

Hong Kong Baptist University Library

Special Collections & Archives

Helen Brenton and Roy Jr. Pryor Papers

Record Group No. 17

[December 3, 2015]

Pryor, Roy Jr., 18--? & Pryor, Helen Brenton 1897-

Papers: 1925 – 1980, n.d.

1 Box (1 DC, total 0.5 linear footage). Articles, Bank statements, Book, Clippings, Correspondence, Journals, Manuscripts, Photographs, Receipts and Travelling document.

Restrictions: None

Anyone using this collection must sign an *Agreement* to use the Helen Brenton & Roy Jr. Pryor Papers. Some materials may be photocopied.

Biography of Roy Jr. Pryor

Full Name: Roy Jr. Pryor

Birth date: 18--?

Family:

Parents: Joseph F. Pryor

Marital Status: Married to Helen Brenton in 1922, Kansas City, U.S.A.

Children: Dorothy Elizabeth & Richard Brenton

Biography of Helen Brenton Pryor

Full name: Helen Brenton Pryor, 1897 – ?

Birth date: 1897 in Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, U.S.A.

Family:

Parents: Mary Celinda Foster Brenton and William Henry Brenton

Education:

1919 Bachelor of Arts, University of Oregon, U.S.A.

1921 Bachelor of Science, University of California, U.S.A.

1924 Doctor of Medicine, University of Minnesota, U.S.A.

Career:

1924 – 1927 Resident in obstetrics and gynecology, Rockefeller Foundation Hospital, Beijing (Pei- ping), China.

Attending physician in gynecology and pediatrics, University of Nanking Hospital, China.

1928 – 1935 Assistant Pediatrics, University of California Hospital, U.S.A.

- 1930 – 1940 Research Associate, Institute of Child Welfare, University of California, U.S.A.
- 1935 – Professor of Hygiene, Medical Adviser of Women and Director of Women Students Health Service, Stanford University, U.S.A.,
Private practice in pediatrics in San Francisco and Palo Alto, U.S.A.,
Chief of staff in pediatrics in the Sequoia Hospital, U.S.A.

Major Publications:

- 1933 *Determining appropriate weight for body build.*
- 1936 *Width-weight tables, for boys and girls from 1 to 16 years, for men and women from 17 to 24 years.*
- 1938 *Phases of adolescent development in girls.*
- 1940 *Width-weight tables, for boys and girls from 1 to 16 years, for men and women from 18 to 41+ years.*
- 1943 *As the child grows.*
- 1969 *Lou Henry Hoover: gallant First Lady.*

[NOTE: In the Scope and Content description, the notation “folder 2-5” means box 2, folder 5]

Scope and Content

The Helen Brenton & Roy Jr. Pryor Papers mainly document the personal experiences of Dr. Helen Brenton & Rev. Roy Jr. Pryor and Helen’s mother Mary Foster Brenton in the Nanjing Incident on March 24, 1927 in Nanjing, China. There are also some correspondence and manuscripts describe the Japanese attack in Beijing (Peiping) and Tianjin (Tientsin) as well as the Nanking massacre in 1937. The overall arrangement of the collection was provided by the archivist while some of the folder titles were provided by Roy Jr. Pryor and his family.

Series: Paper records and photographs

Arrangement: The overall arrangement of the collection was provided by the archivist, as were some of the folder titles. The folders are now arranged alphabetically by subject and document type, and then chronologically within each type of document classification.

Date range: 1917 – 1980, n.d.

Volume: 1 DC (0.5 linear footage)

Boxes: 1 box (7 folders)

Geographic coverage: Beijing (Peiping), Nanjing (Nanking), Tianjin (Tientsin), China, Japan, United States.

Types of documents: Articles, bank statement, book, clippings, correspondence, documents, journals, manuscripts, photographs, photo album and receipts.

Subjects: China, Japanese occupation, Nanjing Incident, Nanking massacre, Missionaries, Missions, American, Foreign relations, Wars.

