Credit to: UTS1: Edgar Simmons Buchanan Papers, series 4, box 1, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Maya Naunton, 2017
with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation

Summary Information
Creator: Edgar Simmons Buchanan, 1872-1932
Title: Edgar Simmons Buchanan Papers, 1890-1936
Inclusive dates: 1890-1936
Bulk dates: 1900-1932
Abstract: Anglican Church minister and theologian. Papers pertaining to early manuscript research, correspondence, newspaper clippings, and autobiographical writings.

Size: 15 boxes [1 oversize], 6.75 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkespecial@library.columbia.edu
Administrative Information

Provenance: Edgar Simmons Buchanan Papers were donated to the Union Theological Seminary in 1943. These materials were partially processed in shortly after the donation. This collection was among a large group of unprocessed materials that were organized in 2016/2017 as part of an archival processing grant funded by the Henry Luce Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation. Further accruals expected.

Access: Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkespecial@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: This collection is open to readers. Access to some of the materials might be restricted.

Preferred Citation: Item description, UST1: Edgar Simmons Buchanan Papers, 1894-1932, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography

Edgar Simmons Buchanan was a scholar of early Biblical manuscripts and an Anglican Church minister. He was born in Southampton, England on May 6th, 1872 to John Edgar Buchanan and Elizabeth May Saunders. When Buchanan was four, the family moved to New Zealand where he grew up. Buchanan graduated from University of New Zealand with an M.A. and B.Sc. In 1896 he returned to England where he attended Theological College in Salisbury. The College was headed by Bishop Wordsworth for whom Buchanan worked as his pupil and assistant. Their close relationship lasted until Bishop Wordsworth’s death in 1911. After being ordained in 1897 Buchanan served as a curate in a number of churches in England and on the continent. During this period he also studied early Biblical manuscripts in libraries in London, Paris, Rome, Vienna, Milan, and Verona. He published numerous articles and books based on his research.

In 1914, Buchanan came to New York and stayed in the United States for the rest of his life. In the United States Buchanan continued working on early Biblical manuscripts, as well as teaching and lecturing, including teaching at Columbia University. In 1915 Buchanan became a Curator of Manuscripts in the Hispanic Society of America. While working there, he began studying a manuscript belonging to Archer Milton Huntington, the founder of the Hispanic Society (referred to as the Huntington Palimpsest). Buchanan announced that the manuscript was a palimpsest and declared that the erased text constituted the earliest, previously unknown version of the Gospels. He dated the erased text to the 2nd century AD and claimed that the text was very distinct from the traditional Bible as it was known and that the newly discovered text revolutionized our understanding of Christ and Christianity.

Buchanan prepared the text for publication and was working on correcting the proofs when the owner of the manuscript started having doubts about the validity of Buchanan’s findings. Other scholars disagreed with Buchanan’s assertions and the type of the book was broken up and it was never published in the United States. Buchanan published it later in England.

Subsequent to the controversy with the Huntington Palimpsest, Buchanan continued to fight for recognition of his discoveries, writing letters to other scholars, to the media, and even to Pope Pius XI, who Buchanan met prior to his election while they were doing Biblical research in Italian Libraries.

Buchanan supported England during WWI and the archive holds correspondence with the English government and benevolent societies reflecting that association.

Maya Naunton, 7/17/2017
Later Buchanan taught at a number of private schools. He continued to do research and publish. He also lectured around the country.

In 1930 Buchanan fell sick and sailed to Australia at his doctor’s advice, where he died on August 19th, 1932.
Collection Scope and Content Notes
The collection consists of papers relating to Mr. Buchanan’s scholarly work, his autobiographical writings, and his correspondence. The scholarly papers are mostly concerned with Buchanan’s work on early Biblical manuscripts.

The collection is divided into four series.

**• Series 1: Correspondence, 1890-1936 (3 boxes, 1.25 linear ft)**

Most of the correspondence in this series relates to Buchanan’s research into early Gospel manuscripts and his teaching career. Some of the correspondence is of more social nature. Most of the correspondence is arranged chronologically, with the exception of Box 3, Folder 6. The last was arranged during previous processing to include letters from famous people that Buchanan corresponded with.

