Inventory of the Claiborne M. Hill Collection

Collection number: GTU 2005-1-01

Graduate Theological Union Archives
Graduate Theological Union
Berkeley, California

Processed by:
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Date Completed:
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Claiborne M. Hill collection
Dates: 1884-1940,
Bulk Dates: (Bulk 1904-1934)
Collection number: GTU 2005-1-01
Creator: Hill, Claiborne M.
Collection Size: 25 boxes
10 linear ft.
Repository: The Graduate Theological Union. Library.
Berkeley, CA 94709

Abstract: This collection contains correspondence, financial correspondence, addresses, notes and sermons

Physical location: Shelf Location: 5/G/3 - 5/G/6
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access
Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
Claiborne M. Hill collection, GTU 2005-1-01. Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA.

Acquisition Information
American Baptist Seminary of the West, 2005. ABSW retains ownership of the collection. It is on permanent deposit at the GTU Archives.

Biography
Claiborne Milton Hill was born November 16, 1857 in Suisun, California, his parents Sterling and Sarah Russell. The family moved to Oregon where he received his B.A. from the University of Oregon, 1881. He graduated from Rochester Theological Seminary in 1884 and was ordained into the Baptist ministry. It is claimed that he was the first native-born Californian to enter the Baptist ministry. (Fleming, Pg. 107) He married Anna F. Pengra in December 1884, their children were Amy Helen (Mrs. Paul K. Yost) and Carey Sterling Hill. He served as pastor for the Eugene, Oregon Baptist Church 1884-90, as Superintendent of missions for the American Baptist Home Mission Society for Oregon, 1890-93, and as pastor of the 10th Ave. Baptist Church, Oakland, California 1893-1904 before assuming the presidency of the Pacific Coast Baptist Seminary in 1904. He also taught Bible and practical theology. After his retirement from Berkeley Baptist Divinity School in 1937, he remained in Berkeley active in the community and in the Baptist associations until his death January 27, 1950. (
Administrative History

The Pacific Baptist Theological Union was incorporated in 1889 by a group of Baptist clergy and lay people with the express intention to establish a seminary for the whole Pacific coast to fit men and women "for efficient ministerial, missionary, church and Sunday School work, and for all kinds of practical Christian labor." (Fleming, Pg. 32) The school, known as the Pacific Baptist Theological Seminary, formally opened in Oakland, California in 1890 under the presidency of Edgar H. Gray. When Gray died in 1894, there was no one to continue the work of the seminary and instruction ceased. The Theological Union however continued to meet to work on building the endowment and financial means to establish a school.

In late 1898 it was voted to reorganize under the name of Pacific Coast Baptist Theological Union. By-laws were adopted and the new agency incorporated. But it was not until 1904 that a committee on Baptist educational work of the California Baptist Convention voted that instruction should be resumed and "the theological seminary be located at Berkeley, California." (Fleming, Pg. 43) Dr. Claiborne M. Hill was elected President. Property was purchased at 2606 Dwight Way in Berkeley that included a three-story frame structure. The Pacific Coast Baptist Theological Seminary was opened August 15, 1904. The early years of the school were "fraught with [the] difficulties" of building financial support, building a faculty, and building a student body. Dr. Hill persisted in his leadership. "[H]is perseverance in the face of every difficulty was one of the factors that ultimately brought success. Allied with this were his patience under trial and his never failing conviction that the enterprise was of God." (Fleming, Pg. 48)

The seminary name was changed to Berkeley Baptist Divinity School in 1915 after California College, a Baptist school in Oakland, was discontinued. BBDS continued under the California College charter issued in 1892. Plans for a permanent building and collecting the necessary funds began in 1908. Julia Morgan was engaged as the architect in 1917, construction commenced in 1919, and the building was completed in 1921. BBDS enjoyed a period of prosperity and growth. This included expanding and developing the curriculum as a graduate school meeting the needs of those who had finished a full college course. The early years of the school had focused on training young people of varying educational backgrounds.

Then came the upheaval of the Depression. "These years of the thirties were among the most difficult ever experienced by many of the schools, and for some this decade was a race for survival." (Fleming, Pg. 68) BBDS did not escape the financial crisis. Dr. Hill faced and worked these years as he had the early years of the school, with calm perseverance and steady organization always moving toward the highest goals. "In 1937, after four difficult years, with each year adding to an accumulated deficit, President Hill resigned, marking the end of an era in Berkeley's history. This had been a most notable period in the school's life, marked by sacrificial devotion in the founding of the institution and its progression to a place of recognition as a standard American Baptist seminary. The unique service of President Hill for 33 years in the establishment and development of the school at Berkeley will always remain one of Berkeley's most cherished traditions. The school is a monument to his dedication." (Fleming, Pg. 75)


Scope and Content of Collection

The Collection consists of four series: 1) Correspondence; 2) Financial Correspondence; 3) Addresses and Notes; and 4) Sermons. The Collection was transferred from the old library building stacks at the American Baptist Seminary of the West. The name was changed from Berkeley Baptist Divinity School in 1968. It was arranged in the order maintained here. The Correspondence was housed in all the same type and style of letter file boxes ca. 1937. The Addresses and Notes, and the Sermons were housed in separate and more recent types of boxes.

