



Guide to the Hersey Everett Spence papers, 1794; 1904-1973

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Summary

Collection Title:

Hersey Everett Spence papers, 1794; 1904-1973

Creator:

Spence, Hersey Everett, 1882-1973

Abstract:

Hersey Everett Spence was a minister, educator, and writer. After graduating from Trinity College in 1908 he spent ten years in the pastorate before returning to his alma mater in 1918 as Professor of Religious Education and Biblical Literature. The collection contains correspondence, writings (poems, plays, eulogies by Smith), clippings, a sound recording, and other printed material reflecting the opinions and career of H.E. Spence. The materials in the collection range in date from 1794; 1904-1973; with the bulk of the materials dating from 1938 to 1970.

Extent:

2.88 Linear Feet
1000 Items

Physical Location:

For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Language:

English

Language:

Material in English

Collection ID:

UA.29.02.0013

Permalink:

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/uaspence/>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Hersey Everett Spence Papers, Duke University Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

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Background

Scope and Content

The Hersey Everett Spence papers contain correspondence, writings (poems, plays, eulogies by Smith), clippings, a sound recording, and other printed material reflecting the opinions and career of H.E. Spence. Spence was noted for his outspokenness on the state of the University and on matters such as desegregation (he was not in favor) and athletics (he was in favor). Other subjects present include: biography and family genealogy; the Methodist Retirement Home; and the Duke Memorial Methodist Church (both in Durham, NC). The collection includes over 100 unpublished poems; a copy of Spence's "When Preacher's Meet", a volume concerning the NC Pastor's School; the typescript of "I Remember" (1954) [400 pages, titled "Fifty Years of Alma Mater"]; and a taped interview (12 June 1970; no transcript). The materials in the collection range in date from 1794; 1904-1973; with the bulk of the materials dating from 1938 to 1970.

Biographical/Historical

Born in South Mills, North Carolina (June 12, 1882) and educated at Trinity College, Durham (A.B., 1907; A.M. 1908) and Duke University (B.D., 1927) Hersey Everett Spence was a minister, educator, and writer. After graduating from Trinity in 1908 he spent ten years in the pastorate before returning to his alma mater in 1918 as Professor of Religious Education and Biblical Literature. (This is believed to be the first appointment of a Professor of Religious Education in a southern college.)

Spence was active in Methodist education throughout North Carolina, and well known through his service on the North Carolina Pastors' School, the Sunday School Board, and the Methodist Board of Education, as well as, for his pastorates held in Raleigh, Durham, Sanford, and Blowing Rock. He taught the Hersey Spence Sunday School Class at Duke Memorial Methodist Church for forty years. At his retirement in 1952 it was believed that Dr. Spence had taught about two-thirds of the Methodist ministers then serving in North Carolina.

Spence was also known as a public speaker and author of poetry and religious drama. For twenty years he wrote and directed the Christmas Pageant a main feature of the Duke University Christmas exercises. His Choral Communion Service-the Rhapsody of Redemption-was also a fixture of the pre-Easter season at Duke and often played to overflow capacity in the University Chapel. Over the years he produced many pageants and poem for religious, educational, and civic occasions as well as radio broadcasts. A number of his programs were used throughout the Southeast and in the Methodist Church at large. A listing of his formal publications include: "Reveries in Rhyme," "A Guide to

Bible Study," "Ruth," "Marching Men of Methodism," "When Cross Roads Cross Again," "Old Testament Dramas," "The Bishop's Crusade," "Pageants," and "Holidays and Holy Days."

On October 8, 1913, Spence married Bessie Octavia Whitted of Durham. Mrs. Spence an alumna of Trinity College, Duke University (A.B, A.M.), and the University of Chicago (B.D.) taught for a number of years in the local Durham city schools, and in 1928-1929 was the Dean of Girls at Durham High School. In 1929-1930 she became an assistant professor of Biblical Literature in the Department of Religion at Duke University. The Spence's retired from Duke University in 1952 after a combined 60 years of service.

Upon his retirement Professor Spence was honored with the distinction of being the first recipient at Duke University of the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award. He was also granted honorary degrees from Asbury Theological Seminary (Doctor of Divinity) and High Point College (Doctor of Letters).

Hersey Everett Spence died September 30, 1973. Mrs. Spence followed soon after passing away on October 7, 1973.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Acquisition Information

The Hersey Everett Spence papers were received by the University Archives as a transfer in 1955, 1962-1968, 1973-1974, 1988.

