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Descriptive Summary

Identifier  ICU.SPCL.GOODSPEEDTW

Title  Goodspeed, Thomas W. Papers

Date  1865-1927

Size  3 linear feet (5 boxes and 1 volume)

Repository  Special Collections Research Center
University of Chicago Library
1100 East 57th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract  Baptist educator. Secretary, Board of Trustees, University of Chicago, 1890-1913. Registrar, University of Chicago, 1897-1913. University historian, 1916-1927. Contains personal and professional correspondence; manuscripts, including drafts of History of the University of Chicago, 1891-1916, and Goodspeed’s autobiography; articles and speeches; and fragments of a diary. Correspondents include Frederick T. Gates, John D. Rockefeller, William Rainey Harper, Augustus Strong, and others. Topics relate to the founding and early years of the University of Chicago.

Information on Use

Access  No restrictions.

Citation  When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Goodspeed, Thomas W. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note  
Clergyman, educational leader and extraordinary fundraiser, Thomas Wakefield Goodspeed (4 Sept. 1842-16 Dec. 1927) conceived the modern university and saw its fruition in the University of Chicago. Born in Glens Falls, New York, Goodspeed’s family relocated to Illinois in 1855 after the failure of his father’s, Stephen Goodspeed’s, business. It was there that Goodspeed witnessed one of the Lincoln-Douglas debates. His mother, Jane Johnson was a devoted Baptist who was determined that her sons should become ministers, to which end Goodspeed attended academies and preparatory schools in Glen Falls, Poughkeepsie, New York, and in Galesburg, Illinois. In 1862 Goodspeed graduated from the soon to be doomed first University of Chicago [Established with a grant from Stephen Douglas]. The University of Rochester granted his A.B. degree in 1963, and it was at the Rochester Theological Seminary that he was ordained in 1865 and graduated in 1866. In this same year Goodspeed married Mary Ellen Ten Broeke who
bore their two sons. Serving in the ministry first in Avon and Chicago, IL he then accepted the
position as pastor of the Baptist Church of Quincy, Illinois where he stayed for five and half
years until 1872.

Goodspeed might have never left Quincy had it not been for a plea from his ailing brother,
that he required assistance in the demanding ministry at Chicago’s Second Baptist Church.
Goodspeed stayed in Chicago and one year later he accepted a position on the Board of Trustees
of the Baptist Union Theological Seminary. His appointment was a fortunate one for the
institution because Goodspeed managed to collect enough funding to save the financially
troubled institution. Later the Seminary would become the Divinity School at the new
University of Chicago.

Seeing the importance of fundraising, Goodspeed resigned his post at Second Baptist Church
in order to raise funds for the Seminary. He became the secretary of the Seminary and moved
to Morgan Park, in the suburbs, in order to become the foundering pastor of the Morgan Park
Baptist Church (1876-1879). Over the course of eight years Goodspeed managed to raise more
than $250,000 for the Seminary. Many of those contributions were given one dollar at a time
by individuals; however Goodspeed also developed connections with the major businessmen
which included Marshall Field and the future benefactor of the University of Chicago, John D.
Rockefeller. Their relationship began with Rockefeller's gift of $30,000 for the Seminary.

Before Goodspeed conceived the new University of Chicago he attempted to save the old one. In
April 1886 Yale University attempted to woo William Rainey Harper, the professor of Hebrew,
away from the Seminary. Goodspeed suggested that Rockefeller should fund the University's
move to Morgan Park near the Seminary and Harper could be retained in Chicago to be the
president. Harper expressed interest in this plan but went to Yale to teach while the details were
worked on. The old University of Chicago closed its doors that same year.

From the ashes of Goodspeed’s efforts rose the Pheonix that adorns the University of Chicago’s
logo to this day. Goodspeed promoted the idea of a major Midwestern college or university
that would be a place of intellect and light. Working with Reverend Frederick T. Gates (of
Minneapolis) on the founding of the American Baptist Education Society, Goodspeed became
more strongly convinced of the urgent need for higher education in the Midwest; he argued that
it was "an immediate and imperative denominational necessity."

