

REEVE, THOMAS ELLIS.

Thomas Ellis and Etha Mills Reeve papers, circa 1887-1971

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Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Reeve, Thomas Ellis.
Title:	Thomas Ellis and Etha Mills Reeve papers, circa 1887-1971
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection No. 863
Extent:	11 linear feet (23 boxes) and 2 oversized papers boxes and 1 oversized papers folder (OP)
Abstract:	Papers of Methodist minister and missionary Thomas Ellis Reeve, Sr. and his wife, Etha Mills Reeve which include family correspondence, diaries, legal and financial records, mission records, photographs, sermons, printed material, writings, and ephemera.
Language:	Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

Collection stored off-site. Researchers must contact the Rose Library in advance to access this collection.

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Source

Gift, 2000.

Citation

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Processing

Processed by Jana Lonberger and Susan Potts McDonald, November 2003.

Collection Description

Biographical Note

Thomas Ellis Reeve, Sr. (1889-1971), Methodist minister, was born to James Harris and Jennie Alice Ellis Reeve in Atlanta, Georgia. His siblings included, James H. (Jim), C.P. (Phil), Sue Janette, and Gladys. In 1896, the family moved to Calhoun, Georgia. Reeve's father died in 1900, and his mother married Lawrence (L.) Moss in 1905. Reeve graduated from Emory College in 1909 and Vanderbilt University in 1911. He entered his first pastorate in 1911 with the Methodist Episcopal Church South at Woodland, California, where he remained a year. He served a two-year pastorate at Alameda, California until 1914 when he became pastor of Wesley House in San Francisco.

In 1916 he traveled to the Belgian Congo to do missionary work in Lubefu with the Methodist Episcopal Church Mission South. While in the Congo he met and married fellow missionary Etha Virginia Mills (1883-1974) in December of 1918. Etha (or Ese, as he called her) was born to John Jackson and Ann Maria Yeamans Mills and raised in Apple Grove, Virginia. She graduated from Blackstone Female Institute (Blackstone, Virginia) in 1905 and studied at Peabody College in Nashville and the University of Virginia. Before traveling to the Congo in January of 1918, she had taught school in Virginia for five years.

The Reeves subsequently were assigned to the Methodist Episcopal Congo Mission (South) at Wembo-Nyama (1921-1923), Tunda (1923-1924), and Minga (1926-1929), with furloughs to the United States in the interim periods. Reeve authored a book, *In Wembo-Nyama's Land*, detailing his experiences in the Congo. The Belgian government found the book controversial and delayed the Reeves' return to the mission field.

When the Reeves returned from Africa in 1929, they settled in Calhoun, Georgia and took over a dairy and cotton farm. They raised three sons, Thomas Ellis Reeve Jr. (April 29, 1920-), James "Jack" Jackson Reeve (February 1, 1922-), and Charles Wiley Reeve (December 26, 1923-).

Scope and Content Note

The collection contains the personal papers of Thomas Ellis Reeve, Sr. and Etha Mills Reeve from ca. 1905-1929. The papers include family correspondence, diaries, legal and financial records, mission records, photographs, sermons, printed material, writings, and ephemera.

The correspondence includes letters from Ellis Reeve to his parents while he was attending Emory College and Vanderbilt University, letters from his time in California, and while he was a missionary in the Belgian Congo. Correspondents include Methodist Episcopal Church Bishop W.R. (Walter) Lambuth and W.M. Morrison.

The diaries (1916-1920 with gaps) begin with Reeve's descriptions of his travels to the Congo and go on to describe his experiences as a missionary at Wembo-Nyama in the Belgian Congo. The writings series contains mainly sermons written by Reeve and articles written by various missionaries in Africa probably for distribution in Methodist Church publications. Authors include H.P. Anker, Ansil Lynn, Thomas E. Reeve, and Charles P.M. Sheefey.

The photographs are comprised of images of the family and their missionary work and includes a scrapbook containing photographs taken in the Congo depicting missionary life and the native people. The majority of the printed material relates to either the Methodist Episcopal Church, South missionary work in Africa or to Georgia history. Many of the pieces published by the Methodist Church are written in native African language.

