

**The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary,
Columbia University in the City of New York**

Union Theological Seminary Archives

Finding Aid for

William Weston Patton, 1836-1918



Portrait of William Weston Patton by Charles Delevan Mosher. Credit to Wikipedia, retrieved 8/25/2016.

Finding Aid prepared by: Maya Naunton and Rebecca Nieto, August 2017
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.

Summary Information

Creator: William Weston Patton, 1821-1889
Title: William Weston Patton Papers, 1836-1918
Inclusive dates: 1836-1918
Bulk dates: 1860-1880
Abstract: UTS Alumnus (1842); Presbyterian minister; abolitionist; son of William Patton (faculty member and director, Union Theological Seminary). Papers consist of bound volumes, family photographs, sermons and family books.
Size: 6 boxes, 2.75 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: The papers were donated to the library at Union Theological Seminary by Mr. Patton's descendant in 2004. These materials were part of a large group of unprocessed material that was organized in 2017 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation. The majority of Patton's papers, including many of his early writings and hymnology, are held at the [Connecticut Historical Society](#).

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, notably the bound and loose materials in Series 2, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restrictions in handling and copying.

Preferred Citation: Item description, UTS1: William Weston Patton Papers, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography

William Weston Patton was a minister and a key figure in the abolitionist movement. Patton wrote the lyrics to what became the "Battle Hymn of the Republic". He was the president of Howard University from 1877 to 1889.

William Weston Patton was born on October 19th, 1821. He was the oldest surviving child of Rev. William Patton, D.D., and Mary Weston Patton. His father was one of the founders of the Union Theological Seminary (and briefly served as director from 1836 to 1849) and the Evangelical Alliance. Patton's grandfather was a colonel in the Revolutionary War and the first Postmaster of Philadelphia in the new Republic.

William Weston Patton graduated from New York University and the Union Theological Seminary and became a minister at age 20. Not long after that, Patton left the Presbyterian Church partly because of his anti-slavery stance and became a minister in a Congregational Church.

He married Sarah Jane Mott in 1843. They had 3 children, two of whom died in childhood. His first wife died in childbirth and he married Mary Boardman Smith in 1851. With her he had 6 children all of whom survived into maturity.

Patton served as a minister in Chicago and was one of the organizers and a President of the Board of Directors of the Chicago Theological Seminary.

During the Civil War Patton was a vice-president of the Northwestern Sanitary Commission. In that capacity he inspected army camps throughout the central United States. It was during his travels for the commission that he wrote new lyrics to the song that was then familiarly known as "John Brown's Body". The text was published in the Chicago Tribune and then was modified by Julia Ward Howe into what is known today as "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

In 1862 Patton presided over a mass meeting in Chicago, where he drew up a memorial on proclamation of emancipation and he was the head of the Committee that presented it to President Lincoln.

In 1867 he resigned his pastorate and became an editor of the Advance, a Congregational paper in the Northwest. In 1877 he became a president of Howard University. He held that post to shortly before his death on December 31, 1889, at the age of 69.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The majority of William Weston Patton's papers are held in the Connecticut Historical Society and the Chicago Historical Society. The papers held in the Burke Archives contain family photographs, family books, manuscripts and a collection of papers from the Congregational Church of Christ, Westfield, NJ, where his son was a minister.

The collection is organized into 3 series, arranged as follows:

- **Series 1: Photographs, 185?-189?**

Images are of various members of the Patton family and houses where they lived, arranged chronologically. Materials are housed in an oversized archive box. Photographs in the content listing include captions and annotations accompanying the original images.

- **Series 2: Published and Unpublished Writings, 1845-1861**

Some books were written by W.W. Patton's father, William Patton, others by Williams Weston Patton himself. One book was written by his children to publish the sermon preached by his son on occasion of his death and the biography written by them.

All of the books belonged to the family as testified to by ms inscriptions.

- **Series 3: Congregational Church of Christ, 1874-1918**

This series contains newsletters, service programs, and other materials relating to the Congregational Church of Christ. Some materials relate to the town itself. WWP's son, Cornelius H. Patton was a pastor at this church.

Processing

Any 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. Photographs that are in frames were wrapped in acid-free paper.

Further Sources

Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography, volume 4, New York, D. Appleton, 1888.

