

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

Union Theological Seminary Archives 1

Finding Aid for

James Morris Whiton Papers, 1819 – 1921



Credit to UTS1: James Morris Whiton Papers, series 5, box 1, and folder 3,
The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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

Summary Information

Creator: James Morris Whiton, 1833-1920
Title: James Morris Whiton Papers
Inclusive dates: 1819-1921
Bulk dates: 1847-1920
Abstract: Congregational minister, teacher, and author, recognized as a writer on theological and ethical themes, and a preacher of the social gospel. Collection contains writings, correspondence, journals, the New York State Conference of Religion, photographs and scrapbooks.
Size: 22 boxes, 10.50 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: Exact provenance unknown. The records may have been given to Union Theological Seminary by a member of his family.
- 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, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation: Item description, UTS1: James Morris Whiton Papers, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography

James Morris Whiton, Jr. was born April 11, 1833 in Boston, Massachusetts to James Morris Whiton (1809-1857) and Mary Elizabeth (Knowlton) Whiton (1809-1906). At the age of 11 he began at Boston Latin School. In 1849, James Whiton entered Yale College; his first connection with the press came during his sophomore year when he began to write book notices for a periodical. He graduated from Yale in 1853 and soon after accepted a teaching position at a high school in Worcester, Massachusetts. His interest in the ministry continued to grow, having joined the church after his younger sister's death in 1847. He later accepted the position of Rector at Hopkins Grammar School in New Haven, Connecticut.

James married Mary Bartlett, the sister of a close friend, on May 1, 1855. In 1859, Whiton was licensed to preach by the New Haven West Association. He wrote a Latin Primer and Greek Primer while pursuing his PhD from Yale from which he graduated in 1861. This was the first year that a PhD degree was awarded at Yale, with James being one of three individuals earning the degree. It is said that his thesis was comprised of six pages all in Latin.

In May 1865, Whiton was ordained and installed as minister of the First Congregational Church in Lynn, Massachusetts, having studied theology at Andover Seminary for a year. He became principal of the Williston Seminary in Easthampton, Massachusetts in 1876, but resigned two years later because of "theological animosities excited by his book, 'Is Eternal Punishment Endless?'" From 1879-1885 he was pastor of the First Congregational Church in Newark, New Jersey, followed in 1886 by Trinity Congregational Church in New York City.

Due to poor health, he retired from pastoral work in 1891 and dedicated himself to teaching, writing, and occasional preaching. Over the next twenty years, Whiton would travel extensively as a guest preacher both on the northeast and into England. He was a member of the staff of *Outlook*, a large publishing house, and contributing editor for the *Homiletic Review*.

Whiton is recognized as a writer on theological and ethical themes, and a preacher of the social gospel. He authored countless newspaper and magazine articles, and ten books.

James Morris Whiton Jr. died in New York City on January 25, 1920 (1919 in some reports) and is buried at the Grove Street Seminary in New Haven, Connecticut.

Sources:

Calkins, Evan. *Growing Up in America: Writings of Mary Elizabeth Knowlton Whiton and Members of her Family, 1809-2007*, Hamburg, NY: Evenhouse Printing, 2011.

Yale University, *Obituary Record of Graduates of Yale College: Graduates Deceased during 1920*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The collection is organized in four series:

- **Series 1: Journals, 1847-1920 (3 boxes, 1.50 lin. ft.)**
This series contains diaries and logs of journeys for Whiton. There are multiple diaries for the late 1880s period specifically.
- **Series 2: Correspondence, 1819-1921 (5 boxes, 2.50 lin. ft.)**
Within this series are letters to individuals, publishers, companies, organizations and committees that Whiton was involved. Included are letters from Herbert A. Youtz at Auburn Seminary and letters regarding an essay prize that Whiton won at Talladega College. In the folders with the topic of Modern Theology are writers such as Walter Rauschenbusch and McGiffert, W. Dougla MacKenzie at Hartford Theological Seminary, Charles Francis Carter, Nathaniel Schmidt, and Frederic Palmer.

Also contained in the series are two bound letter books. The first, called "Valuable Letters," contains material related to a proposition to become pastor at a church in Pittsfield, Massachusetts; settlement in Lynn; and overtures from other churches that Whiton declined. These letters are from a variety of locations, not just Massachusetts. Also includes letters from parents regarding their sons' work during the term and a memorial service booklet for President James A. Garfield from 1881.

The second book, "Letters worth keeping," contains similar material including from the American Home Missionary Society; about his emigration to England; the New York Society of Christian Socialists; and from a variety of theological seminaries.

- **Series 3: Writings, 1866-1919 (7 boxes, 3.25 lin. ft.)**
This series contains manuscript and print addresses, essays, and notes, as well as sermons. The newspaper articles were either by or about Whiton. There are also articles that influenced or were collected by Whiton himself. Whiton was an active reviewer of books and other publications, and this series also contains information on those.

