

Guide to the Justus Richard Pearson Papers

MS 1365



compiled by Bruce P. Stark

March 1985

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1365

CREATOR: Pearson, Justus Richard, 1915-

TITLE: Justus Richard Pearson, Jr. papers

DATES: 1931-1954

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2.5 linear feet (6 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of personal diaries written by Pearson from 1931-1954. They cover his last year at Cass Technical High School in Detroit, his attendance at Hopkins Grammar School, his years at Yale University, his World War II alternative service, and his graduate school career at Columbia University.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1365>

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.1365>.

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

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Justus Richard Pearson, Jr., 1984.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

Justus Richard Pearson, Jr. Papers (MS 1365). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Justus Richard Pearson, Jr. (1915-) was born in Detroit on January 2, 1915, the son of Justus Richard and Bessie Louise Day Pearson. He graduated from Cass Technical High School in Detroit 1931, worked for four years in Detroit, and in September 1935 entered Hopkins Grammar School in order to prepare for admission to Yale. Pearson graduated from Hopkins in June 1936 and entered Yale in September. A member of the class of 1940, he belonged to Calhoun College and was active in the University Glee Club. He majored in H.A.L., received an M.A. in general studies from Yale in 1942, and spent the war years in Civilian Public Service working as a dairy tester in Dutchess County, New York. Pearson served as an instructor in English at Vassar College 1946-1947 and then entered the Ph.D. program at Columbia University. He received a Ph.D. in English and Comparative Literature in 1955 and has taught at Emory University, Michigan State University at Oakland, and Illinois Wesleyan University. On June 9, 1954, he married Jane Mayes Dorset Townley.

Scope and Contents

The Justus Richard Pearson papers consist of six boxes of diaries spanning the dates 1931-1954. The collection was donated to Yale University by Justus Pearson in 1984.

Pearson's diaries provide considerable personal detail on the life, activities and feelings of an articulate adolescent, college student, conscientious objector, and graduate student. There is also a great deal of information on family life, particularly for the 1930s. Young Pearson seriously considered a career in the theater and after graduation from high school worked part-time in local theaters in the Detroit area. He attended many concerts, plays, and movies and listened to many radio programs. The diaries contain an especially complete record of Pearson's student life at Hopkins, Yale, and Columbia and of his personal attachments. While at Yale, for example, he was romantically involved with several Vassar students.

The collection will be of use to anyone studying student life from the Depression to the 1950s, alternative service for conscientious objectors during World War II, and interpersonal relations.

Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 1 - 4	Diary 1	1931-1934
b. 2, f. 5 - 8	Diary 2	1935-1938
b. 3, f. 9 - 12	Diary 3	1939-1942
b. 4, f. 13 - 16	Diary 4	1943-1946
b. 5, f. 17 - 20	Diary 5	1947-1950
b. 6, f. 21 - 24	Diary 6	1951-1954

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

Conscientious objectors
Families
World War, 1939-1945 -- Conscientious
objectors
World War, 1939-1945 -- War work

Genres / Formats

Diaries

Names

Pearson, Justus Richard, 1915-

Corporate Bodies

Calhoun College (Yale University)
Cass Technical High School (Detroit, Mich.)
Columbia University (Graduate students)
Hopkins Grammar School
Yale College (1887-). Class of 1940
Yale University -- Students