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Dame Rachel Crowdy Papers

Collection Summary

Title:	Dame Rachel Crowdy Papers
Call Number:	MS 90-25
Size:	0.25 linear feet
Acquisition:	Purchased from Christie's by Martin Bush, 1986
Processed by:	MD, circa 1990; Reprocessed by JEF, 3-26-1998; HLM, 6-16-2008
Restrictions:	None

Literary Rights

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Restrictions

None

Content Note

The Dame Rachel Crowdy Papers contain manuscript and typescript letters to Crowdy and her husband Lt. Col. Cudbert Thornhill from various prominent political figures, wartime leaders and leaders of womens organizations during the period 1918-1959. The correspondence touches on many aspects of world affairs and contains references to the various women's organizations which were organized in England before and during World War II. Among the correspondents are Neville Chamberlain, Queen Mary and Sir Harold MacMillan.

Biography

Dame Rachel Eleanor Crowdy (1884-1964) was born March 3, 1884. She was the daughter of James Crowdy, a solicitor from Kensington, and Mary Isabel Ann Fuidge. She completed her training as a nurse at Guy's Hospital in 1908, and three years later she joined the Voluntary Aid Detachments (VAD) to the Territorial Army of

Great Britain. She served for the VADs during the Great War (1914-1918) participating in some relief efforts along the lines of communication between France and Belgium; some of these efforts included attending to wounded soldiers, and setting up rest stations, ambulance depots, hostels for nurses and relatives of the wounded, hospitals and sick bays. Her hard work earned her the Royal Red Cross 2nd class in 1916 and 1st class in the following year. After the War she was named Dame of the British Empire and was appointed chief of the Social Questions and Opium Traffic Section at the League of Nations, becoming the only woman to head a section at the League. She spent twelve years working with the League, being distinguished with many awards for her work. Among these were being named commander of the Order of Polonia Restituta in 1922 and the Order of Alphonso XII of Spain in 1931; she was also granted the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws at Smith College in the United States in 1926.

The next decade saw Dame Rachel perform some international functions on behalf of the British Government. She attended conferences in Honolulu and Shanghai in 1930 and 1931, and was a member of the royal commission to investigate the traffic of arms in 1935-1936. In the following year she was part of a parliamentary commission to overlook the Spanish Civil War; and in the next two years she served on the West Indies Royal Commission. The last major appointment Dame Rachel had was at the Ministry of Information in Great Britain, serving as a regions advisor from 1939 to 1946.

In 1939 she married Colonel Cudbert John Massy Thornhill. He died in 1952. She died October 10, 1964.

Detailed Description: Box and Folder Listing

Box 1	FF 1	June 1918-November 1919 - Contains page of signatures written on Government House stationery; invitation to several people of title to visit, signed D. Calcutta dated June 23, 1918; letter by unknown author to Dame Katharine about passage aboard ship dated August 21, 1918; thank you letters from Queen Mary dated November 30, 1918, Christmas 1918 and October 17, 1919; letter about health position Dame Rachel was about to report on in paper from League of Nations dated September 8, 1919; letter related to the Red Cross dated September 9, 1919; invitation to help organize VAD Club on paper from the British Red Cross Society dated November 1, 1919.
Box 1	FF 2	January 1920-February 1924 - Contains invitation to take a chairman position on the Girl Guides Council from Lady Baden-Powell dated January 17, 1920; note expressing good wishes from Queen Mary dated October 26, 1921; regrets for lunch with Dame Rachel from Robert Cecil on July 16, 1922; Dorothy Yorke (?) appreciates Dame Rachel's congratulations for the Royal baby on February 10, 1923; appreciation note from Fridtjof Nansen to Dame Rachel for her work for the Epidemics Commission of the League of Nations dated April 9, 1923; Robert Cecil responds to request by Dame Rachel on February 26, 1924.
Box 1	FF 3	January 14, 1925-April 16, 1926 - Contains personal letter from Karen Jeppe dated January 14, 1925; letter on Ministry of Labour stationery dated April 22, 1925; invitation to lunch party from Duchesse De Hamilton dated October 1, 1925; and letter from Edward Naughton (?) dated April 16, 1926.
Box 1	FF 4	January 16, 1928-October 11, 1929 - Contains personal letter dated January 16, 1928 (author's name illegible); letter from Marguerite Vacari (?) on July 18, 1928; Fridtjof Nansen suggests Jane Addams should be given the Nobel Peace Prize, dated August 22, 1928; Dame Rachel is asked to complete articles for Encyclopedia Britannica by Sir Leo Chiozza Money on September 6, 1928; Margaret Bonfield writes about resolution from Women's Freedom League on December 11, 1928; letter by Alexander P. (?) on December 30, 1928; appreciation note for Dame Rachel's condolences on author's servant's death dated March 10, 1929 (author's signature illegible); Lady Cynthia Colville asks Dame Rachel to be vice-president of the Townswomen's Guilds Appeal on October 11, 1929.

