

# Guide to the Charlotte B. DeForest Papers

RG 178



Compiled by Martha Lund Smalley

2002, 2022

409 Prospect Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
(203) 432-5301

[divinity.library@yale.edu](mailto:divinity.library@yale.edu)

<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Yale Divinity Library  
409 Prospect Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
(203) 432-5301  
divinity.library@yale.edu  
<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

**CALL NUMBER:** RG 178

**CREATOR:** DeForest, Charlotte B., 1879-

**TITLE:** Charlotte B. DeForest Papers

**DATES:** 1879-1967

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 2.5 linear feet (5 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Correspondence, writings, and collected material in the Charlotte B. DeForest Papers document her work in women's higher education in Japan, her literary efforts to translate Japanese poetry and children's books, and her work with Japanese-Americans. Charlotte Burgis DeForest was the daughter of ABCFM missionaries to Japan and a graduate of Smith College. She was a missionary educator in Japan from 1903 to 1940, serving on the faculty and as president of Kobe College. During World War II she was involved in work with Japanese-Americans incarcerated by the United States during World War II.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.178>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.178>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Received from UCBWM offices.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Preferred Citation

Charlotte B. DeForest Papers (RG 178), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

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## Processing Information

This finding aid was revised in 2020 to address outdated or harmful descriptive language. During that revision, description was changed in the abstract and scope and contents note for the collection. References to Japanese- American "relocation" and "detainees" during World War II were removed and replaced with community recommended and currently accepted terminology in 2020, such as "Japanese American incarceration." Previous versions of this finding aid may be available. Please contact the Divinity School Library for details. If you have questions or comments about these revisions, please contact the Divinity School Library or the Archival and Manuscript Description Committee. For more information on reparative archival description at Yale, see [Yale's Statement on Harmful Language in Archival Description](#)

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## Biographical / Historical

Date	Event
1879 Feb 23	○ Charlotte Burgis DeForest was born in Osaka, Japan, daughter of ABCFM missionaries Elizabeth Starr and John Hyde DeForest, who served in Japan from 1874 to their respective deaths in 1915 and ca. 1910. Charlotte's sister Lydia and her husband William B. Pettus were missionaries to China serving under the YMCA.
1882-1883	○ In America on furlough with parents
1894 Feb-May	○ In private boarding school in Hanover, Germany
1894-1897	○ Attended, graduated from Newton High School, Newtonville, MA
1897-1901	○ B.A., Smith College
1902 Sep -1903 Aug	○ Assistant superintendent of Missionary Home, Auburndale, MA
1903Dec	○ Returned to Japan as missionary serving under American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
1904	○ Language study in Sendai
1905	○ Taught English at Kobe College, with time for language study
1906Apr-1907 Mar	○ Traveling to visit schools; language study
1907 Apr	○ Returned to Kobe College: In charge of Sunday School work and later appointed as head of the Bible Department
1907	○ M.A., Smith College
1910-1911 Oct	○ Acting Principal of Kobe College during absence of Miss Searle
1911Nov -1913	○ On leave of absence
1912Mar-May	○ Studied at Hartford School of Missions
1913	○ Returned to teaching at Kobe: English, Bible, Music

Date	Event
1915	○ Appointed President of Kobe by Woman's Board of Missions of the Interior
1920	○ Studied at University of Chicago
1921	○ L.H.D. degree from Smith College
1921-1925	○ At Kobe
1925 Dec - 1926 Dec	○ Business trip and health leave in U.S.
1929 - 1934	○ On Doshisha University Board of Trustees
1935Jun -1936	○ On furlough in U.S. and Europe
1939	○ Received medal from Hyogo Prefectural Education Association
1940	○ Resigned presidency of Kobe; named "Honorary President"; received various citations and medals from Japanese government
1941- 1943	○ Worked part time in American Board Library
1942 -1943	○ Volunteer work at Boston Immigration Station for Japanese-Americans incarcerated by the United States during World War II
1943-1944	○ Taught nine month course in Japanese language to Army Student Training Unit at Pomona College, Claremont, CA
1944 Jun - 1945 Dec	○ Worked as "junior counselor" in Social Welfare Department of the U.S. government at Manzanar, CA Relocation Center for Japanese incarcerated from West Coast (e.g., for military hearings)
1947	○ Returned to Kobe College to teach and help rally alumnae
1950	○ On leaving Japan, received Fourth Grade of the Order of the Sacred Treasure
1951	○ Retired at Pilgrim Place, Claremont, CA
1960	○ Invited by alumnae to attend 85th anniversary of Kobe College

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## Scope and Contents

In Series I, Correspondence, the Original letters subseries begins with letters written by Charlotte to her parents as she left them in Japan and began her journey to continue her education first in Germany and then in the United States. Charlotte had literary interests and wrote substantive, detailed letters throughout her life. Charlotte's letters to family members dating from 1907 to 1912 are primarily from Japan, except when she was on furlough or vacationing in Guling (Kuling), China. Circular letters written by Charlotte date from 1940 to 1951 and relate primarily to her activities at Kobe College. Also of interest in Series I are letters written to Charlotte by Kobe College alumnae who were affected by the incarceration of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

In 2022, a series of eight printed volumes of transcribed correspondence and other papers were added to Series I. These volumes, with accompanying CDs with the digital files, are from a project to transcribe Charlotte DeForest letters in the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 1-91) held in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. The project was done by Motomi Tsugami of Kobe College as part of the Sougou-Kenkyu Project, 'Reading Missionary Letters of Charlotte

De Forest and others', supported by the Kobe College Research Center from 2016- to 2022. The digital files are available the Divinity Library's server.

