Abbie G. Sanderson Papers

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Folder label: Biographical documentation of AGS, including passport, brochure, Colby College information form, newspapers clippings


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ABBIE G. SANDERSON
South China
Sailed 1918, 1923  Birthday, May 27
(New England District)

Born into a minister's family in the town of Greenville, New Hampshire, surrounded by Christian influence, reared in a missionary atmosphere, Miss Sanderson cannot remember the time when she was not interested in the peoples of the far-distant mission fields. The demand for service early came home to her and her education was such as to fit her for the most efficient work. It was in Waterville, Maine, that she spent nearly all her years of preparation, graduating from Coburn Classical Institute there and later from Colby College. As a teacher she spent one year at Charlton, Mass. Two years as preceptress at Ricker Classical Institute in Houlton, Maine, gave her valuable experience in dealing with girls and bearing responsibility, and it is the Baptist church there that holds her membership.

In the fall of 1917 she came to Hasseltine House, planning to give a year to theological study at Newton. But very shortly after begin-
ning her work there a cable came from Swatow, 
China, telling of an unexpected vacancy in the 
school and begging that some one be sent im-
mediately. Much as Miss Sanderson regretted 
this break in all her plans, yet the emergency 
was such an acute one that she felt it her duty 
to go, and she sailed for that field early in 
1918.

Since then she has given herself unstintedly 
to the young Chinese girls of the Abigail Hart 
Scott Memorial School. Since she has been 
there the school has developed into a full-
fledged high school, although still keeping the 
lower grades.

Miss Sanderson has achieved marked success 
in the use of the difficult Chinese language, is 
a born teacher and readily adapts herself to 
uncomfortable and unusual circumstances. She 
was in Swatow during the fearful typhoon and 
tidal wave of 1919 and showed courage and 
level-headedness during that frightful disaster. 
Her sweetness and saneness cannot fail to have 
a very great influence over the young girls 
whose character she is helping to form.

PUBLISHED BY
THE BOARD OF MISSIONARY COOPERATION 
OF THE NORTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION 
FOR THE 
WOMAN'S AMERICAN BAPTIST FOREIGN 
MISSION SOCIETY
276 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY
SIGNATURE.

Sign below as directed. The passport should also be signed in the space provided therefor in the lower left-hand corner.

Abbie J. Sanderson
(Signature of bearer, to be affixed immediately upon receipt of passport.)

Sutton, Vermont
(Bearer’s address in the United States.)


Swatow, China
(Bearer’s foreign address.)


RENEWALS.

An American citizen residing in a foreign country and desiring the extension of the validity of his passport should make application therefor to the nearest American diplomatic or consular office.
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
PASSPORT

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

I, the undersigned, Secretary of State of the United States of America, hereby request all who do or may concern to permit

Elfric L. Sanderson

a citizen of the United States, safely and freely to pass and remain in case of need to go beyond all lawful Act and Protection.

His passport is valid for the only in the following countries

All Countries Missionary work and Travel

The bearer is accompanied by

Given under my hand and the seal of the Department of State at the
City of Washington the 1st day of March in the year 1921 and of the Independence of the United States the
one hundred and forty sixth year.

Charles E. Hughes

PERSONAL DESCRIPTION

Age 27 Years

Height 5 feet 4 inches

Complexion Fair

Occupation Sanitary Engineer

Signature of Bearer

Alba J. Sanderson

PHOTOGRAPH OF BEARER

No. 30490
AMENDMENTS AND EXTENSIONS.

This passport is valid for a period of twelve months and expires on March 8, 1924, unless previously extended. It is subject to one or more extensions provided the final date of expiration is not later than two years after the date of its issuance.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON
RENEWED March 8, 1924
EXPIRES March 8, 1925
BY AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
GEORGE M. CROther
SECRETARY OF STATE

George Long

VISAS.

Sealed at H. I. N. Consulate, Swatow
Good for the Transit through Hong Kong, en route to the United States of America.


