

The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,
Union Theological Seminary, New York

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 3

Finding Aid for

George Bowen Papers, 1846 – 1862



Image Source: Pitts Theology Library Digital Image Archive
<http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/BV2550R45V2/00002647.jpg>

Finding Aid prepared by: Debbie Liu, February 2012
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Summary Information

Creator: George Bowen, 1816 – 1888
Title: George Bowen Papers
Inclusive dates: 1846 – 1862
Bulk dates: 1846 – 1854
Abstract: George Bowen, a graduate of Union Theological Seminary, served as a missionary in Bombay, India from 1848 till his death in 1888. Bowen was editor of the *Bombay Guardian* from 1854-1888. Collection includes one bound notebook containing his lectures, sermons, notes, and comments.
Size: 1 box, 0.25 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance: Originally part of the independent Missionary Research Library, these records were moved with the MRL to the Brown Memorial Tower of Union Theological Seminary in 1929. In 1976 the records were accessioned to the Burke Library archives with the closure of the MRL.
- Access: Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible
Burke Library staff is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions: The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation: Item description, MRL 2: George Bowen Papers, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography

George Bowen (April 30, 1816 - February 5, 1888) was a missionary born in Middlebury, Vermont. At sixteen, Bowen decided on a literary career combined with music. Bowen studied German, French, Italian, and Spanish and further mastered these languages by extensively travelling Europe from 1836-1840. The death of his fiancée began a drastic transformation in his life and resulted in Bowen offering himself to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) as a missionary.

From 1844-1847 Bowen studied at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He arrived in Bombay on Jan. 19, 1848, where he lived until his death in 1888. After withdrawing from the ABCFM, Bowen earned his living by tutoring and was Associate Editor from 1851-1854, then Editor from 1854-1888 of the *Bombay Guardian*. Bowen was also editor of the Marathi publications of the Bombay Book and Tract Society and Secretary to the Religious Tracts Society.

In 1871 Bowen began associating himself with the work begun by travelling Methodist Evangelist, William Taylor. As a result of this relationship, Bowen joined the Methodist Episcopal Church as a missionary staff member in 1873. He became a charter member of the South India Conference, and for three years was a presiding elder of the Bombay District. Twice, in the absence of the bishop, Bowen acted as the president of the Conference.

George Bowen's editorials in the *Bombay Guardian* were published as three volumes: *Daily Meditations*, *The Amens of Christ*, and *Love Revealed* in Scotland (Edinburgh) and the United States (Presbyterian Board of Publications, Philadelphia). They were widely regarded as influential devotional books.

Sources:

"An Ideal Missionary: The Life Work of Rev. George Bowen." *The New York Times*, February 10, 1888.

Grove Biography in Context, s.v. "George Bowen," <http://galegroup.com> (accessed February 27, 2012).

Collection Scope and Content Note

The collection contains one bound notebook containing hand-written lectures, sermons, notes and comments written by George Bowen during his time at Union Theological Seminary and in Bombay. The notebook has 332 pages and is bound chronologically, from October 1, 1846 - March 16, 1862. A set of numbered lectures is available on pages 150-169.

Processing

Book was tied with cotton string and wrapped in unbuffered tissue paper and placed in new acid-free box

Further Sources

The main records of the ABCFM are held by the Houghton Library, Harvard College Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts and the following link is to the Finding Aid of that collection: <http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/~hou01467> Microfilms of various sections of the Houghton Library collection, most commonly of the earliest pre-1919 correspondence, can be found in many academic libraries.

See Series: ABC 6: Collection Department of ABCFM Finding Aid at Houghton Library: series includes letters received by the Board relating to candidates for appointment as missionaries, arranged by candidate. Bowen letters can be found in Volume 18, 43-48.

The Missionary Research Library at the Burke Library, Union Theological Seminary also offers a collection of ABCFM records. Please contact the archives if you would like to see these records at burkearchives@library.columbia.edu.

Contents list

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	Book, October 1, 1846 - March 16, 1862