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Union Theological Seminary, New York

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 6

Finding Aid for

**Matthew Tyson Yates Papers, 1878**

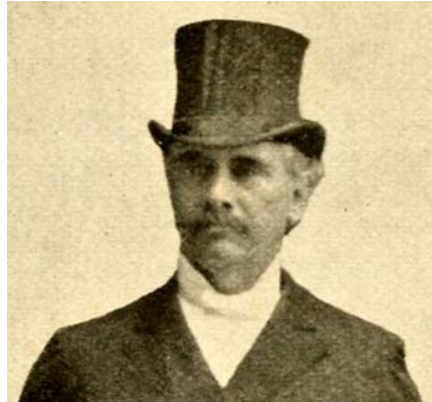


Image Credit: Charles Elisha Taylor, *The Story of Yates the Missionary*  
(Nashville: Sunday School Board, 1898).

Finding Aid prepared by: Gregory Adam Scott, June 2010

**Summary Information**

Creator: Matthew Tyson (M.T.) Yates, 1819 - 1888  
Title: Matthew Tyson Yates Papers  
Inclusive dates: 1878  
Bulk dates: 1878  
Abstract: Matthew Tyson Yates, a Southern Baptist preacher and distributor of Chinese language Christian literature in Shanghai and region from 1847 wrote and published this essay in 1878 on Chinese ancestral worship.  
Size: 1 box, 0.25 linear feet  
Storage: Onsite storage  
Repository: The Burke Library  
Union Theological Seminary  
3041 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027  
Phone: 212-851-5612  
Fax: 212-851-5613  
Email: [archives@uts.columbia.edu](mailto:archives@uts.columbia.edu)

### Administrative Information

- Provenance: These records were part of the independent Missionary Research Library prior to its closure in 1976, when the records were accessioned to The Burke Library.
- Access: Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by phone, fax or email [archives@uts.columbia.edu](mailto:archives@uts.columbia.edu), as far in advance as possible.
- Access Restrictions: The collection is unrestricted to readers.
- Preferred Citation: Item description, MRL 6: Matthew Tyson Yates Papers, box # and folder #, The Burke Library Archives (Columbia University Libraries) at Union Theological Seminary, New York.

### Biography

Matthew Tyson (M.T.) Yates was born in Wake county, North Carolina in 1819. He was baptized in 1836, and graduated from Wake Forest College in 1846. In September of that year he married Eliza E. Moring, and in October was ordained into the Southern Baptist Convention in Raleigh, NC. In April of the following year he and his wife left for China, and reached Shanghai in September of 1847. Yates quickly acquired a singular skill in Chinese, and for the rest of his life was engaged in preaching and distributing Christian literature in Shanghai and the surrounding region.

In 1872 he was awarded an honorary D.D. by Wake Forest College. Near the end of his life Yates suffered illness, and died on March 17, 1888 after suffering a series of strokes.

### Collection Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of a single essay by Yates on Chinese ancestor worship published in Shanghai in 1878. Understanding ancestor worship and other aspects of Chinese religion was important for missionaries who needed to communicate their beliefs in relation to traditional practices. Yates' essay was presented at the first General Conference of Protestant Missionaries in China, which was held in Shanghai from May 10 to 24, 1877. The event attracted nearly 150 attendees, representing nearly all of the mission stations and organizations then in China. Yates also chaired the editorial committee that produced a volume of the conference proceedings.

A further copy of this publication can be found in the MRL Pamphlets collection, folder [2094](#).

### Processing

Contents were placed in a new acid-free folder and box.

### Contents list

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	1	M.T. Yates, "Ancestral Worship: Revised Edition of an Essay Read Before the Missionary Conference held at Shanghai, May 10th-24th, 1877," Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1878