

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

**Union Theological Seminary Archives 1**

**Finding Aid for**

**Caroline Worth Pinkham Papers, 1867 – 1984**



Photograph of Caroline Worth Pinkham. Credit to: UTS1: Caroline Worth Pinkham Papers, 1867-1984, box 1, folder 4, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Katherine Palm, April 2015  
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**Summary Information**

**Creator:** Caroline Worth Pinkham, 1897-1984  
**Title:** Caroline Worth Pinkham Papers  
**Inclusive dates:** 1867-1984  
**Bulk dates:** 1916-1935  
**Abstract:** First woman to receive Ph.D. from Columbia and Union Theological Seminary in the History and Comparative Study of Religion and writer whose several years of living in India in the early 1920s and interest in women's status in scripture influenced much of her work. Collection consists of a manuscript autobiography that includes correspondence and photographs and manuscripts of a number of published and unpublished works.  
**Size:** 6 boxes, 2.50 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:** The papers are part of the Union Theological Seminary Archives, which comprises institutional and administrative records of the Seminary, combined with the papers of many organizations, scholars, pastors, laypersons, and others connected with the school. The materials in this collection were part of a large group of unprocessed material that was organized in 2015.
- 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, UTS1: Caroline Worth Pinkham Papers, 1867-1984, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

### Biography

Caroline Mildreth Pinkham (née Worth) was born on June 20, 1897 at 287 Amity Street, Flushing, New York. A writer throughout her life, Pinkham was a published author and also the first woman to get the Ph.D., from Columbia and Union Theological Seminary in the History and Comparative Study of Religion in 1941.

Her father, George W. Worth, had a real estate and insurance office. Her mother, Caroline Amelia Thorn, graduated from a Normal school as a teacher, but was a homemaker during Pinkham's life.

Known as "Mildreth," Pinkham was educated at the Packer Collegiate Institute, a private school in Brooklyn from which she graduated in 1917. While at school, Pinkham had a number of original writings published in "Packer Current Items," the school's literary magazine. During this time, she and her mother chose to leave the Episcopal church to follow the Presbyterian faith and eventually joined the Lafayette Presbyterian Church.

In 1917, Pinkham enrolled at Young's School of Stenography and Typewriting at 148 Montague Street in Brooklyn, New York, writing in her diary: "I do not intend to be a stenographer all the days of my life, but I believe the knowledge of shorthand will be of value." Soon after, the family moved from 498 Clinton Avenue for a new residence at 421 4th Street, Brooklyn, New York.

During her early twenties, Pinkham worked in various offices in a secretarial capacity, such as The Brooklyn Bureau of Charities and at Town and Country magazine. In July 1917 she began work at Sperry Gyroscope Company, which she describes as then "doing war work in the

aeroplane.” In the early 1920s, she assisted at the Brooklyn Children’s Museum at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences and contributed to its publications.

Pinkham married Lloyd Francis Pinkham, a graduate of the University of Maine and former Lieutenant in the United States Air Service, on September 9, 1922. Their courtship is reflected in a series of letters between them in 1920-1922 while Pinkham was posted in India as an employee of Standard Oil. Pinkham spent much of the next three years based in Lucknow, United Province, India with her husband.

After returning to the United States in 1925, Pinkham and her husband joined the West Side Presbyterian Church in Ridgewood, New Jersey. Her husband began a long career at The Remington Cash Register Co. (the business of which was eventually sold to the National Cash Register Company) and the couple settled in New Jersey. Pinkham’s book, *A Bungalow in India*, was published in 1928 and in 1929 Pinkham enrolled as an undergraduate at Columbia University.

Pinkham received bachelor of science and master of arts degrees from Columbia University in 1933 and 1935, respectively. She graduated from Union Theological Seminary in 1935. Her progress towards her advanced degrees slowed during various periods when she and her husband relocated to South Bend, Indiana and Portland, Maine for reasons related to his career.

