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Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 6

Finding Aid for

John Horton Daniels and Helen Daniels Papers, 1919 - 1956



Image Credit: *Minnesota Alumnus*, Vol. 44, no. 9 (May 1945), p. 296

Finding Aid prepared by: Gregory Adam Scott, July 2010

Reviewed and Updated by Brigette C. Kamsler, February 2014 with financial support from the
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Summary Information

Creator: John Horton Daniels, 1891 - [1974?] and Helen Daniels

Title: John Horton Daniels and Helen Daniels Papers

Dates: 1919 - 1956

Abstract: J. Horton Daniels, a doctor based in Nanjing 南京, China and his wife Helen Daniels, both missionaries with the Presbyterian General Board of Missions 長老會. Contains correspondence, clippings and publications.

Size: 4 boxes, 1.50 linear feet

Storage: Onsite storage

Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@libraries.cul.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance:** These records were part of the independent Missionary Research Library prior to its closure in 1976, when the records were accessioned to The Burke Library.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@libraries.cul.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. [Burke Library staff](#) is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions:** The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, MRL 6: John Horton Daniels and Helen Daniels Papers, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography¹

(John) Horton Daniels was born on September 22, 1891 in Minneapolis, MN, the son of Frank Birchard Daniels and Florence Louisa Farrington. He graduated with a B.A. from the University of Minnesota in 1914 and entered the medical school that fall, but transferred to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University in 1916, receiving his M.D. in 1918.

Helen Dunn was born on May 11 1892 in Minneapolis to Frederic Earle and Harriet Augusta (Lewis) Dunn. She received her B.A. from the University of Minnesota in 1915, and was involved with the YMCA at the University of Wisconsin. She and Horton were married on August 14, 1919, and later that year went to China as missionaries under the auspices of the Presbyterian General Board of Foreign Missions. The two initially studied at the Language School at the University of Nanking, and Horton worked as a member of the medical staff of the University Hospital. During the 1927 “Nanking Incident,” when troops of the National Revolutionary Army assaulted the warlord armies controlling Nanjing, the couple had to flee to the safety of an American gunboat. They were eventually brought home to Minneapolis where Helen gave birth to their first child, John Horton.

Horton worked at the Student Health Service at the University of Minnesota from 1927 to 1930, after which the family returned to Nanjing. Horton was appointed head of the University Hospital, while Helen researched a history and guidebook for the city, which was never published. The family was on furlough during the Nanjing Massacre of December 1937, but returned to the city in August 1938 and remained for three years. In January 1941, the growing military threat from Japan prompted most of the family to return to Minneapolis while Horton remained in Nanjing. In the fall of that year Helen became ill and Horton intended to return to her, but was en route in Manila when Pearl Harbor was attacked. He was interned as a civilian by the Japanese military,

¹ Main source of biographical information used: Olive Bell Daniels, *The Farrington Ancestry* [Madison, Wisc., 1964], pp. 262-273.

and managed to do some work as a physician in the camp. He was eventually released in 1943 as part of a prisoner exchange with the United States.

After the end of the war, the couple returned to Nanjing to resume their work, but nearly a decade of conflict had drained the resources of the hospital. After working for one year under the new People's Republic of China, the couple returned home in 1950. Horton served as director of the Associated Mission Medical Office of the National Council of Churches' Division of Foreign Missions, part of the NCCCUSA. Horton retired in 1960 and is reported to have died in 1974.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The collection is divided into two series.

- **Series 1: Correspondence, 1919 – 1950 (3 Boxes, 1.25 linear feet)**

The first series consists of correspondence written by John Horton and Helen Daniels to family and friends in the United States. It covers the period during which they lived and worked in China, including the final years leading up to the establishment of the People's Republic and the eviction of the missionaries.

Most of this correspondence is of a personal nature, reporting and reflecting on their experiences in China. Several of the letters are significant because they were sent by John Horton Daniels to his wife and family from internment in the Philippines. There are also official communications between government agencies and the Daniels' family regarding his status as an interned civilian.

