

Khalili A. Totah and Eva Marshall Totah Papers HC.1210

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Table of Contents

<u>Summary Information</u>	3
<u>Ermina Jones Totah</u>	5
<u>Eva Marshall Totah</u>	5
<u>Khalil Totah</u>	5
<u>Scope and Contents note</u>	6
<u>Administrative Information</u>	6
<u>Related Materials</u>	7
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u>	7
<u>Collection Inventory</u>	9
<u>Papers of Khalil A. Totah</u>	9
<u>Papers of Ermina Jones Totah</u>	12
<u>Papers of Eva Marshall Totah</u>	14

Summary Information

Repository	Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections
Creator	Grant, Elihu, 1873-1972
Creator	Husayni , Amin, Grand Mufti, 1893-1974
Creator	MacMichael, H.A. (Harold Alfred), 1882-1969
Creator	Totah, Ermina Jones , 1892-1928
Creator	Totah, Eva Rae Marshall , ca. 1896-1990
Creator	Totah, Khalil, 1886-1955
Creator	Wauchope, Arthur, Sir
Title	Khalil A. Totah and Eva Marshall Totah Papers
Date [inclusive]	1896-1955
Extent	2.0 Boxes
General Physical Description note	
Language	English
Mixed materials [Box]	1
Container	2

Container

1

Preferred Citation note

Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA, Quaker Collection, Khalil A. Totah and Eva Marshall Totah Papers, Coll. No. 1210

Ermina Jones Totah

Ermina Jones Totah (1892-1928) m. Khalil Totah in South China ME in 1916. She came with him to Ramallah, Palestine, and was a teacher at the Friends Boys School. In the summer of 1923, she left Ramallah and came to her family home in South China, returning to Ramallah. In 1928, in order to help her depression, she went to Italy with Alice Jones, returning to Ramallah after two months and took up teaching again. But, still in despair, she took her own life.

Eva Marshall Totah

Eva Marshall Totah (c. 1896-1990) was born in South Dakota. She studied at William Penn College and received her B.A. from Penn College and her M.A. from Haverford College in 1919. (A copy of her thesis, "Settlement Music Schools: a Study and Interpretation," is in the college's archives). In 1927, she held a position in drama and expression instructor in the department of speech at Penn College. In 1927, she went to Ramallah to teach at the Friends School. She married Khalil A. Totah in 1928 and remained in Palestine. In 1937, on a sabbatical, she and Totah and their 3 children came to the United States (including Haverford, PA). They returned and lived in Ramallah, Palestine until 1944, when they emigrated to the U.S. She taught English, drama, dance, speech, religion and other subjects at Friends schools and elsewhere. Totah had three children: Nabil Marshall Totah, Sibyl Belmont and Joy Totah Hilden. Her own interests included a half-way house for women in California and the Crenshaw House for men. At the time of her death, Totah was a member of Whittier First Friends Meeting in California. (Information from Friends Journal 36 (Nov. 1990): 43-4 & Quaker Life 31 (Nov. 1990): 38 & internal evidence)

Khalil Totah

Khalil Totah (1886-1955), son of Abdullah and Azizeh Totah, was born in Ramallah, Palestine. He studied at the Church Mission Society School and Friends Hope Day School in Ramallah, 1890-1900 and then New Boys Training School in Ramallah (1901-03), Brummana Friends School in Brummana, Lebanon (1903-04), Church Mission Society English School, Jerusalem (1904-05). He taught English at Friends Boys Training School in Ramallah (1905-06). He studied at Friends Oak Grove Seminary in Vassalboro, ME (1906-8) and Clark College in Worcester, MA, where he received his B.A. (1908-1911). He was principal of Friends Boys School, Ramallah, Palestine, in 1912-14 and again from 1927-1944.

In 1929, he came to Haverford College to raise money for the school. (Elihu Grant was one of the founders of the school, and a mentor to Khalil Totah). He was in compulsory Turkish Military Training Service for 3 months in 1914. He became a minister in the Society of Friends in Mass. (1914-16) and taught elementary school there (1916-18. He received his M.A. (thesis: "Friends Secondary Schools in America") and Ph.D. (in education; thesis: "Contributions of the Arabs to Education") from Columbia University in 1917 and 1926 respectively. He served as Y.M.C.A. Director with the 79th Division of the U.S. Army in France (1918-1919). From 1919-25, he was Principal of Governor's Teacher Training College in Jerusalem. In 1937, he was a delegate to the Friends World Conference. He was interim pastor at the Congregational Community Church in MS, 1944-1945. From 1945-50, he was the Exec. Dir. of the Institute of Arab American Affairs, N.Y. He became an American citizen in 1946. He lived in Whittier CA from 1950-55 where he was a lecturer and writer. He. m. Ermina Jones in 1916 in South China ME. After her death in 1928, he m. Eva Marshall in 1929 with whom he had 3 children. Khalil Totah died in Whittier CA in 1955. (Information from Eva M. Totah)

