

Acc.12680

December 2006



## **Inventory**

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**Isabella Plumb**

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**Personal papers of Isabella Plumb (1861-1944), Church of Scotland missionary to Poona and Sialkot.**

**Isabella Plumb was born and brought up in Norfolk, though when she came to fulfil her childhood ambition of becoming a missionary it was as an agent of the Aberdeen Auxiliary of the Church of Scotland Women's Association for Foreign Missions. She stayed with the Auxiliary from 1882, when she travelled to her first posting in Poona, through a subsequent move to Sialkot in 1889 where she remained until her retirement in 1925. She stayed on in India until 1930 on a voluntary basis, running a missionaries' rest-home - for which she had successfully campaigned - at Dalhousie hill station. She was also an enthusiastic traveller, public speaker and collector of photographs; the archive reflects all these interests.**

For an article on Isabella Plumb based on this collection, see: 'The Indomitable Miss Plumb' by Hannah Adcock, *Edinburgh Review*, no. 119, January 2007.

*Presented, 2006*

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**1-6 Correspondence**

- 1 Letter-book, 1889-1894, containing copy letters from Isabella Plumb in Sialkot, mainly to a Mrs Simpson.
- 2 General correspondence, 1888-1956 and undated, of, to and concerning Isabella Plumb.
- 3 Correspondence, receipts, insurance documents and other papers, 1910-1941, relating to two cottages which Isabella Plumb owned in Mundford, Norfolk. One of these was 'The Retreat', where she lived after her return in 1930.
- 4 Letters, 1911, 1919-1932, 1942, of Isabella Plumb, mainly to her nephew James Plumb, his wife Hilda and their daughter Elsie, and to other members of her family.
- 5 'Letters concerning Angelina'

Letters, 1913, concerning a mission pupil named Angelina who fell pregnant, and the claims and counter-claims regarding the baby's paternity.

- 6 Correspondence and papers, 1916-1926 and undated, relating to Isabella Plumb's successful efforts to raise funds to buy a rest-house at Dalhousie hill station, near Chamba, for missionaries in the Punjab. Includes lists of donors and potential donors; text of a fund-raising address evidently given by Isabella Plumb; copies of fund-raising letters; a page from *Life and Work* (?1916) containing a paragraph about the fund.

## 7-11 Journals

- 7 Diary [India], 1887.
- 8 Diary [India], 1891, last entry on 30 August. Notes and a missionary magazine cutting (?1934) are loosely inserted.
- 9 Two notebooks, c 1892, containing descriptions of the voyage to Mumbai (Bombay) via the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal, and observations on the commerce, history, landscape, architecture and other topics of Mumbai and surrounding areas. Probably written to accompany a lantern slide-show, the hand may not be that of Isabella Plumb.
- 10 Notebook, c 1905-1908, containing: copy letter (1905) to Isabella Plumb from Fannie E Williams; extract copied from Punjab Mission News, April 1905, concerning the deaths of three Church Missionary Society missionaries at Kangra in an earthquake; journal of Isabella Plumb's trip to Pangi, August-September 1907 and to Kashmir, August 1908. A photograph of a church interior is loosely inserted.
- 11 MS accounts of a walking tour in the Himalayas, undertaken by Isabella Plumb and friends, in 1908 (see above), and of her trip round the world in 1909 (1<sup>st</sup> person, but in someone else's hand?); 2 copies of 'A holiday walking tour in the Himalayas' by Isabella Plumb, reprinted from the *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 16 March 1909.

## 12-19 Talks

- 12 Notes on Indian cultures and beliefs, possibly in Isabella Plumb's hand; probably to accompany a lantern-slide show.
- 13 MS drafts, c.1896-1911, of 6 talks given by Isabella Plumb, mainly on the subject of India and mission work.
- 14 MS drafts, c1914-1926, of 8 talks given by Isabella Plumb, mainly on the subject of India and mission work.
- 15 MS drafts, undated, of 6 talks given by Isabella Plumb, mainly on the subject of India and mission work.
- 16 Notebook. Contents include: drafts of 4 talks (1888 and undated) on missionary work with women in India; notes and transcripts from books on Indian missions;

extracts from Mission Reports concerning the girls' orphanage at Sialkot, 1862-1879. A booklet entitled 'What is a Zenana?'; 2 press-cuttings and some notes are loosely inserted.

- 17 Notebook, c 1888, containing drafts of 2 talks on missionary work with women in India. A pencil template, possibly of a design for embroidery, is loosely inserted.
- 18 Notebook containing draft talks, c 1890s, by Isabella Plumb on the Sialkot and Punjab missions. Another hand has edited and added sections. Further drafts are loosely inserted.
- 19 Jotter, undated, containing draft of a talk which Isabella Plumb must have given in Norfolk, probably in the 1930s. It contains some autobiographical information as well as an overview of her mission work.

## **20-21 Notes, transcripts and other writings**

- 20 Miscellaneous writings and transcripts. Includes: 'Report for 1908' (?Isabella Plumb's report on the Zenana mission in Sialkot, presumably for submission to the Mission Board); 'Church of Scotland Mission', MS copy, in Isabella Plumb's hand, of a short history of Church of Scotland Indian missions by William Scott, dated 1921; jotter, dated 1929, containing loose pages on which Isabella Plumb has copied extracts from *The Holy Land* by Rev John Kelman.
- 21 "Bible Lands and the fulfilment of prophecy therein. A brief glimpse first at the land of Egypt before travelling on to Palestine and Syria." MS copy, 1930, by Isabella Plumb of 'Miss Kidley's notes on her visit to Egypt and Palestine'.