Box 1	FF 5	<p>January 16, 1930-April 28, 1937 - Contains letter from leader of the opposition of the House of Commons in Canada to Lieutenant Colonel George Vanier concerning Dame Rachel dated January 16, 1930; letter addressed to Dame Rachel on October 10, 1930; letter from John Rockefeller to Dame Rachel written on October 14, 1930; private letter to Dame Rachel dated August 30, 1933; polite refusal to invitation dated June 11, 1934; thank you note from Queen Mary dated January 2, 1937; letter written in French and dated January 18, 1937 (author's signature illegible); three letters from Sir Alfred Knox to Thornhill dated April 5, 14 and 15, 1937; letter about Colonel Thornhill addressed to Hodsoll (?) dated April 18, 1937.</p>
Box 1	FF 6	<p>January 15, 1938-August 11, 1941 - Contains letter from Henni Forchhammer concerning the Red Cross dated January 15, 1938; thank you note from Malcolm McDonald dated May 1940; two letters from Lady Diana Duff-Cooper concerning project they are working on dated September 3 and 6, 1940; Walter Citrine sends Dame Rachel thank you note on October 17, 1940; Malcolm McDonald writes about unorganized evacuees in letters dated November 13, 1940 and January 30, 1941; thank you note to Colonel Thornhill on Commander in Chief in India letterhead dated February 8, 1941; note by Walter Citrine recommending some books to Dame Rachel dated April 10, 1941; note by Margaret Bondfield on May 13, 1941; note from Walter Monckton of the Ministry of Information to Dame Rachel concerning her interest in going to the United States dated July 8, 1941; thank you note by Duff Cooper on July 24, 1941; two letters by Brendan Bracken on July 25 and August 11, 1941, the latter concerning Dame Rachel's sister's death.</p>
Box 1	FF 7	<p>February 10, 1942-November 4, 1942 - Helena Sikorski (?) thanks Dame Rachel for her work with the Polish Relief Fund on February 10, 1942; request of assistance to formation of a Women's Home Defence unit in the event of invasion dated March 1942; letter from Dame Rachel to Sir Stewart-Wilson concerning a Sir Henry dated March 9, 1942 in response to a letter sent by Stewart-Wilson to Colonel Thornhill sent in March 3, 1942; response by Stewart-Wilson on March 11; invitation to luncheon sent April 9, 1942; letter sent from the General Headquarters of the Middle East Force concerning the use of car dated April 27, 1942; note from Philip Noel-Baker indicating presence of copy of letter by Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd, July 6, 1942; arrangements for assisting people who need help since Japanese occupation of Malaya called the Far Eastern Relief Fund dated September 11 and 25, 1942; note by Philip Noel-Baker on October 14, 1942; response to previous letter by Dame Rachel, October 28, 1942; response by Noel-Baker saying he never heard about London Women's Parliament dated October 29, 1942; thank you note from Margaret Biddle concerning invitation she received from Dame Rachel to meet Eleanor Roosevelt dated November 4, 1942.</p>
Box 1	FF 8	<p>November 4, 1942-December 16, 1942 - Note from Dowager Lady Swaythling appreciating chance to meet Mrs. Roosevelt dated November 4, 1942; Chairman of the National Women's Auxiliary Committee thanks Dame Rachel for meeting Mrs. Roosevelt dated November 5, 1942; Brendan Bracken is glad to have helped enable party for Mrs. Roosevelt dated November 5, 1942; letter addressed to Mr. Thornhill from Neville Chamberlain on November 5, 1942; note about enabling meeting with Mrs.</p>

Roosevelt on November 7, 1942; personal note from Philip Noel-Baker on November, 17 1942; letter from Neville Chamberlain to Dame Rachel on November 19, 1942; note from Philip Noel-Baker about "The Free Siamese" and apples dated November 24, 1942; letter from the War Office concerning casualty lists of the war in the media dated November 30, 1942; note from Brendan Bracken on December 9, 1942; letter from high ranking employee of weekly publication concerning publication of articles about efforts of women in the war dated December 10, 1942; thank you note dated December 15, 1942; letter concerning the Women's Advisory Committee on Overseas Publicity from Brendan Bracken dated December 16, 1942.

