

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

Union Theological Seminary Archives 1

Finding Aid for

Hugh Porter, 1915-1978

Finding Aid prepared by Betty C. Bolden and Rebecca Nieto, November 2017

With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: Hugh Porter, 1897-1960
Title: Hugh Porter Papers, 1915-1978
Inclusive dates: 1915-1978
Bulk dates: 1945-1960
Abstract: Musician and Educator; UTS School of Sacred Music class of 1930; faculty, School of Sacred Music, 1930-1944; Harkness Associate Professor, School of Sacred Music, 1945-1947; Organist and Director, School of Sacred Music, 1960.
Size: 2 boxes, 1.00 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: These records were among a large group of unprocessed materials that were organized in 2017 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter 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: UTS1: Hugh Porter Papers, 1928-1973, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography

Hugh Porter was an organist and scholar known for his position on the faculty on and tenure as director of Union Theological Seminary's School of Sacred Music (now at Yale University). He was born on September 18, 1897 in Heron Lake, Minnesota, the son of John Francis and Mary Effie (nee Boring) Porter. Porter married Ethel Flentye on August 20, 1932, and together they had a son, David.

From an early age Porter was musically-inclined, earning his Bachelor of Music from Chicago's American Conservatory of Music in 1920. From there, Porter was a fellow in the Juilliard Foundation from 1923 to 1924 before earning his B.A. from Northwestern University in 1924, his Master of Sacred Music from Union Theological Seminary in 1930 (of which he was among the School's first graduating class), and later his doctorate in Sacred Music also from Union (1944).

The School of Sacred Music at Union Theological Seminary was founded by Clarence and Helen Dickinson during the presidency of Henry Sloane Coffin, opening in 1928. In addition to his academic career in music, Porter served as organist for the Oratorio Society of New York in 1924, organist and choirmaster at the Second Presbyterian Church in New York City from 1930 to 1936 and later in the Reformed Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas from 1936 to 1947. Porter served as the head of the Organ Department at Juilliard Summer School while completing his academic work at Union (1932-1945), also serving as a lecturer in Transposition and Vocal and Orchestral Score Reading in the School of Sacred Music from 1930 to 1945. By the early 1970s, the School of Sacred Music matriculated fewer students than in the early years of its founding, and following the recommendation of a planning group consisting of faculty and students, the School was purchased by Yale University, where it has functioned since 1973 within Yale's Institute of Sacred Music.

Professor Porter held a number of roles during his career at Union. In addition to his lectureship and eventual presidency in the School of Sacred Music, Porter served as Harkness Associate Professor in Sacred Music from 1945 to 1947 and Clarence and Helen Dickinson Professor of Sacred Music beginning in 1947. Porter succeeded Clarence Dickinson as the second Director

of the School of Sacred Music from 1945 until his death in 1960. Since his death, the Hugh Porter Scholarship was instituted at the Institute for Sacred Music at Yale.

Below is a list of institutions in which Porter served or performed as an organist during his career, with dates where available:

Private student organist under Wilhelm Middelschulte
 Student Choral Direction with Albert Stoessel and Clarence Dickinson
 Organist, College of Liberal Arts at Northwestern University, 1920-1923
 Calvary Episcopal Church (NYC), 1925-1928
 Church of the Heavenly Rest (NYC), 1929-1930
 American Conservatory of Music, 1919-1922
 David Mannes Museum School, 1925-1928
 New York University (also Faculty in music theory), 1925-1928
 Soloist, Library of Congress, 1931
 Town Hall recitals (NYC), 1930
 Kimball Hall (Chicago), 1928
 American Guild of Organists (Boston), 1937

Collection Scope and Content Note

The Porter Papers are divided into 2 series. The first includes Personal Correspondence, Alumni Relations, Alumni Bulletins and By-Laws of the Alumni Association. The second series includes Professional Activities , lectures, workshops and Pilgrim Hymn Correspondence.

- **Series 1: Letters, Personal Correspondence and Alumni Relations, 1928-1978 (1 box, 0.5 lin. ft.)**
- **Series 2: Hymnody, Professional Activities, 1915-1973 (1 box, 0.5 lin. ft.)**
 Contains sheet music from congregations Porter performed in with handwritten score notes,

Processing

Materials were rehoused in acid-free folders and archival document boxes. Rusty paperclips were removed and replaced with plastic clips.

Further Sources

The Union Theological Seminary Alumni Directory, 1836-1958. Accessible on the [Internet Archive](#).

<http://www.nycago.org/Organs/NYC/html/UnionSem.html>

Additional information regarding the School of Sacred Music at Yale University and its history at Union can be found [here](#).

Contents list

Series 1: Personal Correspondence and Alumni Relations, [1928]-1978

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	1	Correspondence, n.d.
1	1	2	Correspondence, 1944
1	1	3	Personal Letters & Correspondence, 1928-1968
1	1	4	Christmas Letters/Alumni, 1950-1961
1	1	5	Correspondence /Closing School of Sacred Music, 1971-1973
1	1	6	Address-John Bennett [photocopy], n.d.
1	1	7	Address-Robert McCracken, April 23, 1960
1	1	8	Address-Werner Merten, Spring 1955
1	1	9	Church Bulletins, 1959
1	1	10	By-Laws of the Alumni Association (School of Sacred Music), n.d.
1	1	11	Alumni Bulletins, 1949-1961
1	1	12	Letters to Alumni [1968]
1	1	13	Letters to Alumni – Hugh and Ethel Porter, 1953-1963
1	1	14	Dr. Cyril Richardson/Alumni Day, May 1947
1	1	15	Donors- Ladies of the Faculty-Alumni Address Partial, 1955-1962
1	1	16	Songs & Verses/Retirement Dinner Faculty, May 3, 1945
1	1	17	Letter from Ethel Porter to Donald Shriver, 1978
1	1	18	Ethel Porter, John Edmonds and Robert Tangeman/Concerns [1964]
1	1	19	Photo: David M. Gehrenbeck, Helen Hurt Gehrenbeck with Holiness, Pope Paul [1971]
1	1	20	General [1938-1963]

Series 2: Hymnody and Professional Activities 1915-1973

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
2	2	1	Sheet Music, 1958
2	2	2	Mimeographed Articles (inc. "Henry Sloane Coffin" by Porter), 1948-1962
2	2	3	Hymnody – Mimeographed Class Materials, 1940-1958
2	2	4	Lectures, n.d.
2	2	5	Summer Course/1 st Yr. Conference, 1945
2	2	6	Annual Workshops Music for the Church, 1963-1973
2	2	7	Talks, 1957
2	2	8	UTS Historical Organ Lecture Recitals by Clarence Dickinson [programs], 1915-1931
2	2	9	Directors Annual Reports, 1957-1959
2	2	10	Scoresheets, Syllabi and Notes, 1948-1954
2	2	11	Pilgrim Hymn Correspondence, 1959
2	2	12	Columbus Hymn Festival, 1959
2	2	13	Hymnody – Notes and Clippings [1959]
2	2	14	Leland Chou Ordination (Toledo, OH), 1960