Arrangement Note

Organized into eight series: (1) Correspondence; (2) Diaries, scrapbooks, notebooks; (3) Missionary and Methodist Episcopal Church, South records; (4) Family papers; (5) Writings; (6) Photographs; (7) Printed material; and (8) Ephemera.

Description of Series

[Series 1: Correspondence, 1887-1971](#)

[Series 2: Diaries, scrapbooks, notebooks, 1903-1920](#)

[Series 3: Missionary and Methodist Episcopal Church, South records, 1915-1929](#)

[Series 4: Family papers, 1883-1963](#)

[Series 5: Writings](#)

[Series 6: Photographs](#)

[Series 7: Printed material, 1907-1974](#)

[Series 8: Ephemera](#)

Series 1
Correspondence, 1887-1971
Boxes 1-11

Etha V. Mills correspondence

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	1909-1917 August
1	2	1917 September-1918

Thomas Ellis Reeve correspondence

1	3	1887-1903
1	4	1905 January-October
1	5	1905 November-December
1	6	1906 January-March
2	1	1906 April-July
2	2	1906 July-December
2	3	1907 January-March
2	4	1907 April-July
2	5	1907 September-October
3	1	1907 November-December
3	2	1908 January-August
3	3	1908 September-December
3	4	1909 January-April
3	5	1909 May-December
4	1	1910 January-April
4	2	1910 May-December
4	3	1911-1913
4	4	1914-1915
4	5	1916 January-July
4	6	1916 August
4	7	1916 August
5	1	1916 September-October
5	2	1916 November-December
5	3	1917 January-May
5	4	1917 June-August
5	5	1917 September-December
6	1	1918 January-May
6	2	1918 June-July
6	3	1918 August-December

Thomas Ellis and Etha Mills Reeve correspondence

6	4	1919 January-March
6	5	1919 April-June
7	1	1919 July-December
7	2	1920 January-June
7	3	1920 July-December
7	4	1921 January-March
7	5	1921 April-November
8	1	1922
8	2	1923 January-June
8	3	1923 July-October
8	4	1923 November-December
8	5	1924 January-February
8	6	1924 March-May
8	7	1924 June-July
9	1	1924 August-December
9	2	1925 January-May
9	3	1925 June-December
9	4	1926 January-May
9	5	1926 June-September
10	1	1926 October-December
10	2	1927 January-March
10	3	1927 April-July
10	4	1927 August-December
10	5	1928 January-May
11	1	1928 June-December
11	2	1929
11	3	1930-1937
11	4	1938-1954
11	5	1955-1957
11	6	1958-1971
11	7	no date

Thomas E. Reeve, Jr.

11	8	1941
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Series 2
Diaries, scrapbooks, notebooks, 1903-1920
Boxes 12-13

Original diaries and transcripts

Box	Folder	Content
12	1	Thomas E. Reeve: Original diary, September 11 - November 25, 1916
12	2	Thomas E. Reeve: Original diary, March 5, 1917 - March 25, 1918
12	3	Thomas E. Reeve: Typescript, March 5, 1917 - March 25, 1918
12	4	Thomas E. Reeve: Original diary, March 25 - December 6, 1920
12	5	Thomas E. Reeve: Typescript, March 25 - June 6, 1920 (incomplete typescript of original diary)
12	6	Unknown women [possibly girlfriend in California]: Original diary, July 4-August 18, [ca. 1914]

Notebooks

12	7	Thomas E. Reeve: Consecration Day, September 2, 1915 [contains his Pledges to God; Rules for My Life; Diary based on my rules, September 2-December 22, 1915; and dictionary of Otetela words]
12	8	Thomas E. Reeve: Notebook, "Illustrations, Quotations, Jokes, etc.," n.d.

