

Yale University Library  
Yale Divinity Library

# Guide to the Ernest and Olivia Ikenberry Papers

RG 168



Compiled by Elizabeth Pipes and Martha Lund Smalley

2000, 2017

409 Prospect Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
(203) 432-5301

[divinity.library@yale.edu](mailto:divinity.library@yale.edu)

<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

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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 168

**CREATOR:** Ikenberry, Ernest, 1892-1974

**TITLE:** Ernest and Olivia Ikenberry Papers

**DATES:** 1921-2005

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 3 linear feet (7 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Correspondence, writings, and collected material document the Ikenberrys' work in China and the U.S. Ernest and Olivia Ikenberry were American missionaries in China from 1922-1951, serving under the Church of the Brethren. Following their return from China they served at a Church of the Brethren mission among the Navajo Indians in Lybrook, New Mexico.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.168>

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## 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.168>.

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

b. box  
f. folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of O. Susan Ikenberry Wilson, Ernest Ikenberry, Jr.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Preferred Citation

Ernest and Olivia Ikenberry Papers (RG 168), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

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## Processing Information

Place names were modernized in the description, with the name originally used in the collection material or in an older version of the finding aid in parenthesis: e.g. "Beijing (Peking)" or "Benin (Dahomey)".

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## Biographical / Historical

### Ernest LeRoy Ikenberry

- 1892                   ○ Ernest LeRoy Ikenberry born.
- 1920                   ○ B.A. McPherson College
- 1917                   ○ Installed as minister, McPherson Church of the Brethren
- 1922                   ○ Married Olivia Dickens, went to China
- 1922-1923           ○ Language study in Beijing (Peking)
- 1923-1924           ○ Stationed in Ping Ting, Shanxi (Shansi)
- 1924-1934           ○ Taiyuan (Tai Yuan), youth work with YMCA, on loan from Church of the Brethren
- 1927                   ○ Evacuated due to political unrest
- 1929                   ○ Graduated, Yale Divinity School; Returned to YMCA work in Taiyuan (Tai Yuan)
- 1934-1940           ○ Evangelistic work in Ping Ting
- 1937-1940           ○ Children at North China American School
- 1941                   ○ Returned to U.S.
- 1941-1943           ○ Pastor, Twin Falls, Idaho
- 1945                   ○ Ernest returned to Shanghai, China followed by Olivia in 1946
- 1945-1948           ○ National Christian Council of China and the China Office of Church World Service
- 1948-1951           ○ Church of the Brethren Mission Office, Shanghai
- 1951                   ○ Returned to USA
- 1951-1953           ○ Personnel Secretary for Brethren Mission Board, Elgin, Illinois
- 1954-1957           ○ Re-opened Navajo Indian Mission in Lybrook, New Mexico
- 1958                   ○ Pastor, Brethren Church in Phoenix, Arizona
- 1962                   ○ Pastor, Aline, Oklahoma
- 1964                   ○ Wife Olivia died, Married Marguerite Berkey, former missionary to China and Japan

### Ernest LeRoy Ikenberry

- 1964                   ○ Moved to LaVerne, California
- 1974                   ○ Died

### Olivia Dickens Ikenberry

- 1896                   ○ Olivia Dickens Ikenberry born
- 1915-1917           ○ Northfield Seminary
- 1917-1919           ○ Oberlin College
- 1919-1921           ○ McPherson College
- 1921-1922           ○ Taught at Daleville College
- 1922                   ○ Married Ernest Ikenberry, Went to China
- 1922                   ○ Went to China, taught in mission schools, worked with Chinese women
- 1944-1946           ○ Dean of Women, McPherson College
- 1946                   ○ Returned to China
- 1946-1950           ○ National Christian Council, Secretary, Women's Work; publicity writer: Church World Service
- 1964                   ○ Died

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## Scope and Contents

This record group contains relatively little material related to the Ikenberrys' work in China prior to their last stint in Shanghai following the second World War. Three times in their lives as missionaries in China, Olivia and Ernest Ikenberry had to evacuate because of dangerous war situations. First in 1927 when they were living in Taiyuan (Tai Yuan), the warlords began fighting for power in Shanxi (Shansi). The second time, in the winter of 1940, they had been living under Japanese occupation for three years in Ping Ting, Shanxi (Shansi). At this time the Ikenberrys burned all their letters, papers, and accounts to keep them out of the hands of the Japanese, afraid that some information could be used against the Chinese Christians. This collection does contain circular letters, writings, and photographs documenting the Ikenberrys' work in China as well as correspondence and other materials related to their work among Native Americans in the United States.

