
Inventory of the Elsie Thomas Culver Collection, 1945 - 1979 (bulk, 1945-55)

Accession number: GTU 92-9-01

Shelf location: 2//2 - 2//3

The Graduate Theological Union Archives

Berkeley, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Elsie Thomas Culver Collection,

Date (inclusive): 1945 - 1979

Date (bulk): (bulk, 1945-55)

Accession number: GTU 92-9-01

Shelf location: 2//2 - 2//3

Creator: Culver, Elsie Thomas

Size: 8 boxes, 2 ½ ft.

Type of material: Subject files, photographs, slides, negatives

Repository: The Graduate Theological Union.

Berkeley, California

Language: English

Source and Date

Helen Peterson, 1992

Access

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Elsie Thomas Culver Collection, GTU 92-9-01, The Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA.

Access Points

World War, 1939-1945 - Civilian relief, Church Committee on Overseas Relief and Reconstruction

World War, 1939-1945 - Religious aspects

World War, 1939-1945 - Children

World War, 1939-1945 - Women

World War, 1939-1945 - Medical care

Reconstruction (1939-1951) - Religious aspects

Reconstruction (1939-1951) - Holland

Reconstruction (1939-1951) - France

Reconstruction (1939-1951) - Czechoslovakia

Reconstruction (1939-1951) - Germany

Church work with refugees - Pakistan

Church work with refugees - India

Church work with refugees - China

Missions - History - Sources

Africa - Missions - Pictorial works

India - Missions - Pictorial works

Pakistan - Missions - Pictorial works

Egypt - Missions - Pictorial works

Burma - Missions - Pictorial works

Thailand - Missions - Pictorial works

Iraq - Missions - Pictorial works

Philippines - Missions - Pictorial works

Japan - Missions - Pictorial works

World Council of Churches - History - Sources

National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States. Church World Service -- History

Biographical/Historical Description

Elsie Thomas Culver (January 3, 1898 - August 21, 1988) was born in Connecticut to Dudley and Orië (Streeter) Thomas, and raised in Oakland, CA. She received an A.B. in political science (with honors) from the University of California, Berkeley. She married and had a daughter, Helen. While raising her family, she did part-time commercial journalistic and promotional work to 1935. She then began studies at the Pacific School of Religion (M.A. 1941, B.D. 1942). During her time at PSR, she continued to work: on the school's publicity, publicity for the 1939 World's Fair, and assignments for various religious papers. She was widowed sometime in the 1930's.

During World War II, in 1941, Culver was called to New York to handle promotion for the Committee on Foreign Relief Appeals in the Churches. This was an organization established in the United States by churches and other participating organizations which included the Foreign Missions Conference, the YMCA, and the YWCA to coordinate war relief efforts. This committee was changed, and its charge expanded in 1942, to become the Church Committee on Overseas Relief and Reconstruction. (This Committee later became Church World Service in 1946 under the National Council of Churches.) She was in charge of planning and creating material for fund raising campaigns.

Culver was ordained a Congregational minister in New York, 1943, to a writing and ecumenical ministry.

In the fall of 1945, Culver went to Europe under CCORR auspices to consult "with church leaders, United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration officials, and others... . Articles and stories I wrote and pictures I took appeared in leading secular magazines and in church publications of practically all denominations." She continued to serve Church World Service as publicity director until 1948. She then

resigned "to undertake an around-the-world trip [1948-49], speaking, writing and taking photographs for a number of interested agencies and editors. ... Primarily, I was looking for evidence that essentially, around the world, people are friends."

Culver accepted the position of Director of Public Relations for the World Council of Churches in 1950, working in the New York office and traveling extensively. Her many responsibilities included writing articles for church and secular press, editing the *Ecumenical Courier*, and preparing film strips, radio scripts, press folders, posters, etc. She retired in 1957 to return to Berkeley, CA.

She continued to be active in issues of aging and the churches' responsibility to older persons, serving on various committees and commissions. She was also founder, director, and newsletter editor (*The Cornerstone*) of Senior Peacebuilders, an incorporated non-profit educational organization. She continued to write articles, including some work for the GTU, for various organizations and publications, and published a book, *Women in the World of Religion* (Doubleday: 1967).

After a ten-year battle with Alzheimer's disease, she died in Santa Rosa, CA, August 1988. (For further information, see: Box 1, ff 1, Biographical material.)

Scope and Content

The collection seems to have come from Elsie Thomas Culver to the Center for Women and Religion at the GTU ca. 1979. In 1992, the collection was transferred from CWR to the GTU Archives still in its original boxes and containers. It had not been touched in the intervening years. Since there was no conclusive documentation on the collection, Culver's daughter was located. She formally donated the collection to the GTU Archives. The collection consists mainly of photographs taken on Culver's two major trips in 1945 to Europe and in 1948-49 around the world. Culver numbered and put captions or other identification on the majority of the photographs. Her order has been maintained.

