

LEO H. BARTEMEIER (1895-1982) PAPERS ARCHIVES FINDING AID

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BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Leo Henry Bartemeier was born in Muscatine, Iowa, on September 12, 1895. He was the oldest of four living children and was a hard worker even as a child. After graduating parochial school, he was enrolled in Saint Mary's College and High School, a Jesuit education center. He finished high school and two years of prescribed college courses. He studied at the Catholic University of America, graduating with an A.B. degree, and following acceptance of his research thesis on animal psychology, received an M.A. He was then accepted at Georgetown Medical School where he received his M.D. in 1920. Bartemeier interned at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit and through the wise advice of the chief of medicine, applied to, and was accepted by, the Phipps Psychiatric Clinic in Baltimore where he studied under Adolf Meyer and his associates. After two years of excellent training in psychiatry and neurology he returned to Detroit to begin practice.

In 1921 he married Elizabeth Haltigan, his beloved "Bess." Shortly thereafter, Bartemeier applied for training at the Chicago Institute of Psychoanalysis, where Franz Alexander held forth. He was accepted, and for years commuted each weekend from Detroit to Chicago and returned to Detroit to make a living during the week by practicing psychiatry. Completing his work in 1938, Bartemeier became the first Catholic training analyst (in that period analysis was not in favor in many Catholic clerical circles, and Catholicism was not in particularly good order with the analysts).

When the American Medical Association, heretofore not very enthusiastic about psychiatry, decided to establish a committee on mental health, it chose Leo Bartemeier as the chairman, a position he held for a decade.

In 1945 the Army sent a commission of experts to Europe to study the reasons for the large number of psychiatric casualties turning up in the various area commands. Bartemeier was elected head of the commission, which included Karl Menninger, Lawrence Kubie, John Romano and John Whitehorn.

They left the United States in April 1945 and returned in June. Their report on "Combat Exhaustion" is an outstanding document.

In 1954 he returned to Maryland, this time to head the Seton Psychiatric Institute, one of the oldest of the nation's private mental hospitals.

In 1972, Bartemeier wrote his chapter "An Autobiography of My Religion" in the book *Healer of the Mind: A Psychiatrist's Search for Faith*. It was a frank, open declaration of his religious faith and how it carried him through life it was his "Apologia Pro Vita Sua." The writing of this essay was hard for him because the analyst is not used to revealing his personal beliefs. In the opening paragraph he declares himself: "This autobiography of my religion is intended to signify that its purpose is the worship of God. This is the meaning of my religion and my life." He continued: "The function of religion is neither the generating or relieving of anxiety nor the care of other temporal ills. Its function is worship."

Leo Bartemeier was the 80th president of the American Psychiatric Association (1951-1952). This presidency was not the only high honor awarded him; he was also president of the American Psychoanalytic Association (1944-1945), and the International Psychoanalytic Association (1949-1950), the only psychiatrist thus thrice honored, or as one of his own put it "the only psychiatrist to win the Triple Crown."

Leo Bartemeier received the highest award that the Catholic Church can give a layman Knighthood in the Equestrian Order of Saint Gregory the Great.



SCOPE AND CONTENTS

The papers of Leo H. Bartemeier held in the Archives of the American Psychiatric Association cover the period 1947-1952, his terms as secretary and as president of the APA.

The collection consists of Dr. Bartemeier's correspondence on various issues during his tenure. This correspondence is divided into 16 folder groups, totaling .25 linear feet. The folders are arranged alphabetically with the contents arranged by year, then alphabetically.

SERIES: Miscellaneous Papers

Archives Box 100673

Folders

1. American Journal of Psychiatry, Correspondence with Clarence Farrar, 1950-1952.
2. Appointments: 1948, 1950-1951.
3. Foreign Representatives, 1952.
4. Bill 4914, 1948. (A bill to establish a presumption of service connection for nervous system functional disorders and psychosis for certain veterans of WWII.)
5. International Congress of Psychiatry 1951.
6. International Congress on Mental Health, 1948.
7. Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health, 1955-1959.
8. Military, 1947.
9. Miscellaneous, 1947, 1950-1952.
10. National Association for Mental Health (NAMH) Budget, 1951-52.
11. New York Psychiatric Advance Commission, 1946-1947.
12. Psychology (relations with), 1952.
13. W. Hamilton Lecture Award, 1952.
14. White House Conference on Children, 1950.
15. World Federation for Mental Health, 1948-1951.
16. World Health Organization Citizens Committee, 1952.