

WILLIAM KEMME LANDELS COLLECTION

1879 – 1919

AR 829



Faculty and Senior class at the Theological Seminary in Rome, ca. 1915

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Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives

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Summary

Main Entry: William Kemme Landels Collection

Date Span: 1879 – 1919

Abstract: Collection contains 25 letter books of correspondence while Landels was a career missionary in Italy for the British Missionary Society of Great Britain and for the Southern Baptist Convention.

Size: 3.75 linear ft.

Collection #: AR 829

Biographical Sketch

William Kemme Landels was born October 15, 1854 in Birmingham, England, the son of prominent Baptists. He was educated at University College and Regent's Park College. He made the decision for Christ at age fourteen and was baptized by his father in 1868.

“On leaving college he began a mercantile business career, and became deeply interested in the Italian people while he resided in Sicily, associated with a sulphur-mining undertaking. Here he acquired a considerable knowledge of the Italian people and became deeply interested in their truest welfare. Subsequently he felt compelled to offer himself for Missionary work amongst them, and was accepted by the Committee in 1875.”

William Landels married Emma Bowser March 4, 1879, and they had three children, Mary Elizabeth, William Howard, and Reynold Edward.

Mr. Landels joined the Baptist Missionary Society of Great Britain in 1875 and sailed for Italy that same year, following in the footsteps of an older brother, John Landels, who died in Italy in 1879. After serving two years in Rome, William moved to Naples for ten years and then to Turin. Following his service in Naples and Turin, he returned to Rome in 1912, where he spent the remainder of his missionary career. The Landels worked together in missionary service until his death in 1926. Mrs. Landels retired to England where she died at age 83.

Kemme Landels was apparently a very successful foreign missionary. He learned the language quickly and well, both writing and speaking Italian fluently. His mission assignments began humbly but progressed to more difficult and responsible stations. Mr. Landels established a printing press for the printing and disseminating of Christian literature and scripture, including

denominational papers, tracts, and hymnbooks. William Landels played an important role in the unification of Baptist work in Italy between the Baptist Missionary Society and the Southern Baptist Convention and the successful transfer to the latter organization.

Scope and Content Note

The William Kemme Landels Papers consist of 25 letter books of correspondence written primarily while he was a career missionary in Italy, for the Baptist Missionary Society of Great Britain, and for the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States of America. The letters are mostly general correspondence, but occasionally contain a building diagram or a plot map to better describe church buildings and real estate purchases. The letters are mostly written in English, but some are in Italian.

Persons mentioned in the correspondence are: Alfred Henry Baynes, secretary of the British Missionary Society; Rev. Everett Gill; Rev. Dr. George B. Taylor and Dr. Dexter Gooch Whittinghill, Southern Baptist missionaries to Italy; Rev. William H. Shipley, Rev. J. Campbell Wall, Rev. Campbell Wall, and Rev. Nathaniel H. Shaw, representatives of the British missionary Society; D. Ciawpol, of Naples; Paul Cher-Grafsio of Rome; Sig. Tummols; A. J. Vining, Canada; Mr. Gibb of Edinburgh; and Mr. Myers of Cardiff.

The William Kemme Landels Collection and the Nathaniel Herbert Shaw Collection, AR-839, were found in Rome, Italy about 1998 by Edie Jeter, archivist of the International Mission Board (formerly the Foreign Mission Board) of the Southern Baptist Convention. She shipped the collections to the Southern Baptist Historical Archives for processing and preservation.

The letter books are filed chronologically. The back of each book contains an alphabetical index of the recipients of the letters in that particular volume. The letters discuss the challenges in serving missions in a foreign country – the spiritual needs and poor circumstances of the people; travel; currency; locating, buying, and maintaining property; and geography and natural calamities. There is a vivid and pathetic account of a major volcanic eruption about 1915. Considerable discussion relates to the circumstances before, during, and after World War I.

The collection comprises 3.75 linear feet. A few handwritten letters of Rev. Landels are contained in back of the letter book of Nathaniel H. Shaw for 1912.

Arrangement

Letterpress books arranged in chronological order

Provenance

Located in Rome, Italy in 1998 by Edie Jeter, archivist for the International Mission Board, and shipped to the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.

Preferred Citation

William Kemme Landels Collection, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee

Access Restrictions

None

Subject Terms

Gill, Everett, Sr., 1869 – 1958

Shaw, Nathaniel Herbert

Shiple, William H.

Wall, J. Campbell

Whittinghill, Dexter Gooch, 1866 – 1956

Baptist missionary Society (England)

Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board

Missions – Italy

Missions, Foreign

Missionaries – correspondence, reminiscences, etc.

Italy – Religion

Related Materials

Books:

Lord, F. Townley. Achievement: a Short History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792 – 1942, London, UK: The Carey Press, 1941.

Myers, John Brown (Editor). The Centenary Celebration of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1892 – 1893: Reports of the Commemoration Services Held at Nottingham, Leicester, Kettering, London, and Northampton, and List of Contributions to Thanksgiving Fund, London: The Baptist Missionary Society, 1893.

Myers, John Brown (Editor). The Centenary Volume of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792 – 1892, London: The Baptist Missionary Society, 1892.

Stanley, Brian. The History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792 – 1992, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992.

Other Resources

British Missionary Society Records, Microfilm # 5350, Europe, Italy, roll 90

Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board) Correspondence, Everett Gill, Sr. (1904 – 1939), Box 22; George B. Taylor (1873 – 1907), Box 54; and David Gooch Whittinghill, (1901 – 1939), Box 63

Shaw, Nathaniel H. Collection, AR. 839

Container List

Box 1

- 1.1 Landels, Doctor – (Father)
- 1.2 Landels, John – (Brother)
- 1.3 Letter Book 1, 1879 – 1886
- 1.4 Letter Book 2, 1886 – 1890
- 1.5 Letter Book 3, 1890 – 1892
- 1.6 Letter Book 4, 1890 – 1894
- 1.7 Letter Book 5, 1894 – 1896
- 1.8 Letter Book 6, 1896 – 1898
- 1.9 Letter Book 7, 1895 – 1900
- 1.10 Letter Book 8, 1900 – 1901
- 1.11 Letter Book 9, 1901 – 1902
- 1.12 Letter Book 10, 1902 – 1903
- 1.13 Letter Book 11, 1903 – 1904
- 1.14 Letter Book 12, 1904 – 1905

Box 2

- 2.1 Letter Book 13, 1905 – 1906
- 2.2 Letter Book 14, 1906
- 2.3 Letter Book 23, 1910
- 2.4 Letter Book 24, 1906 – 1911
- 2.5 Letter Book 25, 1912
- 2.6 Letter Book 26, 1911 – 1912
- 2.7 Letter Book 27, 1912 – 1913
- 2.8 Letter Book 28, 1913 – 1914
- 2.9 Letter Book 29, 1914 – 1915
- 2.10 Letter Book 30, 1915 – 1916
- 2.11 Letter Book 31, 1916 – 1917
- 2.12 Letter Book 31, 1917 – 1918
- 2.13 Letter Book 32, 1918 – 1919
- 2.14 Miscellaneous – Letters, Clippings