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Papers, 1936-1995, 2002.  4.00 linear ft.

Abstract

Reformed Church in America Missionary to Arabia (Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain) after being influenced by Dr. Paul Harrison and the missionary Tena Holkeboer. Husband Gerald Nykerk worked as a missionary medical doctor and Rose worked alongside as a medical assistant. In 1961, they were onboard the ill-fated British passenger ship, the *Dara*, which burned and sank in the Persian Gulf after an explosion from undetermined causes. After her husband’s death in 1961, Rose continued to work in the missionary field as hospital administrator in Bahrain for eleven more years. The collection consists of correspondence, brochures, minutes of missionary meetings, interview transcripts, newspaper clippings, and photographs of Mrs. Rose Witteveen Nykerk Battleson. Contains extensive information relating to the tragedy onboard the *Dara*, including a paper written by Mrs. Battleson about the incident. Also includes many essays written by Dr. and Mrs. Nykerk on various other topics.

Accession No: H95-1256  
Provenance: Rose Nykerk Battleson  
Donor: Rose Nykerk Battleson  
Photographs: 154 images  
Processed by: Ena Brooks, April 1999  
                     Michael Douma, June 2002

Biography

Mrs. Rose Witteveen Nykerk Battleson was a Reformed Church in America Missionary to Arabia from 1941.

Originally from Holland, Michigan, she attended Holland High School and met her first husband, Gerald H. Nykerk who was then a student at Hope College. Both were involved in similar types of activities: Christian Endeavor, church groups, and working at the city mission. Gerald was finishing up his medical degree at Marquette and Rose was working at Holland Furniture Company when they decided to get married.

Married in 1939, the Nykerk’s were influenced by Dr. Paul Harrison and the missionary Tena Holkeboer to become missionaries. They soon left for the mission field in Arabia in 1941. They traveled from San Francisco to Bombay in a Dutch ship, the Bloemfontein, which had no home base now that the Netherlands had been occupied by the Nazis. A Chinese ship then brought them from Bombay to Bahrain. Because of a rough political situation in Iraq (there intended destination), the Nykerk were told to take up work in Bahrain.

After a couple years of language training they began medical work. Gerald Nykerk worked as a missionary medical doctor and Rose worked alongside as a medical assistant. The Nykerk’s worked in Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain. Gerald suffered from Malaria in 1941, but they both were forced to stay in a Grand Rapids hospital for a year in 1954 to recuperate from tuberculosis. Hard work, adventure, and long trips back to the United States for furloughs.
dominated their working career.

In 1961 they were onboard the ill-fated British passenger ship, the Dara, which burned and sank in the Persian Gulf after an explosion from undetermined causes. Though they lost all personal possessions the Nykerks were glad to be alive and went back to their missionary work after a furlough.

Though her husband died of a heart attack and was buried the same day in Kuwait in 1964, Rose continued to work in the missionary field as hospital administrator in Bahrain for eleven more years. Gerald was remembered as a hard-working, devoted Christian missionary who once performed 316 eye and 96 general operations in Pakistan in a six week period. He was a well-known friend to Arabs as well as his fellow missionaries. Rose recalls working in Bahrain to be very happy years that she connected with and helped people of all classes.

The Nykerk’s three children, David, Nancy, and Laila went to high school in India while David and Nancy later attended Hope College.

After retirement in 1975 Rose remarried to Mervin Battleson of Aberdeen, South Dakota and settled in California. During the Persian Gulf war she gave many speeches on the Middle East. She currently lives in Hammet, California.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of correspondence, brochures, minutes of missionary meetings, interview transcripts, newspaper clippings, and photographs of Mrs. Rose Witteveen Nykerk Battleson. Contains extensive information relating to the tragedy onboard the Dara, including a paper written by Mrs. Battleson about the incident. Also includes many essays written by Dr. and Mrs. Nykerk on various other topics.