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## Arrangement

- I. Correspondence, 1921-1966
- II. Sermons and Writings, 1921-1966
- III. Collected Materials
- IV. Personal Items and Memorabilia, 1922-2005

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, 1921-1966

b. 1, f. 1-4	Family: Parents to Children	1951-1968
b. 7, f. 1-15	Addendum to family correspondence: Parents to children and extended family	1936, 1938, 1946-1958
b. 1, f. 5	General, Business	1947-1950
b. 1, f. 6	Lybrook Reports	1953-1967
b. 1, f. 7	Support Newsletters	1921-1966
b. 6, f. 6	Support newsletter to "Dear Friends" from Taiyuan, Shanxi (Tai Yuan, Shansi)	1929
b. 7, f. 16	Correspondence with National Council of Churches and Yale Divinity School re. China Records Project	1968-1972

**Series II: Sermons and Writings, 1921-1966**

b. 1, f. 8-9	ELI Sermons and Writings	
b. 2, f. 10-11	ODI Publicity for Church World Service	1948-1950
b. 2, f. 12	ODI Writings re: China	
b. 2, f. 13	ODI Writings re: Brethren (general)	
b. 2, f. 14	ODI Sermon Notes and Thesis	
b. 2, f. 15	Sermons and Writings by others	
b. 6, f. 6	"Christian Faith and Politics" by Y.T. Wu	ca. 1933
b. 7, f. 17	"Szechwan Cross Stitch Patterns" by Irma Highbaugh	1942
b. 7, f. 18	Typed notes for sermons and talks	1958-1968

## Series III: Collected Materials

b. 3, f. 16	From China; Music, Reading books
b. 3, f. 17	About China
b. 3, f. 18	China Workshop
b. 3, f. 19	Women's Work, National Christian Council, Shanghai
b. 3, f. 20	Chinese Music, hymn book in Chinese/English
b. 3, f. 21	Prayer
b. 3, f. 22	Indian Affairs



**Series IV: Personal Items and Memorabilia, 1922-2005**

b. 3, f. 23	Photographs, prior to China	
b. 4, f. 24	Photographs, from China	
b. 4, f. 25	Photographs, in USA prior to Lybrook	
b. 4, f. 26	Photographs, from Lybrook	
b. 6, f. 1	Photograph album, covering period from their marriage through trip across U.S. and first scenes in Beijing (Peking). Identifications provided by daughter O. Susan Ikenberry Wilson	1922
b. 6, f. 2	Photograph album, mostly family photos with some other missionaries, Chinese Christians, and scenes in Beijing (Peking). Identifications provided by daughter	1922-1934
b. 6, f. 3	Photograph album, from Taiyuan (Tai Yuan) years - missionaries, Chinese Christians, scenes. Identifications provided by daughter	1928-1933
b. 6, f. 4	Two mounted photographs of ELI with groups: Taiyuan YMCA English Evening School, YMCA Shansi University	1934
b. 4, f. 27	Lake Geneva School of Missions Scrapbook	1941
b. 4, f. 28	Memorabilia: trip from China to USA	1941
b. 4, f. 29	ODI Bible and Notebook	
b. 5, f. 30	Navajo Gospel Hymns	
b. 5, f. 31	McPherson Achievement Award and photos	1962
b. 5, f. 32	ODI Biographical Papers; typescript material from donors re. lives and work of the Ikenberrys	
b. 5, f. 33	ELI Biographical Papers	
b. 6, f. 5	Biographical material, including sketch of ELI and ODI by Susan Ikenberry Wilson (daughter)	ca. 2005
b. 5, f. 34	Interview with ELI	1971
b. 5, f. 35	Yale University Diploma	1929

## **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**

Missionaries  
Missions -- China

### **Names**

Ikenberry, Ernest, 1892-1974  
Ikenberry, Olivia, 1896-1964

### **Corporate Body**

Church of the Brethren -- Missions -- China

### **Contributors**

Ikenberry, Ernest, 1892-1974  
Ikenberry, Olivia, 1896-1964