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Abstract

Chaplain during the Civil War for the Thirteenth (13th) New Jersey Volunteers, Hope College professor of classics and religion (1863-1885), and head of Government College, Yamaguchi, Japan (1888-1894). Collection includes correspondence, a scrapbook of Beck’s articles, and Beck family photographs.

Accession No: H88-0009
Provenance: Theodoric Romeyn Beck
Donor: Lewis B. Sebring, Jr. (1976)
Photographs: 18 images
Processed by: Rebecca A. O’Shesky, June 1992
Jenifer A. Smith, October 1993

Biography

Theodoric Romeyn Beck was born in Albany, New York, on April 19, 1830. He later received both his B.A. degree (1849) and his M.A. degree (1852) from Rutgers University. From 1852-1858, he studied and practiced law in Chicago. After graduating from New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1862, Beck was appointed Chaplain to the Thirteenth (13th) New Jersey Volunteers, a position he held until 1864.

In 1864, the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America appointed Beck to the faculty of Hope Academy. Beck taught a variety of subjects, including Latin and Greek, biblical criticism and philology, Hebrew, Sacred Exegesis, and other courses in religion. He resigned from the faculty in 1885.

In 1888, Beck was appointed by the Japanese Government to found a college based on the American system in the southern cities of Japan. Remaining in Japan until 1894, when American missionaries were no longer welcomed, Beck then returned to California where he wrote religious articles on Japan until his death in Oakland, California, on May 22, 1896.

Scope and Content

The Theodoric Romeyn Beck Papers have been arranged alphabetically by topical heading. The Civil War papers are primarily photocopies which have been reproduced from the collection at the National Archives. Photographs are primarily of the Beck family, although pictures of Beck’s Japanese students are also included. The scrapbook contains news clippings of articles which Beck wrote after his return from Japan.

Container List

Biography, n.d., 1883
Civil War Papers
   1862-1863, 1913 (photocopies; originals in National Archives)
   Reunion of the Thirteenth (13th) New Jersey Volunteers, 1893 (2 images)
Correspondence
   General, 1890-1893
   Irene Whittaker Beck, 1892-1916
   Re: Mrs. Beck’s Death, 1921
Photographs (1 folder)
   Irene Whittaker Beck, n.d., 1908 (4 images)
   T. Romeyn Beck, n.d. (6 images)
   Mrs. Lewis C. Beck (T. R. Beck’s mother), n.d. (1 image)
   General Synod of the RCA, 1884 (1 image)
   Japanese Students
      July 17th, 1894 (1 image)
      1889-1890 (1 image)
      n.d. (1 image)
   Unidentified (Man and House), n.d. (1 image)
Scrapbook (contains articles), 1883-1906
   Silver Napkin Ring, n.d.