The second section contains “topic files” or information and articles on specific organizations and people that influenced Whiton. This includes Henry Ward Beecher, the Federal Council of Churches in America, liturgy, slavery, Church Union, and Westminster Catechism. These can be found in box 6. Some of these topic files can be seen in the material located in Box 7, such as a lecture that Whiton gave about Beecher.

- **Series 4: New York State Conference of Religion, 1899-1915 (5 boxes, 2.25 lin. ft.)**
This series contains information about the New York State Conference of Religion (NYSCR). Included is the original register of those in attendance, correspondence related to the Conference, published proceedings of the conference, and addresses to, and related, to the Conference. The addresses before the New York State Conference of Religion usually contained four numbers in the series with meetings being held regularly through the year. Some of the numbers are missing in each year. Meetings were held throughout the state, including in Poughkeepsie and Schenectady.

Whiton has these materials in his collection because he was very involved in the conference and served as the Chairman of the Executive Committee. Other members of the Executive Committee were Josiah Strong, Henry Mottet, Reverend W. C. Gannett, and L. A. Maynard. Reverend Leighton Williams served as the General Secretary, with Thomas Whittaker as Treasurer.

- **Series 5: General, 1876-1916 (2 boxes, 1.00 lin. ft.)**
Within this series are photographs and scrapbooks from the 1800s and 1900s. The photographs depict Whiton himself, locations he has lived, and other well-known theologians in the field. The Scrapbooks date 1886-1916 and are mainly books with loose papers, pamphlets, correspondence, newspaper clippings, and other scraps stuck between the pages. The materials cover a range of topics that involve the events of Whiton’s life.

Processing

Some metal clips and staples were removed from materials and 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.

The collection was updated in 2015 as part of the Henry Luce Foundation grant. At this time the collection was fully processed and certain boxes were combined. The Project Archivist, Brigitte Kamsler, was assisted in the refolding and describing of materials by two student assistants, Carolyn Bratnober and Alex W. Black.

Further Sources

The Burke Library offers other collections related to the people, theology and topics in this collection. For more information, please see the [Burke Library Archives website](#).

Contents list

Series 1: Journals, 1847-1920

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	1-8	1847; 1850-1880
1	2	1	1881-1882
1	2	2	Supplement: 1858-1861
1	2	3-9	1883-1901
1	3	1-5	1902-1920

Series 2: Correspondence, 1819-1921

2	1	1-7	A-Z, 1872-1919
2	1	8	Outlook Company, 1907-1919 Publication of and about Latin and Green Works, 1864-1889
2	1	9	The Life of God in the Life of his World, 1918-1919 Talladega College, 1903; 1918-1920
2	1	10-11	Works on Modern Theology, 1898-1908
2	2	1	Publications, 1878; 1885; 1917 The Bible as a Self-Correcting Book, 1890; 1918
2	2	2	British letters, 1888-1891
2	2	3	Rectorship, Hopkins Grammar School, 1854-1864
2	2	4	First Congregational Church, Lynn, Massachusetts, 1865-1869
2	2	5	First Congregational Church, Log Pastoral Activity, 1865-1869
2	2	6	History, North Congregational Church of Lynn, Massachusetts, 1868-1875
2	2	7	North Congregational Church, Log Pastoral Activity, 1869-1875
2	2	8	Newark Council, 1879
2	2	9	Willistoniana School, East Hampton, 1876-1878
2	2	10	History, First Congregational Church of Newark, New Jersey, 1879-1885
2	3	1	Trinity Congregational Church, New York City, 1887-1891
2	3	2	Haworth New Jersey Parish, 1901 Ministerial Conferences and Advertisements of Congregations
2	3	3	Second International Congregational Council, 1899 Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions, 1900
Family			
2	3	4	Biographical Data and Bibliography 25 th Marriage Anniversary Event, 1880 Draft Poems to Mary Elya, 1877-1917
2	3	5	Helen [daughter], 1920 Little Morris
2	3	6	12 Sermons by J.M. Whiton's Father[?], 1819-1850

Series 2: Correspondence (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
			Family (cont'd)
2	3	7	From Bartlett and Howard Whiton to Grandparents, 1902-1919 Helen Herrick to J.M. Whiton, 1907-1911
2	3	8	1844-1920
2	3	9	Condolences on death of Whiton's Mother, 1906
2	3	10	Death of J.M. Whiton, 1920-1921
2	3	11	Memorial Service: Address, Correspondence, Notices [192?]
2	4		Book, "Valuable Letters," 1864-1888
2	5		Book, "Letters Worth Keeping," 1889-1910