After years on negotiations it was on 17 may 1889 that Rockefeller committed to donating
$600,000 toward the endowment of the new University of Chicago if Goodspeed and his
associates could raise $400,000 in other contributions to provide for land, building and
equipment. A seasoned fundraiser Goodspeed vacated his Seminary position in Morgan Park
within a month in order to allocate more time to the collection effort. He turned first to local
Baptist groups and then to other religious groups and the Chicago business community. Again
the majority of the contributions were small or moderate gifts given by churches, businesses, and clubs in Chicago and other cities. One year later, 23 May 1890, the driven fundraiser reported to Rockefeller that the Education Society had raised $549,000 to match Rockefeller’s donation. Additionally Goodspeed convinced Marshall Field to donate the real estate for the university, just south of the city in Hyde Park.

The University of Chicago incorporated on 9 September 1890. Goodspeed was elected to the board and served first as the secretary and he also worked as the unofficial business manager and then the registrar, public relations officer, fundraiser and eventually he became the historian of the University.

Harper returned to Chicago to act as the University’s first president. Goodspeed and Gates constantly served as negotiators between Harper, the educational visionary with little sense of expense and Rockefeller, who tired of bailing the University out of its early deficits. In 1910, after supplying $35 million, Rockefeller refused to supply funding toward the endowment until the University could raise enough funds to clear its own debts. The work was accomplished in two years through Goodspeed’s efforts and Rockefeller resumed his position as benefactor.

Once the endowment was restored in 1912 the University was secure Goodspeed allowed himself to retire. President Harry Pratt Judson who had replaced Harper upon the latter’s death, requested Goodspeed to assume the honorary position of secretary to the board. Judson later suggested that Goodspeed collect the biographies of the University’s founders that he had written over time and publish them in addition to writing the early history of the university. (The Story of the University of Chicago 1925)

Goodspeed good humouredly apologized for "breaking into literature" at the age of 74. Always dedicated to the University he continued writing the Harper’s biography up until the week before his passing. The final two chapters fell to his sons for completion. Charles Ten Broeke Goodspeed published a biography about his father and his brother, Edgar continued teaching in the Divinity School at the University of Chicago.

In his histories of the university he neglected to tell the role that he himself played and often credited others with his achievements. For example, in his biography of Harper he credits Harper with convincing Rockefeller to fund the university, while it is well documented that Harper and Rockefeller negotiated through Goodspeed and Gates.

Goodspeed was full of energy and vigor even as he aged. He continued cultivating his rustic home in the Wisconsin woods every summer and researching in conjunction. In the first week of December, 1927 Goodspeed suffered a stroke from which he seemed to be recovering until he was struck again the following week. This time he slipped into a coma. A member of the family or university staff stayed with him every moment until he passed away on 16 December 1927.
Goodspeed infused the modern university with respect for the spiritual; believing that it was essential to education, "No one can be said to be truly educated whose spiritual nature has not been cultivated." This belief extended beyond his religion; he aimed to make the school open to all denominations. He believed he could build a great university and then he knew that he had. He son wrote of him,

He has in a sense written his own biography, in his thirty-four biographical sketches of University friends and donors

**Scope Note**

Box 1 of this collection contains Goodspeed’s correspondence 1865-1927—the bulk of the correspondence dates from 1884-1908. Among the areas covered: John D. Rockefeller’s contributions to the Baptist Union Theological Seminary (Folders 2-3), correspondence between Harper, Rockefeller, Gates with Goodspeed regarding founding a university in Chicago, A.H. Strong’s attack on W.R. Harper’s "orthodoxy" (Folder 3), E. Nelson Blake to Goodspeed regarding fund-raising for the new University, Zella Allen Dixon on the organization of the first library staff [Folder 4], the establishment of a student employment bureau (Folder 6), early relations between the University and Rush Medical College and Mr. Rockefeller’s opposition to a merger between them [Folder 11, 7], Albion Small’s proposal to found the Journal of Sociology [Folder 9], whether or not to introduce co-education to Morgan Park Academy [Folder 11], the union of the Chicago Manual Training School with the University (Folder 13), costs of the (old) Law School building (Folder 15), W.R. Harper’s instructions re his funeral [Folder 16], and the Harper Memorial Library Fund (Folder 17). Among the non-university correspondents are Jane Addams (Folder 20) and Theodore Roosevelt (Folder 15).

