

Yale University Library  
Yale Divinity Library

# Guide to the Merrill and Lucille Ady Papers

RG 138



Compiled by Shari Laist

1998

409 Prospect Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
(203) 432-5301

[divinity.library@yale.edu](mailto:divinity.library@yale.edu)

<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

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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
Preferred Citation .....	4
Processing Information .....	4
Biographical / Historical .....	4
Scope and Contents .....	5
Arrangement .....	5
Collection Contents .....	7
Series I: Correspondence .....	7
Series II: Printed Material .....	8
Series III: Writings .....	9
Series IV: World War II Activities .....	10
Series V: Photographs .....	11
Selected Search Terms .....	12

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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 138

**CREATOR:** Ady, Merrill Steele, 1897-1982

**TITLE:** Merrill and Lucile Ady Papers

**DATES:** 1921-1971

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 1.75 linear feet (4 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Letters, writings, and printed material document the personal side of the Ady's missionary work in China and Hong. These records complement documentation held in the archives of the Presbyterian Board of Missions. Merrill Steele and Lucile Meloy Ady were Presbyterian missionaries in China and Hong Kong from 1923 to 1960.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.138>

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## 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.138>.

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 Carolyn Ady Simonson and Donald W. Ady

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Preferred Citation

Merrill and Lucille Ady Papers (RG 138), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

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## 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)".

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## Biographical / Historical

Date	Event
1897 December 15	○ Born in Omaha, Nebraska
1917-1920	○ Served in armed forces, WWI
1920	○ BA Monmouth College
1923	○ BD McCormick Seminary
1923 August 3	○ Married Lucile Meloy of Evanston, IL who earned her BA degree cum laude at Monmouth and her MA at the University of Illinois. Children: Carolyn (b.1926), Robert (b.1927), Donald (b.1932)
1923 September 26	○ Arrived at Guangzhou (Canton), China as Presbyterian Church in USA missionary for a year of language study
1924-1941	○ Evangelical work in countryside around Yeung Kong, Guangdong (Kwangtung), South China
1925	○ Evacuated to Philippines when Sun Yat-Sen made his first foray into power from Guangzhou (Canton)
1928	○ Furlough - McCormick Seminary
1929-1936	○ Worked under Fifth District Association of the Church of Christ in China (Yeung Kong Station was turned over to CCC circa 1928)
1936-1937 August	○ Furlough in Evanston, IL
1941-1949	○ Appointed Executive Secretary, South China Mission of the Presbyterian Church (Guangzhou (Canton))
1941 December 25	○ Interned by Japanese with Lucile and Donald; Stanley Prison, Hong Kong
1942 July	○ Repatriated
1943	○ Attempted to get back to his station, but was stalled first in Lourenco Marques and then in Kolkata (Calcutta)
1944-1945	○ Field agent in Secret Intelligence in the U.S. Army Office of Strategic Services in China
1945-1949	○ Worked with Kwangtung International Relief Committee (KIRC), Guangdong

Date	Event
1946	○ Lucile and Donald arrived in Guangzhou (Canton) - Donald attended Shanghai American School
1949	○ Furlough
1950-1960	○ In Hong Kong, New Territories for the Sixth District Association of the Kwangtung Synod of the Church of Christ in China
1956	○ Furlough
1957	○ Organized First Asian Church Women's Association. Lucile taught at True Light Middle School
1960-1965	○ In Kowloon, Hong Kong as official representative for Presbyterian Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations (COEMAR)
1966	○ Retired to Duarte, CA
1982 November 2	○ Died

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## Scope and Contents

The Ady Papers housed at the Yale Divinity School Library represent the personal side of a rather substantial official record of their missionary career. Consisting primarily of family letters, these documents reveal much about the daily life of a missionary family, including references to the larger purposes of their mission as well as descriptions of life on a day to day basis amidst political unrest. For details of Merrill's work under the Presbyterian Board, his position with the Church of Christ in China, or later work with the Kwangtung International Relief Committee, the researcher is referred to documents on file with the Presbyterian Board of Missions in Philadelphia.

The Adys came in contact with numerous missionaries, such as Frank Short, Tracy Jones, Alice Schaefer, the Siddalls, Stewarts, Sauers, Nelsons and Lois Armentrout, but these colleagues are usually mentioned only in relation to social engagements.

Taishan Xian (Taishen hsien county), Guangdong (Kwangtung) province, where the Adys worked, was situated half way between Hong Kong and Hainan. This county was "controlled" by the Presbyterians from the Protestant standpoint; it was also the first location of the Catholic Maryknoll Mission which took over from the French fathers.

The early letters in this collection are of interest for their documentation of the reaction of missionaries freshly arrived from America to Chinese culture. They also document the Adys' evacuation to the Philippines in 1925. The Adys were frequently separated during the war and Merrill's letters to Lucile during 1937-1941 and 1943-1946 contain more substantive descriptions and comments than earlier or later letters. Since the Japanese allowed no letters out of internment camps, there is a gap in documentation during 1942. Included with Merrill's oral history transcript of 1970-1971 is a memorandum about his repatriation experience. Also informative are his summaries and observations about conditions in China in 1950 (folder 49).

Added in 2015 were documents related to Merrill S. Ady's work for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II, a memoir by the Adys' son Donald about his World War II experiences as a child in China, and reproductions of high quality, well-identified photographs from the area in Kwantung where the Adys worked.

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## Arrangement

I. Correspondence, 1923-1968

- II. Printed Material, 1921-1956
- III. Writings, 1941-1971
- IV. World War II Activities
- V. Photographs

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence

b. 1, f. 1-22	Primarily family correspondence	1923-1945
b. 2, f. 23-35	Primarily family correspondence	1946-1958
b. 3, f. 36-46	Primarily family correspondence	1959-1968

**Series II: Printed Material**

b. 3, f. 47	Illinois in the World War - A history of the 33rd Division	1921
b. 3, f. 48	Miscellaneous newsclippings	1928-1956
b. 3, f. 48	Reports re. South China	1938-1940
b. 3, f. 48	Yeung Kong Station Bimonthly	1924



**Series III: Writings**

b. 3, f. 49	MSA notes on conditions in China	1950
b. 3, f. 49	"In Memory of Vella Myrtle Wilcox"	1957
b. 3, f. 49	South China Mission	1941-1942
b. 3, f. 49	True Light Middle School	1948
b. 3, f. 50	Claremont Graduate School China Missionaries Oral History Project transcript	1970, 1971

**Series IV: World War II Activities**

b. 3, f. 51	Photocopies of documents relating to work of Merrill Ady for Office of Strategic Services (OSS), with explanatory notes by Donald Ady (son)	1945
b. 3, f. 51	Photocopies of documents related to work of Presbyterian medical missionary Robert E. Lynn for Office of Strategic Services (OSS)	1944
b. 3, f. 52	Memoir of experiences during World War II as a missionary child, including at Stanley Internment Camp, by Donald W. Ady (son)	n.d.

## Series V: Photographs

b. 4, f. 53	Reproductions of pages from photograph album with handwritten captions. Scenes, individuals, events in Yeung Kong, Guangdong (Kwangtung), South China area. (Sheets with transcribed captions and CD of digital copies of photos included)	1920s
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## **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  
Missions -- China  
Missions -- China -- Hong Kong  
Presbyterian Church -- Missions -- China

### **Names**

Ady, Lucile  
Ady, Merrill Steele, 1897-1982