

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

Finding Aid for

American Encyclopaedia of Christianity Records, 1920 - 1948



Wooden container used by W. W. Rockwell, Editorial Secretary,
for his American Encyclopaedia correspondence and papers

Finding Aid prepared by: Ruth Tonkiss Cameron, 2015

Summary Information

Creator: American Institute of Christianity, Inc , 1920-1927
Title: American Encyclopaedia of Christianity Records, 1920 - 1948
Inclusive dates: 1920-1948
Bulk dates: 1922-1926
Abstract: The American Institute for Christianity was incorporated in 1923 to enable the planning and production of a proposed 12 volume American Encyclopaedia of Christianity. Denominational councilors, writers, editors and supporters were contacted across the USA. The Institute was unable to attract adequate funding to produce the Encyclopaedia. The bulk of the Records consist of planning documents and correspondence.
Size: 7 boxes, 1 oversized box, 5.25 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@libraries.cul.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance:** The records of the American Encyclopaedia of Christianity were gathered by W. W. Rockwell, professor and librarian of Union Theological Seminary Library, in his role as Secretary of the Editorial Board for the planned Encyclopaedia. The materials, which he had retained from this project were then added to by papers returned from or donated by other colleagues and project Board members.
Robert. T. Handy, Union Theological Seminary Professor and church historian retained the records for some years from circa 1950 before transferring them to the Burke library at a later but undocumented date.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@libraries.cul.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.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, American Encyclopaedia of Christianity Records, 1920-1948, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

History

In 1920 preliminary discussions began concerning the potential development of an American Encyclopaedia of Christianity, as a balance to the existing Catholic Encyclopaedia. In 1922 an Editorial Board was established to plan the Encyclopaedia's development and publishing. The Encyclopaedia was planned to contain 12 volumes, "each volume containing a million words."

William Walter Rockwell, Union Theological Faculty member and Librarian, acted as secretary to the Board. The other initial Editorial board members were: Joseph C. Ayer, Benjamin W. Bacon, Rev. Arthur W. Brooks and William H. P. Hatch.

In late 1923 editors were asked to seek and secure Denominational Counsellors and much of the working structure for developing and promoting the Encyclopaedia was planned. All counsellors represented Protestant denominations and it became clear that the intention was to publish an up to date alternative to the then dated, but heavily used, Catholic Encyclopedia of 1910. That Encyclopedia had been updated by a single supplementary volume in 1918.

The first meeting of the initially named "Institute for the Advancement of Christian Knowledge" took place in March 1924 and later the organization was renamed as the American Institute of Christianity [A.I.C.].

The following individuals acted as incorporators with Dr. John A. Marquis in the chair: Rev. F. H. Knubel, John A. Marquis, Theodore H. Lamprecht, Rae D. Henkle, David G. Garabrant.

A contract was drawn up between the Institute and Robert Appleton to enable the management of the financial campaign for the Encyclopaedia, initially through the John Price Jones Corporation. That Corporation planned to raise \$1 million for a cost of \$2500.

From 1923-1926 it gradually became clear that the money which was raised did not cover the current expenses of the extensive work being prepared. In December 1926 the Executive Committee of the American Institute of Christianity resolved to offer a settlement to Robert Appleton and to dissolve the contract. The project came to an end and the new Encyclopedia was never produced.

The correspondence of the American Institute from as early as 1920 shows that Rockwell was in touch with people across the USA who saw the need for an Encyclopaedia of Protestant Christianity to compete in a scholarly approach with other religious encyclopedias in existence at that time. Unfortunately this project was fraught with difficulty because of the increasing financial problems in the 1920s and was never completed.

William W. Rockwell held the position of secretary to the Editorial committee of this project. He was born in Pittsfield, Mass. in 1874, a Congregationalist, who graduated from Harvard and Andover, and studied in Göttingen, Germany to obtain his Doctorate in 1914. He joined the Union faculty in 1905 as Assistant Professor teaching church history from both medieval and modern periods and for the first time introducing American Church history to UTS courses.

From 1908-1913 Rockwell was acting librarian at Union in the new Union Seminary building in Morningside Heights. Julia Pettee was appointed at this time to develop the first classification scheme for this large theological library and it is clear that Rockwell promoted this classification system to rationalize the potential contents for the encyclopedia.

Later William W. Rockwell served as both faculty member and librarian for 17 years until his retirement from Union in 1942. He died in New York City in 1958.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The collection is organized in 2 series:

- **Series 1: American Institute of Christianity Records, 1923-1927 (1 box, 0.25 lin.ft.)**
This small series contains the first of the three packets of papers recovered by W. W. Rockwell from different scattered sources.

