

# Princeton University Library

## DEPARTMENT OF RARE BOOKS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

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### William Elliot Griffis Collection, 1873-1903: Finding Aid

#### Summary Information

<b>Call number:</b>	C1243
<b>Location:</b>	Princeton University Library. Dept. of Rare Books and Special Collections. Manuscripts Division. One Washington Road Princeton, New Jersey 08544 USA
<b>Size:</b>	.20 linear feet (1 half-size archival box)
<b>Language(s) of material:</b>	English.
<b>Abstract:</b>	Consists of correspondence and manuscripts related to the history of the 1859 mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in Japan and the role of James Curtis Hepburn in making it a success, collected by William Elliot Griffis for the purpose of writing a book.

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## Biographies of William Elliot Griffis and James Curtis Hepburn

William Elliot Griffis was an American orientalist, congregational minister, lecturer, and prolific author. He attended Rutgers University at New Brunswick, New Jersey, graduating in 1869. In September 1870 Griffis was invited to Japan by the Fukui Lord Matsudaira Shungaku, for the purpose of organizing schools along modern lines, and, in 1871, he was Superintendent of Education in the province of Echizen. Griffis taught chemistry and physics at Kaisei Gakko (forerunner of Tokyo Imperial University). He prepared the *New Japan Series of Reading and Spelling Books* (1872) and published primers for Japanese students of the English language. He contributed numerous articles of importance on Japanese affairs to the Japanese press and to newspapers and magazines in the United States. Griffis published *Hepburn of Japan and his Wife and Helpmates: A Life Story of Toil for Christ* in 1913.

At the age of fourteen James Curtis Hepburn matriculated as a junior in the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) from which he graduated in 1832, earning an A.M. degree in 1835. He attended the University of Pennsylvania Medical School and graduated with an M.D. in 1836. In 1841 Hepburn accepted an assignment from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to work among the Chinese people; in 1859 when Japan opened its ports to American trade, Hepburn requested permission to go and work there. In the years that Hepburn served as a medical missionary he aided in the growth of both the Protestant Church and the medical profession in Japan. He was honored by his colleagues in Japan and in the United States for his contributions to lexicography and education, and was awarded "The Third Order of Merit of the Rising Sun" for services to spiritual and educational causes in Japan by the Japanese Emperor Mitsuhiro.

### Description

The collection consists of selected correspondence and manuscripts of William Elliot Griffis about the history of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. mission to Japan in 1859. Griffis collected this material for a book he was publishing about the medical missionary James Curtis Hepburn, his devotion to the Presbyterian Church, and his role and contributions to foreign missionary work and education in China and in Japan, as related to the mission of the Presbyterian Church in U.S.A. (Griffis's *Hepburn of Japan and His Wife and Helpmates: A Life Story of Toil for Christ* was published in 1913.) Included are a manuscript essay about the history of the mission to Japan and an autobiographical letter about Hepburn's life, both written by Hepburn and sent to Griffis. There are also several letters from Hepburn to Griffis responding to Griffis's questions about his life history. There is correspondence between Griffis and others who came into contact with Hepburn during his lifetime, including diplomats, church officers, dignitaries, and Hepburn's Japanese students, who were asked to provide information and recollections of him. Other correspondents include the Rev. James H. Ballagh and his daughter, the author Carrie Elizabeth Harrell; Harlan P. Beach; Rev. Thomas Rissel Beeber; Dr. John C. Berry; Varnum Lansing Collins; the Japanese diplomat Count Tadasu Hayashi, who wrote an essay (TMs) about Hepburn; J. C. Hepburn's son, Samuel Hepburn, and his nephew S. B. Hepburn; Robert Elliott Speer of The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in New York; John Grier Stockton; Korekiyo Takahashi, the Japanese statesman and financier; and John Crittenden Watson.

### Arrangement

Folders are organized by accession number.

## Access and Use

### Access

Collection is open for research use.

### Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information

Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. Permission to publish material from the collection must be requested from the Associate University Librarian for Rare Books and Special Collections.

## Acquisition and Appraisal

### Provenance and Acquisition

The material was a gift of William Elliot Griffis in November 1918.

## Processing and Other Information

### Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); William Elliot Griffis Collection, Box and Folder Number; Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

### Processing Information

This collection was processed by Dina Britain on November 3, 2008. Finding aid written by Natalie Kim on November 18, 2008.

### Encoding

Machine-readable finding aid encoded in EAD 2002 by Dina Britain on November 4, 2008..

### Descriptive Rules Used

Finding aid content adheres to that prescribed by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

## Subject Headings

These papers have been indexed in the [Princeton University Library online catalog](#) using the following terms. Those seeking related materials should search under these terms.

- Hepburn, J. C. (James Curtis), 1815-1911 -- Career in Missions.
- Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. -- Missions --Japan -- History -- Sources.
- Hepburn of Japan and his wife and helpmates, a life story of toil for Christ.
- Education -- Japan -- History -- Sources.
- Missionaries -- Japan -- 19th century.
- Missions, American -- Japan -- History -- Sources.
- Japan -- History -- Meiji period, 1868-1912 -- Sources.
- Correspondence -- 19th century.
- Manuscripts -- 19th century.
- East Asian studies
- Religion