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John R. Mott papers4492668

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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:	Mott, John R. (John Raleigh), 1865-1955
Title:	John R. Mott papers
ID:	4492668
Date [inclusive]:	1904 -- 1955
Physical Description:	4.5 linear feet 4.5 linear feet; 10 boxes
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	Methodist layman, ecumenist and missionary leader instrumental in many organizations including Student Volunteer Movement, World's Student Christian Federation, the World Missionary Conference, International Missionary Council and World Council of Churches. Collection contains papers and materials documenting his various associations. The collection contains records relating to the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh, Scotland June 14-23, 1910, Continuation Committees, International Missionary Council, biographical information, notes, photographs, printed material, and correspondence.

Preferred Citation

Item description, MRL12: John R. Mott papers, series #, box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Biographical / Historical

John Raleigh Mott was born May 25, 1865 to parents John and Elmira (Dodge) Mott in Livingston Manor, New York. The family soon moved to Postville, Iowa. John attended the Methodist institution Upper Iowa University, and then transferred to Cornell University as a sophomore. While at Cornell, Mott was president of the University Christian Association. After graduation in 1888, he travelled for one year as secretary with the Inter-Collegiate Young

Men's Christian Association. Mott married Leila Ada White in 1891. Together they would have two sons and two daughters. He founded the Student Volunteer Movement in 1888 and would establish SVM chapters throughout the world. In 1895, Mott organized the World's Student Christian Federation. The YMCA, WSCF and SVM allowed Mott to travel the world. He was present at the founding of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America in 1893, and it was through this organization where he met J. H. Oldham. Mott and Oldham together would plan and lead the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910. Mott was Chairman of the WMC and Commission 1, as well as head of the Continuation Committee. During World War One, Mott worked to help German missions and missionaries functional. President Woodrow Wilson appointed Mott in 1917 on the Root Mission to Russia and was able to extend the ecumenical network to the Russian Orthodox Church. In 1920, Mott stepped down as leader of the Student Volunteer Movement and the World's Student Christian Federation, although he continued to remain involved with both organizations. In 1921, Mott chaired the International Missionary Council, and in 1926 became president of the World's Alliance of YMCAs. John Mott received the Nobel Peace Prize with Emily Greene Balch in 1946 for his "earnest and undiscourageable effort to weave together all nations, all races and all religious communions in friendliness, in fellowship and in cooperation." He was named an honorary chair at the founding of the World Council of Churches in 1948. John Mott was awarded several honorary degrees and various decorations from governments throughout the world during his lifetime. He wrote more than a dozen books focusing on topics such as missions and ecumenism. John passed away in Orlando, Florida on January 31, 1955 at the age of eighty-nine.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains general records relating to the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh, Scotland June 14-23, 1910 as well as specific records Mott gained while Chair of the World Missionary Conference; records from the Continuation Committee, including handwritten notes and records from sectional conferences; records from the International Missionary Council, including correspondence, conference materials and other reports; biographical information, notes, and photographs; printed material such as articles, newspaper clippings and pamphlets; and correspondence related to Mott's career with a variety of organizations.

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in six series: Series 1: World Missionary Conference; Series 2: Continuation Committees; Series 3: International Missionary Council; Series 4: Biographical Documentation; Series 5: Source Files; and Series 6: General Correspondence.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

PDF converted to EAD and description updated by Leah Edelman. 2026-01-07

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

Some letters, minutes, reports, memoranda, and articles were cataloged by Lynn A. Grove on 1988-08-03. 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. An item-level folder listing was created in 1981. Order was imposed and the collection was fully processed by Brigette Kamsler in January 2012. The finding aid was created by Brigette

C. Kamsler in 2012 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, and edited by Leah Edelman in 2026.

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

The finding aid for the John R. Mott Papers, Record Group No. 45, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library can be found online here: <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.045>.

Also available at Yale is the collection of the Archives of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, Record Group No. 42, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library: <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.042>.

Related Materials

Mott's papers in relation to the YMCA can be found at the University of Minnesota as part of the Kautz Family YMCA Archives. <http://discover.lib.umn.edu/cgi/f/findaid/findaid-idx?c=umfa;cc=umfa;q1=mott;rgn=main;view=text;didno=yusa0013>.

