WHITAKER, JAMES CLARK, 1913-2000.
James Clark Whitaker papers, 1930-2000

Emory University
Pitts Theology Library
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Whitaker, James Clark, 1913-2000.
Title: James Clark Whitaker papers, 1930-2000
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 211
Extent: 20.4 cubic ft. (64 boxes)
Abstract: Consists of handwritten journals, typed memoirs, correspondence, class notes, handwritten and typed papers and sermons, newspaper clippings and a printed memoir.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access
Collection stored off-site. Researchers must contact the Pitts Theology Library in advance to access this collection.

Restricted: Class notebooks and Reflections containing names of counseling patients. Sanitized photocopies are available.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction
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Citation
[after identification of item(s)], James Clark Whitaker Papers, Archives and Manuscript Dept., Pitts Theology Library, Emory University.

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**Processing**
Processed by Joan S. Clemens, 2001.

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**Collection Description**

**Biographical Note**
James C. Whitaker was born on July 22, 1913 in Black River, Louisiana. He received his B.A. from Asbury College in 1933; a B.D. from Candler School of Theology, Emory University in 1936; a S.T.M. from Drew Theological Seminary in 1966; and a M.S. in Educational Psychology in 1984 from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

Whitaker served as a chaplain in the U.S. Navy during World War II. From 1935 to 1961 he served as pastor to several churches in the Louisiana Conference of the Methodist Church (U.S.). He actively supported desegregation of the New Orleans public schools in the late 1950s and early 1960s, however, his liberal views were not popular with the Louisiana Conference. He transferred to the Northern New Jersey Conference in 1961 where he remained until his retirement in the late 1970s. In 1982, at the age of 70, Whitaker pursued a degree in psychology from the University of Tennessee and began a counseling career.

Whitaker was profoundly influenced by the writings of Soren Kierkegaard about whom he wrote his thesis in the 1960s. He was also influenced by the writings of H. Richard Niebuhr, Paul Tillich and many other theologians and philosophers. This influence is prevalent in the journal of reflections Whitaker maintained from the late 1940s until 1998 as well as in his letters to friends and family. He also participated in layman study groups that engaged in scholarly theological discussions.

Whitaker and his wife, Mozelle Renshaw, had two children. He died on September 21, 2000 at the age of 87.

**Scope and Content Note**
This collection consists of handwritten journals, typed memoirs, correspondence, class notes, handwritten and typed papers and sermons, newspaper clippings and a printed memoir. The material is divided into eight subseries: Biographical, Calendars and schedules, Class and miscellaneous notes, Papers and other writings, Reflections - journals, Reflections and letters, Sermons and prayers, and Miscellaneous.

The first subseries contains biographical information about James C. Whitaker. The material includes his own description of his papers and spiritual journey, a resume, transcripts, and Whitaker's obituary, funeral program and a copy of the eulogy delivered at his funeral. The second subseries consists of Whitaker's handwritten schedules and a set of small pocket calendars he used from 1961-1997.

Class and miscellaneous notes is a larger subseries that contains spiral bound notebooks with Whitaker's class notes from 1961 to 1985. Researchers must note that he recycled these notebooks so a notebook may contain class notes from the 1960s and class notes from the 1980s. He also used his class notebooks for church meeting notes and study group notes. Most of the notes are dated but in a few cases it is difficult to determine when or for what event notes were taken. Between 1982 and 1985 Whitaker was enrolled in psychology and counseling courses.
These courses included practicums in which he counseled clients. The notebooks contained the names of his clients, information which cannot be made public for legal reasons. Whitaker also wrote some of his most insightful reflections regarding his own mental and spiritual health in these same notebooks. The notebooks are restricted but photocopies with the full names of clients removed are available for researchers to use.

The fourth subseries consists of papers and other writings. These papers were primarily written to fulfill class assignments but a few papers were written for other reasons. This grouping also contains copies of the Counselor’s Corner, a piece Whitaker wrote for his church newsletter, as well as some of his poetry and his collection of Søren Kierkegaard quotes.

The heart of the collection is contained in subseries five and six. Whitaker began writing his reflections on his theology and what he learned in his reading and course work in 1946. The first subseries consists of his journals and the chaplain's log he maintained in the U.S. Navy from 1944 to 1945. He began writing his reflections in small pocket-size spiral notebooks. In the early 1970s he switched to notebook paper size spiral notebooks, however, the format change was not consistent. Researchers may have to switch between notebooks to follow his line of thought although in some cases it appears that Whitaker wrote on different subjects in different notebooks. Names of his counseling clients also appear in Whitaker's journal from 1982 to 1985, but the names are not used as frequently as in the class notes. For this reason, only the pages that contain confidential names were removed from the notebooks and replaced with photocopies with the names removed. The journals subseries also contains a two volume work of Whitaker's reflections entitled *On Becoming One's Own Self: Reflected Existence*, edited by Henri N. Levinspuhl. The sixth subseries continues the reflections in the form of letters and handwritten reflections on scrap or blank paper. In the 1990s Whitaker acquired a computer and began typing his reflections using a word processor. Printouts of his work are in the final folder.

The seventh subseries consists of Whitaker's sermons and prayers. The sermons are in two major groupings. The first group of sermons were handwritten and kept in small spiral notebooks and indexed by title and scripture. The second grouping are handwritten or typed sermons that were kept in folders. Most of the sermons are not dated and it is not apparent when or where they were preached. This sub-series also contains a small collection of written prayers for various occasions.

The final subseries is a group of miscellaneous material that consists primarily of clippings. There are considerable clippings and correspondence regarding Whitaker's role in the desegregation of public schools in New Orleans in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The remaining clippings are about Whitaker or church related events in the families life in Louisiana, New Jersey, and Tennessee. Also included are photographs of James and Mozelle Whitaker and a Chinese tapestry that was given to Whitaker to use as an altar cloth when he was a Navy chaplain during World War II. The tapestry is approximately 200 years old.
## Container List

### Biographical

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<td>Introduction to papers, 1998</td>
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<td>Education information, undated</td>
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<td>Education information - Transcripts, 1930-1984</td>
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### Calendars and schedules

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<td>Schedules, 1950-1960</td>
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### Class and miscellaneous notes

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<td>Dietrich Monhoeffer, includes Charles Reich article from the New York Times, 1962, 1970</td>
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<td>Theology of Prayer, 1962 February-May</td>
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<td>German translations and notes on Schroer and Kierkegaard, circa 1962-1970</td>
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<td>Theology of Paul Tillich, 1963 January-May</td>
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<td>Mansfield College, Oxford, 1963 August</td>
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<td>Kierkegaard studies with notes from periodic re-reading of original notes, 1963-1990</td>
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<td>Undated Kierkegaard notes; Self and Society in Contemporary Existentialist Thought; Pocono Preaching Mission, 1966-1967</td>
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**Miscellaneous**

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- New Orleans school integration, 1961-1962
- New Orleans school integration, undated
- New Orleans school integration [original clippings], 1960-1962, undated
- Newspaper clippings - Louisiana, 1949-1975, undated
- Newspaper clippings - New Jersey, 1961-1992
- Newspaper clippings - Tennessee, 1984-1991
- Newspaper clippings - [originals], 1949-1992, undated
- WWII Chaplain services, 1944-1945
- [Loose material sent to Pitts after funeral. Contains notes and explanations by family members], 1959-2000
- Photographs of James and Mozelle Whitaker, circa 1950s
- Chinese altar cloth, undated
- Wherever Our Feet Take Us, by Anna Whitaker Smith, 2007