Scope and Contents note

The papers revolve around three principals and provide a picture of Quakers in Palestine in the 20th century: Khalil Totah, his second wife, Eva Marshall Totah and his first wife, Ermina Totah. Khalil Totah discusses the situation in Palestine, primarily in the 1930s, speaks of his own life and aspirations, as when he became a Quaker minister. His diaries expand the picture, adding information about Friends Boys School in Ramallah (Palestine) and his understanding of the political situation, again primarily in the 1930s. The photographs add the dimension of geography, placing Totah at Oak Grove Seminary, Clark College and at the Institute of Arab American Affairs. Eva Marshall Totah has the largest quantity of correspondence, primarily 1920s and 1930s, which provides great detail to the life and work at the Friends School in Ramallah, the character and growing relationship with Khalil Totah and domestic issues. The papers of Ermina Jones Totah portray an earnest and dedicated teacher and wife, but carry little detail.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections

digitizing materials

The donor has given permission to put the contents of the diaries online, and that we may use Thomas Rick's transcription or do our own.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Earlham College in Richmond, IN has a lot of Ramallah materials, including letters and microfilm, which, according to scholar Thomas Ricks is "very interesting."

Books by Khalil Totah to Quaker Collection

1. The Contribution of the Arabs to Education by Khalil A. Totah. Columbia University, 1926. Totah dissertation signed by Ermina Jones Totah. 2. Dynamite in the Middle East by Khalil Totah. New York: Philosophical Library, 1955.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Friends Boys School. (Ramallah, Palestine).
- Friends Girls School. (Ramallah, Palestine).

Genre(s)

- Correspondence
- Diaries
- Manuscripts
- Photographs

Geographic Name(s)

- Great Britain -- Foreign relations -- 1945
- Israel -- History
- Palestine
- Palestine -- History -- 1917-1948
- Palestine -- Politics and government -- 1917-1948

Personal Name(s)

- Hilden, Joy Totah
- Jones, Rufus Matthew, 1863-1948
- Ly , Juwan Usang, 1888-
- Oliver, Daniel, 1870-1952

Subject(s)

- Arabs
- Quakers - Middle East
- Society of Friends -- Education -- West Bank -- R#m All#h
- Society of Friends -- Missions -- Palestine

Collection Inventory

Box 1 Papers of Khalil A. Totah, 1896-1955 Diaries, letters and photographs.

Information about Khalil Totah

Typed information by the donor about Khalil Totah was placed in PG.

Correspondence 1911-1936

Description of the letters

There is a total of 16 letters by Khalil Totah. They are not all described; however, content dictates whether a letter is described.

to Grand Mufti. Jerusalem, 1936 7/20.

Together with Daniel Oliver, trusts that the Higher Arab Committee and the Grand Mufti will help to bring the present strike to an end.

to Harold MacMichael. Ramallah, n.d. (1936?)

The fence set up by Britain between Palestine and Syria should be taken down. The creation of an Arab Union would aid settlement of the Arab world. Many returning from Iraq found pro-Nazi sentiment was due to Zionism. When asked about a German ascendancy, some said better that which they do not know than that which they have known for 20 years. Arab public would prefer the British to the French in Syria. The British must show their good faith to the Arab world and this would aid pacification of Palestine and consequently the Arab World. (draft letter)

Wauchope, Arthur to K.A.T. Jerusalem, 1936 5/?

Correspondence

Hopes for lasting peace and brotherhood in the Holy Land. Knows he can count on support of the Quakers in achieving this.

to Palestine Watching Committee, Friends House London. 1936 5/11.

Palestine has been suffering from a strike for 3 weeks, though initial bloodshed has ceased. Arab transportation has stopped, though Jewish buses are running with police escort, and school life is disturbed; even at Ramallah they were forced to send pupils home due to food shortage. Arab demands are stopping Jewish immigration and sale of land and the formation of a legislative council, which the Jews oppose. Arabs resent the British policy of filling Palestine with Jews. Palestinians see negotiation with British in Syria, Iraq and Egypt, so why not Palestine. The High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope is committed to establishment of a legislative council. Feels Friends -- Watching Committee -- could help and approach Jewish leaders in London

Schoonover, Kermit to K.A.T. Clintondale, NY, 1939 9/25.

