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Arthur C. McGiffert Sr. papers4492472

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Description is written in: English.

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Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

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

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Summary Information

Repository:	Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary
Creator:	McGiffert, Arthur Cushman, 1861-1933
Title:	Arthur C. McGiffert Sr. papers
ID:	4492472
Date [inclusive]:	1882 -- 1926
Physical Description:	3.75 linear feet 3.75 linear feet; 8 boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	Arthur C. McGiffert Sr. was a Presbyterian Congregational minister, church historian, and UTS President (1917-1926). The collection consists of correspondence, sermons, addresses, personal and professional papers, and two photographs.

Preferred Citation

Item description, UTS1: Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Sr. papers, series #, box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Biography

Arthur Cushman McGiffert was born in Sauquoit, New York on March 4, 1861 to the Rev. Joseph Nelson McGiffert and Harriet Whiting Cushman. Ordained first in the Presbyterian Church and, later, the Congregational Church, McGiffert distinguished himself as an academic, teaching and writing extensively on the subject of church history, and serving as the eighth president of Union Theological Seminary.

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Biography

McGiffert married Eliza Isabelle King on June 9, 1885. Their union was brief as she died in 1887, but they had one daughter, Elizabeth McGiffert (later married Rev. Dwight F. Mowery). On November 12, 1891, McGiffert married Gertrude Huntington Boyce, with whom he had two more children, Arthur Cushman McGiffert and Katharine Wolcott McGiffert (later Mrs. John K. Wright).

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Biography

McGiffert benefited from extensive education, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree and his first Master of Arts degree from Western Reserve University (later combined with Case Institute of Technology to form Case Western Reserve University) in 1882. He graduated from Union Theological Seminary in 1885 and went on to study abroad for a year at the University of Berlin. In 1886-1887, he studied at the University of Marburg with prominent theologian and church historian Carl Gustav Adolf von Harnack. In 1888, he received a Ph.D. from Marburg in connection with his doctoral dissertation, "Dialogue between a Christian and a Jew."

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Biography

He was ordained in the Presbyterian Church in Cleveland, Ohio in 1888 and commenced his teaching career at Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio as an instructor and eventually professor in Church History from 1888-1890. McGiffert returned to Union Theological Seminary in 1893, where he taught Church History and eventually became the acting president from 1916 to 1917 and served as president from 1917 until his retirement in 1926. His term as president coincided with the first world war and related challenges. Also during his tenure McGiffert encouraged the enrollment of students from other institutions (known as "special students") and promoted the scholarly and professional aspects of theological education.

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Biography

McGiffert later received a number of honorary degrees: the D.D. from Western Reserve University in 1892, Harvard University in 1906, Presbyterian Theological College (Halifax) in 1920, and the University of St. Andrews in 1922; and the LL.D. from Pennsylvania College (later Gettysburg College) in 1917 and Queen's University (Halifax) in 1919. He later served in a governance capacity with respect to various academic institutions, such as a member of Western Reserve University's board of trustees and a member of the Advisory Committee of the Harvard Endowment Fund. He took part in a large number of societies and associations, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Philosophy Association, the Authors Club, the American Historical Society, and the American Church History Society.

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Biography

He published a number of works during his career, such as a translation of Eusebius' Church History with Prolegomena and Notes (1890), A History of Christianity of in the Apostolic Age (1897), The Apostles' Creed (1902), Protestant Thought Before Kant (1911), Martin Luther, the Man and His Work (1911), The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas (1915), The God of the Early Christians (1924), and A History of Christian Thought (1933).

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Biography

McGiffert's publication of A History of Christianity of in the Apostolic Age in 1897 in the wake of the heresy trials of Charles Briggs ignited some controversy. In 1900, the Presbytery of New York brought heresy charges against McGiffert in connection with passages of his book that were claimed to show a lack of belief in biblical inerrancy. Although the Presbytery eventually voted to not bring him to trial, the affair caused McGiffert to enter the Congregational Church.

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Biography

McGiffert died at his home in Dobbs Ferry, New York on February 25, 1933, and was survived by his widow and three children. His son, Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Jr., was a published author and teaching as professor of Christian Theology at the Chicago Theological Seminary at the time of his death. McGiffert is buried in Beacon, New York.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains substantial correspondence regarding publications, lectures, addresses, invitations to speak, correspondence with certain institutions and individuals, and other professional and personal correspondence, largely from the period of McGiffert's presidency at Union Theological Seminary (1917-1926); writings and notes of McGiffert including addresses, sermons, and other pieces; as well as a printed volume of McGiffert's Marburg Dissertation (Dialogue between a Christian and a Jew) dedicated to the Rev. Phillip Schaff from 1889, early notebooks, a scrapbook of news clippings of reviews of his work "A History of Christianity of in the Apostolic Age," and a diary.

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Arrangement

The collection is organized in three series: Series 1: Correspondence; Series 2: Writings; and Series 3: General.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

XML Instance created by Brigette C. Kamsler. EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. PDF converted to EAD and description updated by Leah Edelman. 2010-12-13 2019-05-20 2022-11-28

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is located offsite. Please note that requests for use of boxes held in offsite storage must be made three business days in advance.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The exact provenance of this collection is unknown.

Custodial History

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.

Processing Information

Some material was cataloged by Lynn A. Grove on 1988-07-12. 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 and fragile bound volumes were wrapped in acid-free paper. The finding aid was created by Brigette C. Kamsler and Katherine Palm in 2015 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, 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

Arthur C. McGiffert, Jr. papers, 1852-1993, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Presbyterians -- New York (State) -- New York
- Clergy -- New York (State) -- New York -- Societies, etc
- Sermons
- Historians
- College presidents
- Union Theological Seminary (New York, N.Y.) -- Presidents
- Chi Alpha (New York, N.Y.)