Scrapbooks

13	1	Etha Virginia Mills, Blackstone Female Institute, 1903-1905
13	2	Etha Virginia Mills, Scrapbook of postcards, ca. 1906

Series 3**Missionary and Methodist Episcopal Church, South records, 1915-1929****Box 14: folders 1-14**

Box	Folder	Content
14	1	Correspondence, 1916-1929
14	2	Expense report, Etha V. Mills, 1916-1917
14	3	Financial/supplies
14	4	Instructions to Missionaries (outfit, travel, etc.), 1919, 1922, and 1924
14	5	Last Will and Testament: E.B. Stiltz, August 15, 1917
14	6	Maps and charts of Belgian Congo [presumably made by Reeve and H.P. Anker]
14	7	Report of Bishop James Cannon, Jr. on Trip to Congo, [1921]
14	8	Reports: Lubefu Station, 1915, 1917-1923, 1927
14	9	Reports, Travel: "From Banana to Stanley Pool," October 13-20, 1916 [Reeve]
14	10	Reports, Travel: "Report of the Lubefu River Trip, August 17-24, 1917" [Reeve]
14	11	Reports, Travel: "Report of Committee of Investigation on Wembo Nyama, Katak-Kombe, Lodja, and Bena-Dibell Transport and Auto Road Condition," [1918?] [Reeve]
13	14	Reports, Travel: "Seeing Otetela Country - A Seven Week Itineration and Exploration Trip, May 29-July 16, 1918," [H.P. Anker]
13	14	Reports, Travel: "Itinerating Trips," April 7 - June 2, 1922, September 11-18, 1922; and September 8-18, 1922 [possibly by E.B. Stiltz]
13	14	Resolutions

Series 4**Family papers, 1883-1963****Box 14: folders 15-41**

Box	Folder	Content
14	15	Address books (2 volumes)
14	16	Application for Seed, Feed and Fertilizer Loan, 1930
14	17	Attestation d'Immatriculation, Congo Belge, 1921
14	18	Birth announcement, Thomas E. Reeve, Jr., 1920
14	19	Birth certificate: Etha Virginia Mills, 1883
14	20	Birth certificate: James Jackson Reeve, 1922
14	21	Blackstone Female Institute, Etha Virginia Mills, 1903-1904
14	22	Certificate of Admission, Emory College: Thomas Ellis Reeve, 1905
14	23	Deeds, contracts, and agreements
14	24	Exportation forms
14	25	George Peabody College for Teachers, Etha Virginia Mills, 1915-1916
14	26	Last will and testament, Etha Virginia Mills, 1917
14	27	Last will and testament, Thomas Ellis Reeve, Sr., 1917
14	28	Marriage certificate, Thomas Ellis and Etha Mills Reeve, 1918
14	29	Methodist Training School, Etha Virginia Mills, 1915
14	30	Misc.
14	31	Mother of the Year (Georgia) nomination, Etha Mills Reeve, 1963
14	32	Newspapers clippings Reeve family
14	33	Newspaper clippings: General
14	34	Notes on papers compiled by Thomas E. Reeve, Jr.
14	35	Passenger lists to Congo
14	36	Passport, 1920
14	37	Pastor's report to Annual Conference of the MEC, South, Pacific Conference, Colusa District, Woodland Charge, October 9-15, 1912
14	38	Receipts [T. M., James Harris, and Thomas Ellis Reeve]
14	39	Sword statements
14	40	Tax forms, 1930-1932
14	41	University of Virginia, Etha Virginia Mills, 1912-1913

Series 5 Writings Boxes 15-17

Sermons

Box	Folder	Content
15	1	Titled, 1910-1912
15	2	Titled, 1913-1914
15	3	Titled, 1915-1916
15	4	Titled, undated
16	1	Titled, undated
16	2	Titled, undated
16	3	Titled, undated
16	4	Titled, undated
16	5	Untitled, undated

Misc. by TER

17	1	Academic papers, Emory University
17	2	Academic papers, Vanderbilt University, ca. 1909-1910
17	3	Misc.

Book-length

17	4	<i>In Wembo Nyama's Land</i> , TS
17	5	<i>In Wembo Nyama's Land</i> , TS
17	6	<i>In Wembo Nyama's Land</i> , misc.