Tells of becoming a Quaker minister. Asks how the war affects him and hopes the Near East will not again become a battle field. Asserts that America's neutrality is the problem.

to Arthur Wauchope. 1936 7/8.

Reports on the killings of 8 unarmed people by soldiers and other political issues. Includes a list of incidents.

to Arthur Wauchope. 1936 6/27.

State of war in Palestine. There are over 10,000 British troops and over 2,000 police. Much description of current situation. Their school has been closed and they have not the funds to pay teachers and other workers.

to Arthur Wauchope. 1936 6/1.

In the present turmoil, some have said that the Arabs understand nothing but military force, but the satisfactory settlement of the Iraq question disproves that. Gives a variety of reasons for present unrest. One is sorry for the Jews and sympathizes with their desire to have a homeland, but they have not been happy in Palestine for 16 years, and require British military support.

Correspondence

to Elihu Grant. Jerusalem, 1914 2/26.

Is 3 months into required stint as a soldier. Goes to Ramallah every Sunday. Wants Ermina to finish college before they marry.

to Elihu Grant. New York, 1912 2/1.

No longer has the zest for studying he had when at Brumanna and Oak Grove. The main solution to educational problems is economic -- giving boys with education work to keep them in their homelands. And just teaching them English is not enough.

to Elihu Grant. 1912 7/27.

Confusion in Constantinople not only due to war, but also internal difficulties. Albanians making trouble, last election manipulated by Young Turks, Parliament may be dissolved.

to Mr. and Mrs. Marshall. Haverford, 1929 1/17.

Would like to visit them and reassure them that he will take good care of their daughter, Eva, and has much in common with her, including music, poetry, art, and books. Has a strenuous life speaking to schools and interviewing people. In the past week, preached at Pres. Elect Hoover's (Quaker) Meeting in Washington. Eva is happy in Ramallah

Robson, John H. to K.A.T. London, 1936 5/26.

Asks Totah if it is entirely fair to speak of the British policy as filling Palestine with Jews, since Arab population is increasing even more than Jewish. Agrees that opposition to legislative council is a mistake. Speaking for other members of the [Palestine] Committee, feels it would be most helpful if Totah worked for peace and better understanding while in Palestine.

Jones, Ida to KAT. South China, ME, [1923?] 4/28.

is grateful that Totah is sending her daughter (Ermina) to visit them; mentions his trip, including to Switzerland and that travel is an education

Diaries

Diaries 1908-1942 The 1908 and 1914 diaries are small separate books; the 1930 diary is contained on some loose pages; a larger red book with the date "1935" on the cover is actually for the dates 1938 and 1941, with a few entries for 1942; the larger brown book with the date "1939" on the cover is for the dates 1939-40 and 1942-43.

The diaries

The diaries dates include 1908, 1914, 1930, 1938-1943. In 1908, Khalil Totah kept a diary while studying at Oak Grove Seminary in Vassalboro, ME. The 1914 diary commences: "First diary I ever kept in Palestine." The 1930s pages are titled "Biographical, Friends Boys School," and reports on his work and life at the school in Ramallah. The "1935" diary with its entries from 1938 and 1941 deals with Palestine, including Ramallah, and political issues. The "1939" diary with entries from 1939-40 and 1942-43 is primarily political, but also some on Friends Boys School at Ramallah.

Photographs 1896-1955 60.0 Photographs from childhood to older age, alone and in groups. The number of photographs is approximate.

Description of photographs

There are four childhood photos of K.A.T. ranging from ca. 10 years to mid-teens, including a school group photo taken at Friends Boarding School at Ramallah; another group of photos was taken while Totah was a student at the English College in Jerusalem, ca. 1904, Oak Grove Seminary, 1908, at Clark College, 1908-11, and possibly in Palestine, 1908-1912; after schooling, as a Turkish soldier, 1914, at Friends Boys School in Ramallah, 1914, as a volunteer with the YMCA in France, 1918, in Virginia and Philadelphia in 1926; another group was taken between 1928-1944 when Totah was Principal of Friends Boys School in Ramallah; and the last group taken between 1944-1955 while at the Institute of Arab American Affairs.

Box 2 Papers of Ermina Jones Totah, 1896-1928 0.25 Linear feet In box 2, along with papers of Eva M. Totah.

Diary

Diary 1923-1928 The diary is a small cloth-bound brown book.

Ermina Jones Totah diary for 1923-28

The dates were assigned by the donor. Includes sea voyage from Haifa (Israel) to Naples (Italy) and visit in Italy. In July 1925, left Ramallah for U.S. and much of following content is in NY. There are many empty pages. Most of the entries are undated.