She eventually received the degree of doctor of philosophy from Columbia University in 1941 in connection with her dissertation entitled “The Status of Woman in Hinduism as Reflected in the Puranas, the Mahabharata, and the Ramayana.”

Pinkham’s writings include *A Bungalow in India: Intimate Glimpses of Indian Life and People* (1928), *The Status of Woman as Reflected in the Puranas, the Mahabharata, and the Ramayana* (1941), *The Common Heritage* (1985), *Confucius Says, Woman and the Family in World Scriptures*, as well as a variety of articles printed in publications such as *Childhood*, a magazine published by the Old Stone Press.

Pinkham and her husband spent much of their later years, following his retirement, traveling the world.

Pinkham died in 1984 at age 87 in Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey, having survived her parents and husband. The Worth-Pinkham Memorial Library, the current building of which was a gift of Pinkham, in Ho-Ho-Kus bears her name.

#### Sources:

From the collection itself and:

Union Theological Seminary. 1958. *Alumni Directory*. New York: Union Theological Seminary.

“United States Social Security Death Index,” index, *FamilySearch*

(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VMXT-TPN> : accessed 23 April 2015), Mildreth

Pinkham, Nov 1984; citing U.S. Social Security Administration, *Death Master File*, database (Alexandria, Virginia: National Technical Information Service, ongoing).

### **Collection Scope and Content Note**

The collection consists chiefly of manuscripts of Pinkham, including for *Victorian Echoes: An Autobiography* (Boxes 1-4). Throughout the autobiography manuscript, transcribed diary entries contemporary to the period of her life that she is describing are interwoven and for large portions of the manuscript, the diary predominates. Details of her daily activities and thoughts, as well as of salient events of the day are recorded.

Photographs are interspersed occasionally throughout the manuscript, but are largely concentrated in the chapters entitled "Roots" and "Childhood" (Box 1). These photographs are well labelled and indicate the identity of those pictured, who include Pinkham, her immediate family, and family pets and locations. The earliest identified item in the collection is a photograph of Susan Emeline Thorn dated 1867 and located in Box 1, Folder 1.

Within the chapters entitled "Courtship" and "Marriage" (Boxes 2-3), are contained a large amount of correspondence between Pinkham and her eventual husband while he was working abroad in Calcutta, India for Standard Oil and a set of letters from Pinkham in India to her parents following her marriage. These materials contain accounts of both the day-to-day life of Americans living in colonial India and often also touch upon political matters, such as the release of Gandhi in 1924 or the likelihood of home rule.

A large variety of items are included within this correspondence, such as: others' letters, newspaper clippings, business cards, postcards, cancelled stamps, greeting cards, programs, currency, cablegrams, a Sunday school student's drawing, a receipt for purchase of a car in India, a household budget, and sample scraps of knitting wool.

### **Processing**

Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. In some cases, acidic items were separated from one another by placing into acid-free envelopes or interleaving with acid-free paper as needed and metal clips were removed.

### **Further Sources**

Columbia University's Rare Book & Manuscript Library holds a copy of Pinkham's 1936 master's thesis, "The Status of Woman in the Vedas," and the record for this item can be accessed at <http://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/4290768>

**Contents list**

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
		<b>Autobiography (1867-1984)</b>
1	1-7	Vol. 1, Ch. 1: Roots; Vol. 1, Ch. 2: Childhood; Vol. 1, Ch. 3: Adolescence; Vol. 1, Ch. 4: Business World
2	1-7	Vol. 1, Ch. 5: Courtship
3	1-8	Vol. 1, Ch. 5: Courtship cont'ed; Vol. 2, Ch. 1: Marriage
4	1-13	Vol. 2, Ch. 2: Post-graduate years; Vol. 2, Ch. 3: Middle age travels; Vol. 2, Ch. 4: Golden years
		<b>Manuscripts</b>
5	1	The Family in World Scripture
5	2	The Philosophical Adverbial Noun; poems
5	3	Six Christmas Stories
5	4-6	Woman and the Family in World Scriptures
5	7	Your Way and Mine
6	1	Santa's Wonder Tales
6	2	Half of India