

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

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 3

Finding Aid for

William Wilberforce Chapin Papers, 1860 – 1865



Voyage to India map. Credit to MRL3: William Wilberforce Chapin Papers, box 1, folder 9, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Melissa Lemons, August 2007

Updates by Kristen Leigh Southworth and Brigette C. Kamsler, January 2013, with financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: William Wilberforce Chapin, 1836 – 1865
Title: William Wilberforce Chapin Papers
Inclusive dates: 1860-1865
Abstract: Congregational American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions missionary to India. Correspondence with his betrothed Katherine Isabel Hayes and missionary friends, as well as journal entries from trips to Labrador, Greenland, and on voyage to India.
Size: 1 box, 0.50 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, the collection was presented to Union Theological Seminary on May 11, 1931 by Mabel Hay Burrows Mussey of New York City, in memory of her mother Isabel Chapin Burrows. 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 3: William Wilberforce Chapin Papers, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography

William Wilberforce Chapin was born in Somers, Connecticut on December 2, 1836. His father Oliver, an instructor at Williams College, died in 1852 when William was sixteen years old. Chapin joined the Congregational Church two years later. He graduated from Williams College in 1860, showing a particular aptitude for the natural sciences. That same year he was sent on an expedition to Labrador and Greenland by the Natural History Society of Williams College in order to collect animal, plant, shell, and other specimens.

Upon his return, Chapin attended Andover Seminary. During his time at Andover he met Katherine Isabel ("Katie Belle") Hayes, the daughter of a Scottish physician who was on a visit to meet Chapin's sister Charlotte, head of Mt. Holyoke Seminary. Isabel had planned to teach botany at Mt. Holyoke, but instead was forced to return home to New Hampshire to care for her ailing mother. William graduated from Andover in 1863 and was ordained on September 24th of that same year. William and Isabel were married two days later on September 26, 1863.

In January of 1864, the couple traveled to India with the intention of completing a ten-year missionary assignment together as part of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). They were stationed in Pimplus (Pimpulwandi), a rural area about fifty miles from Ahmednagar, and set up their home in a mud hut. Three months after their arrival, William became ill. Eventually he contracted diphtheria. By the time he was able to seek medical care it was too late, and he died on March 22, 1865 at the age of 28, leaving his wife Isabel a widow at the age of 19. On his deathbed he implored her, "I want you to work with all your strength, because the messenger is taking me away...Wherever you are, live for Christ."

Isabel remained in Ahmednagar for ten months teaching at a school for girls, but in September she returned to the United States to become a physician. In 1867 she married Samuel June

Barrows, a congressional stenographer in Washington, D.C. Isabel took his place when Samuel fell ill and became the first woman ever to work for the State Department. She graduated from the Woman's Medical College of the New York Infirmary in 1869, and then went on to study ophthalmology at the University of Vienna Medical School, becoming the first female eye doctor.

By 1885 Isabel Burrows had become a Unitarian and had given up her medical practice to devote her time to social causes. She was overseas attempting to win freedom for Russian revolutionary Catherine Breshkovsky when Samuel died in 1909. She took his place that year at the International Prison Congress in Paris, and continued to work for women's prison reform until she died in 1913. Just months before her death, Isabel published a book about second husband's life entitled *A Sunny Life: The Biography of Samuel June Barrows*.

Sources:

Association of Collegiate and Professional Students, "News Articles: Williams College," *The University Quarterly*, vol. 1, Jan & Apr 1860. New Haven, CT: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, 1860, p. 175.

Harvey, Joy & Ogilvie, Marilyn B., *The Biographical Dictionary of Women in Science: Pioneering Lives from Ancient Times to the Mid-20th Century*. London: Routledge, 2000, p. 85.

Quint, Alonzo H. & Langworthy, Isaac P., "Congregational Necrology," *The Congregational Quarterly*, vol. 8, Boston: Cambridge Press, 1866, p. 39.

Stern, Madeleine B., *We the Women: Career Firsts of Nineteenth-Century America*. Omaha, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994, pp. 178-204.

Vermont Historical Society, "Isabel Hayes Chapin Barrows," *Vermont Women's History Project*, 2006. Accessed 14 Jan 2013 at <http://womenshistory.vermont.gov/?TabId=61&personID=161>

Collection Scope and Content Note

A bound diary from 1860 offers a day-to-day, first-person account of Chapin's expedition to Labrador and Greenland. Correspondence from the courtship between William Wilberforce Chapin and Katie-Belle Hayes has been numbered in chronological order and dates from August 12, 1862 to September 22, 1863 (four days before their wedding). Field notes contain handwritten drafts and abstracts of longer works by Chapin and correspondence from missionary colleagues.

Copies of the Voyage to India journal kept by William and Isabel, as well as the correspondence sent and received by both missionaries during their time on the field, have been transcribed and annotated by Mabel Hay Burrows Mussey, daughter of Isabel and Samuel Burrows. Her notes and commentaries are indicated by the initials "MM".

Processing

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. Any items in an advanced state of deterioration were placed in Mylar envelopes.

Further Sources

The Burke Library also offers other material in the Missionary Research Library relating to South Asia. Information on collections available can be found online at:

<http://library.columbia.edu/indiv/burke/archives/mrl.html>. The Burke also has a collection of American Board (ABCFM) records, more information on which can be found at: http://library.columbia.edu/content/dam/libraryweb/libraries/burke/fa/mrl/ldpd_4492650.pdf.

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.

The Congregational Library also offers ABCFM records. Information on archives and access to finding guides can be found online: <http://www.congregationallibrary.org/resources/archives-and-finding-guides>.

Andover-Harvard Theological Library collects records documenting the Unitarian Church, as well as records for Andover Theological Seminary:

<http://www.hds.harvard.edu/library/bms/index.html>.

Contents list

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	Labrador Journal of William W. Chapin, 1860
1	2-8	Correspondence with Isabel Hayes, 1862-1863
1	9	Voyage to India Journal of William and Isabel Chapin [transcribed with notes by Mabel Mussey], 1864
1	10	Field Notes by William W. Chapin, 1864-1865
1	11	Missionary Correspondence of William Isabel Chapin [transcribed with notes by Mabel Mussey], 1864-1865