Notes:

Dr. Helen Brenton and Rev. Roy Pryor were American Methodist Episcopal Church missionaries who stationed in Nanjing (Nanking), China during the 1920s. Dr. Helen Brenton Pryor was a medical doctor practicing at the University Hospital of Nanking (Nanjing), and she established a women's clinic for both Chinese and foreign patients. Rev. Roy Jr. Pryor was the head of the Hua Chong Middle School for boys. Some bank statements and receipts in the **Primary notes and documents on Nanking Incident** file (folder 1-7) give a glimpse of Roy's work in Nanjing and his future plan while he was at college. Helen's mother, Mary Foster Brenton had also attained a MD degree, she stayed with the couple in Nanjing, spent time at Ginling College, did some volunteer work with nurses, taught at the Hwei Wen Girls' School and was active with the Methodist women. A **Scrapbook** in folder 1-2 contains photographs that the family took in Honolulu, Nanjing including the University of Nanking Hospital, Beijing and Guling in China. There is a group photograph of missionaries leaving Shanghai, China on board of SS Tenyo Maru for the U.S.A. after the Nanjing Incident and one of the passengers was Pearl S. Buck. There are also some photographs of buildings that were damaged in the **Account of the Nanjing Incident** file (folder 1-5).

The Helen Brenton and Roy Jr. Pryor Papers contain detailed personal account of the Nanjing Incident (Nanking Incident 南京惨案) that occurred on March 24, 1927. Before the Incident, there was anti-foreign and anti-Christian sentiment in the 1920s when unrest and warlord fightings were common. On March 24, 1927, when soldiers of the Northern Expedition entered Nanjing (Nanking), instead of protecting the city, the soldiers looted foreign institutes and killed several foreigners including Dr. J.E. Williams, the Vice-President of the University of Nanking. Foreign warships were ordered to evacuate the foreigners soon after this so-called Nanjing Incident.

Helen, Roy and Mary gave detailed account of their personal experiences in the Nanjing Incident and described how they were evacuated and left China in the **Nanjing Incident** files (folders 1-5 & 1-7). They vividly described the chaotic situation and widespread looting in Nanjing on March 24. Helen and her mother (Mary Foster Brenton) were robbed at home, valuables including blankets and coats were taken away by looters. Roy's manuscript also described his deadly journey to pay ransom for the school. Helen believed Roy was killed. However, with the help of their Chinese friends, the family reunited. A few days later, the family and other foreigners fled to Shanghai and finally to San Francisco, U.S.A. In a letter written by the American Consul John K. Davis to Dr. A.J. Bowen on board of USS Isabel (folder 1-7), Davis expressed his appreciation to the Americans who were affected in the Nanjing Incident. When Roy and Helen returned to the U.S.A., they faced some financial difficulties and contacted the **Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church** (folder 1-6).

After the Pryor family had settled down, Roy still collected information on the development in China (folders 1-1 & 1-4). Articles, correspondence, diary and

manuscripts written by some foreigners and members of the Home Economics Study Tour (from the U.S.A.) in folder 1-4 document the eye-witness account of the fall of Beijing and Tianjin and their escape from China, as well as the killing and rape incidents in the Nanjing Massacre (Rape of Nanking 南京大屠殺) in 1937. In addition, two reports to the Board of Trustees of the Yenching University (燕京大学) described the condition in Beijing during the Japanese military occupation in 1937. One of these reports was written by Dr. John Leighton Stuart.

Provenance

The materials for this collection were received by the Special Collections & Archives on 19 November, 2010.

Accession: 10-03

October 13, 2011

December 3, 2015

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CONTAINER LIST

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
China			
1	1	Articles on China from <i>National Geographic</i> : Plates and articles	n.d.
1	2	Scrapbook from Roy & Helen Pryor and Mary F. Brenton	1922-1927
1	3	<i>University Hospital annual report</i> : Book	1925
1	4	Letters and articles relating to China, 1937: Correspondence, journal articles and manuscripts	1937-1938, n.d.
Nanjing Incident (Nanking Incident), China on 24th March, 1927			
1	5	Account of the Nanjing Incident: Articles, correspondence, clippings, manuscripts, photographs and boarding card	1917-1980, n.d.
1	6	Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church after Nanking Incident: Correspondence	1927-1932
1	7	Primary notes and documents on Nanking Incident: Bank statements, correspondence, manuscripts and receipts	1926-1927, n.d.