Note: Correspondence contains both handwritten and typed documents. Series 1, box 1, Folder 6 includes a photograph of unidentified individual.

Large number of the letters concern Buchanan’s interactions with libraries where he worked on his research. These include Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Biblioteca Capitolare di Verona, the British Museum, Morgan Museum and Library, the Bodleian Library, Harvard College Library, The Hispanic Society of America, Oberlin College Library, National Library of Wales, Library of Congress, Bibliothèque Universitaire Bordeaux, and New York Public Library.

Buchanan also corresponded with clergy and religious organizations. These include Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Bishops of Salisbury, Carlisle and Birmingham, Society for Promoting of Christian Knowledge, Drew Theological Seminary, Theological Seminary at Princeton, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, American Sunday-School Union, Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, Episcopal Theological School, the office of Pope Pius XI, American Tract Society, Evangelical Theological College, Pentecostal Holiness Church, Biblical Seminary, Union Theological Seminary.

Individual scholars that Buchanan corresponded with include Alexander Souter, Francis Crawford Burkitt, Dr. Erwin Nestle, Eduard Naville, James Rendel Harris, and Homero Seris.

Further notable correspondents include Theodore Roosevelt, Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling, Dr. Achille Ratti (later Pope Pius XI), E. Rutheford (“father of nuclear physics”), Stanley Baldwin (British Prime minister during WWI), William Inge (Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral).

**• Series 2: Writings, 1896-1932 (9 boxes, 4.75 linear ft)**

The bulk of Buchanan’s writings in the collection are related to his research on early Biblical manuscripts. The writings were arranged according to the subject into the following subheadings:

Subheading: Fleury Palimpsest (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)


Maya Naunton, 7/17/2017
Subheading: Codex Corbeiensis = Codex H2 (Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris)

Buchanan's work on this manuscript was published as “The Four Gospels from the Codex Corbeiensis… Together with Fragments of the Catholic Epistles of the Acts and of the Apocalypse from the Fleury Palimpsest” in the Old-Latin Biblical Texts series in 1907. Contains copies of the text from the M.S. and the published book. The material is handwritten and printed.

Subheading: Codex Veronensis (Biblioteca Capitolare di Verona)

Buchanan published his research on this manuscript as “The Four Gospels from the Codex Veronensis” in 1911. Contains notes and text from the M.S. The material is handwritten.

Subheading: Beatus Apocalypse = Morgan Ms. (Morgan Library)

This work was published as “A New Text of the Apocalypse from Spain” in 1915. Contains notes, text from the M.S., and the published book.

Subheading: Huntington Palimpsest (The Hispanic Society of America, New York)

Contains text from the M.S., notes, articles, proofs of the book. The material is handwritten, typed, and printed.

Subheading: Harkness Manuscript (New York Public Library)

It is unclear if the results of this work were published. Contains text from the M.S. and translations. The material is handwritten and printed.

Subheading: Various manuscript transcriptions and translations

Contains transcriptions and translations from manuscripts other than those listed above. Some of the documents contain information on the source of the text, others are unidentified. The material is handwritten and typed.

Subheading: ESB’s Writings about his research

Contains drafts of a book based on ESB’s research and a list of libraries he sent his books to. The material is handwritten and typed.

Subheading: Papers associated with Bridport, England Reading Society

Contains the papers that Buchanan wrote for presentation at the Society as well as a critique on a paper presented by another member. The material is handwritten.

Subheading: Various writings 1897-1930

Contains texts of sermons given by Buchanan, miscellaneous papers of that are outside of his main research focus, and his poetry. The material is handwritten and typed.

Subheading: Autobiographical writings, 1897-1930

Contains Buchanan’s diaries, his travel notes and other autobiographical writings. The material is handwritten and typed.
• **Series 3: Reviews and Publicity, 1896-1932 (1 box, 0.5 linear ft)**

This series consists of newspaper clippings that relate to Buchanan. Most of the clippings concern his scholarly publications. This series also contains publisher’s notices announcing publication of Buchanan’s books.

