

Theodore Parker Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2023

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm81035493>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms010235>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2010
Revised 2023 October

Collection Summary

Title: Theodore Parker Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1838-1910

Bulk Dates: 1850-1860

ID No.: MSS35493

Creator: Parker, Theodore, 1810-1860

Extent: 180 items

Extent: 1 container

Extent: .2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm81035493>

Summary: Unitarian clergyman, theologian, author, and abolitionist. Correspondence, writings, poetry, and printed material relating to Parker's antislavery lectures and to the publication of his biography and collected writings.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Birney, James Gillespie, 1792-1857--Correspondence.

Clark, E. P.--Correspondence.

Johnson, Oliver, 1809-1889--Correspondence.

Leighton, Rufus--Correspondence.

Mann, Horace, 1796-1859--Correspondence.

Parker, Lydia Dodge Cabot--Correspondence.

Parker, Theodore, 1810-1860.

Sanborn, F. B. (Franklin Benjamin), 1831-1917--Correspondence.

Subjects

Antislavery movements.

Slavery--United States.

Occupations

Abolitionists.

Authors.

Clergy.

Theologians.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Theodore Parker, Unitarian clergyman, theologian, author, and abolitionist, were purchased by the Library of Congress, 1918-1982.

Processing History

The papers of Theodore Parker were processed in 1965 and revised and expanded in 1984. The finding aid was revised in 2009 by David Mathisen. The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

Related Material

Related collections in the Manuscript Division include microfilm of Theodore Parker papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Theodore Parker is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Theodore Parker are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Theodore Parker Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1810, Aug. 24	Born, Lexington, Mass.
1831	Graduated, Harvard College, Cambridge, Mass.
1836	Graduated, Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass.; joined the Transcendental Club
1841	Presented a sermon, "A Discourse on the Permanent and Transient in Christianity," doubting that the scriptures of historic Christianity reflected the truth
1846	Installed as minister of the 28th Congregational Society of Boston, Mass., a "free church" congregation that included Louisa May Alcott, William Lloyd Garrison, Julia Ward Howe, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton
1846-1848	Opposed the Mexican War
1848-1851	Edited <i>Massachusetts Quarterly Review</i>
1848	Wrote <i>To a Southern Slaveholder</i> , in opposition to slavery
1850	Advocated violating the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850
1859	Helped finance John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry
1860, May 10	Died, Florence, Italy

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Theodore Parker (1810-1860) span the years 1838-1910, with the bulk of the material concentrated in 1850-1860. The collection consists of correspondence, writings, poetry, and printed material relating to Parker's antislavery lectures and to the publication of his biography and collected writings, including transcripts by others and reminiscences of him. Correspondents include James Gillespie Birney, E. P. Clark, Rufus Leighton, Horace Mann, Oliver Johnson, F. B. Sanborn, and Parker's wife, Lydia Dodge Cabot Parker.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is organized alphabetically by type of material.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Catalogs of pamphlets and books, 1838-1860
BOX 1	Correspondence
BOX 1	General, 1841-1863 (4 folders)
BOX 1	Special
BOX 1	Birney, James Gillespie, 1848-1853
BOX 1	Johnson, Oliver, 1846-1858
BOX 1	Mann, Horace, 1849-1856
BOX 1	Extracts and copies from journals, 1838-1851
BOX 1	Memoir of Henry Martyn, missionary to India, undated
BOX 1	Miscellany, 1850-1910
BOX 1	Poetry and prose fragments, undated
BOX 1	Reminiscences by friends, undated