

THEODORE DUNHAM PAPERS

1926-1977 (bulk 1926-1955)

FINDING AID

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August 22, 2013  
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## **Administrative Information**

**Title:**

Theodore Dunham papers, 1926-1977 (bulk 1926-1955)

**Accession Number:**

2875

**Call Numbers:**

None

**Creator:**

Dunham, Theodore

**Extent:**

387 items

**Repository:**

Huntington Library  
1151 Oxford Road  
San Marino, CA 91108

**Acquisition Information:**

The collection was a gift from Mary H. Thompson, February 5, 2013.

**Conditions Governing Access/Restrictions:**

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**Language:**

English

**Preferred Citation:**

[Identification of Item], Theodore Dunham papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

**Name of Cataloger/Date Completed:**

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## **Biographical Note**

Theodore Dunham, Jr. was Scientific Director of the Fund for Astrophysical Research from its founding in 1936 until his death in 1984.

Dunham was born in 1897 in New York City. He attended higher education at Harvard (Bachelor's degree, chemistry), Cornell (M.D.) and Princeton (A.M. and Ph.D., physics). He was a staff member of the Mount Wilson Observatory from 1928 to 1947. Along with Walter S. Adams, he discovered the strong presence of carbon dioxide in the infrared spectrum of Venus. During World War II from 1942 to 1946, he was Chief of the Optical Instrument Section of the Office of Scientific Research and Development. He then spent several years applying physical methods to medical research, first from 1946 to 1948 as a Warren Fellow in Surgery at Harvard Medical School, and then from 1948 to 1957 at the School of Medicine and Dentistry at the Institute of Optics at the University of Rochester. In 1957 he joined the faculty of the Australian National University and from 1965 to 1970 he was a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Tasmania. After returning to the United States in 1970, he resumed his earlier association with Harvard College Observatory.

In 1926 he married Miriam Phillips Thompson; they had two children: Theodore Dunham III, and Mary Huntington Dunham.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The majority of the collection (364 items) is made up of correspondence between Theodore Dunham and various astronomers throughout the United States and England (and a couple other countries). Dunham and the other astronomers' research and work are the main topics of the letters. These subjects include: Dunham's work on stars (including our sun) and planets (Jupiter, Venus); biophysics; telescopes and lenses; and the Fund for Astrophysical Research. There is a folder with correspondence between Dunham, Harry Plaskett (Dunham's closest friend and astronomer at Oxford), and others regarding Dunham's attempt at doing his part during World War II. He contacts several people and institutions in England and Canada including the National Research Council in Ottawa looking for a position somewhere. This folder includes a copy of a letter by Dunham to Winston Churchill offering any assistance he can give to the war effort as well as copies of Dunham's "Summary of Scientific Work" (resume).

The majority of the letters by Dunham are copies that he kept for his own records.

There are nine photographs mostly astronomical machinery, probably for illustrations for an article by Dunham, including a transparency of the telescope at the Mount Stromlo Observatory. The publications include a copy of Engineering and Science Monthly which is published by California Institute of Technology Alumni Association. The issue contains an article about George Ellery Hale and an article by Edwin Hubble; as well as several reprints of articles by Theodore Dunham alone and articles he co-wrote with Walter S. Adams.

Prominent participants include: Walter S. Adams, Ralph Howard Fowler, Albert G. Ingalls, H. Spencer Jones, Edward Kurth, John La Gorce, C. O. Lampland, Robert E. Marshak, James H.

Means, Donald H. Menzel, Jay P. Moffat, George Spencer Monk, G. W. Morey, Linus Pauling, Harry H. Plaskett, John Stanley Plaskett, Roderick Oliver Redman, Cornelius P. Rhoads, F. E. Roach, Bruce Rule, Henry Norris Russell, Donald Sadler, Charles D. Shane, Harlow Shapley, S. E. Sheppard, V. M. Slipper, James H. C. Smith, Spencer Lens Company, Lyman Spitzer, H. A. Spoehr, Joel Stebbins, John Q. Stewart, F. J. M. Stratton, Otto Struve, P. Swings, Thermal Syndicate, Albrecht Unsöld, Adriaan Van Maanen, Warren Weaver, Evan Gwyn Williams, Albert George Wilson, Robert Williams Wood, Richard van der riet Woolley, F. E. Wright, and C. C. Wylie.