• **Series 4: Personal, 1894-1932 (1 box, 0.5 linear ft)**

This series contain personal material, such as teacher recommendations, church licenses, resume that Buchanan wrote in 1914, his photograph and his business card.

Note: one folder from this series is housed in Box OS9.

**Processing**

Metal clips were removed from the material if they were rusted. Material was flattened where necessary. The collection was placed in archival folders and boxes. Acidic items were interleaved with acid-free paper. Photographs and fragile materials were placed inside Mylar envelopes.
## Contents list

### Series 1: Correspondence, 1890-1936

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
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</tr>
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### Series 2: Writings, 1896-1932

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<td>Book “The Records Unrolled”, 1911</td>
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<td>Text “About Some Old MSS”, 1928</td>
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<td>Text from Codex, 1901-1905</td>
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Maya Naunton, 7/17/2017
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<td>Transcriptions and notes, 1928</td>
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<td>English version of the MS, 1929</td>
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<td>Notes and wordlists, 1899-1905</td>
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<td>Transcriptions from manuscripts, c. 1905</td>
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<td>Text from St. Matthew’s Gospel, from unidentified manuscript, c. 1910.</td>
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<td>“Early Spanish Marriage Rite” from a missal written c. 1300, copied and translated by ESB in 1916</td>
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<td>“The Confession of St. Patrick” translated by ESB from Latin, 1930</td>
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<td>ESB’s Writings about his research</td>
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<td>“The Story of Changing Manuscripts”, 1929</td>
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<td>Drafts of “The Search for the Earliest Gospels”, 1930</td>
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<td>Unpublished articles, 1930</td>
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### Series 1: Papers associated with Bridport, England Reading Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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<td>Notes on Browning, 1899</td>
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<td>&quot;Wordsworth's &quot;Prelude&quot;, 1899</td>
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<td>&quot;Dante's &quot;Inferno&quot;, c. 1900</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;Spenser's &quot;Faery Queen&quot;, 1900</td>
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<td>Critique of a paper by Mrs. Solly, contributed to the Bridport Reading Society, 1900</td>
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<td>Shelley's &quot;Prometheus Unbound&quot;, 1901</td>
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### Various writings 1897-1930

<table>
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<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
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<td>&quot;George Herbert – Melodist&quot;, published in 1910</td>
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<td>&quot;Victor Hugo on the Rape of Alsace-Lorrain&quot;, c. 1914</td>
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<td>&quot;Booker T. Washington [an appreciation]&quot;, written on his death, 1915</td>
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<td>&quot;Religion Re-revealed&quot;, 1924</td>
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<td>&quot;Prophet or Quack&quot; – a review by ESB of &quot;H.G. Wells: Educationalist&quot; by F.H. Doughty, c. 1926</td>
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<td>&quot;Luther's Reply to King Henry VIII&quot;, 1928</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;Martin Luther Against King Henry of England&quot; translated by ESB, 1928</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Religious poems, 1918-1930</td>
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<td>&quot;Thoughts Concerning God&quot;, n.d.</td>
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### Autobiographical writings, 1897-1930

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<td>A rubbing of the memorial plate installed by ESB's wife in the Ashburton High School, New Zealand, 1930's</td>
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### Series 3: Reviews and Publicity, 1896-1932

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Announcements of ESB's lectures and sermons, 1914-1918
Newspaper clippings regarding Huntington Palimpsest, 1914-1932
Brochure announcing a class ESB was teaching in Columbia University, 1916
Publisher's announcements of ESB's book publications, 1916-1924
Reviews of ESB’s publications and lectures, 1916-1930
Newspaper clippings relating to ESB’s war activities, 1918
“Commentary on the Primitive Text” by B.E. Scriven. Relates to Huntington Palimpsest, 1919
Newspaper clippings relating to ESB’s publications. French, 1923-1924

**Series 4: Personal Material, 1890-1936**

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<td>Letter appointing ESB as an instructor at Columbia University, 1916</td>
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<td>ESB’s photo, business card and a card with a plaid pattern and a note “Buchanan plaid (tartan) and coat of arms (Buchanan’s clan)”, 1920’s</td>
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