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| Box 1 | FF 9 | January 1, 1943-December 8, 1943 - Correspondence with Archie Warell (?) on January 1, 1943; Brendan Bracken writes Crowdy about possible visit of Madame Chiang Kai Shek, dated March 5, 1943; message from the Ambassador of the USSR in Great Britain on May 28, 1943; confirmation note about forwarding of message from the American Embassy dated June 11, 1943; invitation to farewell luncheon in honor of Mrs. Ibberson dated July 16, 1943; note from Harold Butler of the British Embassy in the US about map he is sending Dame Rachel dated July 23, 1943; letter from Buckingham Palace mentioning the Queen receiving letter from Dame Rachel on July 28, 1943; note from Brendan Bracken concerning visit to North Africa dated August 9, 1943; note from Brendan Bracken on his return to the Ministry, September 27, 1943; invitation to greet Dr. Madesin Phillips who was coming from New York dated Oct. 26, 1943; notes on October 31 and November 3, 1943 from same author (writing difficult to read); polite rejections to invitation to see American films on venereal disease on November 25 and 26, 1943; Brendan Bracken regrets he can not join Dame Rachel for lunch dated December 8, 1943. |
| Box 1 | FF 10 | March 2, 1944-December 30, 1944 - Invitation to dine from Constance M. G (?) on March 2, 1944; letter from Lt. Colonel Count de Salis of the British North African Forces presumably addressed to Colonel Thornhill dated March 29, 1944; thank you note on May 5, 1944; letter from Katherine Seymour Lady-In-Waiting mentioning Princess Elizabeth on May 12, 1944; apology note from Paul Howley on May 23, 1944; note about "Kenya business" on July 16, 1944; note about Dame Rachel's flat being hit from Brendan Bracken on July 18, 1944; note mentioning War Commentary meeting from Paul Peabody, Brigadier General of the US Army dated November 1, 1944; letter from Queen Mary on December 30, 1944. |
| Box 1 | FF 11 | January 1, 1945-December 21, 1945 - Acceptance to invitation for lunch from Brendan Bracken on January 1, 1945; thank you notes on January 9 and 23, 1945; note from Brendan Bracken mentioning his departure from the Ministry dated June 4, 1945; letter from Dowager Lady Nunburnholme on June 15, 1945; thank you note on August 9, 1945; thank you note from the Indian Office on August 21, 1945; letter about rationing of clothes supplies in the Channel Islands from the Board of Trade, November 12, 1945; Henni Forchhammer asks Dame Rachel to write something about Karen Jeppe for book to be published, dated December 5, 1945; thank you note for forwarding of letter from Philip Noel-Baker on December 21, 1945.. |
| Box 1 | FF 12 | January 4, 1946-August 21, 1952 - Thank you note from Lady Louis Mountbatten on January 4, 1946; note from Gilbert Murray on about Geneva written January 17, 1946; Henni Forchhammer regrets that book about Karen Jeppe will not be published, October 20, 1948; two notes from Queen Mary on May 25 and December of 1950; personal note from Gilbert |

Murray on December 21, 1950 and letter from him about his plays and his disappointment that Dame Rachel was not elected for position dated August 16, 1951; personal letter from clinic on August 20, 1951; note from Oliver (?) from House of Lords on August 21, 1952.

Box 1

FF 13

Christmas 1949-October 13, 1959 - Best Wishes for Christmas and New Years from Queen Mary, December 1949; note by Queen Mary to Dame Rachel appreciating the latter's sympathy wishes on her mother's death dated April 9, 1953; note from Robert Boother on December 9, 1953; postcard from Queen Mary for Christmas and New Year, December 1954; note from Robert Boother about progress made with the Home Secretary on January 12, 1954; letter from Vice Chancellor of the University of Reading about Home Office Committee, dated September 21, 1954; letter of reply to appeal made by Dame Rachel for Mobile Physiotherapy Service Association on April 5, 1955; reply to Dame Rachel's suggestion to honor Mrs. Corbett Ashby from Samuel on March 18, 1956; reaction letter to Dame Rachel's decision to abandon Chair of UNA's Women's Advisory Council dated August 21, 1956; letter from Violet B. Carter about honoring Mrs. Corbett Ashby dated March 25, 1957; best wishes postcard from Queen Mary for the Christmas Season and New Year 1958; thank you note from the Prime Minister, October 13, 1959; draft with no date; letter from the Ministry of Food; note from C.(?) Guinness; two letters from authors with illegible names.

For information, please contact us at:

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