Inventory of the Charles Nelson Leach Papers

Finding aid prepared by Hoover Institution Archives Staff, revised by Sarah Patton
Hoover Institution Archives
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Title: Charles Nelson Leach papers
Date (inclusive): 1917-1965
Collection Number: 2011C40
Contributing Institution: Hoover Institution Archives
Language of Material: English and French
Physical Description: 3 manuscript boxes, 3 oversize boxes, 3 sound lacquer discs (4.5 linear feet)
Abstract: Diaries and photographs relating to Commission for Relief in Belgium and American Relief Administration activities in World War I-era Europe; correspondence, reports, and collected materials relating to internees and internment camps in the Japanese-occupied Philippines; and correspondence and printed materials relating to the Belgian-American Educational Foundation and its 1955 expedition to the Belgian Congo.
Physical Location: Hoover Institution Archives
Creator: Leach, Charles Nelson
Access
Collection is open for research.
Use copies of all sound recordings in this collection are available for immediate access.
Publication Rights
For copyright status, please contact the Hoover Institution Archives.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Charles Nelson Leach papers, [Box number], Hoover Institution Archives.
Acquisition Information
Acquired by the Hoover Institution Archives in 2011.
Accruals
Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. To determine if this has occurred, find the collection in Stanford University's online catalog at http://searchworks.stanford.edu/. Materials have been added to the collection if the number of boxes listed in the online catalog is larger than the number of boxes listed in this finding aid.
Biographical Note
Born on July 2, 1884 in Burlington, Vermont, Charles Nelson Leach headed west after graduating from high school, attending Stanford University from 1904 to 1908. After working briefly in a sulfuric acid plant to support himself, Leach continued his education at Stanford Medical School, receiving his M.D. in 1913. He then worked in the medical department for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, until he was called by Herbert Hoover in 1915 to go to Europe with the Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB).

Leach worked with the American Ambulance at Neuilly-sur-Seine (outside of Paris) at Red Cross Hospital #1 and served at a mobile surgical facility in Flanders until the United States entered World War I in 1917. At that point he joined the U.S. Army Reserve Officers’ Corps, working at the same Red Cross hospital on an Army Medical Corps assignment. He also completed temporary duty with the Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations. After the war ended, Leach served with the American Relief Administration (ARA) in Eastern Europe from 1918 to 1920. He was based in Vienna, though he traveled throughout Europe during this time.

In 1920, Leach was hired by The Rockefeller Foundation and sent to Johns Hopkins to earn his public health degree. Upon completion of the degree, Leach gained field experience in Australia, then went to the Philippines to assist with public health issues. In 1922, Leach married Florence Warden Dixon in Hong Kong. After living together in Manila and serving in Tokyo after the 1923 earthquake, the couple returned to the United States in 1924. Leach was sent to Alabama by the International Health Division of The Rockefeller Foundation to work on hookworm and other health problems, then to Mississippi in 1927 to assist with flood relief. After receiving further training in New York, Leach and his family moved to Europe (first Prague, then Vienna), where from roughly 1931 to 1934 he worked on diphtheria and other public health problems in Central and Eastern Europe. Leach next found himself in China from 1934 to 1936 as a Visiting Professor of Public Health at the Peking Union Medical College. In 1936, after being given training by The Rockefeller Foundation, he returned to Montgomery, Alabama to run a rabies laboratory in collaboration with the Alabama Department of Public Health, which he did for the next five years. Leach was then sent to the Burma Road to assist with malaria control, but he was in Manila when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Leach was interned by the Japanese in the Philippines, first at the Santo Tomas camp, where he established a camp hospital, then at Los Baños, where he served on the Executive Committee and was involved in establishing healthcare arrangements. In late 1943 he was among those repatriated on the MS Gripsholm, arriving in New York on December 1st.
Leach, along with some of his fellow internees, was featured in the December 20th issue of LIFE magazine. After a six month recovery period (he suffered from weakened eyesight due to malnutrition), Leach was sent to London in 1944 by The Rockefeller Foundation to restart their European activities. He once again traveled extensively throughout Europe, working with institutions and providing Rockefeller assistance to scientists resuming their work that had been interrupted by the war. Leach also traveled with the British Red Cross behind German lines into Holland to assist with nutrition and to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp to help the freed prisoners.

In 1950, Leach retired from The Rockefeller Foundation after 29 years with them. He moved to Alabama and took a position with the Tennessee Valley Authority, supervising malaria control. Not long after, he retired fully due to illness. He returned to Vermont, where he assisted with local medical coverage, did public health work, and served on the board of the American Red Cross and as a trustee of the University of Vermont. In 1955, as a member of the Belgian-American Educational Foundation (BAEF), a successor to the Commission for Relief in Belgium, Leach traveled with an expedition to the Belgian Congo to evaluate health services and facilities there. His final international project was in 1956, when he supervised the refugee camp health service at Eisenstadt, Austria, a destination of refugees from the Hungarian revolution. Increasing health problems in the 1960s caused Leach to slow down considerably, and he passed away in 1971 at the age of 86.

