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Catalogue of the papers of P.M. Aglen

Date range of material: 1939-1986

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Preface

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Contact details

Durham University Library: Archives and Special Collections
Palace Green
Durham
DH1 3RN
England
Telephone: 0191 334 2972
Email: PG.Library@durham.ac.uk
URL: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/>
[ark:/32150/s14f16c285w](http://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:uk:32150-s14f16c285w)

Introduction

Collection title: Aglen, Persis Mary

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Repository: Durham University Library, Archives and Special Collections

Creator: Aglen, Persis Mary

Language of material: English

Persis Mary Aglen (née Burn-Clerk-Rattray)

(1915 - 1999)

Mrs Aglen accompanied her husband, Edward Francis Aglen to the Sudan in 1939 and from then until Mr Aglen's retirement in 1955, lived in Wad Medani, Gezira (later Blue Nile) Province (1939-1944), El Fasher, Darfur (1944-1948) and Khartoum (1948-1955). For details of positions held by Mr Aglen, see separate handlist.

Accession details

Presented by Lady G. M. Warner, 2002

Arrangement

1. Personal Correspondence

Form of citation

Material in the Sudan Archive is given a reference number, which is unique across the collections of papers. Usually it is not necessary to give the name of the person or organisation within which collection the item is found, although it may be convenient to do so.

The short form of citation should be GB-0033-SAD.*reference number*

Most printed references take the form: SAD.*reference number*.

To order items in the searchroom, use the collection reference code(s), derived by removing the repository code (GB-0033-), followed by the reference number. Citing the section of the finding aid is useful.

1. Personal Correspondence

SAD.895/6/1-121 1939-1941

Letters from Mrs Persis Aglen, mostly to her sister Grizel Clerk Rattray, and concerned largely with daily routine, charity work, treks, social occasions, visiting Sudanese and describing the scenery etc. There are also some comments on the war, especially with regard to her family. Excepting the first and last three, the letters are written in the Sudan where E.F. Aglen (Edward), Persis' husband, worked as an Assistant District Commissioner in Wad Medani, Gezira Province.

SAD.895/6/2-10 1939 Sep 12 – 24

Honeymoon and her husband Edward being recalled; arrival of evacuees from Glasgow at her mother's home and their problems settling in; volunteered for the Nursing Reserve and account of the training; domestic affairs and servants

SAD.895/6/11-14 1940 Feb 14

Persis Aglen travels to Khartoum via Alexandria and Wadi Halfa; descriptions of transport (train and steamer), people, villages, countryside and farming methods; social activities including tea with `Ali Nadin Effendi and Dr Anis, attending the cinema with the G.E.R. Sandars and his wife, a race meeting and cricket match; daily life and recovery from malaria; learning Arabic

SAD.895/6/15-19 1940 Mar 27

Stationed in Managil. Accounts of daily routine, social activities and involvement with the Red Cross; trip to Sennar and descriptions of the town and a *habub*

SAD.895/6/20-24 1940 Apr 22

Plans for leave; dinner parties and guilt at luxurious lifestyle despite the war; festivities for the Prophet's birthday; description of a severe *habub* and the consequences

SAD.895/6/25-28 1940 Jul 2

In Wad Medani. Delays of air mail because of the war and discussion of war and politics in Europe, the importance of newspapers and wirelesses; Edward is made a Bimbashi (lowest rank of British officer in the Sudan); description of leave in Lebanon and problems of permits and expense of cars; Red Cross and daily life

SAD.895/6/29-34 1940 Jul 18

To Elizabeth. Description of leave in Lebanon, especially the scenery and flora

SAD.895/6/35-37 1940 Aug 8

To Persis' mother. Effect of WW2 in the Sudan, including air raid sirens and measures taken in Khartoum; domestic and social affairs

SAD.895/6/38-41 1940 Oct 6

War preparations taken in Wad Medani; local climate and vegetation; sewing for the Red Cross; attending V.A.D. practices and raising money for the Sudan War Planes Fund; tea with a former mamur, Dr Anis, G.E.R. Sandars and the *Qadi*; effects of Ramadan on daily working life

