

Collection #
M 0752,
CT 0932–0940

REVEREND JEAN SHEPARD MILNER PAPERS, 1932–1967 (BULK 1932–1960)

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	10 boxes and 9 audiocassettes
COLLECTION DATES:	1932–1967 (bulk 1932–1960)
PROVENANCE:	Mrs. Susannah Day, 7603 N. Pennsylvania, Indianapolis, IN,

46240

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Milner, Jean Shepard, *Your Old Man: Sermon*, Spectator Co., 1929

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1999.0499 and 2000.0195

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jean Shepard Milner was born on 18 November 1893 in Atlanta, Georgia. As a child his family moved to Louisville, Kentucky, where he spent the remainder of his childhood.

Milner's father was an engineer, and as a beginning college student Jean Milner enrolled for engineering classes at Georgia Tech and Purdue University. Influenced by the religious views of botanist Stanley Coulter, then Dean of Science at Purdue, Milner decided instead on a career in religion. He left Purdue and earned a bachelor's degree in science from the University of Louisville and then a theology degree from Kentucky Theological Seminary in Louisville. After graduating from the seminary, Milner served in the Red Cross during World War I.

After two early positions in Edinburg, Indiana, and Ashland, Kentucky, Milner was appointed as minister of the Second Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis in 1921. He was chosen to lead a spiritual revival in the church. He arrived at a time when churches were divided on the Darwinian theory of evolution and the place of science in modern society in general. With a background in both science and theology, Milner was a liberal, or modernist, not a fundamentalist. According to a biographical sketch in the collection (Box 10, folder 14) written by his daughter, Mrs. Susannah Day, Milner "preached and lectured extensively on science and religion, showing they were not opposed to each other He defended man's intellectual freedom to pursue scientific knowledge." Influenced by the Reverend Harry Emerson Fosdick of the First Presbyterian Church in New York, Milner gave a series of lectures on "Christianity and Evolution" in the mid-1920s, firmly established himself as an opponent of fundamentalism. His book, *The Sky is Red* (1935), argued the modernist position as well.

Milner's sermons, transcriptions of many of which can be found in this collection, were a high point of his ministry, especially in their delivery. He retained something of a Southern accent, and his speaking style was vivid. To quote again from the biographical sketch written by his daughter, Milner's "preaching style was polished and dramatic, and he was skillful in relating universal problems to his listeners' personal needs." A selection of his sermons on the topics of faith, spiritual life, and hope can be found in *Selected Writings and Favorite Quotations of Jean Shepard Milner, D.D.* (1967), a photocopy of which is in Box 10, folder 11 of this collection. Selected audio recordings of his sermons form Series 3 of the collection.

When Milner became minister of the Second Presbyterian Church in 1921, it was located at Vermont and Pennsylvania streets. He faced a land disagreement among his own church, a nearby Baptist church, and the Indiana War Memorial Commission, whose property was located between the two churches. All three were hoping to expand their facilities, but there was not enough room for everyone's expansion plans. This conflict turned into one of Milner's greatest

successes during his tenure as pastor. After years of debating a solution to the problem, the state finally agreed to buy the land belonging to both churches in 1956, forcing Milner's congregation to relocate. The original church was demolished in 1960.

Milner and the congregation had already started working on plans for a church at a new site before the state agreed to buy the property. Now with \$600,000 from the sale of the old property, they began to raise the rest of the money to build their new, much larger church. One step in the process was made easier when Charles J. Lynn, former vice-president of Eli Lilly and Company, deeded the site for construction to the congregation. The congregation's new home would be located at 77th and Meridian streets. The congregation was successful in raising the rest of the \$2.1 million needed for construction and moved into the new facility debt-free on 4 October 1960.

Soon after Milner had his congregation settled in the new church building, he decided to retire, after 39 years of service (the longest tenure of any pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church) in 1960. His successor was William H. Hudnut III, a future mayor of Indianapolis.

Milner was also active in other aspects of the community. He was a member of the Board of Trustees for Hanover College, Madison, Indiana, as well as for Methodist Hospital. Milner was also associated with the Rotary Club, the Indianapolis Literary Club, and the Contemporary Club of Indianapolis.

