

Guide to the Ernest and Olivia Ikenberry Papers

RG 168



Compiled by Elizabeth Pipes and Martha Lund Smalley

2000, 2017

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New Haven, CT 06511
(203) 432-5301

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

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Collection Overview

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

CALL NUMBER: RG 168

CREATOR: Ikenberry, Ernest, 1892-1974

TITLE: Ernest and Olivia Ikenberry Papers

DATES: 1921-2005

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 3 linear feet (7 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Correspondence, writings, and collected material document the Ikenberrys' work in China and the U.S. Ernest and Olivia Ikenberry were American missionaries in China from 1922-1951, serving under the Church of the Brethren. Following their return from China they served at a Church of the Brethren mission among the Navajo Indians in Lybrook, New Mexico.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.168>

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.168>.

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

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of O. Susan Ikenberry Wilson, Ernest Ikenberry, Jr.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Preferred Citation

Ernest and Olivia Ikenberry Papers (RG 168), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School 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

Ernest LeRoy Ikenberry

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1892 | ○ Ernest LeRoy Ikenberry born. |
| 1920 | ○ B.A. McPherson College |
| 1917 | ○ Installed as minister, McPherson Church of the Brethren |
| 1922 | ○ Married Olivia Dickens, went to China |
| 1922-1923 | ○ Language study in Beijing (Peking) |
| 1923-1924 | ○ Stationed in Ping Ting, Shanxi (Shansi) |
| 1924-1934 | ○ Taiyuan (Tai Yuan), youth work with YMCA, on loan from Church of the Brethren |
| 1927 | ○ Evacuated due to political unrest |
| 1929 | ○ Graduated, Yale Divinity School; Returned to YMCA work in Taiyuan (Tai Yuan) |
| 1934-1940 | ○ Evangelistic work in Ping Ting |
| 1937-1940 | ○ Children at North China American School |
| 1941 | ○ Returned to U.S. |
| 1941-1943 | ○ Pastor, Twin Falls, Idaho |
| 1945 | ○ Ernest returned to Shanghai, China followed by Olivia in 1946 |
| 1945-1948 | ○ National Christian Council of China and the China Office of Church World Service |
| 1948-1951 | ○ Church of the Brethren Mission Office, Shanghai |
| 1951 | ○ Returned to USA |
| 1951-1953 | ○ Personnel Secretary for Brethren Mission Board, Elgin, Illinois |
| 1954-1957 | ○ Re-opened Navajo Indian Mission in Lybrook, New Mexico |
| 1958 | ○ Pastor, Brethren Church in Phoenix, Arizona |
| 1962 | ○ Pastor, Aline, Oklahoma |
| 1964 | ○ Wife Olivia died, Married Marguerite Berkey, former missionary to China and Japan |

Ernest LeRoy Ikenberry

- 1964 ○ Moved to LaVerne, California
- 1974 ○ Died

Olivia Dickens Ikenberry

- 1896 ○ Olivia Dickens Ikenberry born
- 1915-1917 ○ Northfield Seminary
- 1917-1919 ○ Oberlin College
- 1919-1921 ○ McPherson College
- 1921-1922 ○ Taught at Daleville College
- 1922 ○ Married Ernest Ikenberry, Went to China
- 1922 ○ Went to China, taught in mission schools, worked with Chinese women
- 1944-1946 ○ Dean of Women, McPherson College
- 1946 ○ Returned to China
- 1946-1950 ○ National Christian Council, Secretary, Women's Work; publicity writer: Church World Service
- 1964 ○ Died

Scope and Contents

This record group contains relatively little material related to the Ikenberrys' work in China prior to their last stint in Shanghai following the second World War. Three times in their lives as missionaries in China, Olivia and Ernest Ikenberry had to evacuate because of dangerous war situations. First in 1927 when they were living in Taiyuan (Tai Yuan), the warlords began fighting for power in Shanxi (Shansi). The second time, in the winter of 1940, they had been living under Japanese occupation for three years in Ping Ting, Shanxi (Shansi). At this time the Ikenberrys burned all their letters, papers, and accounts to keep them out of the hands of the Japanese, afraid that some information could be used against the Chinese Christians. This collection does contain circular letters, writings, and photographs documenting the Ikenberrys' work in China as well as correspondence and other materials related to their work among Native Americans in the United States.

