

Herbert Moxley Pease correspondence 3654

Finding aid prepared by Weckea D. Lilly

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

October 04, 2017

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

First edition

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania

March 2012

1300 Locust Street

Philadelphia, PA, 19107

215-732-6200

Table of Contents

<u>Summary Information</u>	3
<u>Biographical/Historical note</u>	4
<u>Scope and Contents note</u>	4
<u>Administrative Information</u>	5
<u>Related Materials</u>	5
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u>	5
<u>Collection Inventory</u>	7

Summary Information

Repository	The Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Creator	Pease, Herbert Moxley, Rev., 1868 - 1940
Title	Herbert Moxley Pease correspondence
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1914-1916
Date [inclusive]	1896-1927
Extent	0.4 Linear feet ; 1 box
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The Herbert M. Pease correspondence primarily concerns the development of the relationship between Pease and Nell Elizabeth Peckens, who eventually became his wife. While the letters document their relationship, they also provide glimpses into various aspects of small town life in Sayre, Bradford County, Pennsylvania, where Pease served as pastor of the First Baptist Church. Nell trained as a nurse and moved from New York City to Madison, New York after their marriage.</p>

Preferred Citation note

[Indicate cited item of series here], Herbert Moxley Pease correspondence (Collection 3654), The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Biographical/Historical note

Herbert Moxley Pease, a native of Jackson, Pennsylvania, was born to George Hannibal and Ester (Powers) Pease in 1868. He became a Baptist minister serving several congregations including churches in Gibson, Jackson, and Eaton. His longest tenure, however, was spent at the First Baptist Church in Sayre, Pennsylvania.

Pease was educated at the Keystone Academy and then Bucknell University, where he graduated in 1895 with a degree in ministry. In that same year, he was ordained to preach at the Eaton Church and married Ida Blanch Shelly. They had several children: George (b. 1896), Lloyd H. (b. 1898), Edward I. (b. 1903), Catherine (b. 1906), and Wilbur F. (b. 1909). Ida died of pneumonia in 1914. Her death brought Herbert and Ida's friend, Nell Elizabeth Perkins, closer through their mutual mourning and consoling.

Herbert's and Nell's relationship developed through a series of letters, across five years or more. As evidenced in the letters, Herbert initially ministered to her as he was her pastor. At the time of Ida's death, Nell (originally from Scranton, Pennsylvania) was in her second year of training to become a nurse, living in New York City. Slowly, Pease revealed his loneliness to Nell which, overtime, softened her to the idea of marrying him. On April 17, 1915, Pease wrote, "[I'm] so lonely, when I have time to stop and think." Then, requesting to see her during her summer break, if time permitted, he instructed, "So you have a duty to your lonely pastor, to keep him posted on these lines." And, to convince her of what could become of their union, he wrote in November 1915, "And I do believe that, if you can love me, you will be as happy as my wife, [even] happier than you have been before." Further, he praised her growing fondness of him saying, "I am so glad you do not resent having a 'pastor lover,' and that your thoughts travel this way . . ." and finally he suggests, "And some way I feel that you are coming to love me just a little." They were married in 1919. Although in her forties, Nell delivered two children: Helen Elizabeth in 1919, and Mary P. in 1924.

Herbert and Nell eventually moved to Madison, New York. Herbert died in New Milford, Pennsylvania on March 3, 1940, and Nell died at the age of 96 on June 11, 1972 in Keeseville, New York.

Scope and Contents note

This collection primarily consists of correspondence between Herbert Moxley Pease and his wife Nell Elizabeth Pease. The letters document the quotidian aspects of a couple living apart from one another and trying to establish and maintain a love affair. Generally, the letters concern religion and religious events, the effect of distance on their emotional lives, the hardships of their occupations, and family-related issues. Most evident though is Herbert's desperate insistence and, perhaps, demand that Nell become his wife. That insistence led Nell to some confusion about how and what she felt for Herbert, for he had to explain to her what he thought a marriage should be composed of at an emotional level. In a letter sent to

Nell, dated November 16, 1915, Herbert pleads, “No, as much as I long for you, I would not dare have you become my wife unless you love me. While you might be faithful to the tasks, I know there would be only because of love. Marriage for money, or convenience, or to satisfy passion, to my mind is not much different from prostitution.” Or it could be his lack of self-confidence in his appearance: “And now, how I wish I were handsome, and talented, and fascinating, etc, instead of a plain old preacher!” Yet there are moments of sincerity where he displays a kind of sensual luring which doesn’t appear to be overly imposing. For instance, in the letter dated November 28, 1915 he wrote: “And yet, would it not be beautiful to have our first kiss, the seal of our souls union, the pledge of pure, mutual love?”

Other letters in the collection are written from relatives to either Herbert or Nell. Herbert’s mother and friend Betty wrote about the status of the children while on a visit to New York. Nell’s brothers, Will and Nelse, wrote about their troubles with health, money, and experience living in Chicago. Overall, the letters provide a good sense of their emotional character and the kind of lives they lived together and apart.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania March 2012

Conditions Governing Access note

This collection is open for research.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Edward Psulkowski World War II letters, Collection 3123 (accession number 2004.103).

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- Correspondence

Personal Name(s)

- Pease, Herbert Moxley, Rev., 1868 - 1940
- Pease, Herbert Moxley -- Correspondence
- Pease, Nell Elizabeth, Mrs., ca. 1878 - 1972 -- Correspondence

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Letter: From Herbert and Ida Pease to Nell Peckens, September 25, 1914	1	1
Letters: From Herbert Pease to Miss Nelle Peckens, February 1915 - October 1915	1	2
Letters: From Herbert Pease to Nelle Peckens, November 1915 - December 1915	1	3
Letters: From Herbert Pease to Nell Peckens, January 1916 - March 1916	1	4
Letters: From Herbert Pease to Nell Peckens, April 1916 - May 1916	1	5
Letters: From Herbert Pease to Nellie Peckens, June 1916 - August 1916	1	6
Letters: From Nell Peckens to Herbert Pease, 1916	1	7
Letters: From Herbert Pease to Nell Peckens, n.d.	1	8
Letters: Herbert Pease to Nell Pease, 1916-1920	1	9
Letters: From Nell Pease to Herbert Pease, 1917, n.d.	1	10
Letters: From Children to Nell Pease and Herbert Pease, 1916-1920	1	11

Letters: From Will to Nell Pease, 1925, n.d.	1	12
Letters: From Nelse to Nell Pease, 1916-1925	1	13
Letters: From Relatives to Nell Pease, 1916-1920	1	14
Letters: From Various Writers to Nell and Herbert Pease, 1896-1927	1	15
Post cards and Ephemera, 1914-1920	1	16