

PEARL AMELIA BIGLER PAPERS, 1908-1970
PP0183

Descriptive Summary

Creator Bigler, Pearl A., 1898-1969

Title Pearl Amelia Bigler Papers, 1908-1970

Accession Number PP0183

Physical Description 5.92 Linear Feet. 5 archival boxes, 1 oversized box, 1 shelf file box.
Mostly good condition, some fragile paper.

Inclusive Dates 1916-1970

Language Note English, Portuguese

Administrative Information

Repository

Mercer University Library
Archives and Digital Initiatives
1501 Mercer University Dr.
Macon, Georgia 31207
478-301-2968
archives@mercer.edu

Citation

[after identification of item(s)], Pearl Amelia Bigler Papers, 1908-1970. Archives and Digital Initiatives, Mercer University Library, Macon, GA.

Acquisition

Gift of Billy Lee in March 2020 and October 2021.

Processing note

Inventory prepared by Gabrielle Hale (2021).

Restrictions on access

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Collection Description

Biographical Note

Pearl Amelia Bigler was a white woman born on January 22, 1898 in Bradford, Pennsylvania to George Abram Bigler and Hattie Amelia Bull Bigler. Following Pearl's birth, her family lived in both Panama, New York, and Charleston, South Carolina before settling down in Macon, Georgia. Upon arrival in Macon, the Bigler family joined the East Macon Baptist Church, where Pearl was baptized on March 15, 1908. In January 1914, the family changed churches and joined the Tabernacle Baptist Church, also in Macon.

The Bigler family experienced financial difficulties that caused gaps in the Bigler children's educations. A friend of Pearl's told her about Martha Berry and her schools for underprivileged children in Rome, Georgia. While also working 8 hours a day, Pearl attended the Berry School and brought her education to the early high school level. Following her enrollment at the Berry School, Pearl also briefly attended the Woman's Missionary Union Training School (Louisville, Kentucky), the Baptist Bible Institute (New Orleans, Louisiana), South Carolina Baptist Hospital (Columbia, South Carolina), and Bessie Tift College (Forsyth, Georgia). While attending Tift College, Pearl finished her high school course and also received a Bachelor of Arts degree in June 1926. The Pearl Amelia Bigler Papers contains scrapbooks and yearbooks from her enrollments at the Berry School and Tift College.

Pearl's desire to become a Baptist missionary began as a child. According to her testimony, she heard God tell her at age nine that, "I want you to be a foreign missionary for Me, you ought to go and tell of me to those who have never heard." Upon graduation from Tift College, Pearl learned that the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention did not have the funds to send her to Brazil. However, she received a gift of \$400 from Mrs. H. H. Tift and went out as a missionary from the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Macon, Georgia in December 1926. This church supported her financially while she did mission work with Reverend and Mrs. Reno in Victória (Vitória), Brazil. After a year in Victória, Pearl went to the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul and started what would later become the Good Will Tabernacle Baptist Church in Porto Alegre. She also helped establish the Sinal (or Signal) Church in Esteio and several "preaching points" in the state.

After approximately forty years in southern Brazil, Pearl returned to Macon, Georgia, in the fall of 1965 due to failing health. On April 24, 1967, she returned to Brazil to enjoy her retirement years. Pearl died of a heart attack on September 1, 1969, in Esteio, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. At the time of her death, she was survived by her brother Ernest Bigler, nephew Leroy Bigler, great-nephew Bobby Bigler, and great-nephew Jimmy Bigler.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains materials from the life of Miss Pearl Amelia Bigler. It includes diaries that span from her teens to her death in 1969, correspondence in both English and Portuguese, reports from Brazil regarding her missionary work, Bibles, Tift College yearbooks, passports, a short autobiography, scrapbooks, photographs, slides, and photo film.