Series II, Writings, provide valuable autobiographical information about Charlotte DeForest, as well her writings on a variety of Japan-related topics. Journals kept by Charlotte in Japan, when she was eleven to fourteen years old (1890-1893), provide fascinating detailed information regarding the activities and feelings of a missionary child of the era. The later diaries are of the five-year variety.

Series III, Subject Files, includes material related to Kobe College and several files relating to Charlotte's translation and publication projects. She worked with Japanese writer Tasuku Harada, who was pastor of the Kobe Kumiai Church and later president of Doshisha University of Kyoto, to versify Japanese nursery rhymes that Harada had translated into English. Correspondence and drafts relate to the publication of *The Prancing Pony: Nursery Rhymes from Japan*.

Series IV, Personal Items and Memorabilia, includes biographical information, photographs of Charlotte DeForest and Kobe College, and collected memorabilia. One folder of correspondence in this series relates to Charlotte's inquiries regarding familial history of the incidence of cleft (or hare) lips. The folder of biographical information regarding Charlotte's brother John includes genealogical information about the DeForest family.

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## Arrangement

- I. Correspondence
- II. Writings
- III. Subject Files
- IV. Personal Items and Memorabilia

## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence

Original letters		
b. 1, f. 1-8	Letters to parents	1893 Nov- 1909 Dec
b. 1, f. 9-11	Letters to mother and sisters	1911 May - 1915 Feb
b. 1, f. 12	Letters to sisters	1907 Mar - 1912 Apr
b. 1, f. 13-15	Letters to sisters	1942 Aug - 1950 Mar
b. 1, f. 16	Letters to nieces and nephews	1964 Aug- 1965 Oct
b. 1, f. 17	Letters to "Robins"	1940 Aug - 1942 Dec
b. 1, f. 18	Circular letters	1940 - 1951
b. 1, f. 19	Letters related to Kobe College, incl. to/from Presidents Monkichi Namba and Tetsutaro Ariga	1946-1967
b. 1, f. 20	Misc. incomplete letters	
b. 2, f. 21	Letters from parents	1887-1900
b. 2, f. 22	Letters to/from others: A - K	
b. 2, f. 23	Letters to/from others: L - W	
b. 2, f. 24	Letters of John DeForest	1879 May, 1886 Oct
b. 2, f. 25	Letters of Kobe College alumnae affected by Japanese incarceration during World War II	1940s
b. 2, f. 26	Address lists	

#### Transcribed letters from ABCFM archives

Eight printed volumes, with accompanying CDs of digital files, of transcriptions of letters and papers from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 1-91) held in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. This project was done by Motomi Tsugami of Kobe College as part of the Sougou-Kenkyu Project, 'Reading Missionary Letters of Charlotte De Forest and others', supported by the Kobe College Research Center. Digital files are available on the Divinity Library's server.

## Transcribed letters from ABCFM archives (continued)

b. 5, f. 1	<p>Printed volume of transcriptions of C. B. De Forest's letters 1905-1919, ABC 16.4.1, Vols. 30 and 38, with CD of files in digital format</p> <p>From the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 1-91) held in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. The project to transcribe the letters was done by Motomi Tsugami of Kobe College as part of the Sougou-Kenkyu Project, 'Reading Missionary Letters of Charlotte De Forest and others', supported by the Kobe College Research Center. This volume was printed in 2016.</p>	1909-1919
b. 5, f. 2	<p>Printed volume of transcriptions of C. B. De Forest's letters 1920-1926, ABC 16.4.1., Vol. 47, with CD of files in digital format</p> <p>From the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 1-91) held in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. The project to transcribe the letters was done by Motomi Tsugami of Kobe College as part of the Sougou-Kenkyu Project, 'Reading Missionary Letters of Charlotte De Forest and others', supported by the Kobe College Research Center. This volume was printed in 2017.</p>	1920-1926
b. 5, f. 3	<p>Printed volume of transcriptions of C. B. De Forest's letters 1927, ABC 16.4.1., Vol. 47, with CD of files in digital format</p> <p>From the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 1-91) held in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. The project to transcribe the letters was done by Motomi Tsugami of Kobe College as part of the Sougou-Kenkyu Project, 'Reading Missionary Letters of Charlotte De Forest and others', supported by the Kobe College Research Center. This volume was printed in 2018.</p>	1927
b. 5, f. 4	<p>Printed volume of transcriptions of C. B. De Forest's letters 1928-1929, ABC 16.4.1., Vol. 47, with CD of files in digital format</p> <p>From the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 1-91) held in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. The project to transcribe the letters was done by Motomi Tsugami of Kobe College as part of the Sougou-Kenkyu Project, 'Reading Missionary Letters of Charlotte De Forest and others', supported by the Kobe College Research Center. This volume was printed in 2019.</p>	1928-1929
b. 5, f. 5	<p>Printed volume of transcriptions of C. B. De Forest's letters 1930-1931, ABC 16.4.1., Vols. 54 and 55, with CD of files in digital format</p> <p>From the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 1-91) held in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. The project to transcribe the letters was done by Motomi Tsugami of Kobe College as part of the Sougou-Kenkyu Project, 'Reading Missionary Letters of Charlotte De Forest and others', supported by the Kobe College Research Center. This volume was printed in 2020.</p>	1930-1931
b. 5, f. 6	<p>Printed volume of transcriptions of C. B. De Forest's letter 1932-1937, ABC 16.4.1, Vols. 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, with CD of files in digital format</p> <p>From the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 1-91) held in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. The project to transcribe the letters was done by Motomi Tsugami of Kobe College as part of the Sougou-Kenkyu Project, 'Reading Missionary Letters of Charlotte De Forest and others', supported by the Kobe College Research Center in 2021.</p>	1932-1937