Rev. Cornelius H. Patton. "Honor Thy Father. A Sermon in Memory of William Weston Patton, Congregational Church of Christ", preached at Westfield, NJ, 1890.

Union Theological Seminary Alumni Catalogue 1836-1947, ed. Harold H. Tryon, New York, NY, 1948, p. 4.

Douglas W. Lind. *His Soul is Marching on: An Annotated Bibliography of William Weston Patton, Abolitionist and Educator of Freemen*, Review of Legal History and Rare Books (Volume 9, 2016, pp. 111-122).

Other of Patton's materials (diaries and other writings) are held at the [Connecticut Historical Society](#).

Contents list

Series 1: Photographs, 185?-189?

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
1	1OS	1	Framed print portrait of Rev. Wm. Patton, D.D. Metcalf pinx ^t , Durand sc., [1830s?]
1	1OS	2	Framed sepia photo on paper [copy] – caption reads, Rev. Wm. W. Patton born N.Y. City – Oct-19-1821 died – Westfield, N.J. Dec 31-1889 daguerreotype [sic], Hartford about 1850, April 9, 1866
1	1OS	4	Rev. William Patton, D.D. [copy], original photo by Moulthrop, New Haven, before April 9, 1866
1	1OS	5	Patton House, 380 West Washington Street, built by W.W. Patton about 1860, sepia photograph, J. Battersby, Chicago, [186?]
1	1OS	6	Mary Amelia Patton [in childhood; copy] [186?]
1	1OS	7	Cornelius Howard and Horace Bushnell Patton [copy], original photo by Fassett's Gallery, Chicago [1860]
1	1OS	8	"Mother" [taken from a painted miniature, possibly Caroline Smith] [1860]
1	1	9	Mary Amelia Patton, 1879-18-81
1	1	10	Caroline D. Smith, 1881
1	1	11	Duodecimal Club of Washington, DC., 1884-1888

UTS1: William Weston Patton Papers, 1836-1918

Series 1: Photographs, 185?-189?

Series	Box	Folder	Content
1	1	12	Mary Patton Welles – Wedding portrait, June 12, 1888
1	1	13	House where Mary Amelia Patton was married, 1888
1	1	14	Two group photographs on the wedding day of Mary Amelia Patton and Martin Welles, 1888
1	1	15	Norman Smith [188?]
1	1	16	Compilation of photographs of the Patton family on a single card Mount [188?]
1	1	17	Compilation of sepia photographs of Ludlow Patton on one card mount [188?]
1	1	18	Three Copies of a photograph of William Weston Patton(one framed) 188?]
1	1	19	Mary A. Patton [189?]

Series 2: Published and Unpublished Writings, 1845-1861

2	1	1	The Cottage Bible and family expositor (vol. 1) by Dr. W. Patton, 1845
2	1	2	The Cottage Bible and family expositor (vol. 2), 1845
2	2	1	Home Pictures [1865]
2	2	2	Honour [sic] thy father, by Cornelius H. Patten [brochure], 1890
2	2	3	Jesus of Nazareth: Who was he? And What is he now?, 1890
2	2	4	The Judgment of Jerusalem [1876]
2	2	5	The last century of Congregationalism by WWP [brochure], 1878
2	2	6	Lily of the Valley, introduction by Dr. W. Patton, 1836
2	2	7	New Testament (vol. 1), 1859
2	2	8	New Testament (vol. 2), 1859
2	3	1	New Testament (vol. 3), 1859
2	3	2	New Testament (vol. 4), 1859
2	3	3	Prayer and the Remarkable Answers by WWP, 1876
2	3	4	Spiritual Victory by WWP, 1874
2	3	5	The Young Man, by WWP, 1847

Series 2: Published and Unpublished Writings, 1845-1861

Series	Box	Folder	Content
2	4	1	Printed leaf of Spring Street Presbyterian Church [announcing preaching by WWP's great-grandson] -- May 12, 1940
2	4	2	Sermon by WWP [1870]
2	4	3	Letter from Connecticut Historical Society Regarding Diary, 1961

Series 3: Congregational Church of Christ, 1874 -1918

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
3	1	1	Annual reports [fragile], 1893-1905
3	1	2	Service programs [fragile], 1888-1918
3	1	3	Newsletter [fragile], 1886
3	1	4	Depositions of a case in the Synod of New Jersey, relating to the Church [fragile], 1875-1877
3	1	5	Various [fragile], 1874-1900