Related Materials

The Burke Library holds many collections with which Mott was associated, including MRL12: International Missionary Council; MRL12: World Missionary Conference: Edinburgh, 1910; MRL12: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions; MRL12: Foreign Missions Conference of North America; and in the William Adams Brown Ecumenical Archives: World Council of Churches. There is also a folder on Mott in MRL12: Missionary Biographical Records in Box 4 Folder 20.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Missions -- Korea
- Missions -- China
- Missions -- Japan
- Missions -- India
- Missions, German
- Christian education -- Asia
- Germany -- Religious life and customs
- Ecumenists

Burke Library record group:

Missionary Research Library Archives: MRL12, Ecumenical/World Mission

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Collection Inventory

Series 1: World Missionary Conference, 1909 -- 1910

Physical Description: 0.75 linear feet 0.75 linear feet; 2 boxes

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged chronologically.

Scope and Contents

This series contains general records relating to the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh, Scotland June 14-23, 1910 as well as specific records Mott gained while Chair of the World Missionary Conference. The series includes a large amount of detailed correspondence in the months leading up to the conference in 1910, as well as after the conference was held. Some of the correspondence includes copies from Mott himself, as well as originals from others involved with the conference. Also included are questionnaires related to the survey Mott conducted on the Condition of the Home Church between February and April 1910 which was presented at the conference, Commission 1 Conclusions – Japan and Commission 1, Personal Notes, Edinburgh Conference, as well as a pamphlet titled "Intercessors

– The Primary Need: An Address by John R. Mott, with Related Selections from the Conclusions of Commissions of the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh, 1910."

Title/Description	Instances
Correspondence pre and post conference, 1909 -- 1910	box 1
Questionnaires, Commission 1 materials, Pamphlet, 1910	box 2

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Series 2: Continuation Committees, 1904 -- 1917

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 arranged by committee and format.

Scope and Contents

This series contains records from the Continuation Committee, which was appointed during the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh to "carry forward the investigations begun by the Commissions and to preserve and extend the atmosphere and spirit of the Conference." As Chairman of the Continuation Committee, Mott was tasked with visiting the mission fields throughout the world in order to spread the word of the Conference, the Continuation Committee and its Special Committees; and to study those in the mission field. Mott spent months devoted to this request and went on an extended tour of the principal mission fields in Asia from 1912 – 1913. Included throughout are Mott's handwritten notes, such as "Report of Goucher's Visit to Far East, 1910-11." The Special Committee on Christian Literature includes items from the various sections throughout the world, including China, the American Section, and the European Section. Also in this series are records from a sectional conference in India. A total of eighteen sectional conferences were held so that Mott could accomplish more in his time.

Title/Description	Instances
Continuation Committee Financial Information, 1913	box 3 folder 1
Special Committee on Christian Literature, 1914 -- 1917	box 3 folder 2-4
Special Committee on the Church in the Mission Field, 1911 -- 1915	box 3 folder 5
Special Committee on Medical Missions, 1911 -- 1917	box 3 folder 6-7
Special Committee on Missionary Statistics, 1911 -- 1913	box 3 folder 8
Special Committee of the Statement of Principles underlying the Relations of Missions and Government, 1912	box 3 folder 9
Special Committee on Work among Moslems, 1912 -- 1913	box 3 folder 10
Special Committee on Missionary Survey and Occupation, 1911 -- 1912	box 3 folder 11

