SUMMARY INFORMATION

Title: Dr. J. F. Plainfield Papers
Dates: 1912-1975; bulk 1959-1971
Accession #: 1987-176
Creator: Plainfield, Joseph Frank, 1880-1976
Physical Description: 0.42 linear feet (1 box)
Languages: Collection material in English.
Processed by: Special Collections staff processed the collection. Julia A. Cowart updated the finding aid in 2018.
Summary: Correspondence, journals and a memoir of an Italian native who became a missionary for the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition:

Related Material:
- S.C. Baptist Biographies file for Dr. John Frank Plainfield.
- Joseph Frank Plainfield Papers, AR 821, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tenn.

USING THE COLLECTION

Access Restrictions: None.

Preferred Citation: [Identification of item], Dr. J. F. Plainfield Papers, Acc. 1987-179 [Folder #], Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, S.C.
Biographical Sketch:

Joseph Frank Piani was born near Milan, Italy, on October 15, 1880. He graduated from the University of Torino and served the Italian government as a superintendent of schools until leaving for Brazil in 1902. While teaching college in Recife, Brazil, Piani became a Christian after meeting with Rev. William H. Cannada (Furman Class of 1898), Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention missionary to Brazil 1902-1912.

Piani’s conversion was followed by baptism at the hand of Cannada in 1904 in the Baptist church in Recife. Piani co-founded with Cannada the Baptist school in Recife. In 1906, Piani came to the United States to study English at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri. It was then that he anglicized his name to Plainfield.

In 1911, Plainfield graduated from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary with a Doctor of Theology. After his marriage to Alice Josephine Lucas in 1912, he returned to Brazil as a missionary pastor and teacher at the Rio Baptist College and Seminary. The Plainfield’s returned to the U.S. in 1915 to work for the Home Mission Board among Italians and other immigrant groups in Barre, Vermont. From 1917 to 1946, he held a succession of pastorates in Newark, St. Louis, and Tampa, Fla. Upon retirement in 1946, the Plainfield’s moved to Lakemont Colony, S.C. where they lived until Mrs. Plainfield’s death on January 22, 1969. Joseph Plainfield spent the rest of his life in Travelers Rest and Tigerville, S.C. In retirement, he served as interim pastor at Poe Mill, Sans Souci, and Ebenezer, and taught Sunday School at Travelers Rest First Baptist Church. He died on September 27, 1976.

ARRANGEMENT

Due to the small size of this collection, the papers are arranged as one series.

Series 1: Dr. J. F. Plainfield Papers, 1912–1975 (Box 1; 7 folders and 7 individual items).

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Dr. J. F. Plainfield Papers consist of correspondence, personal journals, a typescript, photographs and a book.

The earliest item is the leather bound homemade journal titled “Bon-Voyage,” that details the Plainfield’s boat trip back to Brazil in 1912. The pages are decorated with watercolor scenes.

There are four personal journals covering 1959 – 1962, two of which are dedicated to the family physician Dr. Landrum McCarrell in Travelers Rest. The journals contain Plainfield’s thoughts, as well as scripture analysis. There is a photograph of Plainfield and of a dog inside the cover of the 1961 journal.
Plainfield’s unpublished autobiography, “Memories in the Life of Dr. J.F. Plainfield,” was written when he was eighty-eight after his wife passed away (January 22, 1969). The work covers Plainfield’s time as a missionary until his retirement in 1946. He concludes indicating that he was to take a trip to Italy with Dr. McCarrell and his wife to see remaining family.

The correspondence is recipient copies, letters to his family physician and friend, Dr. Landrum I. McCarrell [1918-2004] covering 1956 – 1971, and family friend Mrs. John F. Welborn [Dorothy May Snipes] 1966-1975. The Welborn’s cottage at Lakemont Colony was across the road from Plainfield’s, which was next to Dr. Cannada’s.

The “copy of a Letter to Mrs. Ricks, mailed April 25, 1972” was written by Mrs. McCarrell and describes events that resulted in Plainfield moving away from Travelers Rest in 1972, which included controversy over his will. Plainfield had been living in a mobile home on the McCarrell’s Travelers Rest property until he experienced health problems.

**COLLECTION INVENTORY**

Folder 1.  “Bon-Voyage” journal, 1912
Folder 2.  Correspondence, 1956-1971 inclusive
Folder 3.  Greeting Cards to Dr. & Mrs. McCarrell 1964-1971 inclusive
Folder 4.  Correspondence with Mrs. Wellborn, 1966-1975 inclusive
Folder 5.  “Copy of a Letter to Mrs. Ricks, mailed April 25, 1972” written by Mrs. McCarrell
Folder 6.  Papers found in 1962 journal
Folder 7.  Photographs
   Journal - 1959
   Journal - 1960
   Journal - 1961
   Journal - 1962
Memories in the Life of Dr. J.F. Plainfield (2 Copies)