

**Title:** William Eleazar Barton Papers

**Creator:** Brown, William Eleazar, 1861-1930

**Dates:** 1888-1953, bulk: 1888-1930

**Physical Description:** 5 linear feet. 3 cartons and 8 lantern slide boxes.

**Collection number:** MS 0016

**Access Restrictions:** None.

**Copyright:** Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the archivist or librarian

**Language:** English

**Repository:** Congregational Library and Archive

14 Beacon Street

Boston, MA 02108

617-523-0470

<http://www.congregationallibrary.org>

*Collection processed 1991 and revised by April Johnson, 2011.*

**Abstract:**

This collection contains the papers of William Eleazar Barton and family from 1888-1953 (bulk: 1888-1930). Papers include correspondence; writings such as sermons, lectures, articles and outlines for books; photographs, scrapbooks, and printed materials; and materials created and related to Barton's son and author of, "History of Business," Bruce Barton.

**Acquisition Information:**

Acquisition information is unknown.

**Biographical History:**

William Eleazar Barton was born in Sublett, IL on 28 June 1861 and died in Brooklyn, NY on 30 December 1930. He graduated from Berea College in 1885, received his MA from Oberlin Graduate School of Theology in 1890, and was ordained in 1885.

He married Esther Treat Bushnell of Johnsonville, Ohio in 1885 and they had 5 children: Bruce Fairchild, Charles William, Helen Elizabeth Mary (later Stilwell), Frederick Bushnell, and Robert Shawmut Barton. Over the years he was a pastor at churches in Robbins and Helenwood, TN (1855-1887), Litchfield, OH (1887-1890), Wellington, OH (1890-1893), Boston, MA Shawmut Church (1893-1899), and Oak Park, IL First Church (1899-1924).

In addition to his role as pastor he also engaged in a variety of Congregational activities including: Chairman of the Commission on Congregational Polity, International Council in 1889, 1908, and 1920; Secretary of the Commission of Nineteen, 1910-1913; Moderator of the National Council of Congregational Churches from 1921-1923; Associate Editor of Bibliotheca Sacra from 1913-1917; Editor of The Advance (Pastor's Department) from 1904-1912; Editor and Chief The Advance from 1917-1930; and last but not least he was a lecturer and author on Ecclesiastical Law, including *Pocket Congregational Manual* (1910); *Rules of Order for Religious Assemblies* (1910); *The Law of Congregational Usage* (1915); and *Congregational Creeds and Covenants* (1917), as well as various books (parables) of Safed the Sage and various stories concerning Abraham Lincoln.

**Scope of Collection:**

This collection consists of the papers of Congregational minister, author, and editor William Eleazar Barton and various Barton family members, including his son, writer and editor, Bruce Barton. The papers range from 1888-1953, however the bulk of the papers were created between 1888-1930. The papers consist of personal and professional correspondence of Barton and his family; writing of both Barton and his son Bruce, memorabilia and Barton's lantern slide collection. Of particular interest is the correspondence between Barton and his son Bruce.

**Arrangement:**

The William Eleazar Barton papers are arranged into five series:

- I. Correspondence, 1890-1930, 1952-1953
  - A. Professional, 1890-1930
  - B. Family, 1908-1914
  - C. William Barton and Bruce Barton, 1909-1952
- II. Writings of William Eleazar Barton, 1888, 1903-1930
- III. Printed and Photographic Memorabilia, n.d.
- IV. Items of Bruce Barton, 1926-1928
- V. Barton Lantern Slide Collection, n.d.

**Related Material:**

The Autobiography of William E. Barton, by William E. Barton, with an introduction by Bruce Barton. (1932).

Thomas Hart Benton papers, 1826.

Most of William Barton's publications are accessible via the online catalog.