Series 3: Writings, 1866-1919

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
			Articles, Essays, and Notes
3	1	1	"The Alleged Infallibility of the Scriptures Practically Considered," "The Anti-Christian Use of the Bible," "Business Ethics," "Christology," "Church Action for Political Morality," "The Coming of the Son of Man"
3	1	2	"Damage by a Good Word," "The Divine Trilogy as Biological Reality"
3	1	3	"An Ethical Creed," "Ethical Regulations," "The Gambling Evil," "The God-Consciousness of Jesus," "Inefficient Religion and Efficient," "The Inspiration of the Prophets," "Introduction to the Meeting of the General Assembly of Congregational Churches of Massachusetts"
3	1	4	"John Wiclif as a Social Leader," "Missions and Massacres," "Modern Theology," "Moorehead Lake," "The Moral Crisis Confronting the Church," "Moral Defects in Recent Sunday School Teaching," "Morality Real and Unreal," "Outworn Theological Ideas"
3	1	5	"The Place of Departed Spirits," "Practicing the Presence of God," "Public Sentiment," "Premature Burial," "The Reaction of Ethics upon Economics"
3	1	6	"Religion in Our Public Schools," "Religion Versus Customary Morality," "Religious Solidarity"
3	2	1	"Report on the Work of the Churches and State of Religion," "Retrospect and Prospect," "The Revival of Atheism," "Selections, Chiefly from the Holy Scriptures, for Devotional Use in Public and Social Worship," "Self- Realization as the Christian Aim," "Some Implicates of Theism"
3	2	2	"The Teaching of Christ Respecting the Duration of Future Punishment," "The Teaching of Paul Respecting the Duration of Future Punishment," "Theological Bearings of Modern Philosophy and Science," "Through the Phenomena of Change to the Reality of God," "Trinity and/or Creed," "U.R.S.," "Victim or Warrior?"
3	2	3-4	For <i>The Christian Union</i> , 1888-1891; 1891-1896
3	2	5-6	For <i>The Homiletic Review</i> , 1899-1917

Series 3: Writings, 1866-1919 (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
3	3	1	<i>Interludes in a Time of Change</i> (Reviews), 1909
3	3	2	For <i>The Outlook</i> , 1895-1910
3	3	3	For <i>The Universalist Leader</i> , 1915
3	3	4	General, 1894-1919
Sermons			
3	3	5	"Peace by Power," "Contrasts of a Century," "Reconciled to God," "A Quarter Century Retrospect of Change and Progress in Christian Thought," "Fiftieth Anniversary of North Church," "The Law of Christ," "Christian Morality," 1885-1901
3	3	6-8	General, 1868-1910
3	4	1	Sermon Scrapbook, 1871-1874
Newspaper Articles and Reviews			
3	5	1-2	"New Theology," Controversy over Whiton's sermons, General Content by Whiton
3	5	3-4	Articles that Influenced Whiton
3	5	5	Contributed and Editorial
3	5	6	Articles about Book Reviews, National Tribune and New York Herald
3	5	7	Articles by Whiton, Washington D.C. and London
3	5	8	Scraps from English Papers
3	5	9	Correspondence Published in Foreign Journals Correspondence Reviews in Journals
3	6	1-4	Reviews of Books and Publications
3	6	5-6	Publications Collected by Whiton
Topic Files			
3	6	7-11	Topic Files
Lectures and other Writings			
3	7	1	Poetry, [189?]-1910
3	7	2	Prizes for Writing, 1848-1859; 1891
3	7	3	Translation Notes, Lecture on Cato the Elder
3	7	4-5	Practical Ethics, 1863-1904
3	7	6	Henry Ward Beecher
3	7	7-9	Unpublished Manuscript, <i>From Seers to Prophets</i> , 1885

Series 4: New York State Conference of Religion, 1899-1915

4	1	1	Conference Register Book [189?]
4	1	2	Correspondence about Register

Series 4: New York State Conference of Religion (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
4	2	1-10	Correspondence, 1899-1900
4	3	1-5	Proceedings, 1900; 1903-1906
4	4	1-9	Published Addresses, Series 1-13, 1903-1915
4	5	1	Statement of Purpose, 1898-1899
4	5	2-7	Meetings, Correspondence, Minutes and Reports, 1900-1915
4	5	8	Ancient Hebrew Ethics, presented 1902
4	5	9	Chairman's Address, 1903; 1913; [19??]
4	5	10	Typed and Annotated Addresses, [19??]
4	5	11	Presentations: Ethics of Money, Applied Morality, Moral Crisis and Revival, 1905
4	5	12	Presentations: Music; Protestant Reformers [1904?]
4	5	13	Newspaper Clippings about Conference, 1900-1906

Series 5: General, 1876-1916

Photographs			
5	1	1	Mrs. W.B. Brown Dr. W. B. Brown, predecessor in Newark Unidentified, Oxford, 1886 Portraits of James Morris Whiton, 1891
5	1	2	Antrim, New Hampshire H. Trumbull Rev. J. Brierley, 1906
5	1	3	Whiton Portrait, Lynn, Massachusetts [187?] Whiton Portrait, Birmingham, 1887 Whiton Portrait, Newark, New Jersey, 1882
5	1	4	Whiton Portrait, August 1891 Baldwin Coolidge [A.] W. Dale Alfred R. Wallace
Scrapbooks			
5	2	1	1886-1901
5	2	2	"Personal," 1912-1913
5	2	3	Lynn, Massachusetts, 1876-1897
5	3	4	Loose Papers from "Personal," 1890-1916