Burke Library record group:

Union Theological Seminary Archives: UTS 1, papers of faculty and students

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Collection Inventory

Series 1: Correspondence, 1913 -- 1926

Physical Description: 2.5 linear feet 2.5 linear feet; 5 boxes

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged by type of correspondence.

Scope and Contents

This series contains substantial correspondence regarding publications, lectures, addresses, invitations to speak, correspondence with certain institutions and individuals, and other professional and personal correspondence. The bulk of correspondence is from the period of McGiffert's presidency at Union Theological Seminary (1917-1926). Some of the publications included in that grouping of correspondence (Folders 1-7) are: "God of the Early Christians," Martin Luther, the Man and His Work, and The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas. Some of the publishers included in that grouping of correspondence (Folders 8-15) are: The American Journal of Theology, The Christian Work, The Macmillan Company, and Charles Scribner's Sons. The correspondence in Box 5, folder 12 is related to McGiffert's summer property in West Falmouth, Massachusetts, as well as a boat and car used there. The correspondence in Box 5, Folder 13 relates to financial matters both personal, such as payment of income tax and investments, and UTS-related, such as payment for a new chapel window and messages seeking to improve telephone service for the president. The correspondence in Box 6, Folder 1 is connected to the McGiffert family and includes writings from family members such as Rev. Dwight F. Mowery, one of McGiffert's sons-in-law, and James H. McGiffert, a cousin of McGiffert and an attorney at the National City Bank in Cleveland, Ohio.

Title/Description	Instances	
Publications, 1915 -- 1926	box 1	folder 1-7
Publishers, 1915 -- 1926	box 1	folder 8-15
Lectures, 1916 -- 1925	box 1	folder 16-18
Addresses, 1916 -- 1923	box 1	folder 19
Invitations to speak -- Churches/Religious Groups, 1915 -- 1926	box 2	folder 1-2
Invitations to speak -- Educational Institutions, 1915 -- 1926	box 2	folder 3-4
Invitations to speak -- Organizations, 1915 -- 1926	box 2	folder 5
Invitations to committee membership, 1915 -- 1926	box 2	folder 6
Institutions, 1916 -- 1926	box 2	folder 7-11
Institutions, 1916 -- 1926	box 3	folder 1
List of Individuals, 1913 -- 1926	box 3	folder 2
Individuals A-L, 1913 -- 1926	box 3	folder 3-19
Individuals M-Z, unidentified, 1913 -- 1926	box 4	folder 1-12
List of correspondents, 1913 -- 1926	box 4	folder 13
Election to UTS presidency A-Y, 1917 -- 1918	box 4	folder 14-17
Inauguration A-W, 1918	box 4	folder 18-19

Honors, 1916 -- 1922	box 4	folder 20
Organizational memberships A-W, circa 1916 -- 1922	box 5	folder 1-8
List of correspondents, circa 1916 -- 1922	box 5	folder 9
Class reunions, 1915 -- 1926	box 5	folder 10
Travel, 1920 -- 1926	box 5	folder 11
West Falmouth, 1916 -- 1926	box 5	folder 12
Financial, 1916 -- 1926	box 5	folder 13
McGiffert Family, 1919 -- 1924	box 5	folder 14
Memorial and obituary materials, including photographs, circa 1919 -- 1924	box 5	folder 15

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Series 2: Writings, 1883 -- 1925

Physical Description: 0.25 linear feet 0.25 linear feet; 1 box

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is unarranged.

Scope and Contents

This series contains writings and notes of McGiffert including addresses, sermons, and other pieces. Known titles of writings are in quotation marks.

Title/Description	Instances	
Farewell address to graduating class, 1925	box 6	folder 1
Memorial address, Western University, circa 1883 -- 1925	box 6	folder 2
"Epic of the Themes", circa 1883 -- 1925	box 6	folder 3
"Literature and Life," Chi Alpha, 1906	box 6	folder 4
"The Pastor and the Professor in Relation to Criticism," Chi Alpha, 1903	box 6	folder 5
"Hospital Nurses", circa 1883 -- 1925	box 6	folder 6
Longfellow, First Congregational Church, 1883	box 6	folder 7
Robert Burns, circa 1883 -- 1925	box 6	folder 8
The Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit, Auguste Sabatier, circa 1883 -- 1925	box 6	folder 9

"The Temptation of a Young Clergyman", circa 1883 -- 1925	box 6	folder 10
What is There in Religion, Henry Sloane Coffin, 1923	box 6	folder 11
"Appreciation of President Eliot" for The Christian Register, Boston, circa 1883 -- 1925	box 6	folder 12
The Autobiography of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, circa 1883 -- 1925	box 6	folder 13
Notes, circa 1883 -- 1925	box 6	folder 14

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Series 3: General, 1882 -- 1921

Physical Description: 1 linear feet 1 linear foot; 2 boxes

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is unarranged.

Scope and Contents

This series contains a printed volume of McGiffert's Marburg Dissertation (Dialogue between a Christian and a Jew) dedicated to the Rev. Phillip Schaff from 1889, early notebooks, a scrapbook of news clippings of reviews of his work "A History of Christianity of in the Apostolic Age," and a diary.

Title/Description	Instances	
Memorabilia - programs, bibliography, 1918 -- 1921	box 7	folder 1
Rome diary, 1882 -- 1887	box 7	folder 2
Common-place book, 1883	box 7	folder 3
Hebrew word book, circa 1883	box 7	folder 4
Dialogue between a Christian and a Jew, 1889	box 7	folder 5
Scrapbook of reviews of A History of Christianity of in the Apostolic Age, circa 1882 -- 1921	box 8	

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