Though C.M. Hill was President of the school 1904-1937, the correspondence in the Collection dates 1907-1934. It is unknown what happened to the six years of missing correspondence.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Berkeley Baptist Divinity School--Administration
Berkeley Baptist Divinity School--History--Sources
Baptist theological seminaries--United States--History--Sources
Theological seminaries--California--Berkeley--History--Sources
Berkeley (Calif.)--Religion--History--Sources
Baptists--California--History--Sources
Baptists--United States--History--Sources
Baptists--Clergy, training of--United States--History--Sources
Missionaries--Training of--California--History--Sources
Baptists--Missionaries--Correspondence
Baptists--Sermons--19th Century
Sermons--American--Eugene (Or.)
Sermons--American--Oakland (Calif.)
Berkeley Baptist Divinity School
Pacific Coast Baptist Theological Union
Pacific Coast Baptist Seminary
Fleming, Sanford, 1888-
Hobart, Charles H.
Hoyt, John G.
Johnston, Oliver M. (Oliver Martin), 1866-
Padelford, Frank W. (Frank William), 1872-1944
Clutterbuck, Ernest
Sly, Lucien H.
Morgan, Julia, 1872-1957
Series 1 Correspondence 1907-1934

Physical Description: 22 boxes

Series Scope and Content Summary

This Series contains office correspondence. Included are both the incoming letter with the out-going answer, or only the incoming letter, or only the out-going answer. There seems to be no pattern. The subjects of the letters range greatly according to myriad details involved in the administration of a theological seminary as well as the external issues and events in the surrounding community and larger world. Correspondents write to inquire about becoming a student and a minister if male, or training in other aspects of church work if female. These include people primarily from the West Coast, but also from all over the United States, China, and Japan. There is correspondence requesting faculty positions or recruiting faculty for the school. There is correspondence with the various appropriate Baptist denominational boards, agencies, associations, and conferences both national and regional, as well as the Y.M.C.A and the other protestant seminaries in the San Francisco Bay Area, particularly the Pacific School of Religion, the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, and San Francisco Theological Seminary. There is correspondence with the two Baptist colleges, University of Redlands in Southern California and McMinnville College (later named Linfield) in Oregon.

Much of the correspondence concerns the finances of the seminary including banking, investment, trust, and endowment matters, requesting donations from individuals to the school, reminding congregations to send and receiving their apportionments to the school, etc. (Only a few years of Financial Correspondence, 1929-36, were separated into a separate series found in Series 2.) There is correspondence concerning Hill's lecture, conference, preaching, and travel arrangements. Most of his travels had to do with gaining financial and denominational support for the school.

Correspondents from individual congregations also write asking for recommendations of students or ordained ministers to fill parish positions. There is correspondence from ministers and lay persons in individual congregations writing Dr. Hill to report on their experiences, needs, or other issues. Or they write to ask Dr. Hill's advice about the various needs, situations, or difficulties of their ministry or of the parish.

Hill was also involved with the American Baptist Foreign and Home Missionary societies so there is correspondence concerning persons who seek missionary training, applying for missionary positions, and other issues before the Societies. There are also news letters from missionaries in the fields, particularly China.

Up to about 1921, there is a great deal of correspondence concerning the new building by Julia Morgan. This includes raising the funds, asking and receiving donations toward the building, and correspondence with Morgan, her office and contractors.

Arrangement

The Correspondence 1907-1909 is arranged chronologically by year. The years 1910-1934, are arranged by year and then alphabetically within each year. The boxes are all 5 inch archives boxes.