The scrapbooks range in topic and include photographs, newspaper clippings, postcards, Christmas cards, wedding and birth announcements, and more. These materials cover mission work, views of Brazil and the southern United States, the personal lives of friends, news in Brazil and Macon, Georgia, and more. The Bibles contain handwritten notes and some inserted papers. Note: Pearl is referred to as “Perola” in some of the items.

The collection is located on row 8, shelves E3, E4, and E6 in compact shelving.

Subjects

Baptist Women
Baptist Women – Brazil
Baptist Women – Georgia
Baptist Women – United States
Baptists – Brazil
Baptists – Brazil – Biography
Baptists – Missions – Brazil
Berry Schools
Bessie Tift College (Forsyth, Ga.)
Missionaries – Brazil
Missionaries – Brazil – Correspondence
Missions – Brazil
Missions – Brazil – Rio Grande do Sul (State)
Notebooks – Scrapbooks
Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil)
Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil) – Church History
Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil) – Emigration and Immigration
Southern Baptist Convention. Foreign Mission Board.
Women Missionaries
Women Missionaries – Brazil – History

Related Material

Baptist Woman’s Missionary Union Collection (BB0001)

Series Description

Series 1: Diaries
Series 2: Textual Records
Series 3: Bessie Tift College Yearbooks
Series 4: Photographs and Scrapbooks
Series 5: Bibles

Series 6: USB of Transcriptions

Container List

SERIES 1: Diaries

- Folder 1/1: Diaries – Reflections 1908-1914
- Folder 1/2: Diaries – Reflections 1912-1919
- Folder 1/3: Diaries – 1918
- Folder 1/4: Diaries – 1919
- Folder 1/5: Diaries – January 31, 1920-January 31, 1921
- Folder 1/6: Diaries – February 1, 1921-December 31, 1921
- Folder 1/7: Diaries – January 1, 1922-September 16, 1923
- Folder 1/8: Diaries – January 1, 1923-June 19, 1925
- Folder 1/9: Diaries – September 21, 1925-September 30, 1930
- Folder 1/10: Diaries – 1932
- Folder 1/11: Diaries – September 21, 1930-December 31, 1935
- Folder 2/1: Diaries – May 31, 1934-December 31, 1937
- Folder 2/2: Diaries – January 31, 1936-August 4, 1938
- Folder 2/3: Diaries – August 5, 1938-November 27, 1938
- Folder 2/4: Diaries – 1939
- Folder 2/5: Diaries – 1944-1958
- Folder 2/6: Diaries – 1947
- Folder 2/7: Diaries – 1950
- Folder 2/8: Diaries – January 14, 1951-March 9, 1951
- Folder 2/9: Diaries – March 10, 1951-September 25, 1957

- Folder 2/10: Diaries – August 11, 1958-May 24, 1959
- Folder 2/11: Diaries – May 25, 1959-December 31, 1959
- Folder 2/12: Diaries – 1960
- Folder 3/1: Diaries – 1961
- Folder 3/2: Diaries – 1962
- Folder 3/3: Diaries – 1963
- Folder 3/4: Diaries – 1964-1968
- Folder 3/5: Diaries – 1969
- Folder 3/6: Diaries – Family Record (covers 1860-1947)
- Folder 3/7: Diaries – Autograph Friendship Book, Bessie Tift College, 1926
- Folder 3/8: Diaries – Address Books (undated)
- Folder 3/9: Diaries – Correspondence Logs (1927-1939, 1955-1966)

SERIES 2: TEXTUAL RECORDS

- Folder 4/1: Correspondence – 1926 (Photocopies) and 1934
- Folder 4/2: Correspondence – 1965-1967
- Folder 4/3: Correspondence – 1968
- Folder 4/4: Correspondence – 1969 and Undated
- Folder 4/5: Financial Records – 1960s
- Folder 4/6: Miscellaneous
- Folder 4/7: Obituary and Related Papers (1969-1970)
- Folder 4/8: Passports and Related Documents
- Folder 4/9: Reports from Brazil (1936-1958)
- Folder 4/10: Reports from Brazil (1961-1966)