Milner was awarded honorary degrees from both Purdue and Butler universities. He received an honorary Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) degree from Butler, and, according to his daughter, preferred to be called "Doctor" rather than "Reverend."

Jean Shepard Milner died on 25 June 1964, after a brief illness, in Methodist Hospital, Indianapolis, at the age of 70.

Sources:
George W. Geib, *Lives Touched by Faith: Second Presbyterian Church, 150 Years* (Indianapolis: Second Presbyterian Church, 1988); William Isley, Jr., "Second Presbyterian Church," in *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 1246-1247; materials in the collection; telephone conversation with Mrs. Susannah Day (25 October 2001).

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Series 1 contains the sermons and speeches prepared by Rev. Jean Shepard Milner during his career at the Second Presbyterian Church from 1932–1960 (earlier sermons have not survived). The bulk were delivered as sermons at the church located on Vermont and Pennsylvania Streets. Some of the materials were also delivered for groups throughout the community at various dates. Some of the sermons are out of chronological order. It was decided to keep the original filing system used by Milner in order to preserve the provenance of the material in question.

Series 2 contains miscellaneous materials relating to Milner's career. Within this series are items such as newspaper clippings and photographs. The photographs are housed in Visual Collections and need to be requested separately from the manuscript material.

Series 3 contains audiocassette recordings made of select sermons delivered by Milner between 1956 and 1960. These materials have a separate call number and need to be requested independently of the manuscript material in the collection.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Sermons and Speeches

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Series 2: Miscellaneous

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Photographs	Visual Collections manuscript photographs: Box 10, Folder 8
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<i>A Tribute to the Memory of the Reverend Jean Shepard Milner, D.D.</i> , 27 June 1964.	Box 10, Folder 10
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"The Most Admirable People," 17 March 1957 (See also the original transcript of this sermon located in box 9, folder 1, #1521.)	
"Have You Forgotten?," 28 February 1960 (See also the original transcript of this sermon located in box 9, folder 6, #1615.)	
"When Christianity Becomes Internal," Personal, 1 July 1956 (See also the original transcript of this sermon located in box 8, folder 6, #1497.)	CT 0934
"What Makes a Great Church?," 16 September 1956.	
"The Humble and the Proud," 21 October 1956 (See also the original transcript of this sermon located in box 8, folder 6, #1502.)	
"Recipe for Happiness," 22 April 1957.	CT 0935
"There is a Tomorrow," Easter 1956 (See also the original transcript of this sermon located in box 8,	

folder 5, #1487.)

"Why Be Religious?," 3 November 1957.

"Immortality, Why," Easter, 29 March 1959. (This is the last Easter service at the church located on Pennsylvania and Vermont streets, Indianapolis, Indiana before it was torn down in 1960.)

CT 0936

"Some Good in Evil," 5 July 1959 (See also the original transcript of this sermon located in box 9, folder 5, #1595.)

"The Call of the Church, Our New Church Home," 11 October 1959.

"Why the Church?," 4 November 1956.

CT 0937

"Learning," 24 February 1959.

"Interpretations of History," 18 November 1956 (See also the original transcript of this sermon located in box 8, folder 7, #1506.)

"Too Thin a Religion," 11 May 1958 (See also the original transcript of this sermon located in box 9, folder 3, #1570.)

CT 0938

"Our Family Heritage," 26 January 1958.

"We Say Good-Bye," 27 September 1959. (This is the last sermon delivered at the church located on Pennsylvania and Vermont Streets, Indianapolis, Indiana.)

"Does God Guide Us?," 22 May 1960.

CT 0939

"Meeting Our Test," 27 March 1960 (See also the original transcript of this sermon located in box 9, folder 7, #1619.)

"Are We There (Lord's Prayer)," 10 April 1960 (See also the original transcript of this sermon located in box 9, folder 7, #1621.)

"Ass't Oakal Hall Music and Scripture-Luke 2," Easter 1956.

CT 0940

"There is a Tomorrow," Easter 1956 (See also the original transcript of this sermon located in box 8, folder 5, #1487.)

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://157.91.92.2/>

2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0752).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.