Further subjects: Eastman Kodak Company, Mt. Wilson and the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Lowell Observatory, Lick Observatory, California Institute of Technology, Yerkes Observatory, the Royal Astronomical Society, and the observatories at Cambridge, Oxford, Harvard, and Princeton as well as the National Research Council (U.S. and Canada). George Ellery Hale and Edwin Powell Hubble are mentioned often throughout the collection.

## **Container List**

### **Box 1: Correspondence, A – R**

1. Adams, Walter S. (Walter Sydney), 1876-1956. 2 letters (1945-1954) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. Facsimiles. 2 items.
2. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 3 letters (1931-1933) to Albert G. (Albert Graham) Ingalls. 3 items.
3. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1953, May 22) to Robert E. (Robert Eugene) Marshak, 1916-1992. 1 item.
4. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1933, Feb. 14) to Edwin P. Martz. 1 item.
5. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1941, May 24) to John Matthews. 1 item.
6. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 2 letters (1946) James Howard Means, 1885-1967. 2 items.
7. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1953, May 2) to C. E. Kenneth (Charles Edward Kenneth) Mees, 1882-1960. 1 item.
8. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1931, Aug. 2) to Donald H. (Donald Howard) Menzel, 1901-1976. 1 item.
9. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1933, Aug. 1) to George Spencer Monk, 1884-. 1 item.
10. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 3 letters (1929) to Charlotte E. Moore. 3 items.
11. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 2 letters (1946) to Linus Pauling, 1901-1994. 2 items.
12. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 2 letters (1936) to Edith Plaskett. 2 items.
13. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 41 letters (1931-1955) to Henry Hemley Plaskett, 1893-. Includes "Memorandum on Leave of Absence" by Dunahm. 42 items.
14. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1939, Dec. 31) to Henry Hemley Plaskett, 1893- and Edith Plaskett. 1 item.
15. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 5 letters (1946) to Cornelius P. (Cornelius Packard) Rhoads, 1898-1959. 5 items.
16. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1933, Feb. 15) to F. E. (Franklin Evans) Roach, 1905-1993. Includes hand-drawn sketches. 1 item.
17. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 16 letters (1927-1953) to Henry Norris Russell, 1877-1957.

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- 15 items.
18. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1942, Mar. 30) to Donald Sadler, 1908-1987. 1 item.
  19. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1933, May 25) to Charles Donald Shane, 1895-1983. 1 item.
  20. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 9 letters (1936-1953) to Harlow Shapley, 1885-1972. 9 items.
  21. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 4 letters (1931) to S. E. (Samuel Edward) Sheppard. 4 items.
  22. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 7 letters (1931-1955) to Vesto Melvin Slipher, 1875-1969. 7 items.
  23. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 3 letters (1933) to James H. C. Smith, 1895-1970. 3 items.
  24. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 16 letters (1952-1955) to Lyman Spitzer, 1914-1997. 16 items.
  25. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 3 letters (1933) to H. A. (Herman Augustus) Spoehr, 1885-1954. 3 items.
  26. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 3 letters (1932-1933) to Joel Stebbins, 1878-1966. 3 items.
  27. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1932, Nov. 18) to A. C. Stevens. 1 item.
  28. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1931, Dec. 9) to John Quincy Stewart, 1894-1972. 1 item.
  29. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 15 letters (1931-1953) to Otto Struve, 1897-1963. 15 items.
  30. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 4 letters (1933-1954) to P. (Polydore) Swings, 1906-1983. 4 items.
  31. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 2 letters (1933-1934) to Thermal Syndicate (Firm). 2 items.
  32. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1939, June 12) to Thornton Page. 1 item.
  33. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1932, Dec. 30) to University Club of Pasadena. 1 item.
  34. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 3 letters (1953-1955) to Warren Weaver, 1894-1978. 3 items.
  35. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1934, Dec. 1) to Evan Gwyn Williams, 1905-1940. 1 item.
  36. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1955, Mar. 17) to Albert George Wilson, 1918-. 1 item.
  37. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 9 letters (1935-1937) to Robert Williams Wood, 1868-1955. Includes hand-drawn sketches. 9 items.
  38. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 5 letters (1955) to Richard van der Riet Woolley. 5 items.
  39. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1932, Feb. 24) to F. E. (Frederic Eugene) Wright, 1877-1953. 1 item.
  40. Dunham, Theodore, 1897-. 1 letter (1935, Apr. 5) to C. C. (Charles Clayton) Wylie, 1886-. 1 item.
  41. Ingalls, Albert G. (Albert Graham). 3 letters (1931-1933) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 3 items.
  42. La Gorce, John Oliver, 1880-1959. 1 letter (1937, July 15) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  43. Lampland, C. O. (Carl Otto), 1873-1951. 1 letter (1931, July 15) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  44. Means, James Howard, 1885-1967. 1 letter (1946, Sep. 4) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-.

