

**The Burke Library Archives
At Union Theological Seminary, New York**

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 9

Finding Aid for

Ashbel Green Simonton Journal, 1852-1866



Finding Aid prepared by: Miguel Escobar, October 2006

Summary Information

Creator: Helen Murdoch Simonton
Title: Ashbel Green Simonton Journal, 1852 -1866
Inclusive dates: 1852-1866
Abstract: Transcription of A.G. Simonton's journal covering his years at Princeton seminary and his first years as a Presbyterian missionary in Brazil, 1852-1866.
Size: 1 box, 0.25 linear ft.
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

Administrative Information

- Provenance:** Originally donated by Robert E. Speer of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. to Charles H. Fahs, director of the Missionary Research Library in 1918. The original diary was first sent to Robert E. Speer by A.G. Simonton's daughter who asked that copies of his diary be made and distributed. In 1976 these records were accessioned to the Burke Library archives with the closure of the MRL.
- 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, as far in advance as possible.
- Access restrictions:** The collection is unrestricted to readers.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, MRL 9: Simonton, Ashbel Green, 1833-1867, box #, folder #, The Burke Library Archives at Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York.

Biography

Ashbel Green Simonton (1833-1867) was an American Presbyterian pioneer missionary in Brazil. A graduate of Princeton seminary, he was sent to Brazil by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions arriving in Rio de Janeiro in August 1859. In 1860 Simonton organized the first Sunday school, with five children, and began evangelistic work in Portuguese. He converted, baptized, and ordained a former Roman Catholic priest, José Manoel da Conceição, the first Brazilian Presbyterian minister. He organized the first Presbyterian Church in Rio de Janeiro and was the founder of the first evangelical newspaper. Simonton returned to the United States in 1862 and married Helen Murdoch. She died in 1864 after giving birth to a daughter. Simonton died in 1867 of yellow fever at age 36.¹

Content Note

This collection contains one of the transcripts of the journal requested by Helen Simonton. The original manuscript journal is deposited at Princeton Theological Seminary. Another copy can be found in the Historical Museum of the Presbyterian Seminary in Campinas, Brazil.

Processing

When the Burke Library acquired the A.G. Simonton papers, the original order was retained. Folded materials were flattened. Staples, rubber bands, and metal clips were removed and replaced with plastic clips. All materials were placed in acid-free folders and boxes.

¹ Gerald H. Anderson, *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillan, 1998) 621-3.

Contents list**Box Folder Contents**

1	1	Journal transcript, Nov 5, 1852 – Jun 6, 1854
1	2	Journal transcript, Jul 12, 1854 – Jan 1, 1858
1	3	Journal transcript, Feb 8, 1858 – Dec 31, 1866
1	4	List of Princeton Archive holdings for A.G. Simonton papers