- **Series 2: Clippings and Publications, 1920 – 1956 (1 Box, 0.25 linear feet)**

The second series contains clippings and publications related to the Daniels' work in China. The bulk of this material is from the 1930s and 40s, and includes a number of documents relating to the Nanking Massacre of 1937.

Two local publications, *The Nanking Bulletin of Church and Community* and its continuation *Notes and Notices of the Nanking Union Church and Community*, are represented here by a very comprehensive collection of issues.

The 1949 Nanking Bulletin directory offers a unique glimpse into the foreign community of the Chinese capital only months before the establishment of the People's Republic, and the subsequent exodus of most of the Christian missionaries and Western diplomats.

Processing

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were photocopied on to acid-free paper, and the fragile originals separated by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed. Any items in an advanced state of deterioration were placed in Mylar envelopes.

Contents list**Series 1: Correspondence, 1919 - 1950**

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	1	March - April 1919
1	1	2	August - September 1919
1	1	3	September - December 1919
1	1	4	December 1919 - February 1920
1	1	5	February - December 1920
1	1	6	January - March 1921
1	1	7	March - July 1921
1	1	8	August - December 1921
1	1	9	January - March 1922
1	1	10	March - December 1922
1	1	11	January - February 1923
1	1	12	March - December 1923
1	1	13	January - May 1924
1	1	14	January - December 1925
1	1	15	January - May 1926
1	1	16	June - December 1926
1	1	17	January - July 1927
1	1	18	August - December 1930
1	1	19	January - June 1931
1	1	20	July - December 1931
1	2	1	January - March 1932
1	2	2	April - December 1932
1	2	3	January - March 1933
1	2	4	April - December 1933
1	2	5	January - July 1934
1	2	6	August - December 1934
1	2	7	January - December 1935
1	2	8	January - December 1936
1	2	9	January - December 1937
1	2	10	July - December 1938
1	2	11	January - December 1939
1	2	12	January - August 1940
1	2	13	September - December 1940
1	2	14	January - June 1941
1	2	15	July - December 1941
1	3	1	April - November 1942
1	3	2	January - July 1943
1	3	3	August - November 1943
1	3	4	January - December 1945
1	3	5	January - December 1946
1	3	6	January - December 1947

Series 1: Correspondence (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
1	3	7	January - December 1948
1	3	8	January - December 1949
1	3	9	January - May 1950

Series 2: Clippings and Publications, 1920 - 1956

2	1	1	<i>Student Volunteer Movement Bulletin</i> , January 1920 <i>Nanking Station Report, 1930-1931</i> , July 1931
2	1	2	Clippings, Correspondence, Reports, Photograph, 1922 – 1939
2	1	3	<i>Nanking Bulletin of Church and Community</i> , October 1930 – January 1933
2	1	4	<i>Notes and Notices of the Nanking Union Church and Community</i> , January 1933 - March 1935
2	1	5	Nanking Massacre: Correspondence, Reports, 1937 – 1938
2	1	6	<i>Nanking Notes and Notices</i> , April 1935 - December 1940
2	1	7	Clippings, 1938 – 1948
2	1	8	<i>Mao Tze-Tung on People's Democratic Dictatorship</i> 論人民民主專政, Ms. Notes, [194?]
2	1	9	<i>International Woman's Club, Nanking, China, 1947-1948</i> Hu Hsiao-Shih, <i>The Position of Nanking in Chinese Literature</i> , 1949
2	1	10	<i>Nanking Bulletin: Directory of Foreign Residents</i> , July 1949
2	1	11	Clippings, [195?]
2	1	12	Reports on Christianity and Communism, 1950 – 1952
2	1	13	Clippings from <i>People's China</i> , 1952
2	1	14	Lilian Caldwell Williams, <i>Grandmother's Story of an Ohio Childhood</i> , [1956?] <i>Yesterdays in China</i> , 1956