**Scope and Content of Collection**

The materials in this collection cover three periods of Leach’s life: his work in World War I-era Europe with the Commission for Relief in Belgium and the American Relief Administration (1917-1920); his internment by the Japanese in the Philippines during World War II and his return home thereafter (1942-1945); and his involvement with the Belgian-American Educational Foundation, particularly his attendance on an expedition to the Belgian Congo (largely the 1950s).

The World War I-era portion of the collection consists of diaries kept and photo albums created by Leach during his time in Europe. The three diaries, covering the years 1917 to 1919, include both handwritten entries and pasted in newspaper clippings, ticket stubs, photographs, and other memorabilia (some in French). The entries cover Leach’s daily life and touch on his social outings (tennis games, dinners in Paris, opera performances), work (operative procedures, talks given to troops), wartime conditions (zeppelins over Paris, the devastation at the front), and travels. A 1917 photo album, titled “Members of the Commission for Relief in Belgium,” contains portraits, some of which are signed by the pictured individual with his name and at times a note or mailing address. There are also three photo albums created during the course of Leach’s work with the American Relief Administration that contain photographs (some captioned) of the various areas and peoples of Europe that he saw on his travels.

The World War II-era portion of the collection consists of correspondence to and from Leach, documentation of internment camp conditions, collected materials, and Relief for Americans in Philippines materials. The correspondence consists largely of inquiries sent to Leach about other internees in the Philippines camps (as a result of his picture having appeared in LIFE magazine), with his responses, plus welcome home letters, job offers, and requests to speak. Correspondents include Herbert Hoover, Nick Roosevelt, Ray Lyman Wilbur, and Rockefeller Foundation colleagues such as Raymond Fosdick and George Strode. It would appear that Leach originally organized this correspondence alphabetically, and an attempt was made to recreate the original order. Where this was not possible, the items were placed into a general correspondence folder.

Leach and some fellow internees took it upon themselves to prepare reports documenting the conditions in the internment camps for the use of the U.S. government. In addition to copies of the reports on Santo Tomas and Los Baños, there are a variety of charts providing demographic data about the internees, as well as information about supplies and nutrition in the camps. Finally, there is a small amount of collected material from this period, including newspaper clippings and materials from the Relief for Americans in Philippines organization, which Leach corresponded with regularly when attempting to provide information about internees remaining in the Philippines after his repatriation.

There are also some sound recordings from this time period. One, from May 21, 1943, is a sound disc sent to the Leach family by a ham radio operator who picked up a Tokyo broadcast of the reading of a letter from Leach to his family. The other two sound discs, believed to be from 1950, are recordings of music and of a man talking to his dog, probably recorded from the radio.

The 1950s portion of the collection consists of correspondence, writings, collected and printed materials related to the Belgian-American Educational Foundation (BAEF) expedition to the Belgian Congo in 1955, as well as materials relating to the BAEF more generally. The correspondence, to and from Leach, largely relates to the planning of the expedition to the Belgian Congo (some of it is in French). Leach’s travel diary from the trip is also included, as is a draft write-up of the purpose of the expedition. There are also numerous travel brochures, articles, and newspaper clippings about the Belgian Congo. The BAEF materials include the Foundation’s by-laws and history, a few pieces of general correspondence, event invitations and menus, and the text of some speeches given by Herbert Hoover on commemorative occasions.
Subjects and Indexing Terms
American Relief Administration.
Commission for Relief in Belgium (1914-1930)
Los Baños Internment Camp (Los Baños, Philippines)
Santo Tomas Internment Camp (Manila, Philippines)
Concentration camps.
International relief.
World War, 1914-1918--Civilian relief.
World War, 1939-1945--Philippines.
World War, 1939-1945--Prisoners and prisons.

World War I in Europe materials, 1917-1920
Language of the Materials: Some of the materials are in French.

Box 1
Diaries, 1917-1919

Photo albums, 1917, 1920

Box 2
Members of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, 1917

Box 3
American Relief Administration albums, 1920

World War II in Philippines materials, 1942-1945

Correspondence, 1942-1945
Scope and Contents note
Consists of correspondence sent to and from Dr. Leach. The bulk of the correspondence is in regards to Dr. Leach's fellow internees in the Philippines, with people writing to inquire if Dr. Leach knew their relatives or colleagues. As a result, Dr. Leach organized this type of correspondence by the last name of the internee, rather than by the name of the inquiring relatives or friends. Other correspondence includes letters and telegrams welcoming Dr. Leach home after he was repatriated in December 1943, as well as job offers and requests to speak. These latter instances are organized alphabetically by the name of the sender.

