

A Guide to the Kathryn Eye Papers, 1920-1991 SC 0231

Kathryn Eye Papers
1920-1991



Title Statement

A Guide to the Kathryn Eye Papers, 1920-1991 SC 0231

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Profile Description

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Revision Description

2022-12-01 Oversize series was intellectually removed and items were arranged into other existing series.

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

SC 0231

Unit Date

1920-1991

Language

English .

Abstract

The Kathryn Eye Papers, 1920-1991, contain the papers of Kathryn Eye, local resident and missionary to the Belgian Congo. Materials document Eye's life, missionary work, and exhibit of her art collection at the Madison Art Collection and include correspondence, ephemera and stamps, and a scrapbook.

Extent

1.14 cubic feet 3 boxes

Repository

James Madison University Libraries Special Collections

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open to research. Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection. Please contact Research Services staff before visiting the James Madison University Special Collections Library to use this collection.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have been transferred to the James Madison University Special Collections Library. For more information, contact the Special Collections Library Reference Desk (library-special@jmu.edu).

Acquisition Information

This collection was transferred from Kate Stevens, Director of the Madison Art Collection, on October 3, 2013.

Processing Information

The scrapbook was disbound and laid open with acid-free paper interleaved between the pages. Loose items were placed in envelopes and placed in their original location.

Preferred Citation

[identification of item], [box #, folder #], Kathryn Eye Papers, 1920-1991, SC 0231, Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.

Bio/Historical Note

Kathryn Eye was born February 9, 1909 in West Virginia to William D. Eye, a Methodist reverend, and Leila Lupton Eye. She appears to have attended the Shenandoah Collegiate Institute in Dayton, Virginia and Blackstone College in Blackstone, Virginia; however, the exact dates of her attendance are unknown. Eye received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Emory & Henry College in 1931 and a Bachelor of Science and Registered Nurse degrees from Johns Hopkins University in 1936. She continued to work at Johns Hopkins Hospital as the superintendent of surgical and obstetrical nursing until receiving her missionary appointment to the Belgian Congo in 1938. She served as a medical, educational, and evangelistic missionary in Central Africa for more than two decades.

Before her arrival in Africa, Eye spent several months training and traveling in Western Europe. During her furloughs from missionary work she continued to study medicine at various institutions including Vanderbilt University, the Florence Nightingale Hospital in London, and the Pasteur Institute in Paris. During Eye's long service in Africa, she was head of educational work, director of the evangelistic program, and director of the Methodist Hospital. She served four missionary terms in the Congo and was partway through a fifth when the tumult of the Congo independence from Belgium led the United States Air Force to evacuate her in August 1960. Although Eye anticipated returning to Africa, she never did.

On her return to the United States, Eye served as the Director of Religious Education at Asbury Methodist Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia before becoming the pastor at the Montague Avenue United Methodist Church in Winchester, Virginia. She spoke and preached in various locations from Virginia to Maryland, and even into Tennessee and Pennsylvania. In June 1964, Emory & Henry College presented Eye with the Humanities Award for servicing the world. She was a life member of the Woman's Missionary Society and was an honorary life patron of the Women's Society of Christian Service of the United Methodist Church. Eye retired and lived in Rawley Springs, Virginia until her death on November 16, 1979.

Marie Garnett, the donor and collector of this collection, was a friend and frequent correspondent of Kathryn Eye. Garnett was the youngest daughter of Rev. and Mrs. James A. Johnson. In 1942, she married Hugh Garnett. She received a Bachelor of Science degree from Virginia Tech where she also did graduate work. During the Garnett's residence in New York, Marie was active in radio, newspaper, and magazine work. She served as the President of Republican Women. The Garnetts lived in Harrisonburg, Virginia and had one son, Stephen Lee Garnett.

Scope and Content

The Kathryn Eye Papers, 1920-1991, contain the papers of Kathryn Eye, local resident and missionary to the Belgian Congo. Materials document Eye's life, missionary work, and the exhibit of her art collection at the Madison Art Collection and include correspondence, ephemera and stamps, and a scrapbook. This collection is arranged into three series: 1. Correspondence, 1920-1975; Artifact Information, 1959-1991; and Scrapbooks and Ephemera, 1924-1988.