Special Committee on the Development of Training Schools for Missionaries on the Field, 1912 -- 1914	box 3	folder 12
Special Committee Christian Education in the Mission Field, American Section, 1910 -- 1912	box 3	folder 13-14
Special Committee Christian Education in the Mission Field, European Section, 1910 -- 1912	box 3	folder 15-16
Special Committee on Education, 1911 -- 1916	box 4	folder 1
Christian Education in China – General Information, 1913 -- 1916	box 4	folder 2
Christian Education in India and Ceylon – General Information, 1908 -- 1917	box 4	folder 3
Christian Education in India – Board of Arbitration, 1904 -- 1910	box 4	folder 4
Christian Education in India and the East – Education of Women, 1910 -- 1913	box 4	folder 5
Christian Education in Japan – General Information, 1905 -- 1913	box 4	folder 6
Christian Education in Japan – Christian Literature Society, 1912 -- 1913	box 4	folder 7
Christian Education in South Africa, 1911	box 4	folder 8
Christian Education in Syria and Palestine, circa 1911	box 4	folder 9
Educational Institutions in China and Japan, 1912 -- 1914	box 4	folder 10
Booklet, Experiences and Impressions During a Tour in Asia in 1912- 1913, Being Extracts from Personal Letters of John R. Mott, from Continuation Committee Conferences, 1913	box 4	folder 11
Report, Financing National Religious Agencies, circa 1913	box 4	folder 12
Unity in Korea, 1910 -- 1913	box 4	folder 13
Papers Presented at Madras Conference, 1912	box 4	folder 14-17
Pamphlets, Madras Conference, 1912	box 4	folder 18-19
Tour of Asia as Chairman notes, 1912 -- 1913	box 4	folder 20
Questionnaire Answers, India, 1912 -- 1913	box 4	folder 21-25
Questionnaire Answers, China, 1913	box 4	folder 26

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Series 3: International Missionary Council, 1924 -- 1947

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 chronologically.

Scope and Contents

This series contains records from the International Missionary Council, which was generated from the World Missionary Conference's Continuation Committee in 1921. In the beginning, some early functions of the IMC were to study mission problems and disseminate information; to coordinate missionary activities; to unite Christian forces; and to organize area and world mission conferences. These missionary conferences were utilized to stimulate missionary thinking, missionary cooperation and missionary advance. Four notable world conferences were in Jerusalem (1928); Madras, India (1938); Whitby, Canada (1947); and Willingen, Germany (1952). The series includes correspondence, conference materials and other reports during Mott's association with the Council.

Title/Description	Instances	
Proceedings of the General Conference of Christian Workers; Egypt, The Sudan, Abyssinia. Helwan, 1924	box 5	folder 1-5
Pre-Madras Study, "What is Evangelism?" IMC Conference, 1938	box 5	folder 6-17
Ad Interim Report of the Joint Committee on the Younger Churches, established between IMC and Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches, 1946	box 5	folder 18
Correspondence, 1925 -- 1947	box 5	folder 19

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Series 4: Biographical Documentation, circa 1946 -- 1955

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 arranged by format.

Scope and Contents

This series contains biographical information, notes, and photographs focusing on the life of John Raleigh Mott, as well as a pamphlet from a dinner held in honor of Mott's Nobel Peace Prize.

Title/Description	Instances	
Biography in Memoriam, Personal Notes, Photographs, Nobel Peace Prize Pamphlet , circa 1946 -- 1955	box 6	folder 1-4

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Series 5: Source Files, 1910 -- 1946

Physical Description: 1.75 linear feet 1.75 linear feet; 4 boxes

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is unarranged.

Scope and Contents

Within this series are printed material such as articles, newspaper clippings and pamphlets, as well as transcripts of articles and letters, and manuscript material including personal handwritten notes by Mott. Mott maintained a large collection of source material for use in committees and for when he was preparing addresses and publications. He also collected these items when he was traveling throughout the world during his time as Chairman of the Continuation Committee for the World Missionary Conference. Specific items of note are from Korea, 1912 – 1920, and Germany, 1913 – 1922. Mott was a member of the Commission on Relations with the Orient of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America and these records are also from his time as Chairman. The German mission materials include correspondence, pamphlets, notes and other general information on Germany from the time period indicated.

Title/Description	Instances	
Addresses and Articles given by Mott, 1924 -- 1946	box 6	folder 5
Committee of Reference and Council, Foreign Missions Conference of North America,, 1911 -- 1913	box 6	folder 6
Council of Federated Missions, Japan,, 1914	box 6	folder 7
Inter-College Board in America for Promotion of Higher Union Education in Mission Fields,, 1916	box 6	folder 8
International Reform Bureau, Inc., circa 1916	box 6	folder 9
Newspaper Articles (photocopies), 1910 -- 1927	box 6	folder 10
Translations of Articles and Letters from Danish, Dutch, French, German, 1915 -- 1932	box 6	folder 11-19
Translations of Articles and Letters from German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish, 1915 -- 1932	box 7	folder 1-11
Pamphlet, Recommendations for Political Reconstruction in the Turkish Empire, 1918	box 7	folder 12
Korea Conspiracy Case: Confidential Conference on the Situation in Korea, 1912	box 7	folder 13
Korea Conspiracy Case: Newspaper Articles – The Chosen Conspiracy Case, 1912	box 7	folder 14

