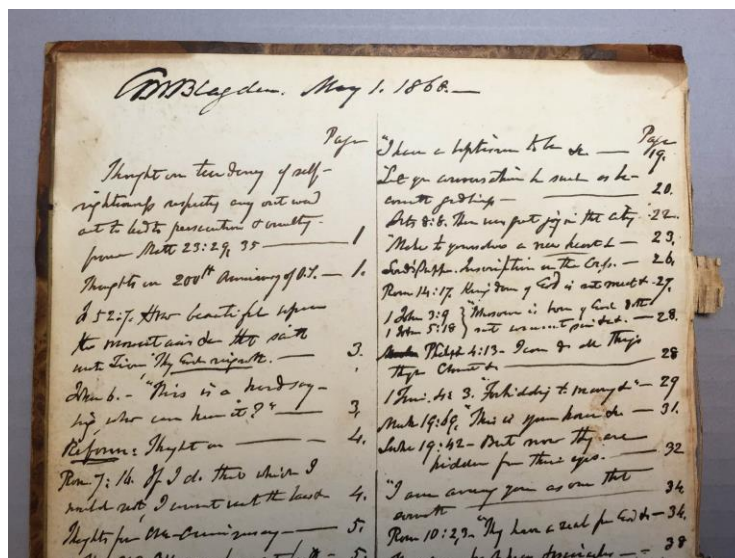


The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,  
Union Theological Seminary, New York

Union Theological Seminary Archives 1

Finding Aid for

George Washington Blagden Papers, 1830 – 1836; 1863 – 1873



Inside cover of Plans for Sermons, 1868-1873. Credit to: UTS1: George Washington Blagden Papers, 1830-1836; 1863-1873, box 1, folder 3, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Katherine Palm, January 2015  
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

**Summary Information**

Creator: George Washington Blagden, 1802-1884  
 Title: George Washington Blagden Papers, 1830-1836; 1863-1873  
 Inclusive dates: 1830-1873  
 Bulk dates: 1863-1873  
 Abstract: Protestant pastor of Boston. Collection consists of three bound volumes: one a record of marriages and two containing plans for sermons.  
 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:** 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: George Washington Blagden Papers, 1830-1836; 1863-1873, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

### Biography

George Washington Blagden was born in Washington, D.C. on October 3, 1802. Despite early intentions to join the legal profession, Blagden instead became a well-known and esteemed pastor. He spent the bulk of his career at the Old South Church in Boston, Massachusetts, serving that pastorate during two periods of spiritual revival, in 1842 and 1856, and through the Civil War.

His parents were George Blagden, originally of Yorkshire, England, and Anne Davies, originally of Richmond, Virginia. After settling in Washington, D.C., Blagden's father made his mark as superintendent of stonework and quarries for the construction of the Capitol building, a project on which he worked from 1794 to his death due to an on-site accident in 1826. Blagden had one brother, Thomas, and two sisters. In June 1831, Blagden married Miriam Phillips, daughter of the Honorable John Phillips of Boston and sister of abolitionist Wendell Phillips. The couple had eight children: five sons (two of whom served in the Union Army) and three daughters.

Blagden graduated from Yale College in 1823 and Andover Theological Seminary in 1826. He later received honorary degrees of Doctor of Divinity from Union College and Harvard University in 1849 and 1850, respectively.

In 1827, he began preaching in Brighton, Massachusetts (later annexed to Boston) in the newly organized Brighton Congregational Church, which had been formed by seceders from the First Parish upon its transformation into a Unitarian church. On December 26, 1827, Blagden was formally ordained.

In October 1830, Blagden became the pastor of Salem Street Church, also in Boston and founded in 1827. Blagden then was called to become the pastor of the long-established Old South Church, where he served from September 28, 1836 until his retirement in 1872. Blagden was voted a salary as pastor *emeritus* for the remainder of his life.

In addition to his duties to his pastorate, Blagden served as a member of the State Constitutional Convention in 1853 and as an Overseer of Harvard University from 1854-1859.

Blagden died on December 17, 1884, in New York City, where he lived for the last two years of his life at the home of his daughter and son-in-law. He was buried next to his wife, who predeceased him in 1874, in Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was survived by four sons and one daughter.

#### Sources:

- Allen, William C. 2001. *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.
- Hill, Hamilton A. 1890. *History of the Old South Church (Third Church) Boston, 1669-1884*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company.
- Stoddard, Charles Augustus. 1885. *A Discourse Commemorative of the Rev. George Washington Blagden, D.D.: Delivered in the Old South Church, Boston, February 22nd, 1885*. Boston: Cupples, Upham.
- Yale University. 1885. *Obituary Record of Graduates of Yale College; Deceased During the Academical Year Ending in June, 1885 Including the Record of a Few Who Died Previously Hitherto Unreported*. New Haven, CT: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor.

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

The collection consists of three bound volumes. The first volume contains a record of marriages from 1830 to 1836, as well as a few entries recording baptisms in 1836. The second and third volumes contain Blagden's self-indexed writings relating to plans for sermons spanning the period from 1863 to 1873.

#### **Processing**

Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Spines of volumes are in extremely brittle and fragile condition.

#### **Further Sources**

The Burke Library holds an original copy of Blagden's "Remarks, and a Discourse on Slavery," which can be viewed on-site in accordance with the library's special collections access policy ([http://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke/access\\_circulation/special-collections-access.html](http://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke/access_circulation/special-collections-access.html)).

The Congregational Library & Archives of Boston, MA holds a collection of Old South Church Records from 1669 to 1996, with material relating to Blagden located within Series 8: Ministers,

Box 37, and Folder 1. The finding aid for the collection can be accessed at <http://www.congregationallibrary.org/finding-aids/BostonMAOldSouth0028>.

The Old Manse Manuscripts collection of the Trustees of Reservations collection of Sharon, MA contains a copy of a letter dated May 30, 1837 from Ezra Ripley (1751-1841) to Blagden, relating to certain resolutions and the Convention of Congregational Ministers. The finding aid for the collection can be accessed at [http://www.thetrustees.org/assets/documents/finding-aids/Old\\_Manse\\_Manuscripts\\_Finding\\_Aid.pdf](http://www.thetrustees.org/assets/documents/finding-aids/Old_Manse_Manuscripts_Finding_Aid.pdf).

A number of sermons and addresses by Blagden were published during his lifetime, such as “The Effects of Education upon a Country Village: An Address Delivered before the Brighton School Fund Corporation, March 30, 1828” (Boston: T.R. Marvin, 1828) and “The Duty of a More Strict Observance of the Sabbath” (Boston: Nichols and Noyes, 1866). These and other writings can be found by searching library catalog records via WorldCat (<http://www.worldcat.org/>).

## Contents list

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	Record of Marriages, 1830-1836
1	2	Plans for Sermons, 1863-1868
1	3	Plans for Sermons, 1868-1873