Arrangement

- I. Correspondence, 1921-1966
- II. Sermons and Writings, 1921-1966
- III. Collected Materials
- IV. Personal Items and Memorabilia, 1922-2005

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1921-1966

| | | |
|---------------|---|--------------------------|
| b. 1, f. 1-4 | Family: Parents to Children | 1951-1968 |
| b. 7, f. 1-15 | Addendum to family correspondence: Parents to children and extended family | 1936, 1938, 1946-1958 |
| b. 1, f. 5 | General, Business | 1947-1950 |
| b. 1, f. 6 | Lybrook Reports | 1953-1967 |
| b. 1, f. 7 | Support Newsletters | 1921-1966 |
| b. 6, f. 6 | Support newsletter to "Dear Friends" from Taiyuan, Shanxi (Tai Yuan, Shansi) | 1929 |
| b. 7, f. 16 | Correspondence with National Council of Churches and Yale Divinity School re. China Records Project | 1968-1972 |

Series II: Sermons and Writings, 1921-1966

| | | |
|----------------|--|-----------|
| b. 1, f. 8-9 | ELI Sermons and Writings | |
| b. 2, f. 10-11 | ODI Publicity for Church World Service | 1948-1950 |
| b. 2, f. 12 | ODI Writings re: China | |
| b. 2, f. 13 | ODI Writings re: Brethren (general) | |
| b. 2, f. 14 | ODI Sermon Notes and Thesis | |
| b. 2, f. 15 | Sermons and Writings by others | |
| b. 6, f. 6 | "Christian Faith and Politics" by Y.T. Wu | ca. 1933 |
| b. 7, f. 17 | "Szechwan Cross Stitch Patterns" by Irma Highbaugh | 1942 |
| b. 7, f. 18 | Typed notes for sermons and talks | 1958-1968 |

Series III: Collected Materials

| | |
|-------------|--|
| b. 3, f. 16 | From China; Music, Reading books |
| b. 3, f. 17 | About China |
| b. 3, f. 18 | China Workshop |
| b. 3, f. 19 | Women's Work, National Christian Council, Shanghai |
| b. 3, f. 20 | Chinese Music, hymn book in Chinese/English |
| b. 3, f. 21 | Prayer |
| b. 3, f. 22 | Indian Affairs |

Series IV: Personal Items and Memorabilia, 1922-2005

| | | |
|-------------|---|-----------|
| b. 3, f. 23 | Photographs, prior to China | |
| b. 4, f. 24 | Photographs, from China | |
| b. 4, f. 25 | Photographs, in USA prior to Lybrook | |
| b. 4, f. 26 | Photographs, from Lybrook | |
| b. 6, f. 1 | Photograph album, covering period from their marriage through trip across U.S. and first scenes in Beijing (Peking). Identifications provided by daughter O. Susan Ikenberry Wilson | 1922 |
| b. 6, f. 2 | Photograph album, mostly family photos with some other missionaries, Chinese Christians, and scenes in Beijing (Peking). Identifications provided by daughter | 1922-1934 |
| b. 6, f. 3 | Photograph album, from Taiyuan (Tai Yuan) years - missionaries, Chinese Christians, scenes. Identifications provided by daughter | 1928-1933 |
| b. 6, f. 4 | Two mounted photographs of ELI with groups: Taiyuan YMCA English Evening School, YMCA Shansi University | 1934 |
| b. 4, f. 27 | Lake Geneva School of Missions Scrapbook | 1941 |
| b. 4, f. 28 | Memorabilia: trip from China to USA | 1941 |
| b. 4, f. 29 | ODI Bible and Notebook | |
| b. 5, f. 30 | Navajo Gospel Hymns | |
| b. 5, f. 31 | McPherson Achievement Award and photos | 1962 |
| b. 5, f. 32 | ODI Biographical Papers; typescript material from donors re. lives and work of the Ikenberrys | |
| b. 5, f. 33 | ELI Biographical Papers | |
| b. 6, f. 5 | Biographical material, including sketch of ELI and ODI by Susan Ikenberry Wilson (daughter) | ca. 2005 |
| b. 5, f. 34 | Interview with ELI | 1971 |
| b. 5, f. 35 | Yale University Diploma | 1929 |

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

Names

Ikenberry, Ernest, 1892-1974
Ikenberry, Olivia, 1896-1964

Corporate Body

Church of the Brethren -- Missions -- China

Contributors

Ikenberry, Ernest, 1892-1974
Ikenberry, Olivia, 1896-1964