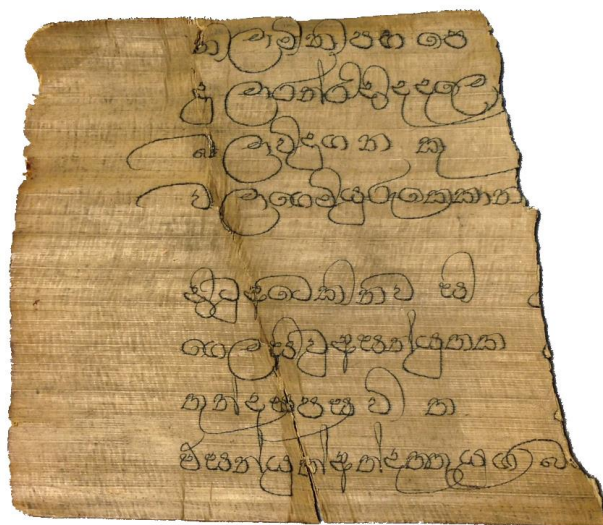


The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,  
Union Theological Seminary, New York

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 3

Finding Aid for

**C. P. Bush Papers, [18??] – [1880]**



Credit to MRL 3: C.P. Bush Papers, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Kristen Leigh Southworth and Brigette C. Kamsler, January 2013  
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

**Summary Information**

Creator: Rev. Dr. Charles Peck Bush, 1813 – 1880  
Title: C. P. Bush Papers  
Dates: [18??] – [1880]  
Abstract: Knife and stylus from an Indian Hindu scribe, along with Indian palm leaf correspondence, donated to the Burke Library by Charles P. Bush, District Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions for New York and alumnus of Union Theological Seminary, class of 1840.  
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](mailto: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. The material was donated to the Burke Library by Charles P. Bush, District Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions for New York and alum of Union Theological Seminary. 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](mailto: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: C. P. Bush Papers, box # and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

### Biography

Charles Peck Bush was born in Brighton, NY on November 11, 1813 to David and Laura Peck Bush. In 1835 he served as a delegate to the State Anti-Slavery Convention in Utica, NY. He attended New Haven Theological Seminary from 1837-1839, and completed his Masters of Divinity degree at Union Theological Seminary in 1840. Bush served a number of appointments as pastor including Tenth Presbyterian Church in New York, NY, Fourth Congregational Church in Norwich, CT, New England Congregational Church in Chicago, IL, and First Presbyterian Church in Beloit, WI.

Rev. Dr. C. P. Bush married Elizabeth Bradford Homer and they had a daughter in 1847, Caroline C. Bush, who went on to serve as a missionary in Harpoot, Turkey for over thirty years. In 1860, Charles P. Bush became District Secretary of the American Tract Society in New York City until 1863 when he moved to Rochester. He then served as District Secretary for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), a position he held for the remainder of his life. In 1867 Hamilton College conferred upon him an honorary Doctorate of Divinity degree. Bush returned to New York City in 1871, where he continued to serve as District Secretary to the ABCFM until his death in 1880.

Dr. Bush's keen interest in history and mission work is evidenced by his numerous biographical publications and speeches. The palm leaf letters he donated to the Burke Library exemplify the writing methods of ancient Asia. Palm leaf manuscripts date back as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The palm leaves were cut to size, and the text was inscribed with the metal stylus. Soot or coal powder was then mixed with oil and rubbed into the inscriptions so that the letters could be

seen more easily. The rounded script used on the palm leaf letters is Tamil, a language of South India and Sri Lanka that is one of the oldest surviving classical languages in the world.

Sources:

- Hurd, D. Hamilton. *History of New London County, CT: with biographical sketches of many of its pioneers and prominent men*. Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis & Co. 1882. Pages 290-303.
- Marsh, Dwight W. *Marsh Genealogy: Giving Several Thousand Descendants of John Marsh of Hartford, CT, 1636-1895*. Amherst, MA: Press of Carpenter & Morehouse. 1895. Accessed online 8 January 2013 at <http://www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/dwight-whitney-marsh/marsh-genealogy-giving-several-thousand-descendants-of-john-marsh-of-hartford--sra/page-36-marsh-genealogy-giving-several-thousand-descendants-of-john-marsh-of-hartford--sra.shtm>
- New York State Anti-Slavery Society. *First Annual Report of the proceedings held at Peterboro October 22, 1935*. Utica, NY: Standard & Democrat Office. 1935.
- Sanford Steever. "Tamil Writing." In Daniels & Bright, *The World's Writing Systems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1996.
- Snow, Lydia Vose Buck Collection, MS 2407. *Congregational Christian Historical Society Library*. Accessed 8 January 2013 at <http://www.congregationallibrary.org/resources/efg/efg-snow>
- Udaya Kumar, D., Sreekumar, G. V., & Athvankar, U. A. "Traditional Writing System in Southern India – Palm Leaf Manuscripts." *Design Thoughts*, July 2009, pp 2-7.



Preserved collection and stylus including knife.

Credit to MRL 3: C.P. Bush Papers, The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries, at Union Theological Seminary, New York.

**Collection Scope and Content Note**

Stylus including knife from an Indian Hindu scribe, along with Indian palm leaf correspondence and former gallery tags. Included in this collection are two cards describing the contents and explaining their significance.

Palm leaf correspondence traditionally measured 1 inch by 1.5 inches in a small package. The material was wrapped and had specific meaning in the manner in which it was wrapped.

### Processing

Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Any items in an advanced state of deterioration were placed in Mylar envelopes. Preservation department created a custom box for stylus and other items.

### Further Sources

Charles Bush wrote a number of pamphlets and publications, including:

Bush, Charles P. *The Fugitive Slave Law: a sermon preached in the Fourth Congregational Church, Norwich, CT on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1854*. Norwich: Woodworth & Perry Steam Printers. 1854.

Bush, Charles P. *Five Years in China, or, The Factory Boy Made a Missionary: The Life and Observations of Rev. W. Aitchison*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Publication Committee. 1865.

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>.

Burke also offers a collection of American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Records. The finding aid can be seen online at:

[http://library.columbia.edu/content/dam/libraryweb/libraries/burke/fa/mrl/ldpd\\_4492650.pdf](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.

### Contents list

| Box | Item | Contents   |
|-----|------|--|
| 1   | 1    | Stylus and Palm Leaf Correspondence, [18??] – [1880] |