Series 1: Correspondence, 1920-1975, contains letters primarily documenting Eye's service in the Belgian Congo. Also included in this series are photographs attached to letters, Christmas cards, and envelopes. The letters are from Eye to family and friends, letters received by Eye, and letters from Congolese people to friends of Eye. The majority of the letters are written as a serialized newsletter describing the activities of Eye in the Congo to her friends and family. She would send the letter to one individual with instructions detailing how the letter should progress. The letters are a mix of typed and handwritten correspondence with many including sketches. Subjects discussed include holiday celebrations, church services, interactions between natives and whites, food and customs, and political conflict. Eye describes the uncertainty that is facing the Congo in a letter dated January 23, 1960: "The future seems rather uncertain. As we contrast the past with the present confusion and conflict we wonder if we shall really be privileged to serve the Lord, much longer in this once favored colony....Our prayers would be especially toward the little children growing up in the midst of such disturbance and hatred as has been in evidence in the inter-tribal warfares."

Of note is a Christmas card and photograph dated September 1959 of Kathryn Eye holding an African baby. The card claims that the photo is of Kathryn Eye and her nephew, shortly after her return from the Congo; however, Kathryn is clearly in the Congo and holding a baby of African descent. It is unclear if the wrong photo was included with the card or the note writer was mistaken.

Several letters from American political dignitaries to Marie Garnett and Kathryn Eye are included. Correspondents include Pat Nixon, Dwight Eisenhower, and John F. Kennedy. Of note is a letter from President Dwight Eisenhower, dated October 28, 1960, thanking Kathryn Eye for an ivory elephant she gifted to Eisenhower during a recent visit to Staunton. Eye presented the trinket to the President as a token of gratitude for the part the United States Air Force played in rescuing her from the unrest in the Congo.

Series 2: Artifact Information, 1959-1991, contains information regarding the artifacts collected in the Belgian Congo by Eye and the related exhibit at the Madison Art Collection. Notable items in this series include a document, written by Kathryn Eye, with photos and descriptions of various African artifacts. Also included is an art appraisal and an article on the Maryland Museum of African Art. The appraiser of the Kathryn Eye artifacts, Dr. Kwaku Ofori-Ansa, is mentioned in the aforementioned article.

Series 3: Scrapbooks and Ephemera, 1924-1988, contains a scrapbook documenting Eye's early life, her extensive stamp collection with a related 1959 issue of *Life* magazine, photographs of her friends and family, and various papers relating to her life and work for the Methodist Church. A single page from a scrapbook (not in the collection) is included and housed in an Oversize box with the *Life* magazine and Kathryn Eye's scrapbook.

Kathryn Eye's stamp collection contains over 500 stamps from around the world. Many of these stamps were sorted by image in plastic bags when received by Special Collections. These stamps were removed from the plastic bags and placed in acid-free envelopes. Stamps and notes were kept separated in the same manner as received. Also in this series is a November 1959 issue of *Life* magazine featuring an article on international stamps. Many of the stamps mentioned in the article were collected by Kathryn Eye. Due to the disparate nature and sheer quantity of the stamps, no attempt has been made to assign a date range to those materials.

The scrapbook is another notable item in this series. The scrapbook documents Kathryn Eye's life during her time at the Shenandoah College Institute in Dayton, Virginia and Blackstone College in Blackstone, Virginia. Included in the scrapbook are programs and souvenirs from various events she attended, cards from friends with holiday imagery, and photographs. Items of note are dried flowers and locks of hair.

Other items include coins and paper currency from the Belgian Congo and photographs depicting Kathryn Eye, her friends and family, the Statue of Liberty, and the gardens of Versailles. Most of the photographs include handwritten descriptions of the subjects or scenes depicted. Photographs originally attached to correspondences were not removed; these can be found throughout Series 1: Correspondence.

Series 3 also consists of one box of oversize materials that do not fit within standard Hollinger boxes. Items include Kathryn Eye's scrapbook and one folder containing an issue of *Life* magazine and an oversize scrapbook page.

Separated Material

The Madison Art Collection retains all artifacts donated by Marie Garnett and collected by Kathryn Eye.