Box/Folder 4 : 1
Lists of internee names and contacts
Scope and Contents note
Included with these materials is a list titled "Internees About Whom Dr. C.N. Leach Has Corresponded or Conferred," which is an alphabetical list of said internees, along with the name and address of the person notified. A large portion of the alphabetized correspondence is based on this list of internees.

Box/Folder 4 : 2-3
General
Scope and Contents note
These two folders contain correspondence that did not fit easily into the alphabetical correspondence files, either because there was no signature or it was illegible, or because it was unclear where the item was placed in Dr. Leach's original organizational scheme.
### World War II in Philippines materials, 1942-1945

#### Correspondence, 1942-1945

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<td>Florence Leach</td>
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**Scope and Contents note**

A few pieces of correspondence sent to Florence Leach by her husband's colleagues and a note from a woman seeking information about someone in an internment camp.

### Documentation of internment camps, 1942-1943

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<td>Copies of portions of Santo Tomas report</td>
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<td>Outlines of questions to answer about camp conditions</td>
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<td><em>Internews, 1942</em></td>
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**Scope and Contents note**

Data and reports gathered and prepared by a committee of internees to provide information regarding internment conditions in the Philippine Islands. Committee members were A.K. Aurell, Ray P. Cronin, C.N. Leach, W. Portrude, Hugh L. Robinson, Ewald Selph, O.G. Steen, and M.E. Vitally.

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**Scope and Contents note**

Includes invitations, articles, clippings, short list of Rockefeller Foundation International Health Division projects in the Philippines in 1941, and a transcription of a statement by Protestant missionaries in the Philippines.

Box/Folder 6 : 4  
**Correspondence, 1952-1955**  
**Scope and Contents note**
Correspondence to and from Dr. Leach regarding the trip to the Belgian Congo he took with fellow members of the Belgian-American Education Foundation.

Box/Folder 6 : 5  
**Writings, 1953, 1955**  
**Scope and Contents note**
Includes a draft which provides some background information on the Belgian-American Education Foundation (BAEF) and its involvement in the Belgian Congo and also details the aims of the survey mission to the Belgian Congo by members of the BAEF; Dr. Leach's travel journal from his trip to the Belgian Congo in 1955.

Box/Folder 6 : 6  
**Personal items, 1955**  
**Scope and Contents note**
Includes addresses of Belgian colleagues, a hotel receipt, an invitation to lunch from the governor of Leopoldville, blank picture postcards, and blank hotel stationery.

Box/Folder 6 : 7  
**Journals and articles, 1953-1958**

Box/Folder 6 : 8  
**Newspaper clippings, 1952-1958**

Box/Folder 6 : 9  
**Travel brochures, circa 1949-1954**

Box/Folder 6 : 10  
**Copies of travel brochures, 1952-1953**

Box/Folder 6 : 11  
**By-laws and history, 1939, 1964**

Box/Folder 6 : 12  
**Correspondence and events, 1959, 1965**  
**Scope and Contents note**
Includes correspondence between Dr. Leach and his BAEF colleagues, as well as an invitation to, and menus for, BAEF dinner events.

Box/Folder 6 : 13  
**Herbert Hoover, 1958, 1959, 1965**  
**Scope and Contents note**
Consists of the text of speeches Hoover gave (two in Brussels in 1958 and one for the Commission for Relief in Belgium’s 45th anniversary dinner in 1959) and a brief biography of Hoover reprinted from the 1965 Year Book of the American Philosophical Society.

Sound recordings  
Record Cabinet  
**Sound recordings, 1943, undated**  
**Scope and Contents note**
Three sound lacquer discs.
Musical radio broadcast and sound recording of a man talking to his dog, undated

Conditions Governing Access note
Use copy reference number: 2011c40_a_0008504

Scope and Contents note
Parts 1 and 2: Side A of the disc is recordings of music, probably recorded from the radio. Part 3 is a man talking to his dog about a bird outside the window and various tricks he wants the dog to perform.

Musical radio broadcast, undated

Conditions Governing Access note
Use copy reference number: 2011c40_a_0008505

Japan Broadcasting Company radio broadcast, 1943 May 21

Conditions Governing Access note
Use copy reference number: 2011c40_a_0008506

Scope and Contents note
This recording sounds like it was sourced from the radio airwaves. It is a reading of a letter from Charles Nelson Leach, POW, to his family.