

Collection #  
P 0561

## ELDEN H. MILLS FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS CA. 1920–1933

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Processed by

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF  
COLLECTION: Three photographs

COLLECTION  
DATES: Ca. 1920–1933

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NOTES:

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Elden Halford Mills was born on 7 October 1895 in Valley Mills, Marion County, Indiana. His parents were Thornton A. (1859–1938) and Cora L. Carson Mills (1863–1924). Elden grew up on his family's farm in the Decatur Township of Marion County. He had two older brothers, Leland S. (1886–1966) and Laurens J. (1889–1982).

On his World War I draft registration card Elden claimed his membership in the Friends (Quaker) Church as reason for his exemption from the draft. He graduated from Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, in 1917. In 1920 he graduated from the Hartford Theological Seminary in Connecticut and later did further study at Union Theological Seminary in New York. During his career as a minister, he served in Quaker, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches.

Elden married Florence Elizabeth Hadley on 20 June 1918 in New London, Howard County. She was born 27 April 1891 to Jonathan and Mary C. Hadley in Howard County, Indiana. She graduated from Earlham College in 1916.

Elden and Florence had four children. The family appears to have moved often, as evidenced by the four children being born in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and Indiana, from 1919 to 1927.

At the time of the 1920 census, Elden and Florence lived in Hartford, Connecticut, with their infant son, Sidney. Elden was a clergyman with the Friends Church there. In 1922 Elden was pastor at Allen's Neck Friends Meeting in Dartmouth, Massachusetts. The family lived in Brooklyn, New York in 1925. In the mid- to late-1920s Elden was pastor of the First Friends Church on N. Alabama Street at 13th Street in Indianapolis, while living at 2054 N. New Jersey Street. In 1930 the family lived in Brooklyn, New York, with four children. Elden was a minister with the Lafayette Avenue Friends Church in Brooklyn. In 1935 the family lived in Queens, New York. In 1936 Elden was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hills, Long Island. In 1940 the family lived in West Hartford, Connecticut, where Elden was pastor of a Congregational church.

Their first child, Sidney Alvord Mills, was born 4 December 1919 in Connecticut. He was a college graduate and an insurance salesman when he entered the army on 16 January 1942 at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. He was a sergeant in the 180th Infantry 45th Division and was awarded the Purple Heart. He died 1 December 1944 and was buried in Saint-Avold, Lorraine, France.

Their second child, Dorothy Gwendolyn, was born in Massachusetts on 17 July 1922. Elden H. Jr., the third child, was born in New York on 24 October 1923. He died 14 February 2011 and was a resident of West Townshend, Vermont, at the time of his death. The youngest child, Marilyn, was born in Indiana on 22 May 1927.

Elden and Florence were divorced sometime between 1947 and 1962. In the late 1950s Elden lived in South Windham, Vermont. In 1958 he accepted a position as full-time minister at the First Congregational Church in West Tisbury on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. By 1962 he was married to Helen Gale (b. 7 July 1911 in Arlington,

Massachusetts). Elden retired from his post at the West Tisbury church by 1976. He died 29 August 1987 in Chilmark, Massachusetts. Helen died 21 October 1992. Florence was living in Pennsylvania at the time of her death in May 1986.

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## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection consists of three black-and-white portraits of Elden and Florence Mills and their children: Sidney, Dorothy, Elden Jr., and Marilyn.

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Portrait of Reverend Elden Mills, his wife Florence, and son Sidney, 1920 or 1921. [6"x4"]

[Back row, left to right: Dorothy, Florence, Elden Sr. Front row, left to right: Sidney, Elden Jr., ca. 1924 or 1925.] Given the children's ages, what was written on back appears to be in error: "Rev Elden Mills, Florence Hadley Mills, Sidney, Dorothy, Marilyn." [9 1/4 " x 8"]

[In back: Florence and Elden Sr. In front, left to right: Sidney, Marilyn, Elden Jr., and Dorothy, ca. 1933.] [7 1/4" x 5"]

### CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 1

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