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## James Shepard Dennis papers4492537

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Description is written in: English.

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Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

3041 Broadway

New York, NY 10027

Telephone: (212) 851-5606

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

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary
<b>Creator:</b>	Dennis, James S. (James Shepard), 1842-1914
<b>Title:</b>	James Shepard Dennis papers
<b>ID:</b>	4492537
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1873 -- 1916
<b>Physical Description:</b>	0.5 linear feet 0.5 linear feet; 1 box
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English .
<b>Abstract:</b>	James Shepard Dennis was a Presbyterian missionary, historian, and statistician of missions who served for four years as a missionary in Syria, primarily in Sidon and Zahleh, and was professor in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Beirut from 1873 – 1891. The collection contains correspondence; meeting minutes; an address book; a Book of Particulars; and information about the publication of Christian Missions and Social Progress, by Dennis.

### Preferred Citation

Item description, MRL2: James Shepard Dennis papers, 1873-1916, box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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## Biographical / Historical

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James Shepard Dennis (December 15, 1842 - March 21, 1914) was a missionary, historian, and statistician of missions. After graduating from Princeton in 1863 followed by a year studying law at Harvard, Shepard entered Princeton Theological Seminary, and graduated in 1867. In 1869, Shepard was ordained by the Presbytery of Newark. He then traveled to Syria as a missionary with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). A year into his service as a field missionary, the mission was transferred to the Presbyterian Church Board of Foreign Missions (PCBFM). Dennis joined this board and was connected to this board

for the remainder of his life. From 1873 to 1891 he was director of the theological school at Syrian Protestant College in Beirut. In 1883, after a professor delivered a commencement speech that was interpreted as paying tribute to Charles Darwin, Dennis drafted a religious manifesto called the Declaration of Principles in response. The college required all faculty members to sign. Several faculty resignations and student protests followed. After his return to America, Shepard lived in New York City and Montclair, N.J., and began documenting the social effects of Protestant missions on non-Christian peoples. Aided by the correspondence from missionaries around the world, Shepard published the three volume work Christian Missions and Social Progress. This book is a contribution to the science of missions and a resource for missionary results. Dennis then published Centennial Survey of Christian Missions (1902), which reported all Protestant missionary operations which were being maintained at the close of the nineteenth century. He demonstrated, with descriptions and statistics, their conditions and achievements in various areas of work. James Dennis Shepard was honorary secretary of the Presbyterian Board from 1904 til his death in 1914.

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection contains correspondence; a notebook of meeting minutes of the Theological Seminary Committee of the Syrian Mission, 1873 – 1874, as well as a list of students of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Beyrout (Beirut); an address book with a typed index of names categorized by country of residence; a Book of Particulars noting letters and date sent; and a brief statement by Malbone Watson Graham detailing circumstances leading to the publication of Christian Missions and Social Progress (by Dennis). Correspondence includes letters to Dennis from missionaries in China, Korea, England, the United States, India, Japan, Turkey, Madagascar, Scotland, and Burma, among others, and are in response to a call by Dennis for updated information and images on missions to be used in a reprint of Christian Missions and Social Progress. Also included with the correspondence are newspaper clippings and photographs.

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## Arrangement

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This collection is organized in one series arranged by format.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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### Revision Description

PDF converted to EAD and description updated by Leah Edelman. 2021-09-08

### Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Onsite storage.

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Formerly part of the independent Missionary Research Library (MRL), these records were accessioned by the Burke Library at the time of the MRL's closure in 1976.

### Processing Information

Materials were cataloged by Lynn A. Grove on 1988-07-18. Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Letters of more than one page or with attachments were separated from others by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed. Photographs were placed in Mylar envelopes. The finding aid was created by Debbie Liu in 2012 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, and edited by Leah Edelman in 2021.

### 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

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### Related Materials

MRL 12: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions records, 1878-1958, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Missions -- Syria
- Syria -- Religious life and customs
- Missionaries
- Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. -- : Missions

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## Burke Library record group:

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Missionary Research Library Archives: MRL2, Near/Middle East

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## Collection Inventory

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### James Shepard Dennis papers, 1873 -- 1916

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 by format.

## Scope and Contents

This series contains correspondence; a notebook of meeting minutes of the Theological Seminary Committee of the Syrian Mission, 1873 – 1874, as well as a list of students of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Beyrout (Beirut); an address book with a typed index of names categorized by country of residence; a Book of Particulars noting letters and date sent; and a brief statement by Malbone Watson Graham detailing circumstances leading to the publication of *Christian Missions and Social Progress* (by Dennis). Correspondence includes letters to Dennis from missionaries in China, Korea, England, the United States, India, Japan, Turkey, Madagascar, Scotland, and Burma, among others, and are in response to a call by Dennis for updated information and images on missions to be used in a reprint of *Christian Missions and Social Progress*. Also included with the correspondence are newspaper clippings and photographs.

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence, A, 1905	box 1	folder 1
Correspondence, B-C, 1905	box 1	folder 2
Correspondence, E-F, 1905	box 1	folder 3
Correspondence, G-J, 1905	box 1	folder 4
Correspondence, L-M, 1905	box 1	folder 5
Correspondence, P-R, 1905	box 1	folder 6
Correspondence, S, 1905	box 1	folder 7
Correspondence, T-Y, 1905	box 1	folder 8
Notebook, 1873 -- 1890	box 1	folder 9
Address book, circa 1873 -- 1910	box 1	folder 10
Book of Particulars [Correspondence Log], 1909	box 1	folder 11
Origin of a Great Missionary Book - Statement by M. W. Graham, 1916	box 1	folder 12

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