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W92-1048. Hager, Harry J. (1899-1983).
Papers, 1917-1977. 32.00 linear ft.



Abstract

Minister of the Reformed Church in America from 1924-1983. The collection includes sermon outlines, reel-to-reel tapes of the *America for God* radio broadcast, original glass lantern slides and digital copies, and correspondence. Correspondents include Edward Dimment, Jeannette Vander Werp, and Ame Vennema.

Accession No: W92-1048
Provenance: Harry J. Hager
Donor: Mary Hager
Photographs: 599 images (Box 1)
Processed by: Larry J. Wagenaar, December 1993

Biography

Harry James Hager was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on May 16, 1899, while his father, Rev. Titus Hager, was serving the Turner Avenue (Nederduitsch) Reformed Church. After graduating from high school in Muskegon, Michigan, he attended Hope College and Western Theological Seminary, receiving a B.A. in 1920 and B.D. in 1924. Hager married Hope graduate (1920) Jeannette Vander Werp on August 12, 1924.

Upon graduation from seminary in 1924, Hager was licensed by Classis Passaic of the Reformed Church in America and was installed at the Forest Grove Reformed Church near Hudsonville, Michigan. He served there only until 1926.

In 1926, President Edward Dimment offered him a position at Hope College as Professor of Biblical Literature and College Pastor, and he served in this capacity until 1929. In December 1928, he was called to Bethany Reformed Church in the Roseland area of Chicago, Illinois, and was installed on May 1, 1929. During his first decade at Bethany, he received a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago (1933) and an honorary doctorate from Hope College (1937). Hager served Bethany until his retirement in 1975.

Radio outreach was a significant portion of Hager's work, and he served as a pioneer in the emerging media ministry. This ministry began with the Sunday afternoon Bethany Bible Broadcast in 1933 and later with a daily "family altar" program each morning. On September 24, 1944, the first Sunday evening service was broadcast on Chicago radio station WCFL. This broadcast featuring Hager was later named *America for God*, and was featured weekly until 1977 on WCFL and other Midwest radio stations.

Hager was active in the administration of the Reformed Church in America. He served as vice-president of General Synod in 1945-1946 and as its president in 1946-1947. He also served as the president of the Particular Synod of Chicago and as an advocate for church missions.

Jeannette Hager passed away on February 17, 1977. Harry Hager died on May 15, 1983, in Holland, Michigan.

Scope and Content

The Harry Hager materials are divided into three series: CORRESPONDENCE, SERMON OUTLINES, and REEL-TO-REEL TAPES.

CORRESPONDENCE (1917-1921) includes a set of letters written by Jeannette Vander Werp to Harry Hager between 1918 and 1921. Some of these were written while she was a student at Hope College, as well as from the Christian Reformed Church mission in Rehoboth, New Mexico. These letters bring to life the joys and concerns of both Harry and Jeannette in the context of a romantic relationship. Other correspondence includes recommendations and application forms for the Rhodes scholarship and military recruitment materials.

SERMON OUTLINES (1924-1977) include most sermons preached by Hager throughout his career. Each outline includes major points for each sermon, biblical and secular illustrations, and a descriptive title. Early sermons are outlined in Dutch, although the bulk of them are in English. Each outline is based on a Biblical text and arranged by the books of the Bible with a small additional section arranged by topic. The back of each outline lists the date and location each sermon was preached and can be used to locate radio sermons in the REEL-TO-REEL series. There are also a number of sermon outlines arranged topically (Children, Christmas, Funerals, etc.), a sampling of early Dutch outlines and a transcript of a sermon preached on Hebrews 4:6.

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (1951-1977) are the audio tapes used by WCFL and other Midwest radio stations to broadcast *America for God*. The services from 1951-1964 were given program numbers and follow a rough chronological order. After a brief period in 1964-1965, when sermons were broadcast live, program tapes were identified by date in late 1965. All of the extant numbered programs (1-436) have been retained in the collection. Dated programs were sampled and retained for the full years of 1966, 1969, 1972, 1975 and 1977, Hager's final year of radio broadcast.

Additional letters, mostly written to Hope president Edward Dimnent between 1916-1926 and news clippings can be found in the Hope biographical file.

Container List

Box 1

CORRESPONDENCE

General, 1917-1919
Jeannette Vander Werp, 1918-1921 (9 folders)
Rhodes Scholarship, 1919

PERSONAL

America for God Theme Song, 1940
Biographical, 1927-1983
Dissertation, "The Radical School of Dutch New Testament Criticism," 1933
Golden Wedding Anniversary, 1974
"One Nation, One Language, One Flag," Award winning dissertation, 1920

Box 2

PERSONAL (cont.)

Photographs (digital, 2 CDs) (599 images), n.d.
Published Sermons, 1941, 1947-1948, n.d.
Resolutions of Support/Appreciation, 1934, 1967, 1975
Vander Werp-Hager, Jeanette, Memory Book, 1917-1920 (Oversized)

SERMON OUTLINES (1924-1977)

Genesis – Psalms (27 folders)

Box 3

SERMON OUTLINES (1924-1977) (cont.)

Proverbs – Malachi (22 folders)

Box 4

SERMON OUTLINES (1924-1977) (cont.)

Matthew – Acts (22 folders)

Box 5

SERMON OUTLINES (1924-1977) (cont.)

Romans – Revelation (35 folders)

Box 6

SERMON OUTLINES (1924-1977) (cont.)

Topical

Children
Christmas
Churches
Dutch Language
Father's Day
Funeral, Old Testament
Funeral, New Testament

Mothers Day
New Years Day
Sermon transcript, Hebrews 4:6

Box 7

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES – NUMBERED PROGRAMS, *America for God*, 1951-1964,
Programs 1-110

Box 8

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 111-172

Box 9

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 173-208

Box 10

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 209-240

Box 11

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 241-265

Box 12

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 266-300

Box 13

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 310-340

Box 14

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 341-436

Box 15

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 12/19/65 – 5/15/66

Box 16

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 5/22/66 – 9/25/66

Box 17

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 10/2/66 – 12/25/66, 1/5/69 – 2/9/69

Box 18

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 2/16/69 – 6/22/69

Box 19

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 6/29/69 – 11/2/69

Box 20

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 11/9/69 – 12/28/69, 1/16/72 – 5/28/72

Box 21

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 6/4/72 – 12/31/72, 1/5/75 – 2/9/75

Box 22

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 2/16/75 – 12/28/75

Box 23

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES (cont.)

Programs 1/22/77 – 12/18/77

Oversized (Shelved)

Hope College Memory Book (scrapbook), 1917

Rev. Harry Hager's presentation glass lantern slides (transparencies) and wooden box
containers of locations around the world (623 items)

Lantern slide projector