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American Encyclopaedia of Christianity records11662936

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on January 14, 2025.
Description is written in: English.

Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

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New York, NY 10027

Telephone: (212) 851-5606

burke@library.columbia.edu

URL: <https://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke.html>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary
Creator:	American Institute of Christianity
Creator:	Rockwell, William Walker
Title:	American Encyclopaedia of Christianity records
ID:	11662936
Date [inclusive]:	1920 -- 1927
Physical Description:	4.75 linear feet 4.75 linear feet; 8 boxes including 1 OS box
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The American Institute for Christianity was incorporated in 1923 to enable the planning and production of a proposed 12 volume American Encyclopaedia of Christianity. Denominational councilors, writers, editors and supporters were contacted across the USA. The Institute was unable to attract adequate funding to produce the Encyclopaedia. The bulk of the Records consist of planning documents and correspondence.

Preferred Citation

Item description, American Encyclopaedia of Christianity Records, 1920-1948, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Biographical / Historical

In 1920 preliminary discussions began concerning the potential development of an American Encyclopaedia of Christianity, as a balance to the existing Catholic Encyclopaedia. In 1922 an Editorial Board was established to plan the Encyclopaedia's development and publishing. The Encyclopaedia was planned to contain 12 volumes, "each volume containing a million words." William Walter Rockwell, Union Theological Faculty member and Librarian, acted as secretary to the Board. The other initial Editorial board members were: Joseph C. Ayer,

Benjamin W. Bacon, Rev. Arthur W. Brooks and William H. P. Hatch. In late 1923 editors were asked to seek and secure Denominational Counsellors and much of the working structure for developing and promoting the Encyclopaedia was planned. All counsellors represented Protestant denominations and it became clear that the intention was to publish an up to date alternative to the then dated, but heavily used, Catholic Encyclopedia of 1910. That Encyclopedia had been updated by a single supplementary volume in 1918. The first meeting of the initially named "Institute for the Advancement of Christian Knowledge" took place in March 1924 and later the organization was renamed as the American Institute of Christianity [A.I.C.]. The following individuals acted as incorporators with Dr. John A. Marquis in the chair: Rev. F. H. Knubel, John A. Marquis, Theodore H. Lamprecht, Rae D. Henkle, David G. Garabrant. A contract was drawn up between the Institute and Robert Appleton to enable the management of the financial campaign for the Encyclopaedia, initially through the John Price Jones Corporation. That Corporation planned to raise \$1 million for a cost of \$2500. From 1923-1926 it gradually became clear that the money which was raised did not cover the current expenses of the extensive work being prepared. In December 1926 the Executive Committee of the American Institute of Christianity resolved to offer a settlement to Robert Appleton and to dissolve the contract. The project came to an end and the new Encyclopedia was never produced. The correspondence of the American Institute from as early as 1920 shows that Rockwell was in touch with people across the USA who saw the need for an Encyclopaedia of Protestant Christianity to compete in a scholarly approach with other religious encyclopedias in existence at that time. Unfortunately this project was fraught with difficulty because of the increasing financial problems in the 1920s and was never completed. William W. Rockwell held the position of secretary to the Editorial committee of this project. He was born in Pittsfield, Mass. in 1874, a Congregationalist, who graduated from Harvard and Andover, and studied in Göttingen, Germany to obtain his Doctorate in 1914. He joined the Union faculty in 1905 as Assistant Professor teaching church history from both medieval and modern periods and for the first time introducing American Church history to UTS courses. From 1908-1913 Rockwell was acting librarian at Union in the new Union Seminary building in Morningside Heights. Julia Pettee was appointed at this time to develop the first classification scheme for this large theological library and it is clear that Rockwell promoted this classification system to rationalize the potential contents for the encyclopedia. Later William W. Rockwell served as both faculty member and librarian for 17 years until his retirement from Union in 1942. He died in New York City in 1958.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains the first of the three packets of papers recovered by W. W. Rockwell from different scattered sources. The first packet contains the small group of records of the American Institute of Christianity (AIC), formerly known as the Institute for the Advancement of Christian Knowledge until fall in 1923. This includes records of the 1923 meeting, a "Minute book of the Corporation which tried to publish the American Encyclopaedia of Christianity, 1923-26" including financial reports from the Institute, a sequence of Executive minutes, and

a group of Historical Church Papers form a survey of denominations across America (these were the work of Professor Williston Walker 1860-1922, American Church historian at Yale University). This collection also contains correspondence, editorial minutes, plans and drafts, and promotional items, as well as the second and third groups of papers received by Rockwell concerning the work towards production of the Encyclopaedia recovered from other members of the committees, and Rockwell's own files as secretary to the Editorial Board.