- Folder 4/11: Reports from Brazil (1966-1969)
- Folder 4/12: Reports from Brazil (Transcriptions)
- Folder 4/13: “To the Glory of God Alone” (Life Story)
- Folder 4/14: “To the Glory of God Alone” (Life Story) – Handwritten Draft
- Folder 4/15: “To the Glory of God Alone” (Life Story) – Typed Drafts
- Folder 4/16: Transcription of Letters and Reports (1910s-1969)
- Folder 4/17: Transcription of Letters and Reports (1936-1969)

SERIES 3: BESSIE TIFT COLLEGE YEARBOOKS

- Folder 4/18: Chiaroscuro 1924
- Folder 4/19: Chiaroscuro 1926

SERIES 4: PHOTOGRAPHS AND SCRAPBOOKS

- Folder 4/20: Photographs – Portraits of Pearl Bigler
- Folder 4/21: Photographs – Pearl Bigler Childhood Class Photos
- Folder 4/22: Photographs – Identified as Bigler or Bull Family
- Folder 4/23: Photographs – Raimundo “Nono” Nehmer
- Folder 4/24: Photographs – Chapel Capao da Cruz
- Folder 4/25: Photographs – Chapel Partenon
- Folder 4/26: Photographs – Sinal Baptist Church in Esteio, Brazil
- Folder 4/27: Photographs – Tabernacle Church in Porto Alegre, Brazil
- Folder 4/28: Photographs – Tabernacle Church in Macon, Georgia
- Folder 4/29: Photographs – Vila Elizabeth Chapel in Porto Alegre, Brazil
- Folder 4/30: Photographs – Portraits of Assorted People 1
- Folder 4/31: Photographs – Portraits of Assorted People 2

- Folder 4/32: Photographs – Portraits of Assorted People 3
- Folder 4/33: Photographs – Portraits of Assorted People 4
- Folder 5/1: Photographs – Unidentified Group Photos
- Folder 5/2: Photographs – Unidentified (Likely from Brazil)
- Folder 5/3: Photographs – Unidentified (Likely from the United States)
- Folder 5/4: Photographs – Negatives and Slides
- Folder 5/5: Scrapbook – “The Berry Schools, Mt. Berry, GA” (1910s-1920s)
- Folder 5/6: Scrapbook – “Home Pictures, Loved Ones, Friends” (1920s)
- Folder 5/7: Scrapbook – Brazilian Items (1920s)
- Folder 5/8: Scrapbook – Clippings (1930s)
- Folder 5/9: Scrapbook – “To Aunt Pearl with love from Leroy (Bigler)” (1930s)
- Folder 5/10: Scrapbook – Brazilian Items (circa 1920s-1960s)
- Folder 5/11: Scrapbook – Brazilian Items (circa 1930s-1950s)
- Folder 5/12: Scrapbook – American and Brazilian Photos (1960s)
- Folder 5/13: Scrapbook – American and Brazilian Photos and Postcards (1960s) 1
- Folder 5/14: Scrapbook – American and Brazilian Photos and Postcards (1960s) 2
- Folder 5/15: Scrapbook – Brazil Photographs (1960s)
- Folder 5/16: Scrapbook – “Album do Rio de Janeiro” (undated, post 1931)
- Folder 5/17: Scrapbook – “Macon, Georgia” Postcards (undated)
- Folder 6/1: Scrapbook – “1957 Deluxe Christmas Cards” American and Brazilian Items (1930s-1950s) Note: Unbound
- Folder 6/2: Scrapbook – “1960 Nu-Art Deluxe Christmas Cards” American and Brazilian Items (1960s)
- Folder 6/3: Scrapbook – Woman’s Missionary Union and Related Items (1930s)

SERIES 5: BIBLES

Box 7: King James Version; Red Letter Edition; Red Letter Edition (Pocket Sized);
Portuguese Edition

SERIES 6: USB OF TRANSCRIPTIONS

Box 7: USB of Transcriptions