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

Processed by Lucinda Glenn Rand; machine-readable finding aid created by Xiuzhi Zhou
Graduate Theological Union Archives
2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, California, 94709
Phone: (510) 649-2523/2501
Email: archives@gtu.edu
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Inventory of the Elsie Thomas Culver Collection, 1945 - 1979 (bulk, 1945-55)

Accession number: GTU 92-9-01
Shelf location: 2/I/2 - 2/I/3

The Graduate Theological Union Archives

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Lucinda Glenn Rand
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5/29/98
Encoded by:
Xiuzhi Zhou

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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/I/2 - 2/I/3
Creator: Culver, Elsie Thomas
Collection Size: 2.5 linear feet (8-5" record boxes)50+ images and documents
Repository: The Graduate Theological Union.
Language: English.

Source and Date
Helen Peterson, 1992

Access
Collection is open for research.

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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

Biographical/Historical Description

Elsie Thomas Culver (January 3, 1898 - August 21, 1988) was born in Connecticut to Dudley and Orie (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 apparently was donated by Elsie Thomas Culver to the Center for Women and Religion (CWR) at the GTU around 1979. In 1992, the collection was transferred from CWR to the GTU Archives, still in its original boxes and containers. 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 provided captions or other identification on the majority of the photographs.

**Background reading**

(Including GTU Library call numbers)


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)


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**Subject Files, arranged chronologically**

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<td>Box 1</td>
<td>Elsie Thomas Culver: biographical material</td>
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<td>ff 1</td>
<td>Travel Journal, mss, Post-WWII Europe, 8-12/1945</td>
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<td>Travel Journal, mimeographed, Post-WWII Europe, 8-12/1945</td>
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<td>1945 trip: Correspondence</td>
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<td>1945 trip: Notebook - expenses, addresses, calling cards</td>
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<td>ff 7</td>
<td>Brochure: Church Christmas Packages, Com. On Overseas Relief, ca. 1945-46</td>
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<td>Brochure: This is Our Story, Aid to Czech Children, ca. 1945-46</td>
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<td>Brochure: Church World Service: Children of War Areas, ca. 1945-46</td>
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<td>World Trip, 1948-49: Articles</td>
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<td>ff 12</td>
<td>Copy and design for brochure: Building the Kingdom in India, ca. 1949-50</td>
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**Location Note**: Small Collections (legal size), 3/C/5
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<th>Folder ff 5</th>
<th>World Trip, 1948-49: Travel Journal, Articles, Photo List</th>
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<td>Additional Note</td>
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<td>Arranged chronologically, then alphabetically by country.</td>
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</table>

**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 1
  - Folder ff 2
  - Folder ff 3-5
  - Folder ff 6-30
  - Folder ff 31-65
  - Folder ff 66-75
- **Box Box 3,**
  - Folder ff 1-48
  - Folder ff 49-53
  - Folder ff 54-58

**England, unnumbered**

**SS Isle De France, unnumbered**

**SS Alexander, en route**

**Czechoslovakia**

**France**

**Germany**

**Holland**

**Switzerland**

**Holland, 1946-48,**

**World Trip, 1948-49.**

- **Box Box 4,**
  - Folder ff 1-6
  - Folder ff 7-9
  - Folder ff 10-19
  - Folder ff 11-71

**Africa**

**Indian**

**Burma**

**China**

**Italy**

**China, Japan**

**Egypt**

**Iraq**

**Pakistan**

**India**

(ff 64-68 contain unnumbered photos of India and Pakistan)

- **Box Box 5,**
  - Folder ff 1
  - Folder ff 2-5
  - Folder ff 6-14
  - Folder ff 15-16
  - Folder ff 17-19
  - Folder ff 20
  - Folder ff 21-22
  - Folder ff 23
  - Folder ff 24
  - Folder ff 25
  - Folder ff 26
  - Folder ff 27
  - Folder ff 28
  - Folder ff 29-33

**Burma**

Thailand (she sometimes marks them Siam)

unnumbered, color photos, Burma and Thailand

Philippines

China

Japan (ff 22, color)

Greece, 1949

Elsie Thomas Culver, ca. 1949-50

New York City, ca. 1950

Photo Christmas Cards, 1950

birds (from which Christmas cards were taken?)

Iraq, 1950, Bd. Of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church

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 6Folio
1) Film strips -- "Go Heal", "Blessed to Receive" and "Blessed to Receive 2", "Delayed Pilgrims", "Joyful 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, I, 2, and CXLI
   Egypt, 27, 28

Negatives: Bottom layer:

Box Box 6Folio
1) World Trip, 1948-49 (con’t.)

Box Box 7Folio
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

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

Box Box 8Folio
1) World Trip, 1948-49

Box Box 8Folio, 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?

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

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

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