

Congregational Library & Archives

Chicago Theological Seminary collection on Samuel Ives Curtiss, 1877-1904. MS4980

Summary

Creator: Chicago Theological Seminary (Chicago, Ill.).
Curtiss, Samuel Ives, 1844-1904.

Title: Chicago Theological Seminary collection on Samuel Ives Curtiss, 1877-1904.

Dates: 1877-1904

Extent: 2 document cases (0.5 cubic feet)

Collection ID Number: MS4980

Language: English, some German, French, and Arabic

Abstract: This collection contains the personal papers of Samuel Ives Curtiss (1844-1904) from the Chicago Theological Seminary. Curtiss was a prominent figure at Chicago Theological Seminary, both as an academic and for his literary pursuits. He was also active in missionary work throughout most of his life.

Collection History and Status

Custodial History: Items transferred to the Congregational Library & Archives in 2011 from the Chicago Theological Seminary.

Repository:

Congregational Library & Archives

14 Beacon Street

Boston, MA 02108

617-523-0470

<http://www.congregationallibrary.org>

Processing Information: Processed by Elyse Edwards, January 2014, using DACS Second Edition.

Accessing and Using the Collection

Conditions Governing Access: Access to this collection is unrestricted and open to the public.

Copyright: Items in this collection are subject to U.S. Copyright Law. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine the copyright status of collection items and to secure any permissions necessary for their reproduction and publication. Requests for permission to publish material must be discussed with the archivist or librarian.

Preferred Citation:

[Identification of item], in the Samuel Ives Curtiss papers, 1877-1904, MS4980. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

Description

Historical Note: Samuel Ives Curtiss (1844-11904) was born on February 5, 1844 in Union, Connecticut. His father was Rev. Samuel Ives Curtiss, a pastor of the church at Union, Connecticut for thirty-five years; his mother was the granddaughter of Rev. Jesse Ives, a congregational minister at the church of Monson, Massachusetts for thirty-two years. He early on aspired to the study of theology and graduated from Amherst College in 1867. He became very active in missionary work while at Amherst. In 1867 he proceeded to Union Theological Seminary, New

York, where he graduated in 1870. He continued his missionary work with the Alexander Mission between 1869-1872. After marrying in 1872, he went abroad to Germany to continue his studies. He spent a year at the University of Bonn, before moving to the University of Leipzig. There he became the pupil of the theologian and Hebraist Franz Delitzsch (1813-1890). He received his degree of doctor of philosophy from the University of Leipzig in 1876 for his thesis on *The name of Machabee*, and of licentiate of philosophy from the University of Berlin. During this period, he additionally translated Gustav Bickell's (1838-1906) *Outlines of hebrew grammar*, and published the volume *Levitical priests: a contribution to the criticisms of the pentateuch*. Delitzsch encouraged Curtiss to make Old Testament studies his life's work.

Curtiss saw that the study of the Old Testament was greatly lacking in American seminary schools, and subsequently accepted a professorship in the Old Testament department with the Chicago Theological Seminary in 1878. At his inaugural address, he gave a speech entitled a *Plea for a more thorough study of the semitic languages in America*. His intention with promoting the study of the Hebrew language was to better prepare scholars to study and respond to Old Testament theology and criticisms. He was successful in gaining the support of the school. During his twenty-five years as Professor of the Old Testament department, he facilitated the advancement of study into semitic religion and Hebraica. In order to address the needs of German and Scandinavian Christians who had separated from their state churches and immigrated to the United States, from 1883-1885 he promoted the creation of German, Danish-Norwegian and Swedish affiliate schools in both the United States and foreign countries.