1907 - L 1910 1907-1910
M 1910 - L 1912 1910-1912
M 1912 - Y 1913 1912-1913
A-Z 1914
A-Y 1915
B 1916 - B 1917-1920 1916-1920

Scope and Content Note

Note: 1917-20 were inter-filed so alphabetically will contain all four years.
Series 1 Correspondence 1907-1934

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GTU 2005-1-01

Series 1 Correspondence 1907-1934

- Box 12: G 1924 - D 1925 1924-1925
- Box 13: E 1925 - G 1926 1925-1926
- Box 14: H 1926 - J 1927 1926-1927
- Box 15: K 1927 - O 1928 1927-1928
- Box 16: P 1928 - J 1929 1928-1929
- Box 17: K 1929 - J 1930 1929-1930
- Box 18: K 1930 - O 1931 1930-1931
- Box 19: P 1931 - M 1932 1931-1932
- Box 20: N 1932 - R 1933 1932-1933
- Box 21: S 1933 - Q 1934 1933-1934
- Box 22:1-4: R-Y 1934
- Box-folder 22:5-10: Series 2 Financial Correspondence 1929-1936
  - 23:1-6: Physical Description: 11 folders
  - Series Scope and Content Summary
    - Financial correspondence was inter-filed in the general correspondence files until 1929 when it began to be separated to a separate file. However, some financial correspondence can still be found in the general correspondence for these years. The correspondence includes banking, investment, trust, and endowment matters. See Box 24, File Folder 34 (legal size) for bank statements concerning trusts 1932-35.
- Box-folder 22:1-5: A-T 1929-1932
- Box-folder 22:5-6: A-W 1933-1936

Series 2 Financial Correspondence 1929-1936

- Box-folder 22:1-5 A-T 1929-1932
- Box-folder 23:1-6 A-W 1933-1936

Series 3 Addresses and Notes 1918-1939, undated

- Box-folder 23:7: News Service Releases from the Front, #12 - 43 (incomplete). Third YMCA War Work fund, Western Department, San Francisco. Descriptions of YMCA workers' experiences in France. 9/1918
- Box-folder 23:8: Addresses about Hill's trip to England 1923
- Box-folder 23:9: "Forty-five Years in the Ministry: A Testimony", Hill's 45th Anniversary of his ordination. 10/20/1929
- Box-folder 23:10: "Memorial Address for John G. Hoyt", First Baptist Church, Oakland, CA 12/18/1938
- Box-folder 23:11: Manuscript: "They Sought a Better Country, or On the Road to Knowledge". Describes the Sterling family in Oregon in the 1870's, particularly as they sought a college education for their sons at the University of Oregon. 1939
- Box-folder 23:12: Notes on the seminary building, Julia Morgan, Architect. Written on the back of an envelope from Morgan's office. undated
- Box-folder 23:13: "Greeting to Dr. W.F. Bade on Behalf of the Theological Seminaries of the Bay Region" on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of his coming to the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, CA. undated
- Box-folder 23:14: "My Young Brethren", four addresses for graduation? (various dates?), "Life is Working in You", "Teach These Truths", "Truth for Life", "Abide in Your Calling" undated
- Box-folder 23:15: "Ten Minute Christmas Talk to Young People". undated
- Box-folder 23:16: "Bitter Tides and Rivers of Water". undated
- Box-folder 23:17: Outlines for various addresses undated
- Box-folder 23:18: Notes on "repeated invitations to merge with the Pacific School of Religion" undated
- Box-folder 23:19: "The Ministry and its Function" undated
- Box-folder 23:20: Lectures on Romans undated
Series 4 Sermons 1882-1944, undated

Physical Description: 2 boxes

Series Scope and Content Summary

The Sermons cover the years of Hill's pastoral ministry, 1884 - 1904. There are also a few, 1908 - 1940 and undated, on themes of ministry and the Bible given during the years Hill was President of the Seminary and after his retirement. Each sermon is numbered with a title and the Bible text used. Each is dated with the church and town in which the sermon was delivered. If the sermon was delivered more than once, all dates and places are listed. The majority of sermons were preached where Hill served as pastor, at the Baptist Church, Eugene City, Oregon 1884-1893, then at the Tenth Ave. Baptist Church, Oakland, California 1893-1904 when he became President of the Seminary.

Arrangement

The sequence of the sermon numbers does not correspond to the calendar dates the sermons were delivered. The numbers and the dates can vary widely. The sermons are arranged here by sermon number. Not all the numbers are included in the collection. There are wide gaps of missing sermons. The sermons are handwritten in black ink on various types, forms, and sizes of paper. Most of the sermons are full written texts, a few are outlines.

Box-folder 24:1-33
#21 - 499 1882-1899

Box-folder 25:1-5
#517 - 891 1889-1904

Box-folder 25:6-9
Un-numbered sermons 1908-1940, undated

Box-folder 25:10
Series of lectures on constructing sermons and preaching undated

Box-folder 25:11
Newspaper article: "Divinity School if 40 Years Old", Oakland Tribune. Includes photograph: C.M. Hill, Sanford Fleming, and Charles Hobart. 11/15/1944