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Jack Welch Papers, 1896-1961

Jack Welch

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**Jack Welch
Papers, (1896-1961)**

Center for Restoration Studies
Manuscripts #65

Abilene Christian University Special Collections and Archives
Brown Library
Abilene Christian University
Abilene, TX 79699-9208

15 March 2022

About this collection

Title: Jack Welch Papers

Creator: Jack Welch, (1941-1996)

Identifier/Call Number: Center for Restoration Studies Manuscripts #65

Physical Description: 2 linear feet (2 boxes)

Dates (Inclusive): 1896-1961

Dates (Bulk): 1896-1961

Location: Center for Restoration Studies

Language of Materials: English

Scope and Content Note: The Jack Welch Collection includes slides and papers related to Dr. Welch's documentation of baptistery paintings in Churches of Christ and Baptist churches predominantly, but not exclusively in Texas and Oklahoma. Baptistery paintings in these churches are typically landscapes, most often of water imagery depicting rivers seeming to flow into the baptistery below the paintings. Members of these churches sought to return to the traditions and tenets of the earliest Christian churches with simple unadorned meeting places and total immersion baptism related in the Bible. Baptism was originally conducted in creeks and rivers. Later large baptisteries deep enough for total immersion were added to the church interior. Although most interior church adornment, particularly art depicting the human form, was avoided, landscape paintings became commonplace during the twentieth century. These paintings provided a visual link to the natural world and to the locations of the early baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River related in the New Testament of the Bible.

Most of the images and papers in this collection are a record of the paintings of Blanche Perry, (See the Blanche Perry Collection at the Center for Restoration Studies, Brown Library, Abilene Christian University). Blanche Perry was a virtually self-taught painter living in Colorado who made it her life's work to paint baptistery paintings for churches. She asked for no payment for this work and did not advertise yet she is known to have provided 222 paintings to churches in the United States and overseas. Each painting was accompanied by her interpretation of the piece, often with instructions for hanging. Each painting was unique although the interpretations were similar and sometimes identical. The focus on Blanche Perry means the Welch collection is similar in content to the papers in the Blanche Perry Collection. Indeed, some materials may have inadvertently been transferred between the two collections during earlier processing as the documentation and organization is so similar.

The Welch collection is divided into three series:

Series 1: Welch Reference Material - This series includes research about baptistery paintings by Jack Welch.

Series 2. Slides (Box 1) - These slides were taken by Jack Welch primarily of the Blanche Perry paintings in churches and the exterior of those churches. Each slide has identifying number on the slide and the archival sleeves housing the slides have information linking to the slide boxes from which they were taken.

Series 3: Blanche Perry Related Papers and Photographs - The papers in this series consist of the correspondence, directions for hanging, and painting interpretations written by Blanche Perry for various churches. These Blanche Perry related papers are arranged by city, state and country as are the similar ones in the Blanche Perry collection. This arrangement may have been Blanche Perry's original filing system. Photographs of Blanche Perry are also in this series and were probably given to Welch by the Perry family.

Biographical Note: Jack Welch (1941-1996) was a professor of English at Abilene Christian University and a feature editor for the *Christian Chronicle*. His other publications include religious novels, stories, and poems. In 1993, he started the Christian Literary Service to help young writers in the field of Christian literature. Prior to coming to Abilene Christian University he preached in Iowa and taught at Bethany College and Western Virginia University. His published novels include *Decision in Paris*, *Feeling Free*, and *Life at an Early Age*.

Welch was born in East Liverpool, Ohio and raised in New Cumberland, West Virginia. He received his undergraduate degree in English from West Virginia University and a Masters in creative writing from the University of Iowa. His doctorate was from Carnegie-Mellon University. Welch died suddenly in St. Petersburg, Russia while leading a mission trip. He left behind a wife and two children and a collection of photographs of baptistery paintings from churches in Appalachia and in the Southwest.

His collection was donated by his family after his death. Some of this collection may have been mixed with the Blanche Perry Collection of baptistery paintings during previous processing.

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition: Welch family

Date of Acquisition: circa 2000

Accession Number: R2007.215

Date of Accession: 21 May 2007

Accessioned by: Reid

Processor and Date of Processing: Drew Winters and Mary Lee Bartlett, PhD, October 2010;
Audrey Schaffner, 6 March 2014

Finding Aid Creator and Date: Drew Winters and Mary Lee Bartlett, PhD, October 2010;
Audrey Schaffner, 6 March 2014

Finding Aid Update: Mac Ice and Amanda Dietz, 15 March 2022

Using this collection

Processing Status: Processed

Conditions Governing Access: Materials are housed in the Abilene Christian University Special Collections and Archives, Brown Library, Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas and are non-circulating. Access is available during normal business hours; prior appointments are preferred.

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Subjects and Keywords

Churches of Christ -- History -- 20th century

Churches of Christ -- United States

Manuscripts

Inventory

Series 1 Papers unrelated to Blanche Perry

Box 1

- a. Correspondence and photographs
- b. Photographs of baptisteries for publications
- c. Photocopies of articles on baptistry
- d. Photograph of Christian Baptistery from Dura-Europos from Yale University
- e. Pages with text and photographs from an exhibit
- f. Article "A Heritage of Regional Landscapes" by Jack Welch, *Goldenseal*, Vol. 6, No. 2, (April-June 1980) pp. 41-48

Series 2 - Slides

Box 1 (continued)

Album of slides – 30 pages, 408 slides – most of interior baptistry paintings and exterior of church; a few personal slides of birthday party and a swimming pool – most slides identified and include churches in Texas in small towns like Maryneal, Anson. Not inventoried, but each page is identified with a title.

