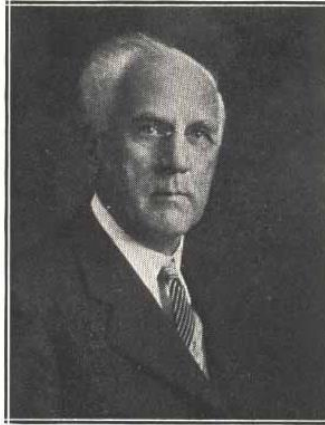


**The Burke Library Archives
Columbia University Libraries
At Union Theological Seminary, New York**

Finding Aid for

James Stanley Durkee Sermons, 1897 – 1947



Credit to: J.S. Durkee Papers,
The Burke Library Archives (Columbia University Libraries)
at Union Theological Seminary, New York, NY

Finding Aid prepared by: April Holm 2009

Summary Information

Creator: James Stanley Durkee, 1866 - 1951
Title: James Stanley Durkee Sermons, 1897-1947
Inclusive dates: 1897 - 1947
Bulk dates: 1897 - 1947
Abstract: James Stanley Durkee worked as a minister in New England and New York, where he headed Plymouth Church from 1927 to 1941. He served as president of Howard University from 1918 to 1926. This collection consists of his typed and handwritten sermons and sermon notes, many of which refer to contemporary events.
Size: 16 boxes, 16 linear feet
Storage: **Offsite storage**
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance: W. W. Rockwell, UTS librarian, received James Stanley Durkee's sermons from Richmond, Virginia in 1931. The papers arrived folded, labeled, and packed in gun boxes that bore the label of a Brooklyn storage firm where Durkee appears to have deposited the sermons during his lifetime.
- 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. Please note that this collection is held in offsite storage and requires 48 hours notice in response to a weekday retrieval request.
- Preferred Citation: Item description, James Stanley Durkee Sermons, 1897 - 1947, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries, at Union Theological Seminary, New York

Biography

James Stanley Durkee was a Baptist and Congregationalist minister who served in Maine, Massachusetts, and New York. He was the last white president of Howard University (1918-1926) and presided over Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims in Brooklyn, New York, from 1927-1941. The majority of his sermons deal with purely religious themes, but many touch upon contemporary topics as well as the relation of science, art, and literature to Christianity.

Durkee was born to James and Elizabeth (Dennis) Durkee in Carelton, Nova Scotia on November 21, 1866. In 1897 he received a bachelor's degree from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine and on August 4 1897, married Florence Marion Robbins, of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. Durkee was ordained as a Free Baptist minister in 1898 and that year began his first appointment at the Free Baptist Church in Auburn, Maine, where he served until 1901.

From 1901 to 1909, Durkee served as a pastor at the Free Baptist Church in Boston, Massachusetts. During these years he received a master's degree from Bates College and Cobb Divinity School and a PhD from Boston University. From 1909 to 1918 he headed the South Congregational Church in Brockton, Massachusetts.

In 1918, Durkee accepted the presidency of Howard University. While he succeeded in securing major federal funding, he also alienated prominent black scholars and restructured the liberal arts and professional programs to concentrate authority in the office of the president. In 1925, dissatisfied students led an eight-day campus wide strike. Following the protests, W. E. B. DuBois ran a series of critical editorials in *The Crisis*, accusing Durkee of treating students and black educators at Howard "as a subordinate caste." Durkee resigned in 1926. He was the last white president of the University.

Following his resignation, James Stanley Durkee accepted a call from Plymouth Church (Congregational) in Brooklyn, New York in 1927. In 1934, Durkee oversaw the consolidation of the congregations of Plymouth Church and the Church of the Pilgrims, which became known as Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims. Durkee's interest in Plymouth Church history is reflected in lectures on founder Henry Ward Beecher and in his arranging a return visit from former slave Rose Ward Hunt, whose freedom Beecher and his congregation purchased. Durkee retired in 1941 and died in Hyattsville, Maryland on September 28, 1951.

James Stanley Durkee authored eight books on Christian themes and wrote poetry throughout his life. He presented sermons regularly on the WJZ "Friendly Hour" radio program in the 1920's and 30's and was active in numerous Christian organizations and the prohibition movement.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The collection is organized in a single series of Sermons, 1897 - 1947 (16 boxes, 16 lin. ft.) This series contains 1378 handwritten and typed sermons, sermon outlines, notes, extracts, and newspaper clippings, arranged in chronological order. Most of the sermons are tied together with string and include a speaking outline. Durkee stored his sermons in brown paper wrappers marked with the sermon name, number and date(s) and location(s) delivered (Durkee frequently re-worked and re-used sermons). The dates on the finding aid correspond to the first time the sermon was delivered. All folders contain complete texts unless indicated as "Sermon Notes." Durkee titled most of his sermons and began to title regularly in 1906. Titles ending with an ellipsis in the finding aid are drawn from the first line of an untitled sermon.

Durkee made some notes and wrote drafts on the reverse of Howard letters and flyers, and printed material from pastorates in Maine, Massachusetts and New York. A small number of the sermons include letters from congregants and colleagues. These unusual items are noted in the finding aid. Durkee saved newspaper clippings relevant to his sermon's themes and these appear throughout the collection.

In addition to purely religious themes, Durkee spoke on contemporary topics and on art, science, and literature in relation to Christianity. Topics include education, the Great Depression, labor, Nazism, politics, racism, temperance, United States history, and World Wars I and II.

