July 2012


Western Theological Seminary

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Papers, 1896-1936. 2.50 linear ft.

Abstract

Hope College class of 1895, Princeton Theological Seminary class of 1898, and doctoral degree from Central College in 1900. He served several Reformed Church in America (RCA) congregations throughout a 30-year period. The collection consists of many letters written by Bruins to his family and friends. As Elton Bruins would say, he was a great correspondent. Also, some letters of his wife Lillian and their sons, Paul and Richard, are included. The letters are organized according to the writer and then by year. There is one photo album that contains pictures from 1896-1899, and a folder from 1930 that contains pictures of his trip to Europe. There are also sermons, essays and poetry written by Bruins. Perhaps one of the most interesting books in the collection is a rare handwritten *Exegesis of Romans IX*, written by H. Smytegelt (apparently one of Bruins’ school books). All of the folders are listed alphabetically according to their category. Additional materials are available in the Elton J. Bruins collection (H88-0019).

Accession No: W94-1184
Provenance: Elton Bruins
Donor: Mary Bruins Allison
Photographs: 1 photo album and 1 folder with pictures (Box 1)
Processed by: Christian Shuck, November 2002

Biography

Reverend Henry Martin Bruins was born February 20, 1873, in Alto, Wisconsin. He graduated from Hope College in Holland, Michigan, in 1895 with a B.A. Bruins then spent a year studying Divinity at Princeton Theological Seminary with the class of 1898. He wrote an essay there that won him the New Testament Fellowship Scholarship. His next year was spent at Harvard, where he received his master’s degree. Never ceasing in achievement, Bruins proceeded to study in Edinburgh, Scotland, and received his doctoral degree from Central College in 1900. He then returned home to the United States and took several pastoral positions in three different states throughout a 30-year period.

Bruins’ first wife was Mary Huizenga Bruins, who died in 1903 while giving birth to their daughter, Mary. His second wife, Lillian Fastenau Bruins, traveled with him on his “grand European tour” after he resigned from his position in Pella, Iowa. They had two boys together.

Henry M. Bruins died February 18, 1931, just before his 58th birthday.

Scope and Content

The collection consists of many letters written by Bruins to his family and friends. As Elton Bruins would say, he was a great correspondent. Also, some letters of his wife Lillian and their sons, Paul and Richard, are included. The letters are organized according to the writer and then by year. There is one photo album that contains pictures from 1896-1899, and a folder from 1930 that contains pictures of his trip to Europe. There are also sermons, essays and poetry written by Bruins. Perhaps one of the most interesting books in the collection is a rare
handwritten *Exegesis of Romans IX* written by H. Smytegelt (apparently one of Bruins’ school books). All of the folders are listed alphabetically according to their category.

**Container List**

**Box 1**

- Church Files
  - Church and Family Documents, n.d.
  - Albert Lea First Presbyterian Church, 1899
  - First Reformed Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1916-1918
  - Perseverance Presbyterian Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1916
  - Second Reformed Church, Pella, Iowa, 1917-1920
- Correspondence
  - General, 1888-1931 (10 folders)
  - Correspondence, n.d.
  - Account of the European Tour, September 17-July 8, 1928 (3 folders)
  - of Lillian Bruins, 1916-1924, 1928-1933 (2 folders)
  - of Paul Bruins, 1927-1936 (3 folders)
  - of Richard Bruins, 1927-1933
- Poetry and Essays, 1900, 1916
- Photographs, c. 1930
- Photo Album, c. 1896–1899

**Box 2**

- Sermons, 1901, 1912-1919, 1922-1924, 1928, n. d. (Dutch) (15 folders)
- Talks, 1924, 1929, n.d.