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Lehigh University Information Resources

Special Collections



Percy Hughes

Percy Hughes is not a name that resonates with the Lehigh University of today, and yet what he accomplished in his 35 years (1907-1942) as a member of the Lehigh faculty is manifest in the existence of the College of Education and in other aspects of the structure and content of the University.

I want to use this **Special Collections** Apar to communicate something about Hughes and his accomplishments, with the assistance of his daughter Elizabeth Clark, professor emerita of sociology at Arcadia (née Beaver) College, who has been visiting Special Collections once a week for more than a semester researching the activities of her father and his influence on Lehigh.

Prof. Clark has kindly provided this capsule biography of her father:

Born in Peshawar, British India, in 1872 of Anglican missionary parents, Hughes was taken to England at the age of three. He and his siblings and mother stayed there while his father returned to Peshawar until the older children were in public schools and his mother could join

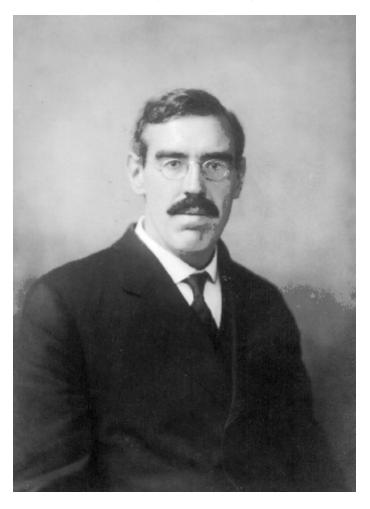
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Reverend Hughes again with the younger children. Hughes went to Christ's Hospital School, known as the Blue Coat School and in 1888 with his family came to New York City where his father became an Episcopal clergyman.

His sister, threatened with tuberculosis, was sent to Alfred University for her health. Hughes left Columbia University to complete his senior year at Alfred and to accompany her there. Within six weeks of matriculation, Hughes was asked by the president of Alfred, the professor of philosophy, to teach the course. Hughes then took an MA and Ph.D. at Columbia University, where he was a student and protégé of John Dewey, and taught there for a few years.

In 1907, Henry S. Drinker, who had been president for a mere two years, brought Hughes to Lehigh as assistant professor education, philosophy, and psychology. In 1909 he was promoted to full professor. Over the years from 1909, Hughes periodically chaired the work in education — both extension and summer session courses — and taught psychology and philosophy, ending as Chairman of the Deparment of Philosophy, Psychology and Education and later the Clara H. Stewardson Professor of Philosophy. Hughes died in 1952.

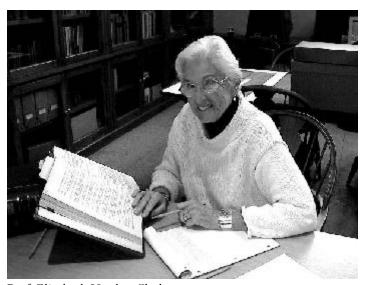
In order to gain an understanding of Hughes and his role in the development of Lehigh as a modern





Hughes (l) with William "Billy" Sheridan, James J. Reed, '27 and Harry Ullmann around 1950.

university, Prof. Clark has been using a wide variety of materials in Special Collections. She comments on some of the resources she's found useful.



Prof. Elizabeth Hughes Clark

In this situation, the Archivist and his staff know the range of materials that might bring their evidence to bear upon a faculty person's work. Photographs, yearbooks, registers, the Brown and White (alas, not indexed), faculty minutes other university and student publications may all have information that tell of Hughes' years at the University and in Bethlehem. Then there are other gems of historic materials, that may be tangential but useful, on Bethlehem and its historic place in American life. There were several

sport and extra-curricular activities in which Hughes was active during the earlier years of his tenure at Lehigh. There may well be other materials in the Special Collections that will yield materials valuable to be collated not only for Hughes but other aspects of Lehigh University of that time.

It's clear from the work that Prof. Clark has done up to this point that her father played a major role in President Drinker's plan to create a 20th century university of the institution established by Asa Packer in 1865.

It's also clear that Hughes' arrival at Lehigh was instrumental in preparing the way for the development of the education program at Lehigh, first as a department, then a School, and finally, since 1985, one of the Univer-sity's four Colleges.

Prof. Clark is presently pursuing one quite interesting piece of Lehigh history, but has not yet uncovered the full details:

There was a philosophical club founded by Hughes in honor of Robert W. B1ake, a well-loved professor who died in 1921. Blake had been the virtual dean of the liberal arts faculty during his years at Lehigh University. A picture of those belonging to the Robert W. Blake Society has surfaced in the 1929 Yearbook. And Hughes' medallion signifying membership in the Blake Society is now in the Special Collections, given by his son, Alfred Lloyd Hughes and daughter, Elizabeth Hughes Clark. On the front of the medallion, the names of Plato, Bacon and James are engraved on an open book. On the back is engraved "Lehigh University, Robert W. Blake, 1899-1921" {Blake's years on the faculty}, and "Percy Hughes."

- P.A.M.

L We're pleased to tell you that Special Collections has a new exhibition in the Zoellner Art Galleries. Titled "Odds and Ends" it consists of a selection of memora-bilia, historical artifacts and curious objects that have found their way into our collection over the decades. Museum hours are: Wednesdays − Saturdays: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sundays: 1 p.m. − 5 p,m.; Mondays & Tuesdays, closed.

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Special Collections materials are available for research and

con-sultation without restriction. For further information contact Philip A. Metzger, Curator of Special Collections, or Ilhan Citak, Special Collections Assistant. Reading room hours are Monday through Friday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. or by appointment. Telephone: (610) 758-4506; fax (610) 758-6091; e-mail: inspc@lehigh.edu.