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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 Nykerks’ 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
BOOKLET, WHO’S WHO, MRS. JOHN VANESS, N.D.
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
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   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
Book, *Last Hours on the Dara*, 1963
Correspondence, 1962
Investigation Notes, 1962
Newscippings, 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
Pamphlet, Arabia Frontiers of Tomorrow, n.d.
Publications
Connections, 1987
Daily Observer, n.d.
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)
- Nykerk 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.