**Access Terms:**

Barton, William Eleazar, 1861-1930  
Barton, Bruce, 1886-1967  
Barton Family  
Authors, American—20<sup>th</sup> Century  
Boston (Mass.)—Church History  
Church Polity.  
Commission of Nineteen  
Congregationalism—History  
Congregational Churches—Massachusetts—Boston  
Congregational Churches—Illinois—Oak Park  
Ecclesiastical Law  
International Congregational Council—Boston, 1920  
International Congregational Council—Bournemouth, England.  
Oak Park (IL)—Church History  
Oak Park, Illinois—First Congregational Church

National Council of Congregational Churches –Kansas City  
North Brookfield, Mass—Union Congregational Church  
The Kansas City Statement of Faith, 1913  
World Conference on Faith and Order—Lausanne, 1927

**Detailed Description and Container List:**

**Series I. Correspondence, 1890-1930, 1952-1953**

This series consists of both professional and personal correspondence of William Barton and family and pertains to their daily lives, Barton’s careers as a pastor and all of his additional professional and personal activities. Of particular interest is the correspondence between Barton and his son Bruce who was an editor and write and who wrote the famous book, “The Man Nobody Knows,” in 1925.

**Subseries A: Professional, 1890-1930**

*Arranged by date.*

**Box 1**

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Folder 1 | 1890-1907  |
| Folder 2 | 1908-1914  |
| Folder 3 | 1917-1930 (includes resignation from Oak Park, IL) |

**Subseries B: Family, 1880-1953 (bulk: 1906-1924)**

*Arranged by date.*

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Folder 4 | 1906-1907  |
| Folder 5 | Undated, ca. 1907-1908                               |
| Folder 6 | 1908-1911  |
| Folder 7 | 1921, 1924   |
| Folder 8 | 1953, includes early manuscript Poems from 1880-1883 |

**Subseries C: Correspondence between WEB and Bruce Barton, 1909-1952**

*Arranged by date.*

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Folder 9  | 1909, 1920 Concerning Billy Sunday          |
| Folder 10 | 1909 Concerning Christianity and politics   |
| Folder 11 | 1926-1930, 1952 Concerning WEB publications |

**Series II. Writings of William E. Barton, 1888, 1903-1930**

*Arranged by topic.*

Writings of William Barton include sermons and lectures, addresses to the National Council and International Congregational Council meetings. There are several folders relating to Barton's participation at the World Conference on Faith and Order in Lausanne, 1927, plus various essays on church union and notes on ecclesiastical law.

Folders 12-15 Ecclesiastical Law, ca. 1912

Folder 16 "The Council Creed: Its Origin and Purpose," n.d. includes photos of Commission of Nineteen and printing of Kansas City Statement of Faith

Folder 17 "Newer Congregationalism," National Council Address, 1913

Folder 18 "The Origin of the Council Creed," Advance, 1915

Folder 19 "Three Centuries of Pilgrim History," National Council Address 1917

Folder 20 "Two Boston Councils Compared," Advance, 1920

Folder 21 "The Unity of the Church," "Congregationalism: Continental and Catholic," National Council Address, 1923

Folder 22 "Report of the Committee on the Report and Proposal of the Committee of the Relations of our National Benevolent Societies to the Churches," n.d., later than 1913

Folder 23 International Congregational Council, Boston, 1920. Commission on Congregationalism and its Polity

Folder 24 International Congregational Council, Bournemouth, England, 1930

Folders 25-26 Church Union, 1918-1927

Folder 27 World Conference on Faith and Order Plans. Correspondence, 1912-1914

Folder 28 World Conference on Faith and Order, Lausanne, 1927. Correspondence, 1926-1927

Folder 29 "The World Conference in Retrospect," 1927

Folder 30 World Conference/Church Union, 1927

Folder 31 World Conference on Faith and Order/Tour of Europe notes and clippings, 1927

Folder 32 Episcopal Church and Lausanne Controversy, Christian Century articles, 1929/1930

Folder 33 World Conference on Faith and Order. Verbatim Reports No. 1-4, 7

Folder 34 "Brief History of Congregationalism," Advance, 1917

- Folder 35 "Men and the Christian Centuries: A series of Twenty Studies Arranged for Bible Class," ca. 1930
- Folders 36-37 "History of the Christian Church in Twenty Lessons," n.d.
- Folders 38-39 "Twenty Christian Centuries: A Series of Twenty Studies Arranged for Bible Class," ca. 1930
- Folder 40 Ministers, Ministry, Preaching