Background reading

(including GTU Library call numbers)

Elsie Thomas Culver, *Women in the World of Religion* (Doubleday, NYC: 1967). HQ1394 C8

Ronald E. Stenning, *Church World Service: Fifty Years of Help and Hope* (Friendship Press, NYC: 1996). BX6 N2 S74 1996

Foreign Missions Conference of North America, "Reports of the Meetings". BV2390 F7 vols. 50-53 (for information on the Church Committee on Overseas Relief and Reconstruction)

David P. Gaines, *The World Council of Churches, a Study of Its Background and History* (R.R. Smith, Peterborough, NH: 1966).

Subject Files, arranged chronologically

Box Box 1, Folder ff **Elsie Thomas Culver: biographical material**

1

Folder ff 2 **Travel Journal, mss, Post-WWII Europe, 8-12/1945**
Folder ff 3 **Travel Journal, mimeographed, Post-WWII Europe, 8-12/1945**
Folder ff 4 **1945 trip: Correspondence**
Folder ff 5 **1945 trip: Travel documents**
Folder ff 6 **1945 trip: Maps and information**
Folder ff 7 **1945 trip: Notebook - expenses, addresses, calling cards**
Folder ff 8 **Brochure: Church Christmas Packages, Com. On Overseas Relief, ca. 1945-46**
Folder ff 9 **Brochure: This is Our Story, Aid to Czech Children, ca. 1945-46**
Folder ff 10 **Brochure: Church World Service: Children of War Areas, ca. 1945-46**
Folder ff 11 **World Trip, 1948-49: Correspondence**
Folder ff 12 **World Trip, 1948-49: Articles**
Folder ff 13 **Copy and design for brochure: Building the Kingdom in India, ca. 1949-50**
Folder ff 14 **Article: Medical Emphasis Year, Eye Glasses, 1950**
Folder ff 15 **Africa Trip, 1955**
Folder ff 16 **Correspondence, 1950-68**
Folder ff 17 **Peace Builders Movement, 1965-66, 1974-78**
Folder ff 18 **Graduate Theological Union, 1967**
Folder ff 19 **PSR President's Cabinet Award/Certificate, 1968**
Folder ff 20 **Correspondence/Postcards, 1969-73**
Folder ff 21 **Articles, 1945-79**

Subject Files

Additional Note

Location Note: Small Collections (legal size), 3/C/5

- Box Box 9, Folder ff **Alcorn Hotel Brochure and Map of Prague, 1945**
3
- Folder ff 4 **The Crow's Nest, ship's newsletter, SS Alexander, 1945**
- Folder ff 5 **World Trip, 1948-49: Travel Journal, Articles, Photo List**

Photographs

Additional Note

Arranged chronologically, then alphabetically by country.

1945 Post-WWII Europe Trip. ETC numbered all photographs sequentially within each country. Most have captions. All are black & white. See Travel Journal, Box 1, ff 2-3. See also negatives in Box 7.

- Box Box 2, Folder ff **England, unnumbered**
1
- Folder ff 2 **SS Isle De France, unnumbered**
- Folder ff 3-5 **SS Alexander, en route**
- Folder ff 6-30 **Czechoslovakia**
- Folder ff 31-65 **France**
- Folder ff 66-75 **Germany**
- Box Box 3, Folder ff **Holland**
1-48
- Folder ff 49-53 **Switzerland**
- Folder ff 54-58 **Holland, 1946-48,
World Trip, 1948-49.**

Additional Note

ETC numbered the photographs sequentially within countries. Most have captions. All are black & white with some color (filed separately and marked). The countries are arranged in the order she visited them. However, some of the countries are out of order in the beginning (ff 69-78). See Travel Journal/Photo List, (Small Collections Box 9, ff 5, 3/C/5). See also numbered film negative canisters in Box 6, individual negatives in Box 8, and slides in Slide Box 1/C.

- Folder ff 59-68 **Africa**
- Folder ff 69-74 **India**
- Folder ff 74-75 **Burma**
- Folder ff 76 **China**
- Folder ff 77 **Italy**
- Folder ff 78 **China, Japan**
- Box Box 4, Folder ff **Egypt**
1-6
- Folder ff 7-9 **Iraq**
- Folder ff 10-19 **Pakistan**
- Folder ff 11-71 **India**
(ff 64-68 contain unnumbered photos of India and Pakistan)
- Box Box 5, Folder ff **Ceylon**
1
- Folder ff 2-5 **Burma**
- Folder ff 6-14 **Thailand (she sometimes marks them Siam)**
- Folder ff 15-16 **unnumbered, color photos, Burma and Thailand**
- Folder ff 17-19 **Philippines**
- Folder ff 20 **China**
- Folder ff 21-22 **Japan (ff 22, color)**

Folder ff 23 **Greece, 1949**
 Folder ff 24 **Elsie Thomas Culver, ca. 1949-50**
 Folder ff 25 **New York City, ca. 1950**
 Folder ff 26 **Photo Christmas Cards, 1950**
 Folder ff 27 **birds (from which Christmas cards were taken?)**
 Folder ff 28 **Iraq, 1950, Bd. Of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church**
 Folder ff 29-33 **UN photos, 1950-52**

Africa Trip, 1955.