- 1 item.
45. Menzel, Donald H. (Donald Howard), 1901-1976. 1 letter (1931, July 30) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  46. Millar, Frederick Robert Hoyer. 1 letter (1940, Nov. 14) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  47. Monk, George Spencer, 1884-. 1 letter (1933, Aug. 5) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  48. Moore, Charlotte E. 3 letters (1929) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 3 items.
  49. Moore, Charlotte E. 1 letter (1937, Sep. 15) to Theodore Dunham, 1897- and Miriam Dunham. Following the above is a note by Barry [Morris]. 1 item.
  50. Morey, G. W. (George Washington), 1888-1965. 1 letter (1941, Apr. 7) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  51. National Research Council (U.S.). 1 letter (1927, Dec. 6) to Theodore Dunham, 1897. 1 item.
  52. Pauling, Linus, 1901-1994. 1 letter (1946, Aug. 12) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  53. Pestell, Wilbur A. 1 letter (1933, Sep. 18) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  54. Plaskett, Harry Hemley, 1893-. 44 letters (1931-1977) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. Includes hand-drawn sketches. 42 items.
  55. Plaskett, Harry Hemley, 1893-. 1 letter (1977, Dec. 30) to Theodore Dunham, 1897- and Miriam Dunham. 1 item.
  56. Plaskett, Harry Hemley, 1893-. 1 letter (1936, Sep. 17) to Roderick Oliver Redman. 1 item.
  57. Plaskett, Harry Hemley, 1893-. 1 letter (1929, Mar. 31) to Albrecht Unsöld, 1905-. 1 item.
  58. Powell, Wilson Marcy. 1 letter (1947, Aug. 26) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  59. Redman, Roderick Oliver. 3 letters (1936) to Harry Hemley Plaskett, 1893-. 3 items.
  60. Rhoads, Cornelius P. (Cornelius Packard), 1898-1959. 5 letters (1946) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 5 items.
  61. Roach, F. E. (Franklin Evans), 1905-1993. 1 letter (1933, Feb. 4) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  62. Rule, Bruce H. 1 letter (1951, Apr. 6) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  63. Russell, Henry Norris, 1877-1957. 1 letter (1937, May 14) to Miriam Dunham. 1 item.
  64. Russell, Henry Norris, 1877-1957. 35 letters (1926-1955) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 35 items.
  65. Russell, Henry Norris, 1877-1957. 1 letter (1949, Dec. 23) to Theodore Dunham, 1897- and Miriam Dunham. 1 item.
  66. Russell, Henry Norris, 1877-1957. 1 letter (1926, June 11) to Frank Watson Dyson, 1868-1939. 1 item.

Box 2: Correspondence, S – W, Photographs, and Publications

1. Sadler, Donald, 1908-1987. 1 telegram (1942, Mar. 17) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
2. Shane, Charles Donald, 1895-1983. 2 letters (1931-1933) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 2 items.
3. Shapley, Harlow, 1885-1972. 11 letters (1926-1953) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-.