Processing Information

Processed by Sherrie Bowser, September 2008

Encoded by Sherrie Bowser, October 2008

Accessions 48-2094, 62-523, 65-192, 68-107, 73-16, 74-111, A88-0033 were merged into one collection, described in this finding aid.

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Related Materials

Related Material

Biographical Reference Collection, 1972 - 2004. University Archives, Duke University. William Preston Few Records and Papers, 1814 - 1971 and undated (bulk 1911-1940) University Archives, Duke University. News Service Biographical Files, circa 1930s - 2004. University Archives, Duke University. University Archives Photograph Collection, 1861-ongoing. University Archives, Duke University.

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Names and Subjects

- Holidays -- Drama
- Methodist Church -- North Carolina
- Sound recordings
- Photographs
- Segregation in higher education -- North Carolina -- Durham
- Religious drama
- Memoirs
- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Spence, Hersey Everett, 1882-1973
- North Carolina Methodist Pastors' School
- Spence, Hersey Everett, 1882-1973

Collection Inventory

General Files, 1794; 1904-1973

Physical Description: 10 folders

Billfold and Letter, August 23, 18?	Box 1
Biography and Genealogy, 1794; 1938-1971	Box 1
Blowing Rock Methodist Church, 1949-1969	Box 1
Clippings, 1939-1969	Box 1
Duke Memorial Methodist Church, 1946-1972	Box 1
Duke University, 1936-1970 Folder includes class agenda for religious Education 2A, Fall 1928; miscellaneous correspondence including letters to: Charles Jordan and Harold Bosley (Divinity School Dean) with regard to the possibility of admitting African-American students to the Divinity School; Herbert Herring in reference to preserving the religion class requirement for students, 12 July 1945; Eddie Cameron, in regard to the poor performance of the football team, 9 November 1958.	Box 1

Methodist Retirement Home, Annual Reports, 1963-1970 (1965 missing), Audit Report 1968 (2 folders)	Box 1
Methodist Retirement Home, Drama Programs and Newsletters, 1963-1971 (incomplete)	Box 1
Miscellany, 1910-1970	Box 1

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Correspondence, 1913-1973

Physical Description: 2 folders

Methodist Retirement Home, Miscellaneous correspondence, 1963-1973	Box 1
Personal correspondence, 1913-1972	Box 1
Folder includes mostly letters from Spence to Mrs. Spence; from nieces and nephews to the Spences; and from Mrs. Spence's brother.	Box 1

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Writings and Speeches, 1923-1964

Physical Description: 13 folders

Eulogies, Memories, and Tributes by Spence, 1944-1955, undated Including:	Box 1
Memorials: Claude M. Flowers, James Cannon	Box 1
Tributes: Robert Lee Flowers, Wilbur Wade Card; Dr. Timothy Plyer, Sr.; Henry Rudolph Dwire	Box 1
Eulogies: Holland Holton; Gilbert T. Rowe, J.A. Speed, C.B. Markham	Box 1
Prayer: Robert Lee Flowers' funeral	Box 1
Fifty Years of Alma Mater, typed manuscript pages 1-150	Box 1

Fifty Years of Alma Mater, typed manuscript pages 151-280	Box 1
Fifty Years of Alma Mater, typed manuscript pages 281-408	Box 1
Pageants, Plays. Religious, 1923-1938 (3 folders)	Box 1
Undated plays by Spence. 2 copies of Ruth: A Drama in Four Acts, dated 4 April 1923 (copy 1 belonged to Herminia Haynes, Trinity '23, copy 2 to Bessie Smith, includes notes and changes to the script). Other plays include: Samuel, Esther, Barabbas, The First Easter Morning, Sacrifice of Isaac, Amos, The Handwriting of the Wall (based on chapter 5 of the Old Testament book of Daniel), and The Christmas Dagger.	Box 1
Pageants, Plays. Secular, 1964 and undated	Box 1
Undated plays by Spence. Including: How Come Christmas (an Uncle Remus-type story about Santa Claus); and The Alchemist (about the founding of Duke University)	Box 1
Poetry, 1913-1969	Box 2
Sophomore English Paper, 1904	Box 2
Unpublished Poems	Box 2
When Preachers Meet, hardcover volume, 1962	Box 2
Writings, miscellaneous, 1927-1964	Box 2

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Audiovisual materials

Physical Description: 2 folders

Photographs	Box 2
Taped interview, June 12, 1970 (audio 1/4" tape, 7" reel)	Box 2

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Oversize materials

Physical Description: 2 folders

Oversize clippings, 1932-1969	Box 3
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Spence Family charts, prepared by Margaret P. Bray, 1970-1971 (3)	Box 3
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