The demands of his academic role left him limited time to pursue his literary endeavors. In 1882 Curtiss became one of the editors of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, in which he published articles on the *Song of Solomon* (1898) and *The book, the land, and the people; or divine revelation through ancient Israel* (1901). From 1883, he and his colleagues published an annual report on theological studies entitled *Current discussions in theology* for which he wrote the *Present state of old testament theology*. In addition, he published a brief biography of Franz Delitzsch in 1891, as well as articles in numerous theological journals including *Ezekial and his times* in *The Bible as Literature* (1896); *Primitive semitic worship* in the *Expositor* (1902); *Firstlings and other sacrifices* in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* (1903); *Physical relations of man and God* in the *American Journal of Theology* (1902); *Manuscripts of the old testament* in *The People's Bible History* (1896); *William II in the holy land* in the *Cosmopolitan* (1899); and the following articles in the *Biblical World: Isaiah 52:13-53:12* (1896); *Deified Men, Conception of God* and two articles on *Local divinities of the modern semites* (all in 1902); *The transformation of local divinities into Gods and Sacrifice among the primitive semites* (1903).

In addition to his academic roles, he was also a deacon at the New First Congregational Church, Chicago, and the head of their Sunday school. In addition, he organized three branch missions of the First Church, which themselves flourished and became independent churches for which he helped to raise money to fund their houses of worship. This work led to the creation of the Chicago Missionary Society in 1881; Curtiss was elected the president of the society in 1888, a position he held until his death in 1904.

During the summers of 1890 and 1893 he resumed his scholarly visits to Europe, traveling to Britain, Germany and Scandinavian lands. In 1898 he visited Egypt, the Sinai peninsula, Syria and Palestine. Here he discovered the theme for his most important work, *Primitive semitic religion today* (1902). In May 1904, he traveled to Palestine to finalize his research into the history of Semitic religion. In August of that year, two papers of his were to be read at the Congress of Orientalists, however a brain hemorrhage on August 22nd prevented him from attending. His papers were read by proxies and received with high commendations. A second hemorrhage on September 22, 1904, left him unconscious and he passed away that same day.

Samuel Ives Curtiss died at the age of 60, having made enormous contributions to the Chicago Theological Seminary, the study of the Old Testament and Hebraica, and through his missionary work.

Scope of Collection: The personal papers of Samuel Ives Curtiss consist primarily of correspondence, historical items, and drafts of his literary works. The correspondence dates from 1877 to his death in 1904. A majority of the correspondence is from his time at the Chicago Theological Seminary. Other records include notes from a ledger, his diploma from the University of Bonn, transcripts from lectures, and drafts of articles. There are no records from his time at Amherst College, Union Seminary, Alexander Mission, his early trips abroad or Chicago Missionary Society.

Further Searches

Subject Headings:

Bible. O.T. - Criticism, interpretation, etc.
 Bible O.T. - Theology.
 Bibliotheca sacra.
 Chicago City Missionary Society (Chicago, Ill.).
 Chicago Theological Seminary.
 Community Renewal Society (Chicago, Ill.) - History.
 Curtiss, Samuel Ives, 1844-1904.
 Delitzsch, Franz, 1813-1890.
 New First Congregational Church (Chicago, Ill.).
 Religion - Philosophy.
 Theology - Periodicals.

Union Theological Seminary (New York, N.Y.) - History

Related Materials held at the Congregational Library & Archives:

Community Renewal Society records, 1881-1978. (RG5061)
 Congregational Yearbook, 1904
No ivory tower: the story of the Chicago Theological Seminary (19.5.2 CHI-THEO)

By Samuel Ives Curtiss:

A plea for a more thorough study of the semitic languages in America (19.3 1016)
Does a literal translation of the song of songs remove its character as scripture? (5.3.1. 5301)
Is there probation after death? a sermon [...] February 11th (5.3.1 5301)
Lectures on old testament literature (5.3.1 5301)
Lectures on the major prophets (5.3.1 5301)
Lectures on the old testament history of the people of redemption (5.3.1 5301)
Messianic prophecies: lectures (Franz Delitzsch translated by Samuel Ives Curtiss) (18.2.2.59)

The book, the land, the people: or divine revelations through ancient Israel (5.3.1. 5301)

The date of our gospels in the light of the latest criticism (5.3.1. 5301)

The name Machabee (5.3.1 5301)

Recent evangelistic movements in Great Britain and on the continent (5.3.1 5301)

Arrangement: This collection is arranged into three series. Correspondence has been arranged chronologically, ephemeral historical items were placed together and identifiable lectures were arranged together. Drafts of works were maintained in the original order in which they were found.

