDENCE deals largely with the Haag's work in Harbin and other Y.M.C.A. stations. These letters provide insight into the working of the Y.M.C.A. in Harbin and its financial difficulties, into local economic and social

conditions, and into the Haags' daily life. Especially interesting are descriptions of the interactions of the Russian and Chinese communities, and the struggles of the Russian refugee community with their Soviet antagonists. The general correspondence contains correspondence with Y.M.C.A. secretaries in China, Japan, and the Soviet Union. Some of the most interesting letters were written by Brackett Lewis, Y.M.C.A. secretary in Vladivostok in the 1920s describing the Bolshevik take-over of that city. The general correspondence also contains a small number of letters from Haag's work in the Philippines and in Bridgeport, and a somewhat larger selection from his years in Japan. These letters are largely routine.

The writings of Howard Haag are arranged chronologically (1921-1961, n.d.). Few were ever published, and many are in draft form. The series begins with notebooks (1921 to 1935) dealing in the main with Harbin. These contain addresses, notes on such topics as Christianity, Russian history, Y.M.C.A. work, photography, and radios, as well as outlines for devotional services, meditations, and quotations. Interspersed with these are sporadic diary entries covering most of Haag's time in Harbin. The first notebook. (1921-1925) covers the Haags' initial journey to Harbin via Japan and China and the first few years in Manchuria, the second, title "Vol. I," (1926-1927) describes trips to Barim and Mukden in Manchuria in 1926. "Vol. II" (1927-1933) begins a description of another trip to Barim in 1927 which is continued in "Vol. III" (1927-1933). "Vol. II" also covers the Haags' journey to the United States in 1929 via the Soviet Union, Berlin, Prague, Rome and Paris, and provides interesting vignettes of these cities on the eve of World War II. Finally, the fourth notebook is devoted to a trip from Harbin to Japan via Korea in 1935. All four notebooks contain frequent references to local conditions, politics, and to the Soviet-Sino-Japanese conflicts of the era.

WRITINGS contains, in addition, newspaper articles (1921-1942) by Haag, most of which are published excerpts from his letters to his parents from Harbin; there are also several articles about the Philippines. A sequence of essays and notes, some in the form of informal sketches, others diary-like notes, fragments of quotations, and so forth, describe Harbin, Y.M.C.A. work in various other countries, and other topics such as Communism, Christianity, and politics. A longer essay, "On the Manchurian - Soviet Border," reports on aid to Russian refugees in northeastern Manchuria, and is illustrated by a sequence of photographs. There is also a lengthy draft manuscript, "Manchuria, A Backward Glance," compiled by Haag from letters and notes written while he was stationed in Harbin. WRITINGS also contains outlines for a variety of speeches (1942-1960), mostly devotional talks given to Y.M.C.A. and similar organizations; others discuss Manchuria and Japan. Finally, Haag's examination papers for the Eastern Association School (1924) on the Y.M.C.A. and the church in America complete the series.

Series III contains a small assortment of papers relating to Haag's work for the Y.M.C.A. from 1921 to 1961, Included are reports, statements, memoranda, conference materials, printed matters, and memorabilia. Over half of the material, including several documents in Russian, concern Harbin. All Y.M.C.A. correspondence is located in *General Correspondence*.

Series IV, PRINTED MATTER, is composed of books, including several published by the League of Nations and by the Manchoukuo government, articles, and so forth, reflecting Haag's interests. They are arranged by subject, and topics range from Manchuria and Sino-Japanese relations to Communism and religion.

The last series, MEMORABILIA, contains newspaper clippings about Haag (1921-1961), programs and other souvenirs (1924-1956), two maps of Manchuria, and biographical material on Haag. The largest portion of the series, however, consists of sixty-seven photographs and postcards, almost all from Manchuria in the 1920s and 1930s. The most interesting of these are pictures of Russian refugees (1931) which illustrate the essay "On the Manchurian-Soviet Border." There is also a photograph album from a Chinese temple near Harbin.

Howard Haag donated his papers to Yale University in 1971.

Arrangement

Arranged in five series: I. Correspondence. II. Writings. III. Y.M.C.A. Papers. IV. Printed Matter. V. Memorabilia.