Articles

17	7	Anker, H.P., "Moses Nganjolo," 1920
17	8	Anker, H.P., "Native Church Life in the Congo"
17	9	Anker, H.P. (Mrs.), "African Women"
17	10	Davis, J.J. (Mrs.), "Queer Things the Natives Do"
17	11	Foreman, M. Flora, "New Brick Hospital for Congo"
17	12	Gilliam, Frank J., "On the Path"
17	13	Harris, L.L., "A Revue - Congo Mission"
17	14	Harris, L.L. (Mrs.), "Christmas at Wembo-Nyama"
17	15	Kinman, L.M., "Farewell to Lubefu"
17	16	Lewis, W.B., M.D., "Christmas Day at Tunda," 1923
17	17	Lynn, Ansil, "A Brief Survey of the Methodist Mission in the Congo"
17	18	Lynn, Ansil, "A Decade of Methodism," 1924
17	19	Lynn, Ansil, "Some Incidents of a Recent Fifteen Day Trip of Exploration and Investigations"

- 17 20 Lynn, Ansil, "The First Experience and Work of a Young Missionary to the Congo," 1920
- 17 21 Lynn, Marzie H., Union Mission House, Kinshasa, Congo Belge
- 17 22 Ogburn, N.S., Jr., "An Afternoon with Japanese School-Boys"
- 17 22a Reeve, Thomas E., "A Glimpse at Some Phase of a Missionary's Life in the Dark Continent," [description of photographs], no date
- 17 23 Reeve, Thomas E., "A Mid-Night Leopard Alarm"
- 17 24 Reeve, Thomas E., "A Missionary's Call"
- 17 25 Reeve, Thomas E., "Dying by Inches"
- 17 26 Reeve, Thomas E., Fragments
- 17 27 Reeve, Thomas E., "In an Open Row-Boat on an African River"
- 17 28 Reeve, Thomas E., "My First Tooth Pulling"
- 17 29 Reeve, Thomas E., "Packing and Unpacking," ca. 1925
- 17 30 Reeve, Thomas E., "Some Eats and Eaters of Africa"
- 17 31 Reeve, Thomas E. (Mrs.), "A Few Extracts from Mrs. Reeve's Letters"
- 17 32 Reeve, Thomas E. (Mrs.), "The Wembo Nyama Revival"
- 17 33 Reeve, Thomas E. (Mrs.) [Etha Virginia Mills], "Under Modern Circumstances is it Possible to Live the Christ Life?," March 21, 1909
- 17 34 Reeve, Thomas E. (Mrs.) [Etha Virginia Mills], Untitled [biographical note and narrative of trip to African, September 14, 1917-December 27, 1917]
- 17 35 Sheefey, Charles P.M., "Death and Funeral Rites Among a Primitive People"
- 17 36 Sheefey, Charles P.M., "Diamond's in the Congo"
- 17 37 Sheefey, Charles P.M., "Travel Letter - Dr. C.P.M. Sheefey, En Route from Antwerp Belgium to Wembo-Nyama, Africa," [September 1922]
- 17 38 Sheefey, Charles P.M., "Extracts from Letter Received from Charles P.M Sheefey in Charge of Medical Work M.E. Church, South, Wembo Nyama, Belgian Congo, Africa," [September 1922?]
- 17 39 Sheefey, Charles P.M., "Letter Written February 17, 1923, from Wembo Nyama"
- 17 40 Sheefey, Charles P.M., "From a Letter by Dr. Sheefey, February 18, 1923"
- 17 41 Sheefey, Charles P.M., "Extracts from Letters from Dr. Charles P.M. Sheefey in Charge of Medical Mission Work M.E. Church, South. Wembo Nyama, Africa, April 16, 1923"
- 17 42 Sheefey, Charles P.M., "Letter from Dr. Charles P.M. Sheefey, Wembo Nyama, Africa, May 26, 1923"
- 17 43 Sheefey, Charles P.M., "Extracts from Letter Written June 13, 1923"
- 17 44 Sheefey, Charles P.M., "Extracts from Letters - Dr. Charles P.M. Sheefey in Charge of Medical Work, M.E. Church, South," [April-May 1924]
- 17 45 Sheefey, Charles P.M., "Extracts from Letters from Dr. Charles P.M. Sheefey, Wembo Nyama," n.d.
- 17 46 Stilz, E.B., "To Junga Yanyi and Back"
- 17 47 Unknown, "Wouldn't Nurse Helpless Baby"