The following numbered sermons are not in this collection and were not in the original donation. Other archival repositories (See below) may contain some of these: #37, 585, 856, 881, 882, 979, 1012, 1016, 1048, 1049, 1053, 1057, 1059, 1061, 1065, 1068, 1070, 1072, and 1084.

A note in Sermon 946 provides this key to handwritten symbols:

- > = "of the"
- \ = "of"
- / = "the"
- U = "in"

Processing

Durkee's original system, reflected in his numbering, is maintained in this collection. The resulting order is almost, but not entirely, chronological.

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed.

Other Finding Aids

The Brooklyn Historical Society, in Brooklyn, NY, possesses a small number of Durkee's sermons and papers in its Plymouth Church Collection. The finding aid is available online at: http://brooklynhistory.org/library/download/Plymouth-Beecher-2006-for_web.pdf

The Moorland-Springarn Research Center at Howard University in Washington, D.C. holds six linear feet of Durkee's papers, including diaries, sermons, manuscripts, and correspondence. More information is available at: <http://wwwFOUNDERS.howard.edu/moorland-springarn/Colld-g.htm>

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4	88	Sermon 317: Jer 18:6, "Potter and the Clay," 14 Jan 1906
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4	90	Sermon 319: Phil 3:13-14, "Shall the Dead Hand Hold?" 21 Jan 1906. Includes letter from congregant, 25 July 1905
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7	3	Sermon 517: John 12:32, "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name," 31 Oct 1909
7	4	Sermon 518: 1 Cor 9:26, "Home Run," 21 Nov 1909
7	5	Sermon 519: Luke 21:1, "Xmas Gift," 19 Dec 1909
7	6	Sermon 520: Ecc 11:1, "Long Drive," 2 Jan 1910
7	7	Sermon 521: Gen 32:24, "World's Greatest Wrestling Match," 23 Jan 1910
7	8	Sermon 522: Ps 27:1, "Life from Light," 20 Feb 1910
7	9	Sermon 523: Is 53:12, "Dividing the Spoils," 3 April 1910
7	10	Sermon 524: Dan 6:10, "Face in the Window," 10 April 1910
7	11	Sermon 525: Is 9:10, "Cedar for Sycamore," 17 April 1910
7	12	Sermon 526: Sg 2:11-12, "Spring Song," 1 May 1910
7	13	Sermon 527: Rev 11:15, "Challenge to the Church," 29 May 1910
7	14	Sermon 528: 1 Kings 6:14, "Building the Temple: Masonic," 5 June 1910
7	15	Sermon 529: Matt 25:32, "Judgment Day," 19 June 1909
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7	17	Sermon 531: Gen 47:10, "Blessing Others," 3 July 1910
7	18	Sermon 532: Mark 1:1, "Gospel We Preach," 11 Sept 1910
7	19	Sermon 533: Col 2:10, "Myself as I May Be," 18 Sept 1910
7	20	Sermon 534: John 18:5, "Standing – On Which Side?" 18 Sept 1910
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7	26	Sermon 540: John 9:18, "Present Christ," 6 Nov 1910
7	27	Sermon 541: Is 49:6, "Capable of Greater Things," 20 Nov 1910
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7	29	Sermon 543: 2 Cor 3:18, "Engraved by the Master," 18 Dec 1910
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7	35	Sermon 549: Ruth 2:21, "Command to the Church," 5 Feb 1911
7	36	Sermon 550: John 8:32, "Truth," 19 Feb 1911
7	37	Sermon 551: Heb 6:4, "Destroying Spiritual Discernment," 5 March 1911
7	38	Sermon 552: John 8:28, "Whatever We Lift Lifts Us," 26 March 1911
7	39	Sermon 553: Matt 6:20, "Future Treasures," 2 April 1911
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7	42	Sermon 556: Gal 6:9, "Ye Shall – If!" 7 May 1911
7	43	Sermon 557: Ps 116:14, "Prythian's Vow," 14 May 1911
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7	50	Sermon 564: Ps 119:140, "It Stands the Test," 17 Sept 1911
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7	54	Sermon 568: Luke 1:36, "Enfolding Life of God," 22 Oct 1911
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13	65	Sermon 1118: Micah 6:8, "Religion for the Common Man," 23 April 1933
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13	75	Sermon 1128: Jer 25:10, "Old Mills that Have Ceased to Grind," 24 Sept 1933
13	76	Sermon 1129: Matt 7:28-9, "The Master Teacher," 1 Oct 1933
13	77	Sermon 1130: Is 53:5, "So Great a Sacrifice," 8 Oct 1933
13	78	Sermon 1131: Matt 16:18, "Church – Past, Present, and Future," 22 Oct 1933
13	79	Sermon 1132: "Hitlerism and Christianity: A Symposium with Dr. Alexander Lyons and 8 th Avenue Temple," 29 Oct 1933. Includes flyer with photo of Durkee.
13	80	Sermon Notes 1133: Sol 5:10, "Greatest of the Great," 5 Nov 1933
13	81	Sermon 1134: Luke 4:21, "Christ's First Sermon," 19 Nov 1933
13	82	Sermon 1135: Phil 3:12, "I Am Elected," 26 Nov 1933
13	83	Sermon 1136: Prov 21:17, "Place of Sport," 3 Dec 1933
13	84	Sermon 1137: Matt 6:6, "What is Prayer?" 10 Dec 1933
13	85	Sermon 1138: Rom 10:12, "Key Word – All," 17 Dec 1933
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14	67	Sermon 1207: 1 Cor 13:13, "Why I Love England," 1 March 1936
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