32146
H. I. N. CONSULATE-GENERAL
SAN FRANCISCO

Date: 28, Nov. 1924

Traveling to Hong Kong
(2nd Class)
Reason for Journey:

Only in direct transit
TO: Shanghai
The document herewith enclosed is an American passport.
Le document ci-inclus est un passeport américain.
El documento incluso es un pasaporte americano.
Il documento qui accluso è un passaporto americano.
O documento incluso n'ísto é um passaporte americano.
Documentul aici închis este un pasaport american.
Die hierin eingeschlossene Urkunde ist ein amerikanischer Reisepass.
De hierin ingeslotene oorkonde is een Amerikaans pas.
Det här innehållande dokumentet är ett amerikanskt pass.
Det heri indeleslute documentet er et amerikansk Pas.
Załączony w tym dokument jest amerykański paszport.
Az ide mellékeltek okirat egy amerikai útlevél.
Připojená listina je americký pas (průvodní list).
Приложеный при сем документ американский паспорт.
Το εγκλειστὸν εγγράφων εἶναι ἀμερικανικὸν διαβατηρίου.
یُوْرَاءِ الْعَلِيمَاءِ فِي زَمَٰلَكِكَ وَكَيْلُكَ كَأَنْ تَرْكِيْبُكَ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكِ
Miss Abbie G. Sanderson

American Baptist Mission
Swatow, Kwangtung
COLBY COLLEGE

Date of filling out this blank: June 24, 1934

Maiden Name in full (No initials, please) Gertrude Sanderson

Address to which you wish mail sent: Swatow, China

Permanent address: South Berwick, Maine

Names and addresses of three relatives or other persons who will habitually know your address (indicate what is the relation—father, cousin, etc.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relation</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Rev. Elisha Sanderson</td>
<td>South Berwick, Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>Arthur J. Sanderson</td>
<td>Wood Hole, Mass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Foreign Secretary: W. A. B. J. N. S. 152 Madison Ave. New York

Occupational History, Professional Activity and Several Residences Since Graduation with Approximate Dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914-15</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>High School, Charlton, Mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915-17</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Wesley Institute, Houlton, Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918-27</td>
<td>&quot;Girls' School&quot;</td>
<td>Swatow, China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927-34</td>
<td>5 months in Religious Tech School, Peking, China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(C)</td>
<td>Cordunational Middle School, Swatow, China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918-34</td>
<td>Continuous service under the Woman's American Baptist Foreign Mission Society as missionary in Swatow, China (2 publications)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Items of general interest since graduation—Note particularly civic, social, or business honors: Clubs, societies, books published, etc.

Please sign here with your usual signature: Abbie J. Sanderson

*Class with which you wish to be associated, which is not necessarily the year in which degree, if any, was awarded.
VITAL STATISTICS

Place of Birth: Greenville, N.H. Date: Year 1873 Month May Day 27
Mother’s Name before Marriage: Eliza W. Jarvis
Father’s Name in Full: Elisha Sanders
Items of Interest Regarding Parents: Baptist pastors in New England for over forty years.

MARRIAGE

Date ___________________________ Place ___________________________

Husband’s Name in Full ___________________________

College ___________________________ Class __________ Degree __________
Occupation ___________________________

If not living, date of death ___________________________
If divorced, check ___________________________

CHILDREN

Names ___________________________ Dates of birth ___________________________
If not living Date of Death ___________________________ College Attended ___________________________

COLLEGE STATISTICS

Preparatory School: Name, Location, etc. Coburn Institute, Waterville, Me.
Colby: Date of Entrance September 1910 Date of Departure June 1914

Degrees, with dates: A.B. 1914

Sorority and Class Societies: Chi Omega, Kappa Alpha

Athletics ___________________________
Clubs: Y.W.C.A. President
Honors: Commencement Speaker

Miscellaneous

Miscellaneous Study: ___________________________
Other Degrees and Courses, When and Where Taken: Bible, Newton, 1917, 1924

Chinese History, Hartford, 1931
(over)
In Colchester

Missionaries from Congo, Japan To Address Area Church Meeting

COLCHESTER — The United Church here will be host to the women's annual basket meeting and the midyear meeting of the Champlain Valley Baptist Association Tuesday, April 18.

The women's basket meeting will begin at 2 p.m. and the midyear meeting of the association will be at 7:30 p.m.

Supper will be served by the host church at 6:30 p.m.

Guest speakers will be Miss Phyllis Benner, missionary from the Congo, and Miss Abbie Sanderson, missionary from Japan.

Mrs. Gladys Streeter, Champlain Valley Women's Association president, will preside at the afternoon meeting and the Rev. Gerald Rowe, of Middlebury, moderator of the association, will preside at the evening meeting.

Mrs. Eileen Austin of Springfield, State Baptist Women's Society president, will participate in the afternoon program.

The United Church choir will sing and Mrs. Kay Purvis will play a violin solo at the evening meeting.
Continues Her Work After Imprisonment By Communists

by Jack McDonough

SOUTH BERWICK — Abbie Sanderson is active and alert — not too unusual for a woman of 67.

But this South Berwick teacher was 21 months in solitary confinement, a prisoner of the Chinese communists.