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- Includes hand-drawn sketch. 11 items.
4. Sheppard, S. E. (Samuel Edward). 2 letters (1931) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. Also includes letter by C. J. Staud to Dunham (1941, June 9). 3 items.
  5. Slipher, Vesto Melvin, 1875-1969. 3 letters (1931-1933) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 3 items.
  6. Smith, James H. C., 1895-1970. 6 letters (1933) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 6 items.
  7. Spencer Lens Company. 1 letter (1931, Jan. 23) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. Includes price list. Author: Harry G. Ott. 2 items.
  8. Spindler & Sauppe, Inc. 1 letter (1931, Feb. 5) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. Author: ---- Weisenlohr? 1 item.
  9. Spitzer, Lyman, 1914-1997. 7 letters (1952-1955) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 7 items.
  10. Spoehr, H. A. (Herman Augustus), 1885-1954. 4 letters (1933) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 4 items.
  11. Stebbins, Joel, 1878-1966. 2 letters (1931-1932) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 2 items.
  12. Stewart, John Quincy, 1894-1972. 2 letters (1931) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 2 items.
  13. Stratton, Frederick John Marrian, 1881-1960. 1 letter (1957, Mar. 15) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  14. Struve, Otto, 1897-1963. 1 letter (1931, May 19) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  15. Struve, Otto, 1897-1963. 19 letters (1931-1937) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. Includes graph. 20 items.
  16. Swings, P. (Polydore), 1906-1983. 1 letter (1933, Mar. 16) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  17. Swings, P. (Polydore), 1906-1983. 1 letter (1937, Sep. 18) to Otto Struve, 1897-1963. 1 item.
  18. Thermal Syndicate (Firm). 2 letters (1933-1934) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 2 items.
  19. Thermal Syndicate (Firm). 1 letter (1932, Sep. 28) to Edward Houghton Kurth, 1898-. 1 item.
  20. University Club of Pasadena. 1 letter (1933, Jan. 25) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  21. Unsöld, Albrecht, 1905-. 14 letters (1929-1937) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 14 items.
  22. Van Maanen, Adriaan, 1884-1946. 3 letters (1931-1933) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. Includes letter by A. L. Head. 4 items.
  23. Weaver, Warren, 1894-1978. 4 letters (1953-1955) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 4 items.
  24. Williams, Evan Gwyn, 1905-1940. 1 letter [circa 1934] to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. Includes two graphs. 3 items.
  25. Williams, Evan Gwyn, 1905-1940. 2 letters (1934) to Theodore Dunham, 1897- and Miriam Dunham. 2 items.
  26. Wilson, Albert George, 1918-. 1 letter (1955, May 9) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
  27. Wood, Robert Williams, 1868-1935. 7 letters (1935-1937) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 7 items.
  28. Woolley, Richard van der Riet. 9 letters (1955) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. Includes two copies of one of the letters. 10 items.
  29. Wright, F. E. (Frederic Eugene), 1877-1953. 8 letters (1932-1955) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. Includes postcard/photo and two pages of notes. 11 items.

30. Wylie, C. C. (Charles Clayton), 1886-. 2 letters (1935) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 2 items.
31. -----, 1 letter (192?, Nov. 22) to Theodore Dunham, 1897-. 1 item.
32. War work correspondence (1940). 38 letters regarding Dunham's search for war work. Includes copies of "Summary of Scientific Work" by Dunham and "Commissions" note. 42 items.
33. Photographs [undated]. 9 items.
34. Magazine: Engineering and Science (1948, June). 1 item.
35. Reprints: Articles by Theodore Dunham, 1897- (1931-1949). 7 items.
36. Reprints: Articles by Theodore Dunham, 1897- and Walter S. (Walter Sydney) Adams, 1876-1956 (1932-1941). 6 items.

### **Indexing: Added Entries**

Kurth, Edward Houghton, 1898-. Addressee of Thermal Syndicate (Firm) letter (1932, Sep. 28). Box 2 (19).

Marshak, Robert E. (Robert Eugene), 1916-1992. Addressee of Theodore Dunham, 1897- letter (1953, May 22). Box 1 (3).

Mees, C. E. Kenneth (Charles Edward Kenneth), 1882-1960. Addressee of Theodore Dunham, 1897- letter (1953, May 2). Box 1 (7).

In War work correspondence folder, Box 2 (32):

Boyle, Robert William  
Fowler, R. H. (Ralph Howard), 1889-1944  
Howlett, Leslie Ernest, 1903-  
Jones, H. Spencer (Harold Spencer), 1890-1960  
Moffat, Jay Pierrepont, 1896-1943  
National Research Council Canada  
Plaskett, John Stanley, 1865-1941  
Sweny, George W.