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H95-1256. Battleson, Rose Nykerk (1913-2004).
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
 - Booklet, Who's Who, Mrs. John VanEss, n.d.
 - Draft Constitution, 1968
- Bahrain
 - American Mission Hospital, 1982
 - Arabia Mission, Minutes, 1966
 - Arabic New Testament, n.d.
 - Bahrain Today, n.d.
 - Brochures, 1981
 - Churches, 1971, 1987, n.d.
 - 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

Book, *Last Hours on the Dara*, 1963
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
Entertainment and Shopping Guide, n.d.
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.

Newsletters, 1969, 1973, 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.

Papers on Islam, 1984, 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.