

Yale University Library  
Yale Divinity Library

# Guide to the Walter and Ruth Marie Taylor Papers

RG 251



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2013

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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  
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 251

**CREATOR:** Taylor, Walter Andrews, 1899-

**TITLE:** Walter and Ruth Marie Taylor Papers

**DATES:** 1923-1954

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 2 linear feet (3 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Letters, writings, and photographs document the life and work of Walter Taylor as an Episcopal missionary architect based in Wuhan, Central China from 1923 to 1927. Taylor's long distance courtship of his future wife Ruth Marie Smith, her eventual voyage to China to marry him in 1926, and their life in China during a politically turbulent time are well documented.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.251>

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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.251>.

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 Kenneth W. Taylor and Mark Taylor.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Preferred Citation

Walter and Ruth Marie Taylor Papers (RG 251), 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

Walter Andrews Taylor (1899 - 1963) graduated from Ohio State University in 1922, a member of Tau Beta Pi. He was appointed by the Episcopal Church to serve as an architect in China. Enroute, while traveling in England, he met his future wife Ruth Marie Smith, who eventually joined him in China in 1926 to be married. Taylor was based in Wuchang, Wuhan, Hubei province, in central China from 1924 until 1927. When the 1926 Siege of Wuchang forced the evacuation of the missionaries, the Taylors stayed at the Kuling Mountain missionary retreat through the siege but were ordered to leave China in 1927. Taylor and his wife returned to the U.S. where he worked in the office of Hobart Upjohn, NYC and was a Lecturer at Columbia University. From 1936 to 1946 he was a Professor in the Department of Architecture of Syracuse University. From 1946 to 1959 he was Director of the Department of Education and Research at American Institute of Architects. From 1959 to 1963 he was Dean of the School of Architecture, Ohio University.

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## Scope and Contents

These papers tell the story of a young missionary architect sent to China by the Episcopal Church. Enroute he meets a young American woman in England and they eventually begin a long distance courtship that leads to her coming to China to be married. Though the time period served by Walter Taylor in China was brief, his letters and writings provide valuable insight into missionary life and his work as an architect. Series I includes Family Correspondence - letters written by Walter and Ruth Marie to their families, and to each other. Series II includes a small amount of non-family correspondence, including letters to/from fellow missionaries. The Writings of Series III include published articles by Taylor about missionary architecture in China, as well as his five-year diary covering the period of his service in China. Series IV, Personal Items and Memorabilia contains various clippings and ephemera that illustrate the events and lifestyle of the missionaries. Series V includes photographs not only of the Taylors but also of some of the buildings he designed.

Filed in the first folder are two copies of a DVD containing scans of letters, documents, and photos included in the collection.

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## Arrangement

- I. Family Correspondence, 1923-1926
- II. General Correspondence, 1926-1927
- III. Writings, 1924-1954
- IV. Personal Items and Memorabilia, 1923-1926
- V. Photographs, 1924-1926, no date

## Collection Contents

### Series I: Family Correspondence

Filed in the first folder are two copies of a DVD containing scans of letters, documents, and photos included in the collection.

#### Walter Taylor to his parents

b. 1, f. 2	Letters describe Walter's travels enroute to his new position as architect in China, including stay in England to study cathedrals, where he met Ruth Marie Smith at Warwick Castle.	1923 May - Oct
b. 1, f. 3	Including regarding stops in Paris and Italy en route to China, beginning work at Boone University in Wuchang, Wuhan	1923 October - December
b. 1, f. 4	Time spent in Beijing (Peking) attending language school, then working and traveling with base at Boone University	1924
b. 1, f. 5	Including regarding work and social life, anti-Christian activities by Chinese; WT confronted by students; vacation and travels for work	1925
b. 1, f. 6	Including regarding plans to marry Ruth Marie Smith; Ruth Marie appointed to mission and will arrive in China in August after meeting Taylor family enroute; marriage on August 26; Siege of Wuchang in fall of 1926 leads to Taylors' evacuation and return to U.S.	1926 - 1927