Daughter of a Baptist minister, Miss Sanderson had gone to China at the age of 24. Following the influence of others she knew who had worked in China, she decided on this vocation while still a student at Colby College.

In 1938 the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society sent her to Swatow to teach the children of that city. Every five years she came home for a regular furlough.

In 1937 she extended the leave to be with her dying father. Then came World War II and she was unable to return until 1946.

Things were normal then. But in a few short years the hand of communism was felt. Gradually the hand closed. By 1950 it was a strangle hold.

For Miss Sanderson it meant fewer classes. The few became fewer. By 1951 there were none.

One pleasant April morning of that year there came a pounding on her door. Opening it she saw the uniform of the Chinese communist police. She would see little else for a long time.

The charge, they said, was spying for the American government.

An "accusation" meeting was held with Chinese communists from all the schools in Swatow in attendance. It was decided that Miss Sanderson was a bad influence.

Imprisonment

(Continued from Page 1)

Police led her to one of the rooms in her own house and kept her there for four months. The only ones she saw in that time were her guards.

Then one day she and three fellow missionaries, two men and a woman, were taken across Swatow bay to a building that once housed a Catholic mission. It was then that she learned her friends had also been imprisoned in her house, each in a separate room.

Time hung heavy for the next 17 months. She asked for and, surprisingly, received two Bibles. These, along with a devotional book and a French dictionary, were all she had to occupy her time.

For diversion she memorized passages of the Bible and improved her French vocabulary. She also relearned the method of finding square root by doing the process backward. Cube root proved too much of a challenge. She couldn't figure it out.

Once a day now she saw the other three missionaries. Peering through the small barred opening in her door she could see them being led past her cell to the single toilet facility to which they had access every evening.

The food was adequate and she suffered no physical harm.

"The hard part of it," she said, "was the mental process. The guards kept telling me of the harm that had come to other Chinese because of me."

$25,000 Fire Damages Somersworth Restaurant

DOVER, N. H., WEDNESDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER

"A good deal of the time I didn't think I would ever get out."

Suddenely on the last day of December 1953, the four were taken from their cells, whisked back across the bay, and told to pack their belongings.

Bringing them to the customs house, the police separated the other woman from the group at bayonet point, and put her on a boat for Hong Kong.

Miss Sanderson and the two men were returned to their cells across the bay.

"I thought that was the end for me," she said.

Five days later, however, they were returned to customs. They too, were then placed on a boat for Hong Kong.

Within two months she was home in South Berwick. No reason was ever given for her release.

Shaken by the ordeal, Miss Sanderson was unable to talk to newsmen or discuss the 21 months of confinement with anyone for over a year.

But then, showing tremendous stamina and devotion to her work, she returned to the Far East in 1954 and taught in Sendai, Japan, for more than five years.

Today, after 32 years in the mission field, she is still difficult to pin down long enough for an interview. Lecturing from Maine to Massachusetts she maintains a schedule that would frighten a youngster of 30. A large machine at Varney's supermarket in Rochester was broken open and the money drawer taken. Two well-dressed men were seen leaving the store in the 1950s.
Missionary Will Address Three Services

SPRINGFIELD — (Special) — Miss Abbie G. Sanderson, a retired American Baptist missionary, will speak at the morning worship service of Calvary Baptist Church here Sunday.

Former Me. Woman Released By Chinese

ROLLINSFORD, N. H., Jan. 9 (AP) — Word was received here today that Miss Abbie Sanderson, 60-year-old Baptist missionary, had been released from a four-year imprisonment by Chinese Communists.

According to the American Foreign Missionary Society, Miss Sanderson is now in Hong Kong following her release from a Swator, China, prison. She had lived formerly in South Berwick, Me.

Missionaries Flee From China

Hong Kong (AP) — Four half-starved American Baptist missionaries, who arrived here from Red China Friday, said Saturday they had heard the communists had ordered the expulsion of all foreign clergymen as quickly as possible.

They said they could not confirm the report, but it seemed to be borne out by the numerous Catholic missionaries expelled within the past 30 days.

There are reported to be more than 200 Catholic missionaries in China and less than 100 Protestant clergymen.

The four Baptists, who said they were held in solitary confinement in four rooms in Swator since April, 1951, are Dr. Emanuel H. Giedt, Miss Abbie Sanderson, Miss Louise Griffin and Rev. Loren E. Norum.

Dr. Giedt, of Rochester, N. Y., said their release seemed like a dream and added: "It happened so quickly I can't readjust myself." They plan to return to the U. S. after recuperating here.