

69

**INVENTORY OF THE
PAPERS OF
AGUEDA IGLESIAS JOHNSTON**

compiled by

**William L. Wuerch
Carmen F. Quintanilla**

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MARC WORKING PAPERS

Dr. Dirk A. Ballendorf, Editor

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INTRODUCTION

The papers of Agueda Iglesias Johnston, one of the most important educators on Guam during the 20th Century, were donated to the Micronesian Area Research Center by her daughter-in-law, Emilie G. Johnston.

Inclusive dates: 1899 - 1977

Linear feet of shelf space occupied: 17

These papers are open to researchers without restriction under the conditions of the Micronesian Area Research Center's General Regulations for Manuscript Collections (see appendix).

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Agueda Iglesias Johnston was born in Agana, Guam on December 12, 1892. She attended United States naval government school in Agana for several years until 1907, when, at the age of fifteen, she began teaching in the lower grades. Two years later she began studying in the evenings with William Gautier Johnston of the US Marine Corps. Johnston was a graduate of George Peabody College in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1911, the couple were married. They had seven children. Agueda continued to teach in the elementary school until 1925, furthering her education through correspondence courses from the American Correspondence School in Chicago. In 1925, she became the principal of the Almacen Grammar School, an intermediate school located in Agana. Agueda held this position until 1930, when she advanced to be the principal of the Seaton Schroeder Junior High School, the first junior high school on the island. When the first senior high school opened on Guam in 1936, named after George Washington, Agueda was chosen as its first principal. At this time she was also the principal of the Teacher's Institute. Agueda held these two positions until the Japanese invasion in December 1941.

During the pre-war years Agueda was involved in a number of civic activities, including helping to establish the Guam Museum in 1932, and organizing the first Girl Scout Troops on Guam. She also contributed articles to the *Guam Recorder*, the island's monthly news and entertainment magazine. Agueda also was active in the Guam Teacher's Association, being elected president 1928-1929, and 1933-1937. When the Japanese occupied Guam all of the American citizens, including Agueda's husband, were sent to a prisoner-of-war camp at Kobe, Japan. William never returned to Guam succumbing to illness while in captivity in October 1943.

The re-opening of the schools after the war saw Agueda the principal of George Washington High School once again. She was promoted to assistant superintendent of the Department of Education in 1946 and held that position until she retired in 1955.

During the immediate post-war years Agueda formed entertainment troupes for the many military camps on Guam. In another expression of her gratitude to the Americans she organized a celebration of the first anniversary of the United States liberation of the island from the Japanese in July 1945. This would become an annual event, Liberation Day, which is celebrated to this day.

Following her retirement Agueda remained active in civic and social organizations such as the Girl Scouts (she had been selected as the first president of the Guam Girl Scout Council in 1947), the American Red Cross, and the Guam Women's Club. She also was a member of the Guam Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees, Guam Fine Arts Society, Guam Historical Society, and the Chamorro Language Commission. She was the founder and first president of the Guam Association of Retired Persons.

Agueda suffered a stroke and died on December 30, 1977 at the age of eighty-five. A state funeral followed, the first for a non-elected official on Guam.

Her many achievements led to Agueda's inclusion in *Who's Who in America* (1955), *Leaders in Education* (1971), *Dictionary of International Biography* (1972), *World Who's Who of Women* (1974-1975), *Who's Who of Community Services* (1975), and *Who's Who of Intellectuals* (1977).

Today, island residents are reminded of Agueda Johnston's contributions to education on Guam by a middle school in the village of Ordot which bears her name.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

The Johnston papers consist of subject files; speeches; newspaper clippings; letters, cards, and other correspondence; pamphlets; booklets; newsletters, and other periodicals; memorabilia; and photographs.

Also included are a collection of personal narratives written by high school students just after the war; extensive files concerning her career in education; notes on the history and traditional culture of Guam; and a file on William Safford, who played an important role in the first American administration of Guam, 1899 - 1900, when he served as aide to the naval governor.

The folder list which follows offers detailed information on the Johnston papers.