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American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions records4492650

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Description is written in: English.

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Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

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URL: <https://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke.html>

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical / Historical	3
Scope and Contents	4
Arrangement	4
Administrative Information	4
Related Materials	5
Controlled Access Headings	6
Burke Library record group:	6
Collection Inventory	6
Series 1: Board records	6
Series 2: Africa	7
Series 3: Asia and Philippine Islands	8

Summary Information

Repository:	Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary
Creator:	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
Title:	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions records
ID:	4492650
Date [inclusive]:	1878 -- 1958
Physical Description:	3.25 linear feet 3.25 linear feet; 7 boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), organized in 1810, was the first successful North American agency dedicated to foreign missions. ABCFM existed until 1961 when it merged with the Board of International Missions to form the United Church Board for World Ministries. The collection concerns missions in South Africa in Rhodesia and Zulu; missions in Asia including Turkey, India, Japan, and China; missions in the Philippine Islands; and ABCFM organization in general.

Preferred Citation

Item description, MRL 12: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Records, 1878-1958, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was organized in 1810 by students of Williams College in Massachusetts as the first successful North American agency dedicated to foreign missions. It would grow to be the largest American foreign mission board in the nineteenth century. ABCFM is recognized as a leader in regards to theology, theory, and policies of foreign missions by those in America. Legally incorporated in 1812, ABCFM sponsored 157 ordained missionaries by 1850. Congregationalist in nature, ABCFM accepted

missionaries from a variety of denominational backgrounds. The American missionaries were first sent to Africa in 1834 to work with the Zulu but had earlier supported the first missionaries to the Eastern Mediterranean in 1819. In 1961, ABCFM merged with the Board of International Missions to form United Church Board for World Ministries. In 2000, the UCBWM became the Wider Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

This collection contains Board Records of the Prudential Committee, which was the Executive Committee of the ABCFM; bulletins; correspondence related to ABCFM missions throughout the world; Department of Missionary Education records including notes on missionary materials; and reports, meeting minutes, correspondence, and other materials produced by the ABCFM in Africa, China, Eastern and Central Turkey, European Turkey at the Samokov Station in Bulgaria, Japan; India; and the Philippine Islands.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

This collection is arranged in three series: Series 1: Board records; Series 2: Africa; and Series 3: Asia and Philippine Islands.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

PDF converted to EAD and description updated by Leah Edelman. 2022-01-31

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Access

The following boxes are located offsite: Box 1-7. Please note that requests for use of boxes held in offsite storage must be made three business days in advance.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Formerly part of the independent Missionary Research Library (MRL), these records were accessioned by the Burke Library at the time of the MRL's closure in 1976.

Processing Information

Annual reports and mimeographed reports were cataloged by Lynn A. Grove on 1988-08-02. Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Minute books were wrapped in acid-free tissue and tied with acid-free cotton tying tape. American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Southern Rhodesia Mission Records, 1900-1949 and American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Records, 1885-1926 relating to the East Africa Central Mission were merged into one collection. The finding aid was created by Brigette Kamsler in 2011 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, and edited by Leah Edelman in 2022.

Conditions Governing Use

Some material in this collection may be protected by copyright and other rights. Information concerning copyright, fair use, and reproduction requests can be consulted at Columbia's Copyright Advisory Office.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Materials

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 1-91)
Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Missions -- Turkey
- Congregational churches -- Missions
- Missionaries -- Africa
- Missionaries -- China
- Missionaries -- India
- Missionaries -- Japan
- Missionaries -- Turkey

Burke Library record group:

Missionary Research Library Archives: MRL12, Ecumenical/World Mission

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Board records, 1921 -- 1937

Physical Description: 0.25 linear feet 0.25 linear feet; 1 box

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Scope and Contents

This series contains Board Records of the Prudential Committee, which was the Executive Committee of the ABCFM; bulletins and correspondence related to ABCFM missions throughout the world. The bulletins were sent to members of the ABCFM discussing their major objective with foreign missions; what the American board was asking of its constituency; goals and other financial figures for 1932. The correspondence entails further financial matters; the list of materials relating to ABCFM held by the Missionary Research Library and their geographic locales; and which newspapers will run articles on ABCFM matters. The Department of Missionary Education includes notes on missionary materials; books

and their authors. The Prudential Committee records include reports on staff vacancies; administrative year information, and reports on the speaker's bureau.

Title/Description	Instances	
Bulletins, 1932	box 1	folder 1
Correspondence, 1933 -- 1934	box 1	folder 2
Department of Missionary Education Papers, 1921 -- 1931	box 1	folder 3
Prudential Committee, 1933 -- 1937	box 1	folder 4

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Africa, 1885 -- 1958

Physical Description: 2.5 linear feet 2.5 linear feet; 5 boxes

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged roughly chronologically.

