Finding Aid of the J.M. McCaleb Papers 0013

Katie Richardson

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Pepperdine University. Special Collections and University Archives.

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URL: https://library.pepperdine.edu/collections/boone-special-collections-university-archives.htm
Abstract: J.M. McCaleb was a Christian missionary who spent nearly fifty years of service in Japan from 1892-1941. The collection includes scrapbooks, clippings, correspondence, and publications both written and compiled by McCaleb.

Language of Material: Materials are in English.

Conditions Governing Access
Advance notice required for access.

Conditions Governing Use
Permission to publish, quote, or reproduce must be secured from the repository and the copyright holder.

Preferred Citation
[Box/folder# or item name], J.M. McCaleb papers, Collection no. 0013, Churches of Christ Heritage Center, Special Collections and University Archives, University Libraries, Pepperdine University.

Immediate Source of Acquisition
The collection was given to Pepperdine University by Nancy Williams Burton and Henry Richard Burton on January 2, 2007.

Biographical note
John Moody (J.M.) McCaleb was born on September 25, 1861, in Duck River, Tennessee, to John and Jane McCaleb. At just six months of age, McCaleb lost his father who was shot and killed by a fellow Union Army soldier during the Civil War. The incident left Jane alone to raise six boys and to manage 365 acres of farmland.

Despite the family's unfortunate circumstances, Jane taught McCaleb how to read at an early age using the family Bible. When a subscription school started roughly two miles away, Jane sent McCaleb who was six at the time. Class was in session just three months out of the year to allow the children to help out at their homes.

In 1876, at age fifteen, McCaleb was baptized. From this young age it was evident that McCaleb was destined for a career in the church. Many community members felt he would make an excellent preacher from the talks and prayers he gave around the county. In the spring of 1888, at the age of twenty-six, McCaleb enrolled at the College of the Bible (now Transylvania College) in Lexington, Kentucky. While a student, he would occasionally preach on Sundays around the community and back home in the Tennessee area.

During college, McCaleb met his first wife, Dorothy (Della) Bentley, whom he married on October 7, 1891. Around that time, W.K. Azbill was organizing a group of missionaries to go to Japan. One of the missionaries he contacted was McCaleb who after careful consideration decided to go. McCaleb and his wife set off for Japan in the spring of 1892 with three other missionaries. While in Japan, the two had three children: Lois, James, and Ruth.

Soon after their arrival in Japan, the group opened a Sunday school and a charity school. The two female missionaries and Azbill oversaw the Yotsuya Ward, while McCaleb and his wife oversaw the Kanda Ward. Not long after their arrival, a lot was secured and a house was built in the Kanda Ward for the McCalebs to live in. The building was complete in 1899.

In 1899, the McCalebs returned to the United States on furlough. That same year, missionaries Mr. and Mrs. William J. Bishop arrived in Japan without a place to live. Therefore, in the McCalebs' absence, the Kanda Ward was turned over to the Bishops. When McCaleb returned to Japan, he was asked to teach in a middle school in the city of Kanazawa where he spent three months living with a Japanese family before returning to Tokyo to teach English.

On October 1, 1907, McCaleb opened Zoshigaya Gakuin, a boarding school for young men where English and Christianity were taught. That same year, his wife and three children returned to the United States permanently for the children's schooling. McCaleb continued to teach at the school until 1923 when it was closed because of damage done by the Great Kanto Earthquake.

In the late 1920s, McCaleb set off on a journey to visit missions around the world. He visited Korea, China, the Philippines, Singapore, India, South Africa, Egypt, Palestine, England, Scotland, Ireland, and Canada. He traveled 34,114 miles before returning home to Kentucky. McCaleb wanted to observe the work that other missionaries were doing in order to improve
missionary work in the future.
McCaleb returned to Japan several more times before World War II broke out, and finally returned to the United States for
good on October 22, 1941. After returning to the United States, McCaleb was invited to serve as a professor emeritus at
Pepperdine University. In addition to teaching Asian Religion Studies at the University, McCaleb preached at various
congregations in the area and even went to Juneau, Alaska, with a group of missionaries. In 1939, McCaleb's first wife
passed away. A few years later, on January 27, 1942, he married again, this time to Elizabeth Reeves. The couple had plans
to go to Japan but McCaleb's health declined and he passed away on November 7, 1953.

Scope and Content
The majority of the collection documents the missionary work McCaleb did in Japan from 1892-1941. A large part of the
collection consists of Christian publications and McCaleb's manuscripts. Most of his writings were later published in
Christian periodicals or newspapers, some of which are part of the collection. In addition to his writings, the collection also
includes biographical information on McCaleb and other prominent church leaders; correspondence between McCaleb and
other missionaries and Churches of Christ followers; financial documents such as checks and budgets, as well as
correspondence pertaining to donor support of missionary and other humanitarian work; article clippings and scrapbooks
mentioning the work McCaleb and the missionaries did in Japan; and a small amount of materials in Japanese.

Arrangement
The collection is arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Related Materials

Processing Information note
The collection was arranged and described by Katie Richardson in November 2011.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Publications
Christian literature -- History
Financial records
Tokyo (Japan)
Los Angeles (Calif.) -- History
Missionaries -- Japan -- History
Restoration movement (Christianity) -- History
Clippings
Periodicals
Christianity -- Japan -- History
Correspondence
Church schools -- Japan -- History
Scrapbooks
McCaleb, J.M.
Pepperdine University
Christian Churches and Churches of Christ--Missions
Azbill, Wilson Kendrick
Lipscomb, David
McGarvey, J. W. (John William)
Grubbs, I. B. (Isaiah Boone)
Pepperdine College
Shaw, Knowles
Larimore, T. B. (Theophilus Brown)
Anderson, William
Rodman, Orville T.

box 1, folder 1 Autograph book 1887-1888
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Physical Description: (4 books)