Collection Contents

Series I: CORRESPONDENCE, 1916-1967, undated

2.75 linear feet (7 boxes)

General Correspondence

b. 1, f. 1-9	1921-1923 Dec, 1925-1928	1921-1923 Dec, 1925-1928
b. 1, f. 10-11	1929 April -October	1929 April - October
b. 1, f. 12-15	1930-1936	1930-1936, 1940-1943
b. 1, f. 16-31	1950-1953, 1957-1961, undated	1950-1953, 1957- 1961, undated

Family Correspondence

Outgoing

b. 2, f. 32-33	1920, 1921 January-March	1920, 1921 January-March
b. 2, f. 34-62	1921 May -1932	1921 May -1932
b. 3, f. 63-66	1933-1937, 1939-1952, undated	1933-1937, 1939- 1952, undated

Incoming

b. 3, f. 67-89	1916, 1921 March-1930, undated	1916, 1921 March-1930, undated
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Series II: WRITINGS

b. 4, f. 90-93	Notebooks	1921-1935
b. 4, f. 94	Newspaper articles	1921-1942
	Essays and notes	
b. 4, f. 95	Re: Harbin	
b. 4, f. 96	Re: Y.M.C.A. work in Asia	1926-1961, undated
b. 4, f. 97	"On the Manchurian-Soviet Border" English See also: box 128, folder 131	1931 March
b. 4, f. 98-100	"Manchuria, A Backward Glance" English	undated
b. 4, f. 101	Re: U.S.S.R.; Asia	undated
b. 4, f. 102	Miscellaneous	undated
b. 5, f. 103	Eastern Association School examination papers	1924 August 11-12
b. 5, f. 104-107	Speeches	1942-1960, undated

Series III: Y.M.C.A. PAPERS

b. 5, f. 108	General: reports, statements, etc.	1925-1959, undated
b. 5, f. 109	China: reports and conference material	1926-1943, undated
	Harbin	
b. 5, f. 110	Annual reports	1928, 1935
b. 5, f. 111	Building project	1927, 1932
b. 5, f. 112	Memoranda and reports	1923-1936, undated
b. 5, f. 113	Newspaper articles	1922-1964, undated
b. 5, f. 114	Printed matter and memorabilia	1921-1967, undated
b. 5, f. 115	Japan: reports and printed matter	1950-1954, undated
b. 5, f. 116	Korea: reports and printed matter	1957-1961, undated
b. 5, f. 117	Latvia: statement by Bert G. Mitchell and Brackett Lewis	1924 June
b. 5, f. 118	Philippine Islands: policy studies, memorabilia	1939-1945
b. 5, f. 119	Thailand: policy study	[1945?]

Series IV: PRINTED MATTER

b. 5, f. 120	Re: Asia	1936-1961, undated
b. 5, f. 121	Re: Japan	1935-1965
b. 6, f. 122-124	Re: Manchuria	1925-1935
b. 6, f. 125	Re: U.S.S.R.	1923-1945
b. 6, f. 126	Miscellaneous	1940-1959, undated

Series V: MEMORABILIA

b. 7, f. 127	Newspaper clippings	1921-1962, undated
	Photographs and postcards	
b. 7, f. 128	Album of Chinese temple at Ashanie near Harbin	1925
b. 7, f. 129	Re: Harbin, the Emperor and Empress of Manchoukuo; miscellaneous	1930-1931, undated
b. 7, f. 130	Re: Dorsett Commission in the Hingan Mts., Manchuria	1924-1926
b. 7, f. 131	Re: Russian refugees in Manchuria	1931
b. 7, f. 132	Programs, souvenirs, etc.	1924-1956, undated
b. 7, f. 133	Maps of Manchria	1939, 1952
b. 7, f. 134	Biographical material	1946, 1962

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.

Geographic Names

Asia
Harbin (Manchuria) -- Description and travel
Japan -- Description and travel
Korea -- Description and travel
Manchuria (China)
Soviet Union -- History -- Revolution, 1917-1921
-- Refugees

Subjects

Clergy

Names

Haag, Howard Lee, 1893-
Lewis, Brackett, 1894-
Mitchell, Bert G.

Corporate Body

Young Men's Christian Associations