

Guide to the Ruth Rouse papers

RG 313



Elizabeth Peters

2019

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Yale Divinity Library
409 Prospect Street
New Haven, CT 06511
(203) 432-5301
divinity.library@yale.edu
<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

CALL NUMBER: RG 313

CREATOR: Rouse, Ruth, 1872-1956

TITLE: Ruth Rouse papers

DATES: 1897-1957

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 6 linear feet (13 boxes)

LANGUAGE: The materials are mainly in English, with some in French.

SUMMARY: The Ruth Rouse papers, 1897-1957, consist of Rouse's personal accounts of her international work with the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM), World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), as well as her research files on the history of global ecumenism.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.313>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.313>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Custodial History

In the process of compiling and cataloguing the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) archive at Yale in the 1940s, Rouse split her own papers. Portions she added to John Mott's collection, in order to fill gaps and enhance the official WSCF archive. Those records mostly include official reports, correspondence with other WSCF leaders, and some of Rouse's notes on the history of the WSCF, and can be found in RG 46. The remainder of her papers she either sent to the main WSCF offices or retained in her home; this portion is generally of a more personal nature, and comprises this collection. About half of the collection was processed as part of the WSCF archive in Geneva (as boxes 213.50.1-213.50.7); because it pertains mostly to Rouse's work outside the WSCF, it has been separated into its own collection and re-processed along with five boxes of previously unprocessed material.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Preferred Citation

Ruth Rouse Papers (RG 313), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

Related Materials

World Student Christian Federation records ([RG 46](#))

Biographical / Historical

Ruth Rouse was born in London in 1872 to an English father and a Scottish mother. She attended Notting Hill High School, followed by one year at Bedford College, London, and three years at Girton College, Cambridge University, where she received her M.A. She described her upbringing as "decidedly international and ecumenical," with relations belonging to a wide range of Christian denominations: Anglicans, Presbyterians, Baptists, Plymouth Brethren, Quakers, and Roman Catholics. She was raised as a Baptist, but soon joined the Church of England.

Shortly after graduating from Cambridge, Rouse became one of the first women student secretaries of the young Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland, and helped to found many of the women student branches in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland. She also traveled for two years in the United States and Canada, first for the Student Volunteer Movement and next for the Student Department of the YWCA. In 1899, she joined the Missionary Settlement for University Women at Mumbai (Bombay), for two years traveling widely through India in the interest of the Student Christian Movement.

In 1905, Rouse was made Secretary of the World Student Christian Federation for Work amongst Women Students. During her twenty years with the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), Rouse visited sixty-six different countries, including every country in Europe except Portugal.

During the first World War, Rouse did YMCA canteen work amongst British troops in France, and visited and spoke in many American, Australian and New Zealand camps, as well as some French. Her life nearly ended in 1918, when she was badly wounded at Étapes by a German bomb.

After leaving the WSCF in 1925, for fifteen years Rouse was the Educational and Editorial Secretary of the Missionary Council of the Church of England, which meant working closely with the International Missionary Council and the British Conference of Missionary Societies, and maintaining a knowledge of the missionary activities of all the Christian denominations, both within and without Britain.

During the whole of the Second World War, Rouse was in the United States, mostly at Yale Divinity School, where she was in charge of cataloguing the John R. Mott Library and the Archives of the WSCF (RG 46). During that time, she also wrote a history of the first thirty years of the Federation, which was published in 1948. She also worked regularly at the office of the World's YWCA, which was in Washington, DC, temporarily.

Rouse served on the Committee of the World's YWCA for forty years, including an eight-year term as the organization's President, from 1938 to 1946. In 1946, the very day she left the Presidency, Willem Visser 't Hooft invited her to assist in producing the History of the Ecumenical Movement; she consented, and was made Editorial Secretary of the Committee on the Ecumenical History. The History was published in 1954, with Rouse as co-editor alongside Stephen Neill. Rouse died in England in 1956, at the age of eighty-four.