Series I: Correspondence

Series II: Historical Items

Series III: Drafts

Contents

Series I: Correspondence

Date: 1877-1904, undated

Extent: 5 folders

Scope of Series: This series contains correspondence from the life and death of Samuel Ives Curtiss.

The bulk of letters are from his time at the Chicago Theological Seminary. A small portion pertains to his appointment as the Professor of Biblical Literature at Chicago Theological Seminary and his death in 1904. Most of the correspondence from Curtiss addresses the financial state of the school and his successes as the Director General of Securing funds. Additional correspondence includes his reports on his travels to Syria, Palestine and the Sinai peninsula 1898-1904, as well as curriculum proposed based on those travels (Folder 4). Finally, correspondence responding to news of his death is also present in this series.

	Date	Box 1 /Folder
Correspondence, Chicago Theological Seminary appointment	1877-1882, undated	B1/F1
Chicago Theological Seminary Correspondence and Financial Reports	1886 - 1893	B1/F2
Chicago Theological Seminary Correspondence and Financial Reports	1893 - 1899	B1/F3
Chicago Theological Seminary Correspondence and Financial Reports	1900 - 1904	B1/F4
Correspondence - death	1904 Sept 22 - 1904 October 12, undated	B1/F5

Series II: Historical Items

Date: 1873, 1899, 1903, undated

Extent: 3 folders

Scope of Series: This series contains historical items including Curtiss' diploma from the University of Bonn, Curtiss' contract with a travel guide for his trip to Syria and Palestine, and newspaper clippings from his articles on *The semitic sacrifice and reconciliation* and *Survivals of primitive semitic religion among Syrians and Arabs*. This series also includes notes and newspaper clippings from a ledger, a notebook from the University of Leipzig, and an article from a German newspaper.

Date

Box 1 /Folder

Historical Items	1899, 1903, undated	B1/F6
Diploma from University of Bonn	1873	B1/F7
Notes and newspaper clippings from ledger	undated	B1/F8

Series III: Lectures and Drafts

Date: 1888-1901, undated

Extent: 1 document case and 7 folders

Scope of Series: This series contains manuscripts and notes on Old Testament lectures given by Curtiss. In addition, this series has many partial works from his drafts including excerpts from *The place of sacrifice among the primitive semites* (folders 14, 17), *Firstlings and other sacrifices* (folder 9), *Primitive semitic religion to-day* (folders 17, 18), *Geography of Syria, Palestine, and the Sinaitic Peninsula* (folder 17), *The name Machabee, A plea for a more thorough study of Semitic languages in America, Does a literal translation of the song of songs remove its character as scripture?*, and *Origin and transmission of the old testament scriptures*.

	Date	Box 1 /Folder
Lectures and courses on the Old Testament	1888, 1899-1901, undated	B1/F9
Lectures on the 2 nd book of Isaiah	undated	B1/F10
Lecture I-IV (partial) on the Messianic Prophecy	undated	B1/F11
The Old Testament a Divine Book	undated	B1/F12
Questions on Old Testament Literature	undated	B1/F13
Notes/Drafts	undated	B1/F14
Drafts	undated	B1/F15
The Divine unfolding of the Messianic Idea	undated	B2/F1
Drafts	undated	B2/F2
Drafts	undated	B2/F3
Drafts	undated	B2/F4
Drafts	undated	B2/F5
Drafts	undated	B2/F6
Origin and Transmission of the Old Testament Scriptures	undated	B2/F7
Notes on the Prophets of the Assyrian period	undated	B2/F8
Does a literal translation of the song of songs remove its character as scripture?	undated	B2/F9
Prophecies and preparations with reference to the coming of Jesus Christ	undated	B2/F10