17 48 Misc. by others

Series 6
Photographs
Box 18-19, OP1, 3

Thomas Ellis and Etha Mills Reeve

Box	Folder	Content
18	1	Thomas Ellis Reeve Sr., Childhood
18	2	Thomas Ellis Reeve Sr., Oxford College
OP1	1	Thomas Ellis Reeve Sr., Oxford College, Class of 1909
18	3	Thomas Ellis Reeve Sr., Vanderbilt University, 1909-1910
18	4	Thomas Ellis Reeve Sr., adult (portrait)
18	5	Thomas Ellis Reeve Sr., adult (candid)
18	6	Etha Mills (Reeve), childhood
OP1	2	Etha Mills (Reeve), Blackstone Female Institute, 1902-1903
18	7	Etha Mills Reeve, adult (portrait)
18	8	Etha Mills Reeve, adult (candid)
18	9	Thomas Ellis Reeve Sr. and Etha Mills Reeve and children, formal portraits [includes three glass plate negatives]
18	10	Thomas Ellis Reeve Sr. and Etha Mills Reeve and children, candid
18	11	Thomas Ellis Reeve Jr., James Jackson Reeve, and Charles Wiley Reeve
18	12	Thomas Ellis Reeve Jr. and family

Thomas Ellis Reeve Sr. parents and siblings

18	13	Lawrence and Alice Reeve Moss
18	14	Lawrence and Alice Reeve Moss and children
19	1	C.P (Phil) and Jewell Reeve and family
19	2	Gladys Moss
19	3	James H. and Jessie Reeve and family
19	4	Janette Reeve and R.R. Owen and family
19	5	T.M. Ellis [Reeve's mother's father]

Etha Mills Reeve parents and siblings

19	6	Mills family
OP1	3	Marcie Mills, wedding portrait

Missionary Work in Africa

19	7	Building and buildings
19	8	Hunting/Game
19	9	Missionaries/Visitors
19	10	Native people
19	11	Reeve family at work and play

19 12 Transportation
OP1 6 Photograph album, 1917-1920

Other

OP3 3 Annual Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South (?) [Reeve's first
Conference]
14 13 Friends
OP1 4 Oxford College [photographs of Candler Hall, Seney Hall, and Pierce Science
Hall], ca. 1909
19 14 Piedmont Hospital, Nurses graduation, 1944
14 15 Places (mostly unidentified)
OP1 5 Unidentified places
14 16 Train wreck, Covington, Ga. (February 2, 1907)
14 17 Unidentified
14 18 Unidentified
14 19 Negatives

Series 7**Printed material, 1907-1974****Boxes 20-21; OP2**

Box	Folder	Content
20	1	<i>Akambu Wa Ahunga wa lu Daka Dia Edjedja</i> , Methodist Episcopal Congo Mission, Congo Belge, Afrique, 1924
20	2	American Bible Society Leaflet, <i>President Roosevelt on the Bible</i> , ca. 1913
20	3	Anker, H.P., "Visit of Bishop Cannon to the Congo Mission," <i>Christian Advocate</i> , October 14, 1927
20	4	Bedinger, Robert Dabney, <i>Triumphs of the Gospel in the Belgian Congo</i> , published by Presbyterian Committee of Publication, ca. 1920
20	5	<i>Biuru ya Dombelo Dia Khumbu</i> , MMCC, n.d.
20	6	Calhoun Public School, Commencement Exercises, May 29-31, n.y. [mentions Phil and Janette Reeve]
20	7	California Social Hygiene Society, Circulars 2-8, San Francisco, California, ca. 1915 [7 items]
20	8	<i>Christian Advocate</i> , "The Word of Life," December 12, 1924 [mentions publishing Bible in Otetela language]
20	9	<i>Church Annual of Calhoun Methodist Episcopal Church South</i> , November 30, 1915
20	10	<i>The Congo Extra</i> , Wembo Nyama Station, [1924]
20	11	<i>The Congo Mission News</i> , April 1920, No. 31 [mentions Reeves going on furlough due to illness on p. 5]
20	12	<i>The Congo Mission News</i> , April 1924, No. 47 [Reeves are mentioned on inside cover]
20	13	<i>Consecration of Deaconesses and Foreign Missionaries</i> , April 19, 1916 [mentions Etha Mills]
OP2	1	<i>Daily Christian Advocate</i> , Vol. 20, Nos. 1-4, July 2-5, 1924
20	14	Eddy, Sherwood, <i>The Supreme Decision of the Christian Student, The Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions</i> , n.d.
20	15	Emory University, Class of 1909, various printed
20	16	<i>Farewell Words to the Class of 1909</i> , Delivered by the Principal Rev. James Cannon, Jr. in the Blackstone Institute Chapel, Commencement, 1909
20	17	<i>General Report of Calhoun, M.E. Church, South</i> , November 1907 and November 1908 [2 items]
20	18	<i>Georgia Tech Glee Club Season 1926</i>
20	19	Harris, Pearl Mills, <i>A Brief History of Education in Louisa County</i> [Virginia], 1963 [Etha Reeve mentioned on p. 30, 45-46]
20	20	<i>Here and There</i> , Educational Department, Board of Missions, M.E. Church, South, ca. 1909
20	21	Ingram, Irvine S., <i>History of the Carrollton First Methodist Church</i> , 1967