Scope and Contents

The Ruth Rouse papers, 1897-1957, consist of Rouse's personal accounts of her international work with the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM), World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), as well as her research files on the history of global ecumenism. About half of the collection had been processed as part of the WSCF archive in Geneva (as boxes 213.50.1-213.50.7); because it pertains mostly to Rouse's work outside the WSCF, it has been separated into its own collection and re-processed along with five boxes of previously unprocessed material.

Rouse's diaries span the bulk of her career—every year from 1905 to 1953, except 1908 and 1946—and contain short, almost-daily accounts of her travels and meetings with a wide variety of people. Rouse wrote about her experiences in each of the nearly seventy countries she visited during this time, giving both her general impressions and details of her own daily life. She notes who she meets with, conferences she attends or speaks at, books she reads, time spent in the office dictating, and leisure time spent skiing or visiting towns. She also makes occasional records of daily expenses. Her journals contain more in-depth accounts of her experiences, often summarizing her work in a particular country or with a particular community. The collection also includes Rouse's private letters home from her travels, which detail her impressions of each country, the people she worked with, and her own struggles with health and work.

The travel reports in this collection, written while traveling for the Student Volunteer Movement and the WSCF, are mostly unofficial—intended to keep Rouse's colleagues up-to-date on her activities, but not intended for publication or wider release. As a result, they contain rather candid accounts of the lives of students in each of the nearly seventy countries Rouse visited. For example, she discusses political and cultural relationships between Finland and Russia, contrasts in life in the Czech Republic and Slovakia before and after World War I, and relationships between Christians and Muslims in Istanbul under the Ottoman Empire. Because Rouse often re-visited countries over the span of a number of years—for instance, she spent a total of six months in Russia over six visits in twenty years—the reports often offer opportunities for comparisons of how life for young people, especially young women, changed over the course of the first half of the twentieth century.

Rouse's correspondence is with a range of other leaders in the Student Volunteer Movement, WSCF, and other missionary and ecumenical organizations, particularly with leaders of women's movements, including Hermine Baart de la Faille, Michi Kawai, Winifred Mary Sedgwick, Tissington Tatlow, and Norah E. Warren. The most extensive correspondence in this collection is with Suzanne Bidgrain and Rena Carswell Datta. Bidgrain served as a traveling secretary for the YWCA and the WSCF, as well as working locally with the French SCM. She also compiled the WSCF's first multilingual hymnal, *Cantate Domino*. Datta served for a period as Rouse's personal secretary, having previously been a secretary for the SVM in Glasgow. The majority of her life was spent at Forman Christian College in Lahore, Pakistan (then India), where she worked with her husband, Surendra Kumar Datta.

The research files in this collection mainly cover two of Rouse's projects: the first on the history of missionary work, and the second on the ecumenical movement. With regards to missionary work, Rouse collected individuals' descriptions of their calls and motives to mission, as well as notes on biographical sources about missionaries in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. She began recording these notes as early as 1904, and reviewed them throughout her career for a variety of different projects. Her notes on the history of ecumenism were collected as Editorial Secretary to the Committee on the History of the Ecumenical Movement, and consist of summaries and analyses of individual ecumenical movements, as well as correspondence with other members of the Committee. There is also a small amount of research material about the history of the World Student Christian Federation; the bulk of this research is in RG 46.

The biographical materials contain a file which Rouse compiled in preparation for writing a history of the Student Volunteer Movement through the medium of her own memoirs. There is also a small file of condolences and remembrances written about Rouse after her death in 1956.

Arrangement

This collection is organized into five series: Diaries and Journals, Travel Reports and Notes, Correspondence, Research Files, and Biographical Materials. Each series may be further organized into subseries.

