



Henry H. Perry Papers

1934-1948

5 boxes (2.5 linear feet)

Call no.: MS1019

Collection overview

A Quaker investment broker and attorney, Henry H. Perry was born in Rhode Island in about 1885. A prominent figure in the New England Yearly Meeting, Perry was called upon by the American Friends Service Committee to act as director of three of the Massachusetts Civilian Public Service Camps: Royalston, Petersham, and Ashburnham. Under the Selective Service Act of 1940, negotiations between the Selective Service and the major peace churches resulted in the creation of a system by which conscientious objectors were allowed to refrain from direct participation in the war, by serving instead in Civilian Public Service camps. Assigned to "work of national importance," they filled in for war-related manpower shortages in a variety of areas, including the Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, mental hospitals, telephone line maintenance and repair, fire-fighting, and clearing fire debris that was left in the wake of the 1937 New England hurricane. Living in Petersham with his wife Edith (Nicholson), Perry served as director of the camps from June 1941 until they were discontinued in October 1942. Perry writes, in a letter dated November 1942, that he is "no longer connected to CPS;" his correspondence is addressed from Dover, MA, showing that he relocated to the Boston area. However, little information is available about him after the camps closed.

This collection consists of administrative and business records concerning the start up, operation, and shut down of the AFSC-run CPS Camps in Royalston, Ashburnham, and Petersham, Mass. Camp Directors were under mandatory orders to keep the strict records that make up the bulk of this collection--administrative documentation, correspondences, health records, itineraries, financial reports and budgets, all pertaining to camp operations. This documentation acted as a deliberate gesture, demonstrating the competency and legitimacy of CPS camp work to Selective Service authorities. However, this collection also contains some personal correspondence and notes not directly related to camp administration, that give a personal, everyday-life, glimpse at the stresses, struggles, and emotional labor, on the part of Quakers, who had to step up, come together, and make the best of a terrible situation: protecting and caring for conscientious objectors during a time of war.

Background on Henry H. Perry

Henry Haines Perry was the middle of three children of the investment banker Arthur H. Perry and Emma Amelia (Foster). Born in Westerly, Rhode Island, on Feb. 1, 1884, Perry graduated from Harvard (1907) and Harvard Law School (1910), and practiced law only briefly before joining his father's investment house. He enjoyed a prosperous career there, becoming Vice President and Treasurer.

A Mayflower descendant on one side of his family, Perry was raised a Quaker and became a prominent figure in the New England Yearly Meeting. Following his retirement from business at the age of 56, he devoted himself to Quaker concerns, becoming a trustee and clerk of the Friends Meeting in Cambridge, where he had been a member since 1916, and becoming regional vice chair of the Friends Committee on National Legislation and a member of the Board for the American Friends Service Committee. With the American entry into the Second World War, the AFSC asked Perry to serve as director of three of the Civilian Public Service Camps in Massachusetts: Royalston, Petersham, and Ashburnham. Conceived in negotiations between the Selective Service and the major peace churches, and written into the Selective Service Act of 1940, these camps were intended to provide moderate conscientious objectors with an alternative to direct participation in the war on the one hand, and imprisonment for refusing cooperation with the war on the other.

CPS internees were theoretically assigned to "work of national importance," addressing war-related employment shortages in critical areas such as fighting forest fires, maintaining and repairing telephone lines, working for the Soil Conservation Service or in mental hospitals, and clearing debris left in the wake of the 1937 New England hurricane. Living in Petersham with his wife Edith (Nicholson), Perry served as director of the camps from June 1941 until October 1942 when they were merged or discontinued.

After leaving CPS work, Perry returned home to Dover, Mass., where he remained active in educational causes, serving as chair of the International Student Seminar in Japan and India in 1950 and as a trustee of Wheelock College, among other endeavors. He died on November 17, 1972, leaving his second wife, Elizabeth (Foster), a son, five daughters, and large contingent of grandchildren.

Scope of collection

The Perry collection consists of administrative and business records concerning the start up, operation, and shut down of the AFSC-run CPS Camps in Royalston, Ashburnham, and Petersham, Mass. Camp Directors were under mandatory orders to keep the strict records that make up the bulk of this collection: administrative documentation, correspondences, health records, itineraries, financial reports and budgets, all pertaining to camp operations. This documentation acted as a deliberate gesture, demonstrating the competency and legitimacy of CPS camp work to Selective Service authorities. The collection also contains some personal correspondence and notes not directly related to camp administration, that give a glimpse of everyday life at the camps, including the stresses, struggles, and emotional labor on the part of Quakers who had to make the best of the need to protect and care for conscientious objectors during a time of war.