The first packet contained the small group of records of the American Institute of Christianity (AIC), formerly known as the Institute for the Advancement of Christian Knowledge until fall in 1923. The records of the 1923 meeting can be consulted from the first folder in Series 1 box 1. This first envelope of material was sent to Rockwell by Mr. Henry N. Furnald, with Rockwell's comment on the envelope indicating that further records may be with Rev. F. H. Knubel and that the significant contents are the "Minute book of the Corporation which tried to publish the American Encyclopaedia of Christianity, 1923-26."

This minute book contains full minutes with financial reports from the Institute and is followed by a sequence of Executive minutes.

In this series can be seen a group of Historical Church Papers form a survey of

denominations across America. These were the work of Professor Williston Walker (1860-1922), American Church historian at Yale University.

- **Series 2 : American Encyclopaedia of Christianity Records, 1920-1948 (6 boxes, 2.75 lin.ft.)**

The bulk of this series consists of correspondence, editorial minutes, plans and drafts, with occasional promotional items. Rockwell's replies to letters may be found among the correspondence files. The bulk of his former carbon copied responses on acidic paper are now replaced with acid free copies.

The series begins with the second and third groups of papers received by Rockwell concerning the work towards production of the Encyclopaedia recovered from other members of the committees. These two packets were labelled as American Encyclopaedia. and form the beginning of this series.

The second packet, entitled "American Encyclopaedia," arrived in an envelope accompanied by Rockwell's comment: "This lot was before October 1921. I think it should be redistributed. Some was brought down this way from Vermont in 1921."

The third packet entitled "American Encyclopaedia of Christianity" arrived in an envelope with the comment: "Important papers including signed copy of Contract. Used Randolph, NH, 1926 and New York 1926-27. From a brief case."

Rockwell's own files, as secretary to the Editorial Board, follow these initial sections and are retained in the alphabetical order which was his personal method of file arrangement. Many single sheets of correspondence were found to have been placed either in individual folders or between folders by this alphabetization. For ease of access to correspondence, these can now be found grouped together at the beginning of each alphabetical section. The correspondence also includes carbon copies of replies by Rockwell and his annotations on letters received.

Sources

-This archival collection

-History of Union Theological Seminary in New York, R. T. Handy, Columbia Univ. Press, 1987

[William W. Rockwell Papers](#) in the Burke archives.

- [American Encyclopaedia of Christianity: its history and present condition: its doctrines, sects and institutions](#)- Preliminary announcement, [1920]

Processing

Decaying metal clips and pins were removed and folded items flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated by interleaving with acid-free paper or insert folders. News clippings and other items in acidic breakdown have been reproduced to acid free paper.

Contents list

Series 1: American Institute of Christianity Records, 1923-1927

Series Box Folder Contents

First Collected Sources

1	1	1	Board of Directors Minute Book, 1923-1927
1	1	2	Executive Committee Minute Book, 1923-26
1	1	3	American Institute of Christianity/Encyclopaedia Pamphlets, 1920, 1925
1	1	4-5	Williston Walker-Historical Church Papers

Series 2: American Encyclopaedia of Christianity Records, 1920-1948

Second Collected Sources 1920-21

2	1	1	Memorandum of Mutual Understanding, Nov. 1920
2	1	2	Finances-Planning, 1920-21
2	1	3	Finances-Founders' Committee, 1921
2	1	4	University Club Luncheon, Jan. 1921
2	1	5	Endorsements, 1921
2	1	6	Denominational Counsellors Advisory Board, 1921
2	1	7	Founders' Committee and Denominational Counsellors, 1921

Third Collected Sources-Key Papers

2	1	8	Memoranda of Mutual Understanding, 1920-23, 1926
2	1	9	Contracts -Editorial Board/Appleton, 1923-26
2	1	10	Finances, 1926
2	1	11	Denominational Counsellors Nominations, 1921
2	1	12	Resolutions and Endorsements, 1924-25
2	1	13	Editorial Principles and Sample Pages, 1925-26 [Transferred to Series 2 OS Box7]
2	1	14	Article Titles List A-B
2	1	15	Potential Writers
2	1	16	Articles Assigned to Writers, 1926
2	1	17	Directions to Writers, 1926
2	1	18	Sources-Sample Publications
2	1	19	Promotional Leaflets
2	1	20	Henkle-Financial Plans, Dec. 1925
2	1	21	Rockwell-Progress Report to Denominational Counsellors, Dec.1925
2	1	22	Rockwell-Kentucky Travel, 1926

