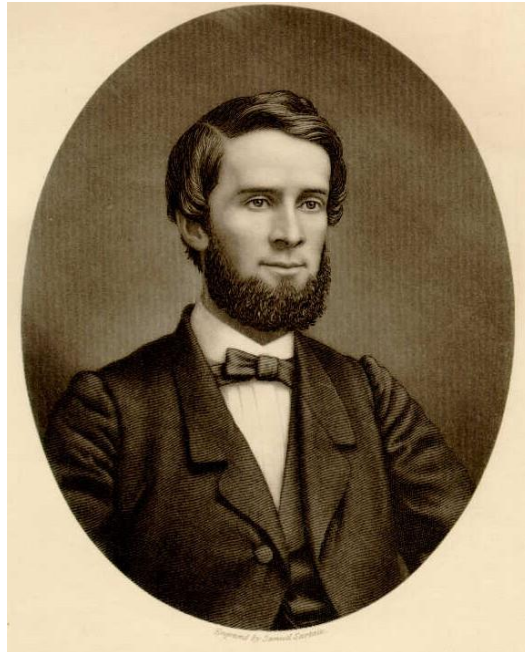


The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,
Union Theological Seminary, New York

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 9

Finding Aid for

Ashbel Green Simonton Journal, 1852 – 1866



Finding Aid prepared by: Miguel Escobar, October 2006

Reviewed and Updated by Brigette C. Kamsler, September 2014 with financial support from the
Henry Luce Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: Helen Murdoch Simonton
Title: Ashbel Green Simonton Journal
Dates: 1852 – 1866
Abstract: Transcription of A.G. Simonton's journal covering his years at Princeton seminary and his first years as a Presbyterian missionary in Brazil.
Size: 1 box, 0.25 linear ft.
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 donated by Robert E. Speer of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. to Charles H. Fahs, director of the Missionary Research Library in 1918. The original diary was first sent to Robert E. Speer by A.G. Simonton's daughter who asked that copies of his diary be made and distributed. In 1976 these records were accessioned to the Burke Library archives with the closure of the MRL. In 2014 the collection was updated as part of the Henry Luce Foundation.
- 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.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, MRL 9: Ashbel Green Simonton Journal, 1852-1866, box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography

Ashbel Green Simonton (1833-1867) was an American Presbyterian pioneer missionary in Brazil. A graduate of Princeton seminary, he was sent to Brazil by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions arriving in Rio de Janeiro in August 1859.

In 1860 Simonton organized the first Sunday school, with five children, and began evangelistic work in Portuguese. He converted, baptized, and ordained a former Roman Catholic priest, José Manoel da Conceição, the first Brazilian Presbyterian minister. He organized the first Presbyterian Church in Rio de Janeiro and was the founder of the first evangelical newspaper.

Simonton returned to the United States in 1862 and married Helen Murdoch. She died in 1864 after giving birth to a daughter. Simonton died in 1867 of yellow fever at age 36.¹

Collection Scope and Content Note

This collection contains one of the transcripts of the journal requested by Helen Simonton. The original manuscript journal is deposited at Princeton Theological Seminary. Another copy can be found in the Historical Museum of the Presbyterian Seminary in Campinas, Brazil.

¹ Gerald H. Anderson, *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillan, 1998) 621-3.

Processing

When the Burke Library acquired the A.G. Simonton papers, the original order was retained. Folded materials were flattened. Staples, rubber bands, and metal clips were removed and replaced with plastic clips. All materials were placed in acid-free folders and boxes.

The collection and finding aid were updated in 2014 as part of the Henry Luce Foundation project. Over the years the papers had become folded and bent. The collection was placed in new acid-free folders with spacers to combat the damage.

This collection is housed in the same box as MRL9: Howard W. Yoder Papers, 1954.

Further Sources

A collection related to Ashbel Green Simonton is deposited at the Princeton Theological Library. More information can be found on [their website](#).

The Burke Library offers other collections related to the topics and geographic locations covered in this collection. For more information, please see the [Burke Library Archives website](#).

Contents list

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	November 5, 1852 – June 6, 1854
1	2	July 12, 1854 – January 1, 1858
1	3-4	February 8, 1858 – December 31, 1866