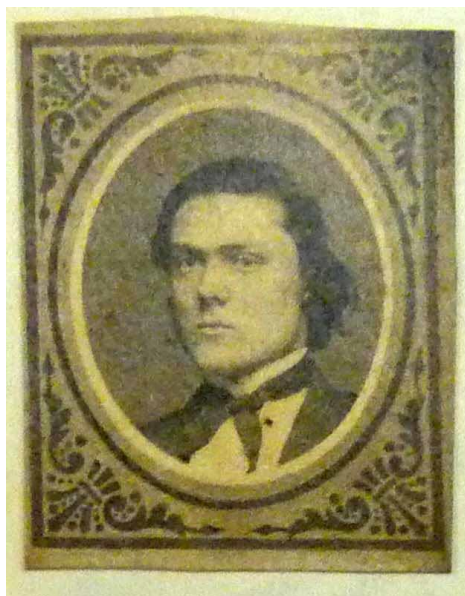


**The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,  
Union Theological Seminary, New York**

**Union Theological Seminary Archives 1**

**Finding Aid for**

**Frederic Mayer Bird Papers, 1846 – 1910**



F. M. Bird, Union Theological Seminary graduation photograph, 1860  
The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary Records, Series 18, Class Photographs

Finding Aid prepared by: Alex W. Black, July 2015  
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

**Summary Information**

**Creator:** Frederic Mayer Bird, 1838 – 1908  
**Title:** Frederic Mayer Bird Papers  
**Inclusive dates:** 1846 – 1910  
**Bulk dates:** 1862 – 1902  
**Abstract:** Episcopal priest, army chaplain, college professor, editor from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Collection contains correspondence and publications related to hymnology and hymnody.  
**Size:** 3 boxes, 1.25 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: Donated by Frederic Mayer Bird, UTS Alumnus of 1860, in 1891. See correspondence with Thomas S. Hastings, then President of Union, in UTS1: Frederic Mayer Bird Papers, series 1, box 1, and folder 6.
- 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: Frederic Mayer Bird Papers, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

### Biography

Frederic Mayer Bird, whose first name is sometimes spelled "Frederick," was born on June 28, 1838 to Mary Elizabeth Mayer (1809-1868) and Robert Montgomery Bird (1806-1854) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Bird's maternal grandfather was a Lutheran pastor. Bird's father was a successful dramatist and novelist. Educated at the University of Pennsylvania (B.A., 1857) and Union Theological Seminary (A.M., 1860), Bird was ordained as a Lutheran minister in 1860. His first position was as pastor in Rhinebeck, New York. He served as chaplain to the 103rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiment from October 1862 to February 1863. His pastorship in in Valatie, New York began in 1866 and ended in 1888. After taking orders as a deacon in the Episcopal Church in 1868, he advanced to the priesthood in 1869. From 1870 to 1874, he was rector in Spottswood, New Jersey. It was there that he met Frances Palmer Snowhill (1858-1941), whom he married in 1877. They had one child, a son, survive to adulthood, Robert Montgomery Bird (1882-1942).

After spending some years as a rector in Indianapolis, Indiana, Hightstown, New Jersey, Iowa City, Iowa and Waterloo, Iowa, Bird was appointed Chaplain and Professor of Psychology, Christian Evidences, and Rhetoric at Lehigh University in 1881. He held that position until his retirement in 1887. Bird was also a contributor to the secular press, including the *New York Independent* and *The Nation*, and the religious press, including *The Lutheran and Missionary*. From 1893 to 1898, he was editor of *Lippincott's Magazine*. Bird died on April 2, 1908 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

The entry for Bird in *Chandler's Encyclopedia: An Epitome of Universal Knowledge* (1898), which was edited by a former colleague at Lehigh, and for which Bird was assistant editor, noted that Bird had "written extensively on hymnology." Some of his publications include *Charles Wesley Seen in his Finer and Less Familiar Poems* (1866) and *The Story of Our Christianity* (1893). By the order of the Lutheran General Council, Bird co-edited *Hymns for the Use of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (1865) with Beale Melancthon Schmucker (1827-1888). He also

co-edited *Songs of the Spirit* (1871) with William Henry Odenheimer (1817-1879). In addition to his editorial work, Bird contributed multiple entries to John Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology* (1892), one of which remarked that "his library of hymnological works is the largest in the United States." That library, which numbered over 3,000 volumes, came to Union Theological Seminary as a gift from Henry Day, a member of the Board of Directors, in 1888. Bird also wrote two novels: *A Pessimist in Theory and Practice* (1888) and *An Alien from the Commonwealth* (1889). In 1889, he published *A Belated Revenge*, a novel based on a manuscript that his father left unfinished before his death.

### Collection Scope and Content Note

This collection documents every phase of Frederic Mayer Bird's work as a scholar of hymnology and hymnody. Represented within the series are his consultations with a network of pastors, scholars, and collectors that traded the texts and histories of hymns, his negotiations with publishers, successive drafts of his writings, and reviews of his work. Correspondence makes up the bulk of the collection. Most of it is addressed to Bird and much of it is lengthy. There is also a large amount of clippings of hymns and articles about them from newspapers and books, as well as galley proofs of hymnals and choral concert programs.

The collection is organized into two series:

- **Series 1: Correspondence, 1862-1902 (1 box, 0.50 lin. ft.)**

This series contains correspondence sent to Bird over the course of his career. Many of his correspondents are other clergymen involved in the study and publication of hymns. Topics common to the correspondence include establishing a hymn's authentic text or identifying its author, as well as the buying, selling, and trading of hymnbooks. The people with whom Bird had an ongoing correspondence have each been given their own folder and those have been organized alphabetically. A single folder collects letters from Bird's one-time correspondents and have also been organized alphabetically.