#### Walter Taylor to Ruth Marie's mother

b. 1, f. 7	Prior to their marriage, WT writes to assure Ruth Marie's mother of his love and her safety in coming to China	1926 Jun
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#### Ruth Marie Smith Taylor to/from family

b. 1, f. 8	Letters to her mother during trip to Europe when she met WT; letters written enroute to China and after marriage	1923 Sep - 1926 Oct
b. 1, f. 9	Letters to/from Taylors regarding engagement and welcome to family; invitations to visit enroute to sailing; her letters after visit	1926 Jul - Aug
b. 1, f. 10	Letters to/from extended Smith family regarding engagement and plans to go to China	1926 Jul

#### Walter to Ruth Marie

b. 1, f. 11	Acknowledges receipt of Ruth Marie's Christmas card in June 1925 with happy recollections of their meeting in England; writes of his travels, work, and mission life; by May 1926 has proposed marriage; includes copies of Walter's letters to/from Bishop Roots regarding his proposal	1925 Jun - 1926 May
b. 1, f. 12	Nearly daily letters written to Ruth Marie following her acceptance of his proposal of marriage	1926 Jun 1-11
b. 1, f. 13	Nearly daily letters to Ruth Marie including information about China, plans for wedding and housing	1926 Jun 12-29
b. 1, f. 14	Love letters in anticipation of Ruth Marie's arrival in China and wedding	1926 Jul - Aug

## Walter to Ruth Marie (continued)

b. 1, f. 15	Walter traveling for his work to Hankou (Hankow), Yueyang (Yochow), Guling (Kuling)	1926 November - December
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Ruth Marie to Walter		
b. 1, f. 16	Ruth Marie planning to go to Europe when marriage proposal received by cable; begins to preparing to go to China	1926 May -
b. 1, f. 17	Ruth Marie accepted by American Church Mission, preparing for trip to China	1926 Jun 16-28
b. 2, f. 18	Love letters; preparation for trip to China; one letter written in China; fragments	1926 Jul, n.d.
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**Series II: General Correspondence**

b. 2, f. 19	Letters of Walter to/from others, including fellow missionaries Robert Bundy, Bishop Logan H. Roots	1926 Jun - 1927 Jun
b. 2, f. 20	Letters of Ruth Marie to/from others, primarily in congratulations for her engagement, including from Eliza Roots, wife of Bishop Logan Roots	1926 Jun
b. 2, f. 21	Letters of others, including to Ruth Marie's mother	1923-1926

**Series III: Writings**

b. 2, f. 22	Diary of Walter Taylor Five-year type diary provides succinct overview of activities	1923-1927
b. 2, f. 23	Personal annual reports of Walter Taylor; fragment of travel account	1924, 1926, no date
b. 2, f. 24	Published articles by Walter Taylor, including "Chinese Architecture in Modern Buildings" in The Chinese Recorder, October 1924; "An Architectural Pilgrimage in China" in The American Architect, July 1929	1924-1956
b. 2, f. 25	Handwritten memoir by Ruth Marie Smith Taylor	circa 1946



**Series IV: Personal Items and Memorabilia**

b. 2, f. 26	Biographical documentation, including account of romance of Walter Taylor and Ruth Marie Smith written by son Kenneth Warwick Taylor, newspaper clippings, cables, letter regarding marriage certificate, wedding invitation, lists of names	1926, no date
b. 2, f. 27	Travel mementos, including menus, receipts, passenger lists	1923-1926
b. 2, f. 28	Collected material, including District of Hankow Newsletter, Tripod newsletter (Deltas of Southern California), poems about Taylors by fellow missionaries	1926, undated
b. 2, f. 29	Collected material, including cards, invitations	1923, no date

**Series V: Photographs**

b. 2, f. 30	Photos of Ruth Marie and Walter Taylor, including wedding and in various settings in China	1926, no date
b. 2, f. 31	Scenes and buildings in China	1924-1926, no date
b. OV1	Album pages and mounted photographs of buildings designed by Walter Taylor and other scenes Buildings depicted include St. Andrew's Church and Gymnasium of Boone College, Central China University, Wuchang; Holy Trinity Church, Tokyo. Mounted brochure for "Walter A. Taylor A.I.A. Architect" lists projects for which Taylor served as architect, associated architect, or consultant.	1924-1926, no date

## **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**

Missions -- China

### **Names**

Taylor, Walter Andrews, 1899-

### **Corporate Body**

Episcopal Church -- Missions -- China