- 20 22 *The Intercollegian*, "Opportunities for Service: Important Calls from Mission Boards, June 1910 [reprint]
- 20 23 *Lokendo la Kristian*, Methodist Episcopal Congo Mission, Wembo Nyama, Congo Belge, 1928
- 20 24 *Lukumu L'ololo Lakafunde Jone*, Methodist Episcopal Congo Mission, Wembo Nyama, April 17, 1925
- 20 25 *Lukumu L'ololo Lakafunde Mateu*, Methodist Episcopal Congo Mission, Wembo Nyama, December, 1925
- 20 26 Memorial Service: Thomas Ellis Reeve, Sr., First United Methodist Church (Carrollton, Ga.), July 16, 1971
- 20 27 Memorial Service: Mrs. Thomas Ellis Reeve, Sr., First United Methodist Church (Carrollton, Ga.), July 21, 1974
- 20 28 Merritt, Stephen, *Samuel Morris: A True Life*, published by Levi C. Sullivan, Blind Tract Minister, Roanoke, Va., n.d.
- 20 29 *Minimum Educational Standard, Foreign Missionary Candidates*, Methodist Episcopal Church South, n.d.
- 20 30 *Mukanda a Mbega*, Methodist Episcopal Congo Mission, Congo Belge, 1917
- 20 31 *Mukumu wa Esambu*, Methodist Episcopal Congo Mission, Wembo Nyama, 1929
- 20 32 *Mukanda wa Misambu*, American Presbyterian Mission Press, Congo Belge, Afrique, 1912
- 20 33 *Mukanda wa Ncelu ya Apostolo*, Methodist Episcopal Congo Mission, Congo Belge, Afrique, 1920
- 21 1 Mumpower, D.L., *Founding of the Congo Mission*, Board of Missions, M.E. Church South, ca. 1913
- 21 2 Mumpower, D.L., *A Great Mission in the Making*, Quarterly Report of Congo Mission, ca. 1915
- 21 3 Postcards, Belgian Congo and Senegal
- 21 4 Postcards, Georgia (Calhoun and Carrollton)
- 21 5 *Qteltela and English Dictionary*, Methodist Episcopal Congo Mission, Congo Belge, Afrique, Wembo Nyama, 1925
- 21 6 Salvation Army, *The Life and Work of the Late General William Booth*, [1912]
- 21 7 Southern Student Conference, *Daily Programme and Suggestions*, Farm School, North Carolina, June 14-23, 1907
- 21 8 Summer Conference Schedule, 1920, [Methodist Episcopal Church, South], n.d. [Reeve mentioned]
- 21 9 Vanderbilt, various printed, ca. 1911
- 21 10 *Wesleyan Christian Advocate*, Vol. 79, No. 42, October 15, 1915
- 21 11 Women's Auxiliary, Atlanta, Ga., accordion photo cards of Luebo, Congo
- OP2 1 Woman's Missionary Council, M.E. Church, South, *The Bulletin of Missionary News*, Nashville, Tenn., June 1920

- 21 12 Woman's Missionary Council, M.E. Church South, *Planting the Gospel in the Belgian Congo*, ca. 1916 [includes photo of Etha Mills on cover]

Series 8
Ephemera
Boxes 22-23

Box	Folder	Content
22		Cultural materials from Africa: animal tusks, teeth, claws and musical instruments
23		Personal artifacts