- **Series 2: Writings, 1846-1910 (2 boxes, 0.75 lin. ft.)**

Within this series are writings by and about Bird and writings by and about others. The former includes unbound galley proof copies of *Hymns for the Use of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* and *Songs of the Spirit*, as well as some of his newspaper publications. The latter includes samples of publications and research into the work of other scholars and practitioners of hymns. There are also many clippings from newspapers and hymnals, some of which have been annotated.

### Processing

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, in particular the large amount of newspaper clippings, were placed in Mylar sleeves.

**Further Sources**

The Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts at the University of Pennsylvania holds some of Frederic Mayer Bird's papers within the [Robert Montgomery Bird Papers](#).

The Pitts Theology Library at Emory University owns a [Frederick Mayer Bird Scrapbook](#).

## Contents list

### Series 1: Correspondence, 1862-1902

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	1	Benton, A.A. (Angelo Ames), 1883-1884
1	1	2	Burrage, Henry S. (Henry Sweetser) and F.M. Bird, 1886-1889
1	1	3	Colesworthy, Daniel Clement, 1880
1	1	4	Coxe, A. Cleveland (Arthur Cleveland), 1880
1	1	5	Eddy, Zachary, 1871-1880
1	1	6	Hastings, Thomas S. (Thomas Samuel) and F.M. Bird, 1891
1	1	7	Hatfield, Edwin F. (Edwin Francis), 1864-1867
1	1	8	Hitchcock, Roswell D. (Roswell Dwight), 1880-1884
1	1	9	Horder, W. Garrett (William Garrett), 1887-1888
1	1	10	Jackson, Samuel M. (Samuel Macauley), 1882-1883
1	1	11	Jennings, Francis, 1867-1868
1	1	12	McLean, Mary D., 1893-1894
1	1	13	Mearns, James, 1883-1886
1	1	14	Murray, J.O., 1867-1868
1	1	15	Nason, Elias, 1880
1	1	16	Nutter, C.S. (Charles Sumner), 1888-1889
1	1	17	Odenheimer, W.H. (William Henry), 1871
1	1	18	Palmer, Ray, 1881
1	1	19	Park, Edwards A. (Edwards Amasa), 1862-1863
1	1	20	Putnam, A.P. (Alfred Porter), 1880-1881
1	1	21	Raff, George W., 1865-1867
1	1	22	Randall, William H., 1880
1	1	23	Schenck, N.H. (Noah Hunt), 1865-1868
1	1	24	Schmucker, B.M. (Beale Melanchthon), 1871-1885
1	1	25	Sedgwick, Daniel, 1864-1866
1	1	26	Sedgwick, Daniel, 1867-1878
1	1	27	Smith, M.B. (Marshall B.), 1867
1	1	28	Stoever, M.L. (Martin Luther), 1865
1	1	29	Thin, James, 1886-1887
1	1	30	Thompson, A.C. (Augustus Charles), 1863-1869
1	1	31	Washburn, E.A. (Edward Abiel), 1867-1871
1	1	32	White, William O. (William Orne), 1873-1874
1	1	33	Whittingham, W.R. (William Rollinson), 1865-1868
1	1	34	Wolcott, Samuel, 1880-1882
1	2	1	Publishers, 1863-1902
1	2	2	General, 1865-1902

#### Index of General Correspondents

Andrews, W.G.  
Anketell, John  
Benedict, S. (Samuel)

**Series 1: Correspondence (Cont'd)****Series Box Folder Contents**

Index of General Correspondents (cont'd)  
 Camp, H.C.  
 Chute, William E.  
 Diehl, George  
 Duffield, Samuel W. (Samuel Willoughby)  
 Hills, E.M.  
 Howe, M.A. De Wolfe (Mark Anthony De Wolfe)  
 Kellogg, Alfred H.  
 Krotel, G.F. (Gottlob Frederick)  
 Lamberton, J.P.  
 Lorenz, E.S. (Edmund Simon)  
 Loy, M.  
 Marseilles, Charles  
 Martens, D.M.  
 Nelson, H.W., Jr.  
 Paine, Silas H.  
 Palmer, Anna Maria D.  
 Roth, H.W.  
 Schaff, Daniel I.  
 Schaff, Philip  
 Schaeffer, C.W.  
 Sheeleigh, M.  
 Spofford, A.R. (Ainsworth Rand)  
 Wilkins, J.J.

**Series 2: Writings, 1846-1910**

2	2	1	<i>Songs of the Spirit</i> uncorrected galley proofs, 1871
2	3	3	<i>Hymns for the Use of the Evangelical Lutheran Church</i> corrected galley proofs, 1865
2	3	4	Newspaper Article and Book Notes by Bird, n.d.
2	3	5	Reviews of Bird's Work, 1865-1886
2	3	6	Hatfield, Edwin F. (Francis), 1863-1864
2	3	7	Muhlenberg, William Augustus, 1859-1881
2	3	8	Rankin, Jeremiah Eaves, 1881-1886
2	3	9	Russell, William, 1880
2	3	10	Washburn, Henry Stevenson, 1870-1881
2	3	11	Whitcher, Frances Miriam, 1882
2	3	12	Concert Programs, n.d.
2	3	13	Newspaper Clippings of Articles on Hymnology, n.d.
2	3	14	Hymnal Clippings with notes, n.d.
2	3	15	General, 1846-1910