

Guide to the John and Eleanor Reuling Papers

RG 120



Compiled by Martha Lund Smalley

1997, 2003

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Collection Overview

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

CALL NUMBER: RG 120

CREATOR: Reuling, John A.

TITLE: John and Eleanor Reuling Papers

DATES: 1920-1965

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 4 linear feet (8 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Letters, reports, and writings document American mission work in South Africa from 1927 to the 1960s. John A. Reuling was director of teachers' training at Adams College, Natal, South Africa, serving under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, from 1927 to 1941. After 1946 he was an administrator for the United Church Board for World Ministries, serving first as regional secretary for Africa and then as general secretary for Mission. Eleanor Swanson Reuling also taught at Adams College and assisted her husband in his work.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.120>

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.120>.

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

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

1997 Gift of United Church Board for World Ministries; 2002 Gift of the Reuling family.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Preferred Citation

John and Eleanor Reuling Papers (RG 120), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

Biographical / Historical

Born in Osceola, Nebraska in 1906, John A. Reuling graduated from Michigan State College and received an M.A. from Cornell University. From 1927 to 1941, he was director of teachers' training at Adams College, Natal, South Africa, serving under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. He also served as farm manager and vice-principal of Adams College and District Commissioner for the African Boy Scouts.

From 1942 to 1945, Reuling was president of Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin. He was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Northland College in 1945.

Beginning in 1946, Reuling was Africa Secretary for the American Board and its successor, the United Church of Christ's Board for World Ministries. From 1962 until his retirement in 1971, Reuling was General Secretary for Mission, United Church Board for World Ministries. John Reuling died in 1990.

Eleanor Swanson Reuling was born in 1903 and graduated from Michigan State College. She married John Reuling in 1926, and was appointed as an ABCFM missionary to South Africa in 1927. In addition to raising the couple's four children and providing hospitality for many visitors, Eleanor also taught at Adams College as needed and tutored students who had special needs. Following their return to the U.S. Eleanor continued her work of hospitality, was active in volunteer work, including on the board of Church Women United in New Jersey, and filled various educational and administrative posts for the United Church Board for World Ministries on an interim basis. She was also an accomplished writer. She edited newsletters and prepared interpretive material for the cause with which she was involved, as well as writing a biography of James C. Bryant entitled *First Saint to the Zulus*. Eleanor Reuling died in 1983.

Scope and Contents

An initial donation of material processed in 1997 has been augmented by additional papers received from the Reuling family in 2002. This collection provides valuable documentation of American Protestant mission work in Africa during the period when the Reulings were working there (1927-1942) and thereafter through the 1960s in connection with John Reuling's work as regional secretary for Africa for the American Board.

Regular and detailed letters written to family members in the U.S. from 1927 to 1941 provide information about the mission work in South Africa and the life of a missionary family. This correspondence is complemented by writings and collected material related to the Reulings' work in Africa. An abridged and edited collection of the letters of John and Eleanor Reuling 1927-1941 has been compiled and edited by their daughter Edna Reuling Wade: *Praise Names of Reuling: a Zulu Song* (2015).

Several books were received with the collection. Copies of the books already held by the Divinity Library has been retained with the Reuling Papers while others have been added to the library's cataloged collection.

Arrangement

- I. Correspondence, 1927-1964, n.d.
- II. Collected Material, 1920s-1963
- III. Writings, 1960-1965, n.d.
- IV. Biographical Documentation, 1926-1990, n.d.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence

An abridged and edited collection of the letters of John and Eleanor Reuling 1927-1941 has been compiled and edited by their daughter Edna Reuling Wade: *Praise Names of Reuling: a Zulu Song* (2015).

Material received in 1997

b. 1, f. 1-8	Personal and office correspondence of JAR	1942-1958, n.d.
b. 1, f. 9-16	Circular letters of JAR, from Angola, South Africa, Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia)	1946-1960
b. 1, f. 16	Letter with description of granting of Nobel Peace Prize to Chief Albert Luthuli, a close friend of JAR	1961
b. 1, f. 17-19	Circular letters from missionaries (mostly ABCFM) in Angola	1948-1959
b. 2, f. 20-22	Circular letters from missionaries in South Africa	1949-1961
b. 2, f. 23-25	Circular letters from missionaries in Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia)	1952-1964, undated
b. 2, f. 26	Circular letters from missionaries in other countries	1953-1957, n.d.

Material received in 2002

Letters from Reulings to family in U.S.

b. 3, f. 37-43	Letters to family	1927 Jun-Dec
b. 3, f. 44	Photocopies of 1927 letters	1927 Jun-Dec
b. 3, f. 45-51	Letters to family	1928 Jan-Dec
b. 4, f. 52-53	Photocopies of 1928 letters	1928 Jan-Dec
b. 4, f. 54-59	Letters to family	1929 Jan-Dec
b. 4, f. 60-61	Photocopies of 1929 letters	1929 Jan-Dec
b. 4, f. 62-67	Letters to family	1930 Jan-Dec
b. 5, f. 68-69	Photocopies of 1930 letters	1930 Jan-Dec
b. 5, f. 70-73	Letters to family	1931 Jan-Dec
b. 5, f. 74-75	Photocopies of 1931 letters	1931 Jan-Dec
b. 5, f. 76-78	Letters to family	1932 Jan-Dec
b. 5, f. 79-80	Photocopies of 1932 letters	1932 Jan-Dec
b. 5, f. 81-83	Letters to family	1933 Jan-Nov
b. 5, f. 84	Photocopies of 1933 letters	1933 Jan-Nov
b. 6, f. 85-87	Letters to family	1934 Mar-Dec