## Transcribed letters from ABCFM archives (continued)

b. 5, f. 7	<p>Printed volume of transcriptions of C. B. De Forest's letter 1938-1947, ABC 16.4.1, Vols. 61 and 69 with CD of files in digital format</p> <p>From the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 1-91) held in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. The project to transcribe the letters was done by Motomi Tsugami of Kobe College as part of the Sougou-Kenkyu Project, 'Reading Missionary Letters of Charlotte De Forest and others', supported by the Kobe College Research Center. This volume was printed in 2022.</p>	1938-1947
b. 5, f. 8	<p>Printed volume of transcriptions of C. B. De Forest's letter 1948-1950, ABC 16.4.1, Vols. 69 and 70 with CD of files in digital format</p> <p>From the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 1-91) held in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. The project to transcribe the letters was done by Motomi Tsugami of Kobe College as part of the Sougou-Kenkyu Project, 'Reading Missionary Letters of Charlotte De Forest and others', supported by the Kobe College Research Center. This volume was printed in 2022.</p>	1948-1950

**Series II: Writings**

b. 2, f. 29	Memoirs, journal entries, "How My Mother Brought Me Up," "The Span of My Life"	
b. 2, f. 30	"Pets in the Bible," "The Double Verilys in John's Gospel," "Why I Believe in Prayer"	
b. 2, f. 31	"My Friend Mr. Nagata," "Rambles in Owani," Chinese dialogue, others	
b. 2, f. 32	Thesis for M.A. degree: "Some Types of Japanese Poetry"	
b. 2, f. 33	"Susie's Angels," "Who Interpreted for Commodore Perry," "Some Thoughts on Japanese Childrens' Songs"	
b. 2, f. 34	"Am I My Brother's Keeper?," "Woman's Progress in Japan," "Discipline That Saves Face"	
b. 2, f. 35	"Poems Down the Years"	
b. 2, f. 36	Journals	1890 Jun -1893 Dec
b. 2, f. 37	Diaries	1933, 1948-1952
b. 2, f. 38	Writings of Others	

**Series III: Subject Files**

b. 3, f. 39-40	Kobe College: General information	
b. 3, f. 41	Kobe College: 75th and 85th anniversaries, including photo album	1950, 1960
b. 3, f. 42-44	Translation of "The Prancing Pony": Correspondence and drafts	1910-1967
b. 3, f. 45	Translations: "A Japanese Doctor Visits Schweitzer"	1965
b. 3, f. 46	Translations: "The Nadachi Landslide"	1937
b. 3, f. 47	Translations: "Light is Here"	1951
b. 3, f. 48	Translations: Assorted poems and stories	
b. 3, f. 49	Material re. literature on /of Japan	
b. 3, f. 50	Miscellaneous news clippings re. Japan	
b. 3, f. 50a	Open letter to the World YMCA from Japan YMCA concerning Hydrogen Bomb experiments in the Pacific	1954

**Series IV: Personal Items and Memorabilia**

b. 4, f. 51	News clippings about C DeF	1935-1956
b. 4, f. 52-52a	Awards and citations	1907-1961
b. 4, f. 53	Smith College	
b. 4, f. 54	Biographical records	
b. 4, f. 55	Biographical information on brother, John DeForest	
b. 4, f. 56	Letters researching cleft palate and hare lip (condition occurring among various family members)	
b. 4, f. 57	Japanese crafts and culture	
b. 4, f. 58	Programs and collected items	
b. 4, f. 59-60	Gift booklets - greetings and sketches	
b. 4, f. 61	Photos of C DeF	
b. 4, f. 62	Photo album - Tokyo visit	1960
b. 4, f. 63	Photo album - 85th anniversary of Kobe College	1960
b. 4, f. 64	Miscellaneous	

## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

Japanese Americans -- Forced removal and internment, 1942-1945  
Missionaries  
Missions -- Japan

### **Names**

DeForest, Charlotte B., 1879-

### **Corporate Bodies**

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions -- Missions -- Japan  
Kōbe Jogakuin