W. W. Rockwell's Records A-Z

Correspondence A

2	2	1	Aagaard-ABCFM
2	2	2-3	R. T. Appleton
2	2	4	Arkell-Atkinson
2	2	5	J. C. Ayer
2	2	6	Advisory Council List
2	2	7	A.I.C. Board Executive Records, 1922-27

Series 2: American Encyclopaedia of Christianity Records, 1920-1948

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
			Correspondence A
			Articles
2	2	8	Allotment of
2	2	9	Delivered by Writers
2	2	10	Compensation
2	2	11	To Be Written
			Correspondence B
2	2	12	Babson-Bacon
2	2	13	Baltzer-Best
2	2	14	Beth-Burton
2	2	15	Budget 1925
2	2	16	Business Principles
			Correspondence C
2	3	1	Cadman-Cushing
2	3	2	Chicago Campaign, 1925
2	3	3	Christian Science Publishing Society
2	3	4	Classification-UTS Library
2	3	5	Community Chest -Donors Lists
2	3	6	Congregational Clubs
2	3	7	Congregational Committee Volume Project
2	3	8	Cowing, G. G.-Office Reports and Progress
			Correspondence: D
2	3	9	Dallas-Dyde
2	3	10	Denominational Counsellors
2	3	11	Dictionary of American Biography
2	3	12	Dinner Jan. 1925
2	3	13	Directions to Writers
			Correspondence: E
2	3	14	Ebenhack-Emmett
2	3	15-18	Editorial Board Minutes 1922-26
2	4	1	Editorial Board Minutes 1926-27
2	4	2	Editors-Principles Formulated
2	4	3	Editorial Board-Technical Memos
2	4	4	Encyclopaedia of Religion-New Haven Journal 1925
2	4	5	Episcopalian Volume
2	4	6	Executive Committee [A.I.C.] 1924-25
			Correspondence: F
2	4	7	Fagley-Fisher
2	4	8	Fletcher-Furnald
2	4	9	Founders-Names of [Transferred to Series 2 OS Box7]

Series 2: American Encyclopaedia of Christianity Records, 1920-1948

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
			Correspondence: G
2	4	10	Garabant-Gyger
			Correspondence: H
2	4	11	Hamlin-Hendrix
2	4	12	Henkle-Herrick
2	4	13	Hill-Hunter
2	4	14	Hill/Appleton-Foundation Documents 1923
2	4	15	History of Encyclopaedia Project-Sources Reference
			Correspondence: I
2	4	16	Illustrations [Single Large Item Transferred to Series 2 OS Box7]
2	4	17	Income Tax Lists 1925- References to New York Times Pages
2	4	18	Inst. of Advancement of Christian Knowledge, 1923 [Later American Institute of Christianity]
2	4	19	International review of Missions
2	4	20	Institute of Social and Religious Research
			Correspondence: J
2	4	21	Jacobs-Jordan
			Correspondence: K
2	4	22	Kelly-Kunz
			Correspondence: L
2	5	1	Lamprecht-Lynd
2	5	2	Legal Advice
			Correspondence: M
2	5	3	Macintosh-Marquis
2	5	4	Mees-Merrill
2	5	5	Meyer, H.H.
2	5	6	Miles-Mills
2	5	7	Monroe-Myers
2	5	8	Managing Editor, Maps
2	5	9	Masons
2	5	10	Methodist Circular, Missions Editor
			Correspondence: N
2	5	11	Newell-North
2	5	12	Newspaper Publicity
2	5	13	Outline of Christianity
			Correspondence: P
2	5	14	Pannkoke, O. H.
2	5	15	Parker-Pratt
2	5	16	Presbyterian Volume Presbyterian Circular
2	5	17	Press Clippings Bureaux
2	5	18	Prospects
2	5	19	Publicity Materials

Series 2: American Encyclopaedia of Christianity Records, 1920-1948

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
Correspondence: R			
2	5	20	Reading-Russell
2	6	1	Religious Education Association
2	6	2	Rochester (NY) Campaign
2	6	3	Routing Articles
Correspondence: S			
2	6	4	Schaff-Swearingen
2	6	5	Staff Candidates
2	6	6	Space Allotment-Planning
2	6	7	Space Allotment-Biblical Topics
Correspondence T-Z			
2	6	8	Taft-Zabriskie
2	OS7	1	German Publisher's Advertisement with 16 th Century Images [Transferred from Series 2 box 4 f16]
2	OS7	2	Editorial Principles and Sample Pages, 1925-26 [Transferred from Series 2 box 1 f13]
2	OS7	3	Names of Founders [Transferred from Series 2 box 4 f9]