Country names were modernized in the description, with the name Rouse used in parenthesis (e.g. "Hungary (Austria-Hungary)"); however, the original alphabetical ordering is maintained (e.g. "Hungary (Austria-Hungary)" filed under "A"). Existing regional groupings were also maintained, so materials pertaining to a specific country may be found both in an individual and a regional file (e.g. "Peru" under both "Peru" and "South America").

Collection Contents

Series I: Diaries and Journals, 1897–1953

The diaries and journals are arranged chronologically.

	Diaries	1900–1953
b. 1, f. 1	Diary RG313-0001-0001: 2024-01-04 Covers Rouse's time in India.	1900 July–1901 October
b. 1, f. 2	Diaries RG313-0001-0002-1905: 2024-01-04 RG313-0001-0002-1906: 2024-01-04	1905, 1906
b. 1, f. 3	Diaries	1907, 1909
b. 1, f. 4	Diaries	1910, 1911, 1912
b. 1, f. 5	Diaries	1913, 1914, 1915
b. 1, f. 6	Diaries	1916, 1917, 1918
b. 1, f. 7	Diaries	1919, 1920, 1921
b. 1, f. 8	Diaries	1922, 1923, 1924
b. 2, f. 1	Diaries	1925, 1926, 1927
b. 2, f. 2	Diaries	1928, 1929, 1930
b. 2, f. 3	Diaries	1931, 1932, 1933
b. 2, f. 4	Diaries	1934, 1935, 1936
b. 2, f. 5	Diaries	1937, 1938, 1939
b. 2, f. 6	Diaries	1940, 1941, 1942
b. 3, f. 1	Diaries	1943, 1944, 1945
b. 3, f. 2	Diaries	1947, 1948, 1949
b. 3, f. 3	Diaries	1950, 1951, 1952, 1953
	Journals and letters	1897–1940
b. 9, f. 22	United States, Canada	1897–1899
b. 9, f. 23	India	1899 November– 1900 July
b. 9, f. 24	India	1900 July–1900 December

Journals and letters (continued)

b. 9, f. 25	India	1901 January– 1901 July
b. 9, f. 26	India	1901 July–1901 November
b. 9, f. 27	South Africa	1906 April 18– 1906 August
b. 3, f. 4	Hungary, Austria (Vienna)	1906 November
b. 3, f. 5	Japan, China, Korea	1907 February 2– 1907 June 19
b. 3, f. 6	Russia, Finland	1907 October 17–1907 December 15
b. 3, f. 7	Australia and New Zealand	1908 March 13– 1908 June 21
b. 3, f. 8	Bulgaria, Romania, Germany (Berlin)	1910 April 23– 1910 May 15
b. 3, f. 9	France	1910 November
b. 3, f. 10	Turkey (Constantinople), the Levant, Syria, Palestine, Greece	1911 January 3– 1911 April 9
b. 3, f. 11	Russia, Poland, Germany	1911 October 21– 1911 December 1
b. 3, f. 12	United States and Canada	1912 January– 1912 June
b. 3, f. 13	Norway and Sweden	1915 February– 1915 May
b. 9, f. 28	Sweden Includes an account of the visit of Crown Prince Gustav Adolf (later King Gustav VI Adolf) and Princess Margareta to the conference.	1915 June
b. 9, f. 29	Netherlands (Holland), Germany, Switzerland	1920 May 20– 1920 June 24
b. 4, f. 1	United States, Canada, Jamaica, Panama, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Barbados, Trinidad RG313-0004-0001: 2024-01-05	1915 December 12–1916 May 25
b. 4, f. 2	Switzerland	1916 September 24–1916 October 8
b. 4, f. 3	France (especially Le Havre)	1916 November– 1918 May
b. 4, f. 4	Italy, Austria, Czech Republic and Slovakia (Czechoslovakia)	1920 January 10–1920 February 28

Journals and letters (continued)

b. 4, f. 5

Switzerland, United States, Canada, Mexico, Germany

1939 December
10-1940
December 1

Series II: Travel reports and notes, 1897–1936

The travel notes and reports are arranged alphabetically by country. Country names were modernized in the description, with the name Rouse used in parenthesis (e.g. "Hungary (Austria-Hungary)"); however, the original alphabetical ordering is maintained (e.g. "Hungary (Austria-Hungary)" filed under "A"). Existing regional groupings were also maintained, so materials pertaining to a specific country may be found both in an individual and a regional file (e.g. "Peru" under both "Peru" and "South America").