**Box 2**

- Folder 41 Evangelism, Evangelists, Billy Sunday, ca. 1916
- Folder 42 Conversion, Ministry
- Folders 43-47 Pilgrim/Forefathers Day Addresses. Churches and Congregational Clubs.
- Folder 48 "Congregationalism as a Factor in the Making of Illinois," 1918, Chicago City Missionary Society, 1914
- Folder 49 "300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Signing of Mayflower Compact," 1920, Misc. Writings on Paul Revere, Henry Ward Beecher.
- Folders 50-52 "New Testament Lectures/How the New Testament Came to be Written," 1915-1916
- Folder 53 Misc. concerning divorce, witchcraft, card playing, mouse-trap quotation.
- Folder 54 Archaeology Lectures, ca. 1905
- Folder 55 Sermons, including, "Morality Before Moses," 1903, articles published in "The Jewish Era"
- Folder 56 Christian Doctrine Sermons, ca. 1910-1911
- Folder 57 Sermons on Education, ca. 1920
- Folder 58 Sermons, including, "Why I Believe the Bible," 1903, "A Baccalaureate Sermon to the Human Race;" Christmas Sermon
- Folder 59 "The Hand of God in History: A Series of Lectures on the Contribution of Various Nations to the Gospel of Christ," ca. 1920/1930
- Folder 60 "Lenten Meditations on Confession of Faith," Advance, 1914
- Folder 61 Sermons published 1915-1916, Farmers Review
- Folder 62 Sermons published 1917-1918, Farmers Review

Folder 63 Notes on Original Sin, n.d.

**Box 3**

Folder 64 "The Atonement in History and in Scripture," 1888

Folders 65-67 Parable of the Prodigal Son, Sermons and notes, ca. 1910

Folders 68-69 "A Prophet in His Own County," ca. 1923. Unpublished Fiction

Folders 70-71 Sermons

Folder 72 Criticism of Bishop Potter and the Subway Saloon, NYC

Folder 73 North Brookfield, MA. Union Congregational Church Concerning Church which became part of Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts, 1905

**Series III. Memorabilia- Printed and Photographic, n.d.**

*Arranged by type of material.*

This series includes memorabilia, including published copies of sermons, lectures, scrapbooks, photographs, and biographical materials.

Folder 74 Abroad with the Mayflower Party, 1908.

Folder 75 Announcements for Lectures of WEB

Folders 76-77 Published Copies of Addresses

Folder 78 Scrapbook of Prominent Individuals

Folder 79 Clippings of articles by WEB

Folder 80 Biographical materials, obituaries

Folder 81 Memorials. Barton Chapel; Barton's Pinnacle

Folders 82-83 Photographs, including family

Folder 84 Notes from lecture by Prof. Park, with proof texts

**Series IV. Items of Bruce Barton, 1926-1928**

*Arranged by type of material.*

This series includes items belonging to Bruce Barton, son of William Barton, who was an editor and a writer. Included are miscellaneous clippings, correspondence and typescript copies of some of his work.

Folder 85 Correspondence, 1926-1927, "History of Business" typescript

- Folder 86      “History of Business” typescript
- Folder 87      Clippings
- Folder 88      Clippings and pamphlets
- Folder 89      Articles for Good Housekeeping; “150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Foxboro, Mass.” Typescript of “Outline of Religion”

**Series V. Barton Lantern Slides, n.d.**

*Mostly arranged by topic.*

This series contains lantern slides collected by William Barton. While some of the collections are labeled, there is a large section of miscellaneous slides. Most of the individual slides are labeled and consist of images and text pertaining to religious artifacts and art and colonial American history and art.

- Slide Box 1**      Miscellaneous
- Slide Box 2**      “Good Samaritans”  
“Pilgrims Progress”
- Slide Box 3**      “Hymns”  
“Religious Masterpieces”
- Slide Box 4**      “Religious Masterpieces”  
“Christmas Vespers”  
“Chapel of Ascension”
- Slide Box 5**      “Chapel of Ascension”  
Miscellaneous (Art)  
“Colonial”
- Slide Box 6**      “Colonial”  
Miscellaneous
- Slide Box 7**      Miscellaneous
- Slide Box 8**      Miscellaneous