After 1890 some of the correspondence addressed to Goodspeed is as secretary to the Board of Trustees and consequently complements the material in Correspondence of the Secretary of the Board of Trustees, 1890-1913. See also Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 1892-1913. Correspondence to Goodspeed during this period will also be found under various subject headings in the Presidents’ Papers 1889-1925. For the Harper-Goodspeed ca. 1887-1905 correspondence see the William Rainey Harper Personal Papers, Box 9, Folder 5-9. For the F.T. Gates-Goodspeed correspondence see the Correspondence of Frederick Taylor Gates. See also Box 1, Folders 21-22, of the Goodspeed Papers. Other relevant material will be found in Correspondence of the Founder and His Associates; the Papers of the Baptist Theological Union and the Baptist Union Theological Seminary; the American Baptist Education Society; and the Northeastern Baptist Education Society.

Boxes 2 and 3 contain fifteen notebooks—manuscript drafts of Goodspeed’s History of the University of Chicago 1891-1916. Chapters 3, 12, and 13 are missing. The manuscript drafts correspond generally to the printed version with changes in style, addition and some deletions. There apparently was another or later draft from which the printed version was actually
composed. In Notebook 2 which includes Chapter 2 there is a fragment of a diary Goodspeed kept erratically from 1895-98 (Folder 3).

Box 4 contains two drafts of a manuscript entitled "The First Year of the University" and miscellaneous historical and biographical notes. Box 5 contains correspondence and reviews of TWG's books, a few of his articles and speeches, and miscellaneous material pertaining to his last illness and death.

Outside Box 5 is "Reminiscences of Thomas Wakefield Goodspeed", the bound manuscript of Thomas Wakefield Goodspeed's autobiography.

Goodspeed's biography was written by his son: Goodspeed, Charles T.B., Thomas Wakefield Goodspeed, Chicago: 1932. His part in the founding of the University of Chicago is related in Richard Storr's Harper's University, Chicago, 1966.

Some of the material in this collection has been moved to other more appropriate locations—particularly the Presidents' Papers 1889-1925.

**Related Resources**
The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html

John D. Rockefeller Papers

Baptist Union Theological Seminary

William Rainey Harper Papers

Frederick Taylor Gates Papers

Zella Allen Dixson Papers

Rush Medical College
Albion Small Papers and Addenda

Correspondence of the Secretary of the Board of Trustees, 1890-1913

Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 1892-1913

Presidents' Papers 1889-1925

Correspondence of the Founder and His Associates

American Baptist Education Society

Northeastern Baptist Education Society

**Subject Headings**

- Gates, Frederick Taylor, 1853-1929
- Goodspeed, Thomas Wakefield, 1842-1927
- Rockefeller, John D. (John Davison), 1839-1937
- Strong, Augustus Hopkins, 1836-1921
- University of Chicago. Board of Trustees
- University of Chicago-History