## **22-26 Account books**

- 22 "Miss I Plumb's Private Account Book", 1899-1909 (incomplete). Includes 'Expenses for a trip from Sialkot to Mundford by China, Japan & America', 1909. A copy of a photograph of Isabella Plumb and another missionary with a large number of pupils outside the Church of Scotland Mission Girls' School [Sialkot] is loosely inserted.
- 23 Cash book detailing income and expenditure relating to Isabella Plumb's house (?The Retreat), 1899-1911 and 1931-1943
- 24 Notebook. "Daily expenses in 'The Retreat', August 1931"
- 25 Notebook. "The Retreat Housekeeping Book for 1932"
- 26 "Miss Plumb Daily Account Book, July 1933[-June 1934]"

## **27-29 Miscellaneous**

- 27 Miscellaneous. Includes entrance exam papers, 1930, from the University of Lahore (Isabella Plumb served as 'Lady Supervisor for female candidates' in that year); 'Rules and Regulations', a comic poem about the 'Mission Miss Sahibas'; ration paper, 1918; 2 reproductions of ?Indian portraits/sketches; Isabella Plumb's British Indian passport

(issued 1928); Permit Book (issued 1916); ms copy of a marriage proclamation announcing the intention that John Hutchison is to marry Isabella Plumb on 2 April 1929 (there is no evidence that the marriage took place); note of the programme of a school sports day (undated); "Our Trip to Switzerland with the Polytechnic Touring Association" (typescript account of a trip, probably undertaken in 1911, by some friends of Isabella Plumb); carbon copy of a short history of Elveden, Suffolk; two ms copies of a birthday poem to Isabella Plumb, 15 June 1923.

- 28 Commonplace book, lacking a cover and some pages, containing copied verses, the last entry dated 1891. The handwriting changes from start to finish, but it probably is Isabella Plumb's.
- 29 Guest book. The first set of entries, 1920-1928, are from the Simpson Holiday Home, Dalhousie, India; the second, 1931-1940, from "The Retreat", Mundford, Norfolk.

### **30-40 Photographs**

- 30 Photograph album. Presumably a family album, with some photographs of a young Isabella Plumb at the beginning.
- 31 Photograph album. The people depicted are possibly fellow missionaries and friends from Aberdeen as the bulk of the photographs come from Scottish studios.
- 32 Photograph album, inscribed 'Dalhousie, 27 Sepr. 1897', containing photographs of Sialkot, Gujrat, Dalhousie, Kashmir.
- 33 Small photograph album. Inside the front cover is a dedication 'To Miss Plumb on her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday – June 15, 1927 ...'. Presumably a private joke; the album records a visit by 6 young women to 'Whyligh', the 'rest home' for which Isabella Plumb had campaigned.
- 34 Photographs of Isabella Plumb, or in which she appears.
- 35 Photographs annotated by Isabella Plumb.
- 36 Carte de visite photographs, largely of unidentified people, presumably family and friends of Isabella Plumb. The photographs are mainly from studios in London, the Norfolk area, and Aberdeen.
- 37 Larger studio photographs of unidentified people, presumably family and friends of Isabella Plumb. Many of the photographs are from Aberdeen studios, so are possibly of people Isabella Plumb came to know through becoming a missionary.
- 38 Carte de visite and other studio photographs from India.
- 39 Miscellaneous loose photographs, c.1890s-1940s; includes a few negatives, ?1924, a photograph of the 'Plumb Memorial Church, Akhrota', and what may be some photographs taken on the walking tours of 1907-1908.

- 40 Postcards, purchased photographs and ephemera relating to Isabella Plumb's travels outside India. Subjects include China, Toronto, Victoria (B.C.), Quetta, the Lake District and London.

#### **41-44 Printed items (including press cuttings)**

- 41 Press cuttings, 1893-1925 and undated, mainly from missionary magazines; includes notice on Isabella Plumb's retirement in 1925.
- 42 Various missionary publications. Includes: Sialkot Semi-Jubilee 1889-1914 Annual Report; 'Eightieth Annual Report of the Church of Scotland Women's Association for Foreign Missions', 1918; Annual Reports for 1924 and 1925 of the Synod of Aberdeen Auxiliary of the Church of Scotland Women's Association for Foreign Missions; *Life and Work*, June 1925 (on p.22 is a photograph of Isabella Plumb and a notice concerning her retirement); *Other Lands*, April 1927; *The Womens Missionary Magazine*, January 1932.
- 43 Printed items:  
*Information for travellers landing at Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Thomas Cook, [c 1909]);  
*Montreal: the Canadian metropolis and its many attractions* (s.l.: Canadian Pacific Railway Company, [c 1909])  
*Missionary alphabet* Church of Scotland ([Edinburgh: Church of Scotland, undated]);  
Inaugural sermon [of the] Women Citizens' Association, Aberdeen [at the] West Parish Church, Sunday October, 27, 1918  
*A handbook to the West River: being a short description of the chief places of interest between Canton & Wuchow-fu* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong, Canton & Macao Steamboat Co, c 1909)  
*The Little Bugler of Kassassin* by Mrs Ballard (London, [1883])
- 44 *King Edward's realm; story of the making of the empire* by C S Dawe (London, [1902])

#### **45 Outsize items**

- 45 4 group photographs (c 1910-1920) of Isabella Plumb with European and Indian mission staff and others.  
Studio photograph of Isabella Plumb  
*The Times of India Illustrated Weekly*, October 27, 1915

#### **46 Earlier lists**

- 46 Earlier list and partial lists of Isabella Plumb's papers, compiled by members of her family. There are references to material which is no longer in the collection; it is known that some papers were lost prior to the donation of the archive to the Library.