Series 2: Papers and Photographs related to Blanche Perry

Box 2

1. Photographs (probably given to Jack Welch by the Perry family)

Small envelope labeled "A.C. Perry Wedding" - 11 2" x 3" B/W Photos

Table with Silver

Table with Silver + Child

Table with Glass

Table with Glass + Bookshelf (x2)

Fireplace with Three women sewing + man reading

Fireplace with plants

Columns with plants (x2)

Fireplace

Family reading

3" x 4.75" B/W Photo – Perry with Painting, out of focus

5" x 7" B/W Photo – Perry painting baptistry, from the right, labeled "Elk City Okla"

5" x 7" B/W Photo – Perry painting baptistry, straight on, brush up, labeled "Elk Okla"

5" x 7" B/W Photo – Perry painting baptistry, straight on, brush down, labeled "Elk city Okla"

3.5" x 5" B/W Photo – Perry and two women on sofa + 2 men standing

3.75" x 4.75" B/W Photo – Portrait of Perry, reverse reads, "small", "Please return all these and enclose bill [?]. thank you", "1941".

3" x 3.75" B/W Photo – Portrait of A.E. Perry, labeled "1941"

3.75" x 4.75" B/W Photo – Perry with waterfall painting, reverse reads, "Shawnee, Okla. Spring 1935", "Turner Fall & Arbuckle Mt in background. Dogwood & red bud trees in cut out screens to hide steps & doors. I am painting left side", "Cardinal facts of gospel"

- painted in skies & water in symbols”, “my sixth painting”, “- age 45 -“.
- 3.5” x 5” Color Photo – Perry with river painting, in front of brick wall; labeled “Lachine, Que – 1966”. Painting clearly reads “No.220”.
 - 3.25” x 4.25” B/W Photo – Baptistery and pulpit, labeled “Alexandria Va”.
 - 3.25” x 4.25” B/W Photo – Perry partially behind painted cut-out, waterfall painting; labeled “Probably Springfield, Mo.” Note: painting very similar to Shawnee, Okla. painting (see above)
 - 5” x 5” Color Photo – Perry with gold-framed flower painting; unlabeled, probably late 1960’s
 - 5” x 7” B/W Photo – Portrait of Perry, labeled Mrs Andrew E. Perry; stamped by “Studio of the May Company Denver, Colo.” and “West Coast Christian 729 SO. Gramercy Dr. Los Angeles, California”.
 - 7.5” x 10” B/W Photo – Perry with four women, a girl and a man; labeled “Ma Yvonne Niel”, “I. B G. Perry”; stamped by Philips Photographic Service Abilene, Texas”.
2. Mount Willing High School Catalogue (1896)
 3. Blanche Perry papers (arranged by city or country, probably Blanche Perry’s original arrangement)
 1. No City Listed
 - “The Jordan River” interpretation
 2. Multiple Cities Listed
 - Includes interpretations of the painting “The Jordan River” and “Resurrection Morning”
 3. Canada, Quebec, Lachine
 - Correspondence to Blanche Perry
 4. Panama, Canal Zone, Balboa
 - Interpretation and correspondence
 5. Philippines, Zambuanga City
 - Correspondence to Blanche Perry
 6. Alabama, Ramer
 - Newspaper clipping
 7. Alabama, Troy
 - Interpretation “The River Jordan”
 8. Arizona, Chandler
 - Interpretation “The River Jordan”
 9. Arizona, Tempe
 - Interpretation :Song on Jordan’s Story Banks”
 10. Arizona, Tucson
 - Interpretation
 11. Arizona, Yuma
 - Correspondence to and from Blanche Perry
 12. Arkansas, Lapanto
 - Interpretation
 13. California, Santa Rosa
 - Correspondence to Blanche Perry

14. Colorado, Denver
Correspondence
15. Florida, Miami
Correspondence (1957)
16. Florida, Pensacola
Interpretation and correspondence
17. Kansas, Elkhart
Interpretation
18. Kansas, Lewis
Interpretation
19. Kansas, Wellington
Interpretation
20. Kentucky, Hopkinsville
Interpretation “The Jordan River”
21. Maryland, Baltimore
Interpretation
22. Missouri, Kansas City
Correspondence to Blanche Perry
23. Missouri, Poplar Bluff
Interpretation
24. Nebraska, Hamlin
Interpretation
25. Nebraska, Palisade
Correspondence
26. New Mexico, Albuquerque – North Fourth Street
Interpretation
27. New Mexico, Albuquerque – Soleta Highway
Interpretation
28. Oklahoma, Blackwell
Prelude to Interpretation
29. Oklahoma, Marlow
Correspondence
30. Oklahoma, Pryor
Correspondence to Blanche Perry
31. Oklahoma, Shawnee
Correspondence to Blanche Perry and interpretation
32. Oklahoma, Wewoka
Interpretation “The Jordan River”
33. South Dakota, Huron
Interpretation “The Jordan River”
34. Tennessee, Maryville
Church Notice
35. Tennessee, Nashville – Green Street
Interpretation
36. Tennessee, Nashville – Waverly-Belmont
Church bulletins

37. Tennessee, Old Hickory
Interpretation
38. Tennessee, Ripley
Newspaper clipping and note to Blanche Perry
39. Texas, Anson
Church newsletter
40. Texas, Dallas
Church bulletins
41. Texas, Port Arthur
Interpretation
42. Texas, San Antonio
Correspondence
43. Texas, Seminole
Prelude to interpretation
44. Texas, Tom Bean
Interpretation
45. Virginia, Alexandria
Correspondence
46. Virginia, Wytheville
Correspondence