	Travel notes	1897–1912
b. 4, f. 6	Australia	1908
b. 4, f. 7	Austria (Vienna), Hungary, Germany (Tübingen)	1906
b. 4, f. 8	Japan	1907
b. 4, f. 9	Russia	1907, 1911
b. 4, f. 10	Scandinavia (Finland, Norway, Sweden), United Kingdom	1897, 1903–1904
b. 4, f. 11	South Africa	1906
b. 4, f. 12	South America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Panama, Peru, Uruguay) RG313-0004-0012: 2024-01-05	1916
b. 5, f. 1	Turkey, Balkan states	1911
b. 5, f. 2	United States, Canada	1897–1898, 1903
b. 5, f. 3	Women's Movements RG313-0005-0003: 2024-01-05	1912
	Travel reports	1905–1924
b. 5, f. 4	Argentina, Australia and New Zealand (Australasia)	1907–1924
b. 5, f. 5	Austria	1907–1924
b. 5, f. 6	Belgium, Brazil	1907–1924
b. 5, f. 7	Bulgaria	1907–1924
b. 5, f. 8	Canada	1907–1924
b. 5, f. 9	Chile, Cuba, Czech Republic and Slovakia (Czechoslovakia)	1907–1924
b. 5, f. 10	China	1907–1924
b. 5, f. 11	Denmark	1907–1924
b. 6, f. 1	Finland	1907–1924
b. 6, f. 2	France	1907–1924
b. 6, f. 3	Germany	1907–1924
b. 6, f. 4	United Kingdom (Great Britain), Greece	1907–1924
b. 6, f. 5	Netherlands (Holland)	1907–1924

Travel reports (continued)

b. 6, f. 6	Hungary	1907-1924
b. 6, f. 7	India	1907-1924
b. 6, f. 8	Italy	1907-1924
b. 6, f. 9	Japan, Korea, Mexico	1907-1924
b. 6, f. 10	Near East (Turkey, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece)	1907-1924
b. 6, f. 11	Norway	1907-1924
b. 6, f. 12	Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania RG313-0006-0012: 2024-01-05	1907-1924
b. 6, f. 13	Russia	1907-1924
b. 7, f. 1	Russia	1907-1924
b. 7, f. 2	Serbia, South Africa RG313-0007-0002: 2024-01-05	1907-1924
b. 7, f. 3	South America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Panama, Peru, Uruguay)	1907-1924
b. 7, f. 4	Sweden	1907-1924
b. 7, f. 5	Switzerland	1907-1924
b. 7, f. 6	United States	1905-1924
b. 7, f. 7	Reports by Suzanne Bidgrain	1911-1924
b. 7, f. 8	Reports by Charles Hurrey	1923-1924

Series III: Correspondence, 1899–1952

The majority of Rouse's WSCF-related correspondence can be found in the World Student Christian Federation records ([RG 46](#)).