Series descriptions

Series 1. Pre-Operation

1934-1943

The Pre-Operation Series contains papers documenting the period during which the CPS Camps were being organized and set up. These records include, but are not limited to, publications about the 1940 Selective Training and Service Act, draft laws, correspondence regarding specific draft cases, and documents and correspondence from AFSC administrators regarding the CPS Camps in Petersham, Ashburnham, and Royalston.

Series 2. Operation

1941-1942

The Operation Series documents the day-to-day operations of the CPS Camps in Petersham, Ashburnham, and Royalston. These records include manuals for Camp Directors, information on parole cases, medical files, financial files, staff hiring and employment records, materials on camp building, construction, and floor plans, and correspondence between AFSC and Selective Service officers.

Series 3. Post-Operation

1942-1948

The Post-Operation Series contains records documenting the closure and relocation of the CPS Camps at Petersham, Ashburnham, and Royalston. With the closure of these camps, internees were transferred to camps in either Peabody, Mass., or Gorham, New Hampshire. This series includes records pertaining to accommodations made for the move, public relations between CPS Camps and local townsfolk, camp newsletters and other publications, and personal correspondence regarding camp administrators' feelings of success and failure in terms of the camps and their roles within them.

Inventory

Series 1. Pre-Operation	1934-1943	
Original Plan for Organization of This Collection	1944-1944	Box 1: 1
AFSC Draft Law	1940-1940	Box 1: 2
ASFC Publications - Selective Training and Service Act of 1940	1940-1943	Box 1: 3
AFSC Telegrams	1941-1941	Box 1: 4
AFSC Correspondence, General	1941-1941	Box 1: 5
AFSC Personal Correspondence	1936-1941	Box 1: 6
AFSC Publications - Pamphlets, Newsletters, Etc.	1941-1941	Box 1: 7
AFSC Donations	1941-1941	Box 1: 8
AFSC "ASFC Correspondence"	1941-1941	Box 1: 9
AFSC Government Transportation	1941-1941	Box 1: 10
AFSC Camps - Compton, Peabody	1940-1940	Box 1: 11
AFSC Draft Case Correspondence	1940-1940	Box 1: 12
AFSC Miscellaneous Society of Friends Meetings	1941-1941	Box 1: 13
Series 2. Operation	1941-1942	
CPS Administrative	1941-1942	Box 1: 14

CPS Staff	1941-1942	Box 1: 15
CPS Camp Publications	1941-1942	Box 1: 16
CPS Camp Rosters	1941-1942	Box 1: 17
CPS Service Fund	1942-1942	Box 1: 18
CPS Japanese Americans	1942-1942	Box 1: 19
CPS Governor's Committee	1942-1942	Box 1: 20
CPS Forms, Blank	1941-1942	Box 1: 21
CPS Telegrams	1941-1942	Box 1: 22
CPS Draft Law	1941-1942	Box 1: 23
CPS Rationing, Supplies	1941-1942	Box 1: 24
CPS Foreign Projects	1941-1942	Box 1: 25
CPS Buildings and Equipment	1941-1942	Box 1: 26
CPS Rulings	1941-1942	Box 2: 1
CPS Cambridge Monthly Meetins CPS Fund	1941-1942	Box 2: 2
CPS Regulations, Manuals, and Forms	1941-1942	Box 2: 3
CPS Education and Books	1941-1942	Box 2: 4
CPS Personal Assignment and Transfers	1942-1942	Box 2: 5
CPS Correspondence, General	1941-1942	Box 2: 6
CPS Personal Correspondence	1941-1942	Box 2: 7
CPS Personnel Transfer to Camp Antelope from MA Camps	1942-1942	Box 2: 8
CPS Seawater Experiments	1942-1942	Box 2: 9
CPS Perole Cases	1942-1942	Box 2: 10
CPS Publications - Pamphlets, Newletters, Etc.	1941-1942	Box 2: 11
CPS AFSC Service Memos	1941-1942	Box 2: 12
CPS Certificates (Alternative to War Bonds)	1942-1942	Box 2: 13
CPS Disaster Units	1942-1942	Box 2: 14
CPS Conference Memos	1941-1942	Box 2: 15
CPS Detached Service	1941-1942	Box 2: 16
CPS Financial (Accounts)	1941-1942	Box 3: 1
CPS Public Relations	1941-1942	Box 3: 2
CPS Belville Research Center	1942-1942	Box 3: 3
CPS Data	1941-1942	Box 3: 4
CPS Donations	1941-1942	Box 3: 5
CPS Miscellaneous - Personal Residence	1942-1942	Box 3: 6
CPS Government-Run Camps	1942-1942	Box 3: 7
CPS Leaves, Releases, Furloughs	1941-1942	Box 3: 8
CPS Financial Vouchers	1941-1942	Box 3: 9
CPS Miscellaneous - American Field Service	1942-1942	Box 3: 10
CPS Community Projects	1941-1942	Box 3: 11
CPS Camp Finances	1941-1942	Box 3: 12
CPS Clippings	1941-1942	Box 3: 13
CPS Personnel - Medical Cases	1942-1942	Box 3: 14
CPS Visitors	1941-1942	Box 3: 15
CPS Financial (See Also Accounts)	1941-1942	Box 3: 16
CPS "AFSC Correspondence"	1941-1942	Box 4: 1
CPS Food	1941-1942	Box 4: 2
CPS Government Transportation	1941-1942	Box 4: 3
CPS Hospital Project	1941-1942	Box 4: 4
CPS Camps - Compton, Peabody	1942-1942	Box 4: 5
CPS Farm Service	1942-1942	Box 4: 6
CPS Draft Case Correspondence	1941-1942	Box 4: 7
CPS Miscellaneous Society of Friends Meetings	1941-1942	Box 4: 8
CPS Notes, Sketches, Etc.	1941-1941	Box 4: 9
CPS Work Projects, Special Detail	1941-1942	Box 4: 10
CPS Insurance	1941-1942	Box 4: 11
CPS Miscellaneous - Richmond All Friends Conference	1942-1942	Box 5: 1
CPS Leases	1941-1942	Box 5: 2
CPS Medical Services	1941-1942	Box 5: 3
CPS National Service Board for Religious Objectors	1941-1942	Box 5: 4