Artifacts include weaponry, jewelry, sculpture, and paintings, and can be viewed at the Lisanby Museum at James Madison University. A copy of Richard K. MacMasters' *Our Strong Heritage, 1778-1988: Asbury United Methodist Church, Harrisonburg Virginia* (1988) was removed from the collection, cataloged, and placed in Special Collections' rare book collection. A small portion of the book related to Kathryn Eye is photocopied and contained within Series 3: Scrapbooks and Ephemera.

Keywords

Missionaries -- Congo (Democratic Republic)
Art, African
Stamp collections
Postage stamps -- History
Coins -- Congo (Democratic Republic)
Money -- Congo (Democratic Republic)
Congo (Democratic Republic) -- History -- 1908-1960
Belgium -- Colonies -- Congo (Democratic Republic) -- History
Letters (correspondence)
Photographs
Newspaper clippings
Scrapbooks
Appraisals (financial records)
Magazines (periodicals)
Postage stamps
Money (objects)
Envelopes
James Madison University. Madison Art Collection
Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963. (Title of work: Correspondence.)
Eisenhower, Dwight D. (Dwight David), 1890-1969 -- Correspondence
Nixon, Pat, 1912-1993 -- Correspondence
United Methodist Church (U.S.) -- Virginia -- Harrisonburg
United Methodist Church (U.S.) -- Virginia -- Winchester

Bibliography

"Find A Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QV2V-BGNZ> : 13 December 2015), Kathryn Eye, 1979; Burial, Dayton, Rockingham, Virginia, United States of America, Clover Hill United Methodist Church Cemetery; citing record ID 67091406, Find a Grave, <http://www.findagrave.com>. Garnett, William E. and Emma Garnett McCoy. *The Garnetts of Albemarle County, Virginia: James Muscoe and Cornelia Wingfield Garnett, Antecedents and Descendants*. 1963. Obituary for Rev. Kathryn Eye, *Daily News-Record*, November 17, 1979.

Provenance

The materials were first donated in 1990 by Marie Garnett, friend of Kathryn Eye, to Dr. Joanne Gabbin, then Director of the James Madison University Honors Program. After transfer to the Madison Art Collection, items from this collection were processed by Madison Art Collection staff. All materials were given an accession number (still present on the back of most documents) and delivered to Special Collections. It is likely the materials were labeled in original order; however, to increase their discoverability, the correspondence was rearranged in chronological order. The Madison Art Collection accession numbers allow the original order to be ascertained if necessary.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in three series. All series are arranged chronologically.

- Correspondence, 1920-1975
- Artifact Information, 1959-1991
- Scrapbooks and Ephemera, 1924-1988

Description of Subordinate Components

Correspondence

Unit ID 1

Unit Date 1920-1975

Correspondence

Unit Date 1920-1938

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1939-1940

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1941

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1946-1947

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1954-1956

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1959

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1960

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1960-1961

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1962-1975

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Envelopes

Unit Date 1939-1960, undated

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Artifact Information

Unit ID 2

Unit Date 1959-1991

Artifact Description (original and photocopy)

Unit Date 1959

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

Photographs

Unit Date 1960, 1991, undated

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

Art Appraisal

Unit Date 1990

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 14 (folder)

Kathryn Eye Art Collection Program

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 15 (folder)

Scrapbooks and Ephemera

Unit ID 3

Unit Date 1924-1988

Scrapbook

Unit Date 1924-1926

Mixed Materials [1000898402] OV 1 (box)

Photographs

Unit Date 1936, 1938, undated

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 16 (folder)

Life magazine and scrapbook page

Unit Date 1959, undated

Mixed Materials [1000898402] OV 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Church Program and Songbook,

Unit Date 1970, undated

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 17 (folder)

Our Strong Heritage, 1778-1988: Asbury United Methodist Church, Harrisonburg Virginia (partial photocopy)

Unit Date 1988

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 18 (folder)

Information on Africa

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [1000886227] 1 (box)

Container 19 (folder)

Currency

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [1000886228] 2 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Stamps (Folder 1 of 3)

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [1000886228] 2 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Stamps (Folder 2 of 3)

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [1000886228] 2 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Stamps (Folder 3 of 3)

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [1000886228] 2 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Great Books Project

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [1000886228] 2 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Newspaper Articles

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [1000886228] 2 (box)

Container 6 (folder)