b. 8, f. 1	List of Correspondents Not necessarily all represented in this collection. Includes some correspondents represented in RG 46.	[1945]
b. 8, f. 2	Bidgrain, Suzanne	1910–1915
b. 8, f. 3	Bidgrain, Suzanne	1916
b. 8, f. 4	Bidgrain, Suzanne	1917–1918
b. 8, f. 5	Bidgrain, Suzanne	1919–1920
b. 8, f. 6	Bidgrain, Suzanne	1920–1921
b. 8, f. 7	Bidgrain, Suzanne	1922
b. 8, f. 8	Bull, Oswin	1922–1923
b. 8, f. 9	Cairns, D.S. (David Smith)	1912
b. 8, f. 10	Carswell (Datta), Rena	1915
b. 8, f. 11	Carswell (Datta), Rena	1915–1916
b. 8, f. 12	Carswell (Datta), Rena	1917–1918
b. 8, f. 13	Carswell (Datta), Rena Begins using married name, Mrs. S.K. Datta, in 1919	1919–1920
b. 8, f. 14	Eddy, G. Sherwood	1913–1918
b. 9, f. 1	de la Faille, Hermine Baart	1910–1918
b. 9, f. 2	Fairfield, Zoe	1912
b. 9, f. 3	Fries, Karl	1912
b. 9, f. 4	Gibson, Harold	1922
b. 9, f. 5	Hoffmann, Conrad, Jr.	1920
b. 9, f. 6	Jacob, E.O. (Ernest Otto)	1912
b. 9, f. 7	Kawai, Michi	1912
b. 9, f. 8	Mott, John R.	1912
b. 9, f. 9	Murray, C.H.	1922–1924
b. 9, f. 10	Porter, David	1920–1921
b. 9, f. 11	de Rougemont, Fritz	1912
b. 9, f. 12	Rutgers, Dr. H.C. (Herman Cornelis)	1912–1913

b. 9, f. 13	Sayre, A.G.	1912
b. 9, f. 14	Sedgwick, Winifred	1912
b. 9, f. 15	Thomsen, S.	1912
b. 9, f. 16	Tatlow, Tissington	1913
b. 9, f. 17	Warnery	1909
b. 9, f. 18	Warren, Norah E.	1920
b. 9, f. 19	Wilder, Robert P.	1920-1921
b. 9, f. 20	Woods, Edward S.	1913
b. 9, f. 21	Yergen, Max	1921-1923

Series IV: Research files, [circa 1904-1954]

	Missionary calls These notes pertain to individuals' descriptions of their calls and motives to mission. Some Rouse collected from printed resources, but others appear to have been collected through personal conversations.	[circa 1904-1945]
b. 10, f. 1	Ancient and sundry	
b. 10, f. 2	Sundry Continental (mostly 19th century)	[circa 1904-1905]
b. 10, f. 3	British (Earlier)	
b. 10, f. 4	British (Later)	
b. 10, f. 5	American and Canadian (Earlier)	
b. 10, f. 6	American and Canadian (Later)	
b. 10, f. 7	Manuscripts and summaries	
b. 10, f. 8	Medium - Research	
b. 10, f. 9	Medium - Literature	
b. 11, f. 1	Motives	
	World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) These notes pertain to Rouse's <i>History of the World Student Christian Federation</i> . The bulk of her notes and drafts on this topic can be found in the World Student Christian Federation records (RG 46).	1940-1946
b. 11, f. 2	Forerunners of WSCF	1945
b. 11, f. 3	Surveys of National Movements, 1897-1913	[1940-1945]
b. 11, f. 4	Research notes on WSCF, especially Rouse-Mott-Fries correspondence	1946
b. 11, f. 5	Summaries, Analyses, Outlines, and other Research	[1940-1945]
b. 11, f. 6	Analyses of Conferences, 1897-1913	[1940-1945]
b. 11, f. 7	<i>The Federation in the World War, 1914-1918: A first draft of some chapters of a History of the Federation</i>	1940
b. 11, f. 8	Notes and correspondence re: Karl Fries and Papers About the division of Fries's papers between Yale, Uppsala, and Geneva	1945
b. 11, f. 9	Correspondence re: WSCF Archives Robert Mackie, Raymond Morris, Adeline Du Pasquier. Includes discussion of which of Rouse's papers ended up at Yale, Geneva, or remained in her possession.	1946-1952

Ecumenism

[circa
1946-1954]

These notes on the history of ecumenism were collected when Rouse was Editorial Secretary to the Committee on the History of the Ecumenical Movement, and consist of summaries and analyses of individual ecumenical movements, as well as correspondence with other members of the Committee.