Series 3. Post-Operation	1942-1948	
Post-CPS Staff	1942-1943	Box 5: 6
Post-CPS Camp Publications	1943-1943	Box 5: 7
Post-CPS Draft Law	1942-1943	Box 5: 8
Post-CPS Rationing, Supplies	1942-1942	Box 5: 9
Post-CPS Education and Books	1942-1942	Box 5: 10
Post-CPS Correspondence, General	1943-1948	Box 5: 11
Post-CPS Personal Correspondence	1942-1943	Box 5: 12
Post-CPS Perole Cases	1942-1943	Box 5: 13
Post-CPS Publications - Pamphlets, Newletters, Etc.	1942-1943	Box 5: 14
Post-CPS Finanncial (Accounts)	1942-1942	Box 5: 15
Post-CPS Public Relations	1943-1943	Box 5: 16
Post-CPS Dependents	1942-1943	Box 5: 17
Post-CPS Miscellaneous - Personal Residence	1942-1943	Box 5: 18
Post-CPS Financial Vouchers	1942-1943	Box 5: 19
Post-CPS Commmunity Projects	1943-1943	Box 5: 20
Post-CPS Camp Finances	1942-1943	Box 5: 21
Post-CPS Clippings	1943-1943	Box 5: 22
Post-CPS Personnel Medical Cases	1942-1943	Box 5: 23
Post-CPS Visitors	1943-1943	Box 5: 24
Post-CPS Finances (See Also Post-CPS Accounts)	1942-1943	Box 5: 25
Post-CPS Government Transportation	1942-1942	Box 5: 26
Post-CPS Hospital Project	1942-1943	Box 5: 27
Post-CPS Camps - Compton, Peabody	1942-1943	Box 5: 28
Post-CPS Draft Case Correspondence	1943-1943	Box 5: 29
Post-CPS Insurance	1942-1943	Box 5: 30
Post-CPS Leases	1942-1943	Box 5: 31
Post-CPS Executive Committee Minutes	1942-1942	Box 5: 32
Post-CPS Donations	1942-1943	Box 5: 33

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

The collection arrived as part of the Records of the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, April 2016.

Processing Information

Processed by Dominique Pierre Batiste, May 2018.

Language:

English

Cite as: Henry H. Perry Papers (MS 1019). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

- American Friends Service Committee
- Ashburnham (Mass.)--History
- Civilian Public Service
- Pacifists--Massachusetts
- Petersham (Mass.)--History
- Quakers--Massachusetts
- Royalston (Mass.)--History
- Society of Friends
- World War, 1939-1945--Conscientious objectors

Contributors

- Perry, Henry H. **[main entry]**

Genres and formats

- Administrative records