- SAD.895/6/42-44 1940 Nov 8
 `Id celebrations at the end of Ramadan and description of the
 levf#169;e; detailed description of a special service of
 intercession at the Greek Church
- SAD.895/6/45-46 1941 Jan 17
 Italian defeat in the Western desert and work as a cypher clerk;
 VAD exam; daily routine and preparation for a tennis tournament
- SAD.895/6/47-48 1941 Jan 31
 Discussion of meeting between the two sisters; preparations for
 the annual produce and horticultural show; dinner party with the
 Governor, J.W. Robertson; domestic affairs
- SAD.895/6/49-51 1941 Feb 23
 Comparison of Egyptian and Sudanese poor; description of
 native houses, including hoshes; comments on girls' education
 and description of the girls' school at Managil; accompanied
 Edward on official business to `Abud; visited Shaykh Ibrahim's
 father and another unnamed *shaykh*
- SAD.895/6/52-53 1941 Mar 7
 Setting up of a club for the army ranks; dinner with the American
 missionaries Miss McIntyre and Miss Soule and the Andersons;
 dinner with Major Prior; watched the film "Nazi Spy" with a CMS
 missionary
- SAD.895/6/54-57 1941 Mar 25
 Domestic affairs and trek to Sennar; stayed with "Pat" [possibly
 P.A.R. Lindsay, A.D.C. at Roseires] and had tea with T.H.B.
 Mynors, the DC at Singa; dinner with officers from Kenya,
 including Captain Buchanan; tour of the irrigation gardens with
 Mr Williams; tour of the vegetable gardens at Abu Geili with Mr
 McBain; visited Jebel Moya and story of H. Wellcome and his
 search for the Queen of Sheba; tea with *shaykhs* ; description
 of scenery; coffee with *shaykh's* wives
- SAD.895/6/58-59 1941 Apr 5
 Accompanied Miss McIntyre, an American missionary, on her
 teaching rounds of women in their homes; attended Sudanese
 teaparties; request for Grizel to order some shopping for Persis
- SAD.895/6/60-61 1941 Apr 6
 Trip to Sennar and description of cotton picking and Edward's
 duties; visit to a new sub-grade school near Sennar, with
 description of buildings, people and river; domestic issues
- SAD.895/6/62-63 1941 Apr 27
 French soldiers entertained in the canteen; Italian prisoners of
 war
- SAD.895/6/64-65 1941 May 16
 Scandal involving a clerk destroying letters and stealing the
 money contained in them; repair of the house; events in the
 Western Desert; attended end of year evening at the Unity School
 for Boys

- SAD.895/6/66-70 1941 May 23
Description of birds and weather; trip to the woods at Shukkaba; anticipation and actual stays of Mrs Anderson and M.F.B. Bell (a temporary A.D.C.) and his two cheetahs; home news
- SAD.895/6/71 1941 Jun 2
Birthday letter; Red Cross flagday, cheetahs and cypher work
- SAD.895/6/72-73 1941 June 13
Making car badges for Red Cross; trip to Sennar, stopping for breakfast with Sudan Plantations Syndicate inspector R.B. Nixon and his vet wife; arguments within Wad Medani society; plan for trek up the White Nile with J.W. Robertson and his wife; request for dress material from Cairo
- SAD.895/6/74-82 1941 Jul 1
Comparison of Cairo and Khartoum weather; plans for leave in Kenya; account of trip to the White Nile with J.W. Robertson and his wife, via Jebel Moya and Kosti; joined by J.M. Hunter, A.D.C. Kosti; description of Nile steamers; description of Baqqarah tribe and crocodiles and hippos in river; description of Kosti; tea-party for the opening of the new Sudanese club; visited Aba island, home of Sayyid `Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi; visits to Umm Gur, an "alternative livelihood" pump scheme, Dueim and the school for boys at Bakht er Ruda
- SAD.895/6/83-86 1941 Jul 18 - 20
Discussion of the inefficiency of the war department at Khartoum; leave cancellation
- SAD.895/6/87-89 1941 Aug 12
Ill with sand-fly fever; the alternative livelihood schemes and compensation to farmers for the raising of the water level of the White Nile; effect of damming on Egyptian farming; incompetence in the administration; request for dress patterns
- SAD.895/6/90-92 1941 Aug 27
Plans to spend leave in Kenya; picnic with the Anderson and Evelyn families; war developments
- SAD.895/6/93-100 1941 Sep 12 - 27
Low incidence of bilharzia; visit to Sennar; visit from N.S. Mitchell Innes; entertaining the troops stationed in the district; tea with Dr Manwell; visit from T.A. Maclagen
- SAD.895/6/101-105 1941 Oct 7
Written on the steamer *Omdurman*, en route to Kosti but mainly concerning events before leaving; visit to Remeitab; visits from the T.H.B. Mynors and his wife and D. Lomax; packing up the house; description of boat and accommodation
- SAD.895/6/106-107 Undated [probably 1941 Oct 17]
From the Masindi Hotel, Uganda. Description of scenery along river and the Nilotic tribes; stops at Renk, Malakal, Bor, Terekaka and Juba
- SAD.895/6/108-114 1941 Nov 1
Description of journey and scenery from Juba to Nimule; account of steps taken to combat sleeping sickness; description of the sudd between Nimule and Pakwach and journey across Lake