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in two series: Series 1: American Institute of Christianity Records; and Series 2: American Encyclopaedia of Christianity Records.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

PDF converted to EAD and description updated by Leah Edelman. 2022-12-06

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Onsite storage.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The records of the American Encyclopaedia of Christianity were gathered by W. W. Rockwell, professor and librarian of Union Theological Seminary Library, in his role as Secretary of the Editorial Board for the planned Encyclopaedia. The materials, which he had

retained from this project were then added to by papers returned from or donated by other colleagues and project Board members. Robert. T. Handy, Union Theological Seminary Professor and church historian retained the records for some years from circa 1950 before transferring them to the Burke library at a later but undocumented date.

Processing Information

Decaying metal clips and pins were removed and folded items flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated by interleaving with acid-free paper or insert folders. News clippings and other items in acidic breakdown have been reproduced to acid free paper. The finding aid was created by Ruth Tonkiss Cameron in 2015, and edited by Leah Edelman in 2022.

Conditions Governing Use

Some material in this collection may be protected by copyright and other rights. Information concerning copyright, fair use, and reproduction requests can be consulted at Columbia's Copyright Advisory Office.

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Related Materials

Related Materials

WAB: William Walker Rockwell Papers, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Encyclopedias and dictionaries

Burke Library record group:

General collections

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Collection Inventory

Series 1: American Institute of Christianity records, 1923 -- 1927

Physical Description: 0.5 linear feet 0.5 linear feet; 1 box

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged in order of accession.

Scope and Contents

This series contains the first of the three packets of papers recovered by W. W. Rockwell from different scattered sources. The first packet contained the small group of records of the American Institute of Christianity (AIC), formerly known as the Institute for the Advancement of Christian Knowledge until fall in 1923. This series includes records of the 1923 meeting, a "Minute book of the Corporation which tried to publish the American Encyclopaedia of Christianity, 1923-26" including financial reports from the Institute, a sequence of Executive minutes, and a group of Historical Church Papers form a survey of denominations across America (these were the work of Professor Williston Walker 1860-1922, American Church historian at Yale University).

Title/Description	Instances
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First collected sources, 1923 -- 1927	box 1
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Scope and Contents

Board of Directors Minute Book, 1923-1927; Executive Committee Minute Book, 1923-26; American Institute of Christianity/Encyclopaedia Pamphlets, 1920, 1925; Williston Walker-Historical Church Papers

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Series 2 : American Encyclopaedia of Christianity records, circa 1920 -- 1927

Physical Description: 4.25 linear feet 4.25 linear feet; 7 boxes including 1 OS box

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged by accession date, and then alphabetically.

Scope and Contents

This series contains correspondence, editorial minutes, plans and drafts, and promotional items. Rockwell's replies to letters may be found among the correspondence files. The series begins with the second and third groups of papers received by Rockwell concerning the work towards production of the Encyclopaedia recovered from other members of the committees. Rockwell's own files as secretary to the Editorial Board follow these initial sections and are retained in the alphabetical order which was his personal method of file arrangement. The correspondence also includes carbon copies of replies by Rockwell and his annotations on letters received.

Title/Description	Instances	
Second collected sources, 1920 -- 1921	box 2	folder 1-7
Scope and Contents		
Memorandum of Mutual Understanding, Nov. 1920 2 1 2 Finances-Planning, 1920-21; Finances-Founders' Committee, 1921; University Club Luncheon, Jan. 1921; Endorsements, 1921; Denominational Counsellors Advisory Board, 1921; Founders' Committee and Denominational Counsellors, 1921		
Third collected sources, key papers, 1920 -- 1926	box 2	folder 8-22
Scope and Contents		
Memoranda of Mutual Understanding, 1920-23, 1926; Contracts -Editorial Board/Appleton, 1923-26; Finances, 1926; Denominational Counsellors Nominations, 1921; Resolutions and Endorsements, 1924-25; Editorial Principles and Sample Pages, 1925-26 ; Article Titles List A-B; Potential Writers; Articles Assigned to Writers, 1926; Directions to Writers, 1926; Sources-Sample Publications; Promotional Leaflets; Henkle-Financial Plans, Dec. 1925; Rockwell-Progress Report to Denominational Counsellors, Dec.1925; Rockwell-Kentucky Travel, 1926		
W. W. Rockwell's records, A-B, circa 1922 -- 1927	box 3	
W. W. Rockwell's records, C-E, circa 1922 -- 1927	box 4	
W. W. Rockwell's records, E-K, circa 1922 -- 1927	box 5	
W. W. Rockwell's records, L-R, circa 1922 -- 1927	box 6	
W. W. Rockwell's records, R-Z, circa 1922 -- 1927	box 7	
Oversize materials, circa 1922 -- 1927	box 8OS	

Scope and Contents

German Publisher's Advertisement with 16th Century
Images [Transferred from Series 2 box 5 f16];

Editorial Principles and Sample Pages, 1925-26
[Transferred from Series 2 box 2 f13]; Names of
Founders [Transferred from Series 2 box 5 f9]

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