Material received in 2002 > Letters from Reulings to family in U.S. (continued)

b. 6, f. 88	Photocopies of 1934 letters	1934 Mar-Dec
b. 6, f. 89-91	Letters to family	1935 Jan-Dec
b. 6, f. 92-93	Photocopies of 1935 letters	1935 Jan-Dec
b. 6, f. 94-96	Letters to family	1936 Jan-Dec
b. 6, f. 97-98	Photocopies of 1936 letters	1936 Jan-Dec
b. 6, f. 99-101	Letters to family	1937 Jan-Dec
b. 6, f. 102-103	Photocopies of 1937 letters	1937 Jan-Dec
b. 7, f. 104-105	Letters to family	1938 Jan-Dec
b. 7, f. 106-107	Photocopies of 1938 letters	1938 Jan-Dec
b. 7, f. 108-110	Letters to family	1939 Jan-Dec
b. 7, f. 111-112	Photocopies of 1939 letters	1939 Jan-Dec
b. 7, f. 113-115	Letters to family	1940 Jan-Nov
b. 7, f. 116-117	Photocopies of 1940 letters	1940 Jan-Nov
b. 7, f. 118	Letters to family	1941 Jan-Dec
b. 7, f. 119	Photocopies of 1941 letters	1941 Jan-Dec
Correspondence of others		
b. 7, f. 120	Other family members (siblings)	1939-1940
b. 7, f. 121	Miscellaneous acquaintances/colleagues	
b. 7, f. 122	Fragments and notes	1928-1940

Series II: Collected Material

Material received in 1997

Regarding mission work in Angola

b. 2, f. 27	Reports of John T. Tucker	1945-1946
b. 2, f. 27	Proposed 5-year plan for union institutions	1946
b. 2, f. 28	Report of secretary of Angola Evangelical Alliance	1951
b. 2, f. 28	Minutes of meeting of mission bodies	1953

Regarding mission work in South Africa

b. 2, f. 29	Report of South African Mission	1941
b. 2, f. 29	Memorandum to Minister of Native Affairs	1945
b. 2, f. 30	Adams College reports, minutes	1945-1946
b. 2, f. 31	American Board semi-annual meeting	1951
b. 2, f. 31	Comments by JAR on S. Africa Mission	1958
b. 2, f. 31	Memo to JAR from Inanda Community	n.d.

Regarding mission work in Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia)

b. 2, f. 32	Comments by JAR on medical work	1946
b. 2, f. 32	Minutes of Missions Council	1949

Other

b. 2, f. 33	Conference on Christian Education in Changing Africa	1962-1963
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Material received 2002

b. 8, f. 126	Personal items: related to Scouting (JAR)	1920s
b. 8, f. 127	Personal items (JAR)	
b. 8, f. 128	Related to South Africa mission - programs, celebrations	
b. 8, f. 129	Newsclippings - local interest, South Africa	
b. 8, f. 130	Newsclippings - re. war stories	
b. 8, f. 131	Newsclippings - re. politics and missions	1957-1961
b. OV-1	Eleanor Reuling's "Inanda" photo scrapbook	
b. OV-1	Books: <i>The Story of the American Board</i> (1910) , <i>The Zulu-Kafir Language</i> ,(1899), <i>Zulu-Kafir Dictionary</i> 1857), <i>Recent Developments in the South African Mission Field</i> (1958); Additional books were added to YDSL collection: <i>Textbook fo Zulu Grammar</i> (1931), <i>Letters of the American Missionaries 1835-1838</i> (1950), <i>Zulu English Dictionary</i> (1948).	

Series III: Writings

Material received 1997

Writings of John A. Reuling

b. 2, f. 34	"The Mission and Governments"	1965
b. 2, f. 34	African greetings	n.d.

Writings of Eleanor Reuling

b. 2, f. 35	Notes, writings re. African missions and African women, incl. wife of Chief Albert Luthuli	n.d.
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Material received 2002

Writings of Eleanor Reuling

b. 7, f. 123	"Memories of Africa"	n.d.
b. 7, f. 124	"First Saint to the Zulus" (biography of James C. Bryant)	1960

Series IV: Biographical Information

	Material received 1997
b. 2, f. 36	Biographical information
	Material received 2002
b. 8, f. 132	Re. marriage, family, ABCFM appointments
b. 8, f. 133	Obituaries, eulogies, interment and family reunion
b. 8, f. 134	Photographs: more than 400 unidentified snapshots document mission work ca. 1927-1941 and daily life in South Africa, including scenes from educational, medical, and church settings.

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 -- South Africa

Names

Reuling, Eleanor S.
Reuling, John A.

Corporate Bodies

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign
Missions
United Church Board for World Ministries