- Albert; bus from Butiaba to Masindi, passing tropical forest and plantations; steamer from Port Masindi to cross Lake Kyoga; trains to Eldoret; description of wildlife
- SAD.895/6/115-121 1941 Nov 26 – Dec 3
Account of their stay on a farm in Kenya, trips taken and people encountered
- SAD.895/7/1-79 1942 Jan 11 – 1945 Jan 5
Continuation of letters from Persis Aglen in Blue Nile (Wad Medani and Singa) and Darfur (El Fasher) provinces to her sister Grizel in Cairo. General content similar to 895/6/1-121 above, with more specific references to the following:
- SAD.895/7/2-4 1942 Jan 11
Account of King's Day sports; visits from A.D.C. I.H. Watts and D. Hawkesworth; account of Christmas, the `ld and a four day government holiday; visit from Mademoiselle Recordon, the Huddleston's governess; establishment of a small school for the British children by Dorothy Rutledge
- SAD.895/7/5-8 1942 Feb 7
Charity race meeting; trek to Managil; problems with servants; involvement with the school for British children set up by Dorothy Rutledge
- SAD.895/7/9-10 1942 Feb 24
Visit from J. Howard; plans for a trip to Wad Medani with the older girls and teachers at Managil; home news
- SAD.895/7/11-13 1942 Mar 23 - Jun 2
Plans for and description of leave in Jerusalem; work in the garden; home news
- SAD.895/7/14-15 1942 Jun 19
Work as relief confidential clerk in the mudiriyah; effect of habubs on complexion
- SAD.895/7/16-17 1942 Jul 1
[Airgraph and letter] Repeat of information; comments on war; 10 day trek in Managil discussing reorganisation of native administration
- SAD.895/7/18-19 1942 Aug 8
Visits from M.H.V. Fleming and J.W. Haig and wife; work as relief confidential clerk in the *mudiriyah* ; domestic concerns and reading
- SAD.895/7/20-23 1942 Sep 18 – Nov 23
Response to Grizel's trip to Jerusalem; comments made by soldiers about Arab hospitality in Palestine; Persis' brief transfer to Halfa for clerical work; hiring of a bicycle due to petrol and tyre rationing; from Wadi Halfa re Edward's transfer to Singa; packing; work as nursing reserve in Halfa
- SAD.895/7/24 1942 Dec 5
Account of sailing with Mr Mortimer; books read
- SAD.895/7/25-26 1942 Dec 20
Arrival in Singa and description of life there

