SUMMARY INFORMATION

Title: J. Martin England Papers
Dates: 1932, 1954-1978, and undated
Accession #: 2010-068
Physical Description: .42 linear feet (1 box)
Languages: Collection material in English and Burmese.
Processing Information: Julia Cowart processed the collection in 2010 and updated the finding aid in 2017.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition:

David Stricklin, associate professor of History and chair of the Division of Humanities, Lyon College, Batesville, Arkansas donated the J. Martin England papers to Special Collections in October 2010. The papers were given to Stricklin by England to assist him in writing his dissertation, later published as, A Genealogy of Dissent: Southern Baptist Protest in the Twentieth Century.

Biographical Sketch:

J. Martin England was born in the mill town of Seneca, South Carolina in 1901. He received degrees from Furman University in 1924, and from Crozer Theological Seminary, Pennsylvania. England received an Honorary Doctorate in Divinity from Furman University in 1986.

From 1933 until 1939 and again from 1945 to 1950, England and his wife served as Northern Baptist missionaries in Burma. After the Japanese Army overran Burma the England’s returned to the United States and settled in Louisville, Kentucky. A mutual acquaintance, Walter Nathan Johnson, introduced England to Clarence Jordan (1912-1969), a farmer, Greek scholar, and Southern Baptist minister, and they realized they shared a dream of creating an intentional community in the southern United States based on modern agricultural economy, a commitment to biblical ethics, and a desire for racial reconciliation for the South. England and Jordan, along with their wives, moved to Americus, Georgia, bought some land, and started Koinonia Farm in 1942. After the Japanese left Burma, the England’s returned to the mission field in 1945.
After returning to the United States in 1950, England became involved in civil rights work and in peace activism from the 1950s to the 1980s. As a staff member of the American Baptist Church’s Minister and Missionaries Benefit Board, England arranged to provide Martin Luther King with a retirement and death benefit policy just months before King was assassinated.


INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS

Access Restrictions: None.

Preferred Citation: [Identification of item], J. Martin England Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, S.C.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The J. Martin England Papers contain correspondence, handwritten and typed notes, essays, and several articles written by England. The handwritten notes are from the time that England and his family lived in Burma and notes England made after he returned to the United States that reflected on his Burman experiences. The notes focus particularly on his appraisal of the differences and similarities between life in Burma and life in the United States, especially between life among the Kachin peoples, with whom England and his wife, Mabel Orr England, and their children lived and worked. The accretion contains materials that England gave Stricklin directly, including newsletters published by Walter Nathan Johnson, whom Martin admired greatly. A letter Martin wrote Johnson was published in the newsletter, The Next Step in the Churches, and led directly to the creation of Koinonia Farm.

ARRANGEMENT

The collection is arranged chronologically by format.

Related material:

The following sources provide additional information on J. Martin England’s personal and professional life.

- Special Collections Furmaniana file - J. Martin England
- Special Collections S.C. Baptist Photograph Collection - Picture 1344 – Martin England
Separated material:

A newspaper, *Atlanta Journal*, April 9, 1968, was moved to the American Newspaper Collection, Headlines and Front Pages, 20th Century [Front page -“Funeral Procession of Dr. King Draws Half a Million Persons”].

**COLLECTION INVENTORY**

**Box 1**

Folder 1: Correspondence: 1962, 1954-1978, undated

- a. Photocopy of letter to Martin England from George Stoll, September 30, 1932
- b. Letter from Martin England to Teneka, March 15, undated
- c. Letter to Martin England from Fred Shorter, undated
- f. Letter from Howard G. McClain, Executive Director of the Christian Action Council, Jan. 21, 1955
- g. Letter to Martin England from Wilmer and Mildred Young, January 24, 1955
- h. Letter to Martin England from Brandon Crosby, August 22, 1955
- i. Letter to Martin England from Michael Massey, August 19, 1966
- j. Letter to Martin England from Dick Foster, July 17, 1967
- k. Letter to Mr. Ralston Young from Martin England, October 29, 1969
- l. Letter to Martin England from Bill Jeffries, February 17, 1970
- m. Letter to Martin England from Edward B. Jones, March 12, 1970
- n. Letter to Martin England from Will, March 10, 1974
- o. Letter to Martin England from Carl W. Tiller, Associate Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, July 31, 1975

1970-1978 from Burma and Madras, India

- r. Letter to Martin England from Charlie Tilbury, August 12, 1972
- t. Letter to Martin England from Momauk, April 23, 1973
- u. Letter to Martin England from Augustine, June 6, 1973
- v. Letter to Martin England from Augustine, July 26, 1973
- w. Letter to Martin England from L. Jatlaw, 1974
- x. Letter to Martin England from L. Jatlaw, March 29, 1976
- z. Letter to Martin England from Miss Kaw Nau, October 5, 1977
aa. Letter to Martin England from Dr. and Mrs. M. La Myen, February 21, 1978

Folder 4. Essays, notes, typed, undated
   - “A Proposed Course for Mars Hill College”
   - “Churchmanship for Our Time”
   - “Fellowship X”
   - “Fundamentals of Faith, Topic: Christ”
   - “Fundamentals of Faith, Topic: Sin”
   - “I am being pressured…”
   - “Invest”
   - “Jesus of the Chief II”
   - “Transition after story”
   - “X Plan- 28”
   - Christianity and War
   - Dick Phillips and UNICEF
   - Miscellaneous notes
   - Notes beginning “George Wash Carver…”
   - Segregation
   - Tribal conversions to the Jesus Way
   - “We are Glad You Came” pages 2-5
   - March 25
   - Jan. 5-6, 1954
   - Oct. 30, 1970
   - Dec. 30, 1970
   - Feb. 17, 1971
   - May 25, 1972
   - Nov. 9, 1972


Folder 6. Published materials
   - ABC Retirement Plan and The M&M Medical Plan, outline and summary, undated
   - Bulletin, The Next Step in the Churches, Vol. 21 no. 6, Walt N. Johnson, editor, March 1943
   - Newsletter, “Fellowship of Institutional Communities,” February 1955 [mention of Koinonia Farm]
• Tract, “Patriotism is not Enough,” Martin England, undated

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Folder 8. Essays, undated
  • Arithmetic for Christians
  • Economics for Head Hunters
Folder 9. Materials by and about Walter N. Johnson
  • “Interracial Conversations,” by Walt N. Johnson, 1952
  • Article, “The Lawyer and the preacher,” Biblical Recorder, by Walter N. Johnson, September 21, 1910 [photocopy]
  • Theses, “Walter N. Johnson : Apostle of Stewardship,” by Daniel Calhoun Johnson, January 1965 [photocopy]
Folder 10. Newsletter, The Next Step in the Churches, 1926, July 1939-July 1941
Folder 11. Newsletter, The Next Step in the Churches, October 1941-December 1943
Folder 13. Newsletter, The Quarterly Communication, [formerly The Next Step in the Churches], January-October 1949

Materials from other sources:
Folder 15. Articles about Koinonia, 1992, 2006