Correspondence 1923-1930

Description of letters

There is a total of 18 letters written by Ermina Jones Totah. Not all the letters are described, but those that are are based on content or tone. In general, they are loving letters to her husband, KAT, which give details of her visit to family in South China, ME in the summer of 1923.

to KAT. South China, ME, 1923 7/26.

cannot be forced to love living in Jerusalem but will try.

to KAT. South China, ME, 1923 7/18.

At Yearly Meeting, Rufus Jones spoke of the important work Khalil and she were doing in Palestine

to KAT. South China ME, 1923 5/19.

observations of her surroundings.

to KAT. South China, ME, 1923 6/3.

Tells Khalil not to worry about Selim and offers advice and suggests he be a loving brother. Asks about Khalil's impressions of London Yearly Meeting. Wonders if she behaves better with her parents than she does with him. Thinks it might help if they prayed together, for themselves and those whom they would help

Photographs

Swift, Sarah to Ermina Jones Totah. Worcester, MA, 1923 7/18.

mentions reckoning of a debt for Ermina and Khalil, and how well Rufus Jones spoke of Khalil Totah at Yearly Meeting and is glad that they are both her friends.

to KAT. n.d.

working on business issues, such as buying and selling liberty bonds

Photographs 1896-1927

Photographs of Ermina Jones Totah

There is a total of 8 photographs, dating ca. 1896 when she was a child to 1927 and 3 with no date

Contents of the photographs

Photographs show Ermina as a child, with Khalil in ca. 1910, in Jerusalem in 1919, her certificate of Palestinian nationality photo in 1925, in Palestinian costume in ca. 1927, on a camel at the Dead Sea, possibly with her mother and another woman, likely in South China, ME, and a small portrait photo. In addition, there is a photo of Mary Hoxie Jones (1904-2003), a relative of Ermina's through her father, Rufus M. Jones.

There are also 3 photographs of a piece of trench art bearing Ermina's name. "Emina J. Totah", "St. Miheil 1918" are written on the shell as well as the name "E. Ricard" (possibly the artist). It is believed that this trench art was commissioned by Khalil for his first wife.

Papers of Eva Marshall Totah, 1927-1944 0.25 Linear feet In box 2, with papers of Ermina Jones Totah

Diaries 1932-1944

Diaries overview

Correspondence

There are two diaries and some pages from another diary. The red diary covers the years 1932, 1942-44; the brown diary covers the years 1937-42; the separate pages are from 1939.

Content of diaries

The 1932 diary opens with the announcement of the birth of Eva's daughter, Sybil, in 1932 in Whittier hospital. On the same page, for 1943, Sibyl entertains and Nabil helps someone who is ill in 1944. The diary primarily reports on life in Palestine, from domestic to school and other issues. The second diary with entries from 1938 to 1942 also represents time in U.S. (Philadelphia area) as well as Palestine. Some political comments. The 1939 pages are limited to comments on events during World War II.

Correspondence 1927-1943

General note

There is a total of approximately 200 letters by Eva Marshall Totah. They are not all described; however, content dictates whether a letter is described. In general, the letters are all very descriptive - about Friends Girls and Boys Schools in Ramallah, general descriptions of Ramallah, Palestine (now Israel) and people in the school, locally and visitors, about religious holidays and visiting religious sites as well as vacations in Jordan, Syria and other countries, assistance to the needy and political issues -so a selection is made when content varies. Some of her letters were published in the American Friend.

to family. Ramallah, 1929 10/17.

school children of the government school in Nablus went on a strike of protest relating to situation in Palestine. Government officials had some of them beaten, resulting in a Palestine-wide school strike, and only Khalil Totah's efforts kept their boys from striking.

to Family. Ramallah, 1929 6/15.

architects looking at ground where new school building will be located

to Family. Ramallah, 1928 6/10.

Correspondence

Tells of the suicide of Ermina Totah who was concerned not to hamper her husband (Khalil Totah's) life in having to care for her

to Family. Ramallah, 1928 5/27.