- SAD.895/7/27-28 1943 Jan 16
Christmas in Wad Medani with D.M.H. Edwards
- SAD.895/7/29 1943 Feb 7
Trek down the west bank of the river, checking markets; description of Attib; meeting the female members of the *umdah's* family at Abu Hugar; visits from Major Pritchard (the province veterinary inspector); C.C.G. Cumings (the province judge) and the director of the Egyptian Irrigation Department
- SAD.895/7/30-33 1943 Mar 3 - 14
Trek up the Dinder, visiting Abu Hashim, the police post at the edge of the National Game Reserve, `Ein esh Shems, Mu`reif ed Dik and Guweisi; description of wildlife; ride with the nazir in his car; plans for leave; Edward seconded to administration in Cyrenaica and Persis working as a V.A.D. in Cairo
- SAD.895/7/35-36 1943 Jul 19
Brief account of camel trek to the west of Singa; G.R.F. Bredin's illness; working with C.B. Tracey and D.M.H. Evans
- SAD.895/7/37-39 1943 Aug 13, 1943 Oct 6
Disapproval of her sister's marriage to a Jew; work as a clerk for D.M.H. Evans in Wad Medani
- SAD.895/7/40-43 1943 Oct 14
Letter from Grizel to Persis. Family news; her husband's illness and their subsequent sick-leave to Jerusalem; new accommodation in Cairo
- SAD.895/7/44-45 1943 Oct 22
From Singa re drive to Khartoum with Sayyid `Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi and description of him and his household; journey to Singa
- SAD.895/7/46-50 1943 Nov 22 – Dec 11
From Wad Medani and Singa re family and domestic concerns; plans for a trek to Khor Doleib
- SAD.895/7/51-54 1944 Jan 13
From Singa re trek to Khor Doleib to collect taxes from nomad tribes
- SAD.895/7/55-57 1944 Feb
Account of trek to Fazughli for the enthronement of the mek; meeting with A.W.M. Disney and wife; entertainment by musicians and dancers; brief history of the Fung empire; account of coronation
- SAD.895/7/58-59 1944 Feb 12
Home news and anticipation of transfer to El Fasher, Darfur
- SAD.895/7/60-62 1944 Mar 19
Description of El Fasher and P. Ingleson and wife (Governor); Darfur races; first impressions of G.D. Lampen, the new Governor; account of journey to El Fasher
- SAD.895/7/63-64 1944 Mar 24
Letter from Edward to Grizel. Plans for leave in Cairo and Cyprus; life in El Fasher

- SAD.895/7/68-71 1944 Jul 22
From El Fasher re return journey by plane; tour of Geneina with W.T. Clark, the Resident
- SAD.895/7/72-73 1944 Aug 11
Home news; in quarantine for mumps
- SAD.895/7/74 1944 Sep 8
Suggestions for how Grizel may fly to Khartoum
- SAD.895/7/75 1944 Nov 4
Home and war news; movement of province personnel; account of Edward's lorry breaking down
- SAD.895/7/76 1944 Nov 25 - Dec 1
War news; tea-parties with RAF and American personnel
- SAD.895/7/78 1944 Dec 15
War and home news; treks with Edward to correct maps around El Fasher
- SAD.895/7/79 1945 Jan 5
Home and war news; Christmas celebrations
- SAD.895/8/1-58 1945 Feb 2 – 1951 May 28
Continuation of letters from Persis Aglen in El Fasher, Darfur and on leave, to her sister Grizel in Cairo, Greece and later London. General content similar to 895/6/1-121 above, with more specific references to the following:
- SAD.895/8/1 1945 Feb 2
Discussion of war and its repercussions, including shortages, home leave and Greece; possibility of Persis working as G.R.F. Bredin's confidential clerk
- SAD.895/8/2-3 1945 Mar 16 - 23
Home news; sitting an Arabic exam
- SAD.895/8/4 1945 Mar 29
Home news; plans for home leave; race meeting
- SAD.895/8/5 1945 Apr 14
From Khartoum en route to Britain; preparations for journey; suicide of RAF officer
- SAD.895/8/6-8 1945 May 18 - 21
On leave. Account of journey to Britain; home news
- SAD.895/8/9 1945 Jul 15
Journey back from leave in Britain, stopping at Cairo
- SAD.895/8/10 1945 Aug 2
Account of journey from Cairo to El Fasher; description of town since the rains and domestic concerns; W.T. Clark ill at Geneina, his replacement by R.V.M. Stanbury and effect on El Fasher office; opinion on Sudanisation; war news
- SAD.895/8/12 [1945] Dec 30
Letter from cousin Rawdon to Persis Aglen: family concerns
- SAD.895/8/13-14 1945 Dec 6
Account of trip to Kutum; descriptions of Peter Lumsden's and G.M. Moore's houses; visit to Kutum boys' school
- SAD.895/8/15-16 1946 Jan 12
Christmas activities and other social occasions; bishop's visit