Container List

5th Annual Missionary Conference, 1961
American Mission School, 1968
American Mission Hospital, 1982 (1 image)
Arabia Mission
  Draft Constitution, 1968
Bahrain
  American Mission Hospital, 1982
  Arabia Mission, Minutes, 1966
  Bahrain Today, n.d.
  Brochures, 1981
  Greeting Card, n.d.
  Hospital and Mission Work, n.d.
  Map of Manama, n.d.
  Mission Hospital, Constitution, 1971
  Petroleum Company, Annual Report, 1969
  Picture Book of Occupations, n.d.
Being Concerned as Christian or Showing Love as Christians, n.d.
Biographical, Summary of Activities, 1976
Biographical Sketches, n.d.
Board of World Missions, Annual Reports, 1960, 1961-1962 (2 folders)
Books
  Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, New Delhi, 1961
  Taraq Rajab Museum, Quarter Century of Progress, n.d.
  Taraq Rajab Museum, Kuwait, 1983
Booklets
  Christian Mission Digest, 1965-1966
  Story of Arabia, 1939
  Women’s Literary Club, 1961-1962
Bulletin, Christian Institutes of Islamic Study, 1967
Camp Calvin, 1962
Christmas Card List, 1963
Church Bulletins, 1961-1962
Correspondence
  Churches, 1964
  Closing of Hospital, Iraq, 1958
  Kuwait Station, 1964
Correspondence, General, Series 1
  February 20, 1934-March 9, 1936
  April 5, 1941-January 11, 1942
  January 12, 1942-August 25, 1942
  August 31, 1942-October 13, 1943
  October 30, 1943-January 4, 1945
  January 8, 1945-May 8, 1946
  June 23, 1946-August 18, 1948
  September 4, 1948-June 3, 1949
  June 12, 1949-June 15, 1950
  June 16, 1950-December 15, 1952
  May 4, 1953-August 30, 1955
  November 13, 1955-June 16, 1957
  June 23, 1957-September 1, 1958
  September 15, 1958-February 1, 1960
  February 22, 1960-May 27, 1961
  June 4, 1961-August 22, 1963
  September 1, 1963-December 28, 1964
  January 5, 1965-June 7, 1966
  June 19, 1966-June 8, 1968
  July 7, 1968-March 15, 1970
  April 12, 1970-January 23, 1972
  March 23, 1972-May 15, 1975
  No date
Box 2

Correspondence
- General, Series 2, 1941-1980 (26 folders)
- Peerbolt, A., 1959-1961

*Dara*
- Correspondence, 1962
- Investigation Notes, 1962
- Newsclippings, 1962
- Disaster a Great Leveler, n.d.
- Emphera, n.d.
- Excerpts from Letters received from Rose and Jerry, 1941-1944

Folder, Costumes of the Arab World, 1986
Full Annual Meeting, Minutes, 1961-1965
Furlough Speeches, Correspondence, 1961
I Survived the Dara Fire the Night She Burned at Sea, Drafts and Correspondence, n.d.
Interview Transcripts, 1974, 1987, 2002 (3 folders)
Iraq Hospital and Mission Work, n.d.

*Kuwait*
- American Mission Hospital, Medical Report, 1964
- Church of Christ, News, 1964
- Hospital and Mission Work, n.d.
- Publication, The Kuwait, Kuwait Oil Company, 1954

*Maps*
- Kuwait City, 1984, 1986
- Sultanate of Oman, 1977

*Middle East Newsletter*, 1970

*Mission Executive Committee*
- Correspondence, Reports, Constitutions, 1961-1968
- Minutes, 1961-1969 (2 folders)

*National Evangelical Church, Kuwait*, 1987

*Neglected Arabia*, n.d.


*Newspaper Clippings*, 1975-1987

*Oman*
- Newspaper Clippings, 1984, 1987

*Publications*
- *Connections*, 1987
- *The Lamplighter*, 1982
- *Today in Bible Lands*, n.d.
Pakistan Hospital and Mission Work, n.d.

Box 3

Pamphlets
Arabia Calling, 1949-1955
Bahrain Report, 1971-1975
Neglected Arabia, 1940, 1941, 1944

Paper
Middle East Situation, Don Bosch, 1980
Muscat and Oman, Once Again, David Holden, 1962
Self Determination in Mission, n.d.


Photographs
Bahrain, 1982, n.d. (14 images)
Bahrain Hospital and Church, 1990 (70 images)
Gerald Nykerk, Grave, n.d. (1 image)
Kuwait and Bahrain, n.d. (45 images)
Melvin and Rose, 1995 (1 image)
Nykerg Family, 1960, n.d. (2 images)
Unidentified, n.d. (21 images)
Western Fashion Show, n.d. (20 images)

Program Brochure, Mission Festival, Milwaukee, 1971
Postcards, Arabia, n.d.
Publication, Middle East Forum, 1969
Puzzle, RCA General Program Council, n.d.

Box 4

Report of Mackay Memorial Hospital, n.d.
Speeches, Furlough, 1961
St. Paul’s Ahmadi, Parish Notes, 1964
Summer Vacation, n.d.
Theological Reflections, RCA, n.d.

This is Your Life, Based on the life and experience of Rose Witteveen Nykerk, n.d.
Trip Into Interior of Oman, n.d.
Uneven Patches, P.E.O., 1993
Women’s Missionary Conference, 1961

Legal-Sized Folders
American Mission Hospital, Meetings, 1978-1980
Bahrain
   Factsheet, n.d.
   Minutes, 1959
Dara, Legal Papers, Report of Court, Inquiry, 1962
Mission Executive Committee, Minutes, 1961
Oman, Minutes, 1960
World Day of Prayer, n.d.