**INVENTORY**

Box 1
Folder 1
   Correspondence 1865-83
Box 1
Folder 2
   Correspondence 1884-86
Box 1
Folder 3
   Correspondence 1887-89
Box 1
Folder 4
   Correspondence 1890-91
Box 1
Folder 5
   Correspondence 1892
Box 1
Folder 6
  Correspondence 1893
Box 1
Folder 7
  Correspondence 1894
Box 1
Folder 8
  Correspondence 1895
Box 1
Folder 9
  Correspondence 1896
Box 1
Folder 10
  Correspondence 1897
Box 1
Folder 11
  Correspondence 1898
Box 1
Folder 12
  Correspondence 1899-1900
Box 1
Folder 13
  Correspondence 1901
Box 1
Folder 14
  Correspondence 1902
Box 1
Folder 15
  Correspondence 1903-04
Box 1
Folder 16
  Correspondence 1905
Box 1
Folder 17
  Correspondence 1906-08
Box 1
Folder 18
  Correspondence 1909-12
Box 1
Folder 19
  Correspondence 1913-15
Box 1
Folder 20
  Correspondence 1916-27
Folder 21
Correspondence between TWG and F.T. Gates re writing The History of the U. of C. 1914-1918

Box 1
Folder 22
Correspondence between TWG and F.T. Gates re Story of the U. of C. 1925-1927

Box 2
Folder 1
History of the University of Chicago, Title Page and Contents, Draft.

Box 2
Folder 2
History of the University of Chicago, Chapter one, Holograph Draft.

Box 2
Folder 3
History of the University of Chicago, Chapter two, Holograph Draft. Includes fragment of diary erratically kept by TWG 1895-8.

Box 2
Folder 4
History of the University of Chicago, Chapter four, Holograph Draft.

Box 2
Folder 5
History of the University of Chicago, Chapter five, Holograph Draft.

Box 2
Folder 6
History of the University of Chicago, Chapter six, Holograph Draft.

Box 3
Folder 1
History of the University of Chicago, Chapter Eight, Holograph Draft.

Box 3
Folder 2
History of the University of Chicago, Chapter Nine, Holograph Draft.

Box 3
Folder 3
History of the University of Chicago, Chapter Ten, Holograph Draft.

Box 3
Folder 4
History of the University of Chicago, Chapter Eleven, Holograph Draft.

Box 3
Folder 5
History of the University of Chicago, Chapter Fourteen, Holograph Draft.

Box 3
Folder 6
History of the University of Chicago, Chapter Fifteen, Holograph Draft.
Box 3
Folder 7
History of the University of Chicago, Chapter Sixteen, Holograph Draft.

Box 3
Folder 8
History of the University of Chicago, Chapter Seventeen, Holograph Draft.

Box 4
Folder 1-10
Notebooks containing Mss drafts for "The First Year of the University." Apparently unpublished work

Box 4
Folder 11
"Miscellaneous Notes on Organization" [of the U. of C.], n.d.

Box 4
Folder 12
Recollections of William Rainey Harper written for TWG.

Box 4
Folder 13
Misc. fragments used by TWG in writing his History.

Box 4
Folder 14
Notes for Biographical Sketches.

Box 5
Folder 1
Correspondence and Reviews are History of the University of Chicago. 1916

Box 5
Folder 2-4
Correspondence re Biographical Sketches. 1922

Box 5
Folder 5
Correspondence and Reviews re Story of the University of Chicago. 1925

Box 5
Folder 6
Correspondence and Reviews re Life of Ernest DeWitt Burton. 1926

Box 5
Folder 7
Correspondence and Reviews re William Rainey Harper. 1928

Box 5
Folder 8
Correspondence re Charles T.B. Goodspeed's Thomas Wakefield Goodspeed. 1932

Box 5
Folder 9
"Lincoln and Douglas-With some Personal Reminiscences" by T.W. Goodspeed. February 12, 1921

Box 5
Folder 10
Articles and speeches of TWG.

Box 5
Folder 11
  Letters of condolence on the death of TWG

Box 5
Folder 12-13
  Clippings on TWG’s last illness and death

Box 5
Folder 14
  Tributes to TWG

Box 5
Folder 15
  Miscellaneous memorabilia

Box 5
Folder 16
  Miscellaneous TWG news clippings

Volume 1
  "Reminiscences of Thomas W. Goodspeed"-Manuscript of TWG’s memoirs, bound.