Additional Note

See also numbered negative film canisters in Box 6, and slides in Slide Box 1/E.

Folder ff 34-47 **Africa Trip, 1955.**
 Folder ff 48 **John and Anne Bennett and family, ca. 1955-57**
 Folder ff 49 **Heron Island, ME, with the Bennett's, 1957**
 Folder ff 50 **GTU Seminar or class, Mary Hunt leading. n.d., ca. late 1970's**
 Folder ff 51 **Canada, n.d.**
 Folder ff 52-54 **England, 1952 (see negatives, Box 6, and Slide Box 1/D)**
 Folder ff 55 **Geneva, n.d.**
 Folder ff 56 **Wales, 1952 (see negatives, Box 6, and Slide Box 1/D)**
 Folder ff 57 **Mountains, unidentified, n.d.**
 Folder ff 58 **Norway, 1952 (see Slide Box 1/E)**
 Folder ff 59-60 **Scotland, 1952 (see negatives, Box 6, and Slide Box 1/D)**
 Folder ff 61 **unidentified man, n.d.**

Negatives: Top layer:

Additional Note

Rolled negative film strips in canisters.

Box Box 6 **1) Film strips -- "Go Heal", "Blessed to Receive" and "Blessed to Receive 2", "Delayed Pilgrims", "Joyful**
 Folio box **Giving" (2 copies), "Ecumenical: Are We?"**
 2) Lund
 3) WCC
 4) Gulls, Puget Sound, 1949
 5) Personal Trip, 1952: Norway, England (Chester), England (Chirk Castle), Scotland (St. Andrews), Scotland (2
 rolls), Wales
 6) Africa Trip, 1955: I - IX, French Cameroon; X - XI, Nigeria; XII, Gold Coast; XIII, Liberia; XIV, Dakar; XV, Spain
 7) World Trip, 1948-49:
 Amsterdam Conference, 1948
 Holland, 1, 2, and CXL
 Egypt, 27, 28

Negatives: Bottom layer:

Box Box 6 **1) World Trip, 1948-49 (con't.)**
 Folio box **Egypt, 29, 30, 31, 32**
 Iraq, 33, 34, 35
 Pakistan 36-44
 India, 45-65 (50, 58 missing)
 Ceylon/Burma, 67
 Siam (Thailand), 71-76 (74, 75 missing)
 Philippines, 77, 78
 China/Japan, 79

Negatives

Box Box 7 **Post-WWII Trip, 1945. The negatives are in individual sleeves with numbers corresponding to the prints in Boxes 2 and 3.**
Folio box

Negatives

Box Box 8 **1) World Trip, 1948-49**
Folio box, Folder ff 1 **Italy and Greece**
Folder ff 2 **Iraq and Egypt**
Folder ff 3 **Pakistan**
Folder ff 4 **Burma**
Folder ff 5 **China**
Folder ff 6 **Japan**
2) New York City, Village Art Show, 1949
3) A series of negatives unidentified, n.d.: appears to be a camp of some sort, perhaps a displaced person's camp in Germany or Czechoslovakia ca. 1945?

Box Slide Box **Slides**

Additional Note

Arranged chronologically. ETC did not number the slides. They are numbered sequentially for GTU Archives identification.

1) World Trip, 1948-49
Italy, Slides #629-633
Pakistan, #634-653
India, #654-707
Burma, #708-723
Thailand, #724-742
Philippines, #743-752
Japan, #753-760
2) World Council of Churches Central Committee, Rolle, Switzerland, 8/4-11/1951. Photos by Jane (?) A. Ryberg, Slides #761-785

Box Slide Box **Slides**

1) World Council of Churches generic slides, numbered 1-59, n.d. (ca. early 1950's), unidentified (meetings, people, programs in various parts of the world). Slides #786-845
2) World Council of Churches, Evanston, IL, 1954, Slides #846-874
3) Personal Trip, 1952
England, Slides #875-913
Oxford, #914-925
Chirk Castle, #926-941
Wales, #942-959
Scotland, #960-996
Chester, #997-1006

Box Slide Box **Slides**

1) Personal Trip, 1952 (con't.)
Norway, #1007-1048
Stuttgart, #1049-1053
New York City, #1054-1057
2) Africa Trip, 1955, Slides #1058-1119