Has reached decision to stay in Palestine and is waiting for letter from Penn College to say they are releasing her from previous commitment to come back there to work.

to Family. Ram Allah, Palestine, 1928 3/18.

gives a very detailed description of a tour of Jerusalem provided by "one of the best guides" Dr. Totah

to family. Ram Allah, Palestine, 1928 2/24.

earthquake on Feb. 23 and impact on students. Dr. Grant has arrived.

to Family. Ram Allah, Palestine, 1928 1/22.

reports that Mildred White was offered the principalship of the Girls School and that the current head, Miss Jones, was very disappointed it was not offered to Eva, but she (Eva) is also waiting to hear about a position at Penn.

to Family. Ram Allah, Palestine, 1928 1/8.

extensive description of her trip to Egypt with two other people.

to Family. Ram Allah, Palestine, 1927 10/2.

reports on her schedule: teaching Bible, History-Ancient and Medieval, Hygiene, Rhythmics, English, sports

to Family. Ram Allah, 1927 9/25.

describes how women have to go for water; Girls School 10 minutes' walk from Boys School and Mission House.

to family. Ram Allah, Palestine, 1927 9/14.

Correspondence

describes a poor Muslim village and the custom of women wearing a face covering as well as a black outfit and several customs of the people. Mentions Khalil and Ermina Totah and several other Friends; a very descriptive letter.

to Family. Ram Allah, Palestine, 1927 10/9.

continued description of life at the school, what is taught, what life there consists of.

to family. Ram Allah, Palestine, 1927 12/28.

tells of Christmas pageant in Bethlehem. Reports on all the things she appreciates in Ramallah, including the head of school, Miss Jones.

to Family. Ram Allah, Palestine, 1927 12/10.

Palestine is under the rule of the British which is a "good colonizing country" and they are raising the standard of education, though natives are quite discontent, and some think the poor people are more downtrodden than during Turkish rule.

to family. Ramallah, 1936 8/4.

Daniel Oliver has had many conversations with Khalil

to family. Ramallah, 1936 6/10.

There are more than 12,000 British troops in the country, but the Arab strike continues

to Family. Ramallah, 1936 5/25.

Several cities are under martial law, railroads are patrolled, Jewish colonies guarded with large forces, most of the Arabic press is suspended. There is revolution in Nablus and Gaza.

1928 8/?

Hand-drawn map of Friends Boys School, Ramallah

to Mother. Ramallah, 1928 11/11.

Correspondence

explains all the good characteristics of Khalil Totah and that they are to be married

to Parents. Ramallah, 1928 12/26.

a biographical description of Khalil Totah

to Friends. Ramallah, 1939 8/30.

re continued chaos, military and economic issues. "With war clouding Europe, America looks like heaven."

to classmates. Oskaloosa, Iowa, 1927 1/22.

writes to her classmates of the class of 1918 at Penn College, suggesting they make donations and offering information about various class members and about the college in 1927.

to family. Ram Allah, Palestine, 1927 8/6.

Arrived in Jaffa, attended a wedding, then traveled to Ramallah. Continues with the trip prior to Jaffa, which was through Athens.

to Family. Ram Allah, Palestine, 1927 11/13.

describes all the activities surrounding a roofing party for a new house, including the food, which is meant to be accompanied by strong drink, but as the people are Quakers, they substitute lemonade. Also attended a Greek wedding and a YWCA bazaar, and includes some political discussion of China.

to Family. 1928 1/?

mentions that family is having her letters printed in the Independent and the Republic; is sending a copy of her record of her trip to Egypt (not present); a description of Palestine by James Nichols does not give the whole story.

to family. Ram Allah, Palestine, 1928 2/5.

description of life at the school now that Miss Jones has departed on vacation, and of a Greek Orthodox wedding of one of the pupils.

Manuscripts

to family. Ram Allah, Palestine, 1928 2/21.

J. Usang Ly is to arrive on his way on a trip around the world.

to family. Ramallah, 1928 3/29.

the Silcoxes (missionaries in China) have arrived to attend a big missionary conference in Jerusalem.

to parents. Ramallah, 1929 1/2.

impact on local people by British mandate over Palestine, including jobs and class division and resulting poverty of most Palestinians

to classmates. Ramallah, 1/17/30.

reports on her wedding to Khalil and political situation in Palestine.

to family. Ramallah, 1937 6/22.

on the death of her father.

to Friends. Ramallah, 1938 5/6.

description of Arab village life

to family. Ramallah, 1938 9/27.

describes conditions in Palestine which is "now in a state of revolt" and the world on the brink of war

Manuscripts 1928 8.0**Titles:**

Manuscript titles include: Azizeh; Getting Ferns from Bethel Caves; An Interlude in the Office, Boys School; The Jordan River; May we have Pictures Today?; The Opening Day of School; Sea of Galilee;

Manuscripts

The Search for God; A Week-End in a Greek Monastery; Wedding Customs in Palestine; We Like our School.

Miscellaneous

Report on Sunday School conference, n.d. and 2 other pieces and, along with 3 items written by others