Korea Conspiracy Case: Pamphlets, 1912	box 7	folder 15-16
Scope and Contents		
The Korean Conspiracy Case by Arthur Judson Brown Persecution in Korea: Sidelights on the Japanese Case by One of the "Persecuted" The Situation in Korea		
Korea Conspiracy Case: Publications – The Korean Conspiracy Case by Albertus Pieters, circa 1912	box 7	folder 17
Korean Independence Outbreak: Addresses and Articles, 1919	box 8	folder 1
Korean Independence Outbreak: Biographical and Historical Information on Korea, circa 1919	box 8	folder 2
Korean Independence Outbreak: Correspondence, circa 1919 -- 1920	box 8	folder 3-6
Scope and Contents		
Franklin Brockman to J. R. Mott, October 16, 1919; includes Press Proof of an Open Letter, "To His Excellency Baron Saito...Signed on Behalf of Federal Council, September 29, 1919"; Correspondence from George Gleason and Report on Korean Uprising and Photographs (9) featuring Gleason with notes by Mott, 1919; Correspondence, Homer Hulbert: Copies of Documents appointing him Envoy of Emperor [191?]		
Korean Independence Outbreak: Part 1 through 10, circa 1919 -- 1920	box 8	folder 7-9
Korean Independence Outbreak: Manifesto – "To the Spirit of Justice throughout the World, Korea Herein Expresses her Cause," signed Young L. Park, seal of United Asiatic Society, circa 1919 -- 1920	box 8	folder 10
Korean Independence Outbreak: Newspaper Clippings, 1919 -- 1920	box 8	folder 11
Korean Independence Outbreak: Pamphlets, circa 1919 -- 1920	box 8	folder 12-18
Scope and Contents		
Korea's Appeal for Self-Determination, by an American born in Korea Japanese Diplomacy and Force in Korea by Arthur MacLennan, The Korean "Independence Agitation" – Articles Reprinted from the Seoul Press, The Korean Independence Movement: pamphlet with photos, 192[?], An Open Letter by the Women of Korea, with photos, 192[?], Korea Review, September – October 1919, Pamphlet and Accompanying Items, 1919, The Korea Situation: Authentic Accounts of Recent Events by Eye Witnesses, issued by the Commission on Relations with the Orient of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, Note		

and More Light from Korea, 1919, Korea and Shantung versus The White Pearl by Charles H. Sherrill; The Anti-Japanese Agitation in California by Colonel John P. Irish, 1920, The Korea Situation, Number 2; issued by the Commission on Relations with the Orient of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, The Disturbances in Korea, Department of the Christian Literature Society of Japan, reprinted from the "Japan Evangelist," July 1919, Korea's Fight for Freedom by F. A. McKenzie, 1919, The Other Side of the Korean Question: Fresh Light on Some Important Factors by Frank Herron Smith, 1920, Administrative Reforms in Korea – Articles Reprinted from the Seoul Press, 1919, The Peace Conference, Korean Delegation – Petition and Memorandum Pamphlets, April 1919

Korean Independence Outbreak: The Peace Conference, Korean Delegation – Correspondence, 1919	box 8	folder 19
Korean Independence Outbreak: Proclamation and Demand for Continued Independence of the Korean Nation, 1919	box 8	folder 20
Germany and German Missions, 1913 -- 1922	box 9	folder 1-12

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Series 6: General Correspondence, 1911 -- 1940

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 alphabetically by last name of correspondent.

Scope and Contents

This series contains original correspondence related to Mott's career with a variety of organizations.

Title/Description	Instances
General correspondence A-W, 1911 -- 1940	box 10

Custodial History:

Custodial History

Legacy finding aid with list of correspondents available; please contact burkespecial@library.columbia.edu.

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