- SAD.895/8/17 1946 Jan 19
Setting up of a group for older girls to promote health and hygiene; home news
- SAD.895/8/18 1946 Feb 1
Home and domestic news; plans for "green-belt" tree-planting scheme around El Fasher
- SAD.895/8/19 1946 Feb 7
Home news; visits to government midwives and detailed description of their work
- SAD.895/8/20 1946 Feb 15
Toothache and expense of getting to Khartoum for a dentist; views on exhuming dead American soldiers and flying them to Cairo for burial
- SAD.895/8/21 1946 Feb 22
Impact of J.F. Madden's home leave on the office; domestic affairs
- SAD.895/8/22 1946 Mar 2
Trip to RAF dentist in Geneina; visit from M.E.C. Pumphrey
- SAD.895/8/23 1946 Mar 23
Riots in Khartoum during which church property was damaged; visit from W.R.G.M. Laurie and his wife
- SAD.895/8/24-26 1946 Mar 30 – Apr 9
Home news and plans for leave; problems of childbirth in the Sudan; rising tensions in the Sudan
- SAD.895/8/27 1946 Apr 17
Home news; dissatisfaction with the Sudan and the Sudanese
- SAD.895/8/28-29 1946 Apr 26
Home news and plans for leave; political problems; trip to Tarni; collection of grain and distribution of rationed goods
- SAD.895/8/30 1946 May 3
Rising tension; relations with Egypt; mention of the first female Sudanese university student
- SAD.895/8/31 1946 May 10
Problems with B.O.A.C.; plans for digging of rain water reservoirs; discussions with local Sudanese on education and share companies
- SAD.895/8/32 1946 May 24
Problems of food distribution
- SAD.895/8/34-35 1946 Jun 7
Home news; discussion of proposed Sudanese independence and lack of sense of public duty; anger at Sudanese treatment of girls
- SAD.895/8/36 1946 Jun 21
Victory Parade in Britain; home plans; domestic news
- SAD.895/8/37-43 1946 Nov 15
From Florence re journey from London; plans for journey to El Fasher
- SAD.895/8/44-48 1946 Nov 22
From Rome re journey from Florence and sight-seeing in Rome

- SAD.895/8/49 1947 Jan 12
Home news and Christmas activities; arrival of new Deputy Governor E.H. Nightingale and his family
- SAD.895/8/50 1947 Jan 31
Work with the girl guides group and local library
- SAD.895/8/51 1947 Mar 11
Tribal meeting in eastern Darfur; annual race meeting
- SAD.895/8/52 1947 Apr 11
Appointment of new Governor-General; brief account of children's Easter party
- SAD.895/8/53 1947 Apr 25
Visits from A.E.S Charles and W.R.G.M. Laurie and his wife Pat
- SAD.895/8/54 1947 May 16
Home news; climate in Darfur; plan for surveying work in Jabal Marra
- SAD.895/8/55-58 1947 Jun 15 [second letter incorrectly dated Feb]
Home news; news of Persis Aglen's pregnancy
- SAD.895/8/59-66 1950 Aug 13 – 1951 May 28
Letters home from Persis Aglen in Khartoum during her husband's service in the Department of Economics and Trade, to her sister Grizel in England concerning home leave, transport problems in the Sudan due to the rains and difficulties with regard to the rationing schemes (895/8/59-63); and re the death of her mother (895/8/64-66)
- SAD.895/8/67-68 1973 Feb 20
Letter from Persis Aglen in Edinburgh to her sister Grizel concerning the award of an MBE to her husband Edward
- SAD.895/8/69-70 1986 Nov 15
Letter from Persis Aglen in Scotland to her sister Grizel concerning her busy social life, including entertaining visitors, various trips to see family and friends, hosting the northern Sudan reunion party and church involvements. Grizel kept this letter as an example of Persis' drive and energy
- SAD.895/8/71-80 1945 - 1946
Envelope containing used Sudanese stamps, torn from letters written by Persis to Grizel and franked El Fasher