b. 11, f. 10	Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in Britain and Europe	
b. 11, f. 11	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) and SPCK and 18th Century Ecumenism	
b. 11, f. 12	Mission in South India: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) and SPCK	
b. 11, f. 13	Basel Missionary Society	1946
b. 11, f. 14	Grindelwald Conferences and The Review of the Churches, 1892-1895	
b. 12, f. 1	Intercommunion Notes	
b. 12, f. 2	Bridge Churches	
b. 12, f. 3	Evangelical Alliance	
b. 12, f. 4	Evangelical Alliance Conferences	
b. 12, f. 5	Notes on Evangelical Christendom	
b. 12, f. 6	Minutes of History Committee Meetings ("History of the Ecumenical Movement")	1947-1953
b. 12, f. 7	Appendix on word "Ecumenical," Sundry notes on researches	1949-1955
b. 12, f. 8	Adolf Keller: Memoranda on first phases of "Life and Work" (for use by the writer of this section in the "History of the Ecumenical Movement")	1950
b. 12, f. 9	Minutes of Authors' Conferences ("History of the Ecumenical Movement")	1950 July-1950 August
b. 12, f. 10	History Correspondence ("History of the Ecumenical Movement") RG313-0012-0010: 2024-01-05	1952-1954
b. 12, f. 11	SPCK Correspondence ("History of the Ecumenical Movement")	1952-1953
b. 12, f. 12	Letters and papers on Final Stages of History Committee ("History of the Ecumenical Movement") RG313-0012-0012: 2024-01-05	1953-1954
	Biography	[undated]
	These notes consist of short biographical sketches of missionaries and evangelists, and complement Rouse's research on both missionary calls and ecumenism.	
b. 13, f. 1	Index	
b. 13, f. 2	Sixteenth Century and Earlier	
b. 13, f. 3	Seventeenth Century - Anglicans (General)	

Biography (continued)

b. 13, f. 4	Seventeenth Century - Nonconformist (England)
b. 13, f. 5	Seventeenth Century - Scotland
b. 13, f. 6	Seventeenth Century - Continental
b. 13, f. 7	Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century - American
b. 13, f. 8	Eighteenth Century - Anglicans
b. 13, f. 9	Eighteenth Century - Nonconformist
b. 13, f. 10	Eighteenth Century - Continental
b. 13, f. 11	Nineteenth Century - American
b. 13, f. 12	Nineteenth Century - Evangelicals in the Church of England, Missionary Secretaries, Evangelical Chaplains in India
b. 13, f. 13	Nineteenth Century - Church of England (Anglo-Catholics)
b. 13, f. 14	Nineteenth Century - Church of England (Broad churchmen)
b. 13, f. 15	Nineteenth Century - Church of England (Evangelicals)
b. 13, f. 16	Nineteenth Century - Nonconformist
b. 13, f. 17	Nineteenth Century - Scotland
b. 13, f. 18	Nineteenth Century - Undenominational
b. 13, f. 19	Nineteenth Century - Roman Catholics (English and Continental)
b. 13, f. 20	Nineteenth Century - Continental
b. 13, f. 21	Nineteenth Century - Missionary
b. 13, f. 22	Twentieth Century - Nonconformist
b. 13, f. 23	Twentieth Century - Continental
b. 13, f. 24	Twentieth Century - Anglican

Series V: Biographical materials, 1946–1956

b. 4, f. 13	Memoir and autobiographical notes	1946
b. 4, f. 14	List of materials sent to [Rena] Datta	
b. 4, f. 15	Condolences and appreciations RG313-0004-0015: 2024-01-05 On occasion of Rouse's death	1956
b. 4, f. 16	Correspondence re: Rouse biography	1956–1957

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Ecumenical movement
Women in missionary work

Occupations

Missionaries -- India

Corporate Body

World Student Christian Federation