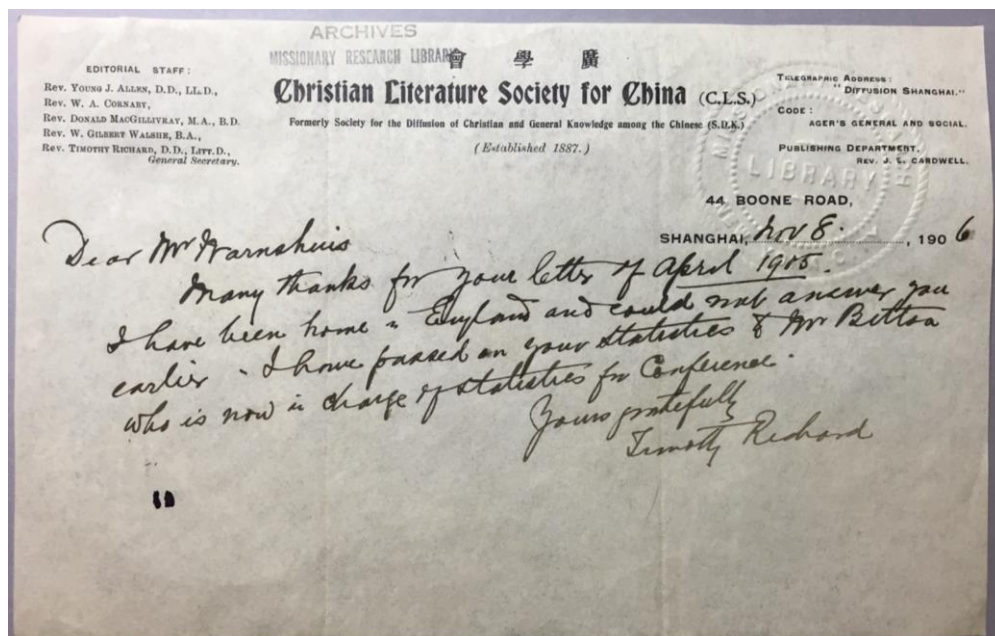


The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,
Union Theological Seminary, New York

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 12

Finding Aid for

Autographs of Missionaries, 1827; 1906



Timothy Richard letter. Credit to: MRL 12: Autographs of Missionaries, box 1, and folder 2, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Brigette C. Kamsler, December 2014
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: Missionary Research Library
Title: Autographs of Missionaries
Dates: 1827 and 1906
Abstract: Collection of signatures of famous missionaries, gathered by MRL.
Contains one letter and one signed title page.
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 12: Autographs of Missionaries, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

History

The Missionary Research Library was created by John R. Mott in 1914 after the World Missionary Conference, held in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1910. It was created in order to be not only a resource for missionaries, but a means to document the missionary movement. With funding from John D. Rockefeller, Mott stated,

“We are now ready to...secure the most complete and serviceable missionary library and archives in the world. I desire it to be thoroughly interdenominational, ecumenical and international. It should be made preeminently rich in source material.”

It was located at the Madison Avenue headquarters of the Foreign Missionary Conference of North America. By the 1920s, funding was becoming scarcer; therefore it was moved to the Brown Tower of the Union Theological Seminary, New York City in 1929.

The Library was an important center of information and research. Active missionaries would consult the material of the Missionary Research Library while on furlough. Much of the Library's success was due to the director and librarian, Charles H. Fahs. Upon his retirement in 1948, the MRL's financial difficulties continued until it was finally integrated as one with the Burke Library's collections in 1967. In 2004, the Burke Library was fully integrated with the Columbia University Library System.

Sources:

Anderson, Gerald H. “To The Ends of the Earth: American Protestants in Pursuit of Mission.” *A Century of Church History: The Legacy of Philip Schaff*, edited by Henry W. Bowden, 168-215. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988.

Anderson, Gerald H. “Research Libraries in New York City Specializing in Christian Missions.” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Aug. 1966), 733-736.

Frame, Cynthia. "Missionary Research Library Collection: From Idea to Special Collection," *Union News*, Summer 1998.

Price, Frank W. "Specialized Research Libraries in Missions." *Library Trends* 9 (2) 1960: Current Trends in Theological Libraries: 175-185.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The Missionary Research Library created many collections of individual items to document a specific topic. This is one such collection, which focused on the signatures of well-known missionaries. The items were pulled from unknown locations and have no relationship other than they contain the autographs of the missionaries.

Robert Morrison, 1782-1834, was an Anglo-Scottish evangelist and the first Christian Protestant missionary in China. He is credited with translating the Bible into Chinese.

Timothy Richard, 1845-1919, was a Welsh Baptist missionary in China, who influenced the modernization of China and the rise of the Chinese Republic.

Processing

Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. The collection had been noted missing for years, but some of the material was found in 2012. However at that time it was discovered that a number of items were still missing. The collection now consists of two autographs.

It originally also contained an album owned by Sarah Wood Lyon which contained signatures of missionaries, 1860 -1923, and eleven other autographed mounted letters from early missionaries that dated from around 1850.

Further Sources

The Burke Library Archives offers many other collections related to missionaries and mission work. For more information, please [see the website](#).

Contents list

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	Robert Morrison, Signature on his copy of Du Halde's <i>Description Geographique Historique</i> , two leaves [Title pages], 1827
1	2	Timothy Richard, autographed short letter, 1906