Scope and Contents

This series contains reports, meeting minutes, and other materials produced by the ABCFM in Africa, including detailed reports and minutes from multiple stations. The reports relate to the operations of the missions, including school reports; committee reports; reports of medical work and diseases treated; treasurer's reports; and reports for the study of language. Also included is information from different schools including the Mount Salinda School and the Chikore School, which detail names of students and what work they performed in class such as brick making and wood sawing. The minutes are from various African branches of ABCFM including the Rhodesian Mission Branch in South Africa, the Northern Branch and the East Central Africa Mission both in Mount Salinda, as well as the Zulu Missions. Annual meetings, special meetings, financial information and committees' minutes are contained in this series. One folder contains faculty committee minutes. This series also consists of correspondence dealing with items such as furloughing and reappointment of missionaries; information on changes in board members and actions taken by committees. Files are typed and appear to be copies kept by the secretaries, including Earnest W. Riggs and John S. Marsh; some have annotations and original signatures. Items are written to others in Africa; as well as ABCFM Secretary in Boston, Massachusetts.

Title/Description	Instances	
Southern Africa, Rhodesia Branch Constitution, Bylaws and Rules, 1922	box 2	folder 1
Southern Africa, Rhodesia Branch Minutes Book with Secretarial Correspondence and Index, 1885 -- 1916	box 2	folder 2-4
Southern Africa, Rhodesia Branch Minutes, 1892 -- 1906	box 2	folder 5-7
Southern Africa, Rhodesia Branch Minutes Book, 1906 -- 1929	box 3	folder 1-7

Southern Africa, Rhodesia Branch Minutes, 1930 -- 1934	box 4	folder 1
Southern Africa, Rhodesia Branch Minutes, Faculty Committee of Mt. Salinda Institute, 1930 -- 1947	box 4	folder 2
Southern Africa, Rhodesia Branch Minutes, 1935 -- 1958	box 4	folder 3-5
Southern Africa, Rhodesia Branch Reports, 1894 -- 1913	box 4	folder 6-9
Southern Africa, Rhodesia Branch Reports, Chikore School, 1907 -- 1909	box 4	folder 10
Southern Africa, Rhodesia Branch Reports, 1908 -- 1927	box 5	folder 1-3
Southern Africa, Rhodesia Branch Chikore Station Report, 1921 -- 1943	box 5	folder 4
Southern Africa, Rhodesia Branch Reports, 1928 -- 1942	box 5	folder 5-8
Southern Africa, Rhodesia Branch Reports, 1943 -- 1949	box 6	folder 1-3
Southern Africa, Adams Station and Durban Station, Report Letters, 1949	box 6	folder 4
Southern Africa, Zulu Missions, General Education Policy, circa 1893 -- 1907	box 6	folder 5
Southern Africa, Zulu Missions Minutes, 1893 -- 1907	box 6	folder 6-7
Southern Africa, Secretarial Correspondence, 1923 -- 1950	box 6	folder 8-9
West Africa, Lobita Bay Station, Report Letter, 1949	box 6	folder 10

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Asia and Philippine Islands, 1878 -- 1950

Physical Description: 0.5 linear feet 0.5 linear feet; 1 box

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged alphabetically by location.

Scope and Contents

This series contains correspondence and reports concerning ABCFM missions in Asia, including China; Eastern and Central Turkey; European Turkey at the Samokov Station in Bulgaria; Japan; and India; and missions in the Philippine Islands. All discuss in detail their experiences with the local population, the current living situations, and other missions in the area. The missionaries speak of when Communists took control in China in 1949-1950. The missionaries in Japan include details about the country's recovery from World War II and the Japanese feeling towards Americans. Those in the Philippines include details from the medical missionaries involving the types of diseases and people receiving medical treatment. The missionaries in Turkey detail the massacres which took place in the late nineteenth century and the Russian army occupation, including the interaction with Turks, Bulgarians and the

missionary groups themselves. The European Turkey Mission reports include those from the Collegiate and Theological Institute in Bulgaria, and the Girls Boarding School. Much of the material is either mimeographed or carbon copy. The reports from the European Turkey Mission are handwritten mission or school copies and include annotations and corrections.

Title/Description	Instances	
China, Secretarial Correspondence, 1937	box 7	folder 1
China, Report Letters from Missionaries, 1949 -- 1950	box 7	folder 2
China, Foochow Mission, Fukien: Shao-Wu Station Report Letters, 1906 -- 1950	box 7	folder 3
China, Foochow Mission, Fukien: Ing-Hok Station Report Letters, 1907 -- 1914	box 7	folder 4
China, North China Mission: Pang Chuang Station Report Letters, 1906 -- 1914	box 7	folder 5
Eastern Turkey Mission: Harpoot Station Report Letters, 1906 -- 1914	box 7	folder 6
European Turkey Mission: Samakov Station, Bulgaria Annual Reports, 1878 -- 1888	box 7	folder 7-8
European Turkey Mission: Samakov Station, Bulgaria Girls Boarding School Annual Reports, 1882 -- 1898	box 7	folder 9
European Turkey Mission: Samakov Station, Bulgaria Collegiate and Theological Institute Annual Reports, 1880 -- 1914	box 7	folder 10-13
Central Turkey Mission: Adana and Aintab Stations Report Letters, 1909 -- 1910	box 7	folder 14
India, Madura Mission: Battalagundu and Aruppukottai Stations Report Letters, 1907 -- 1914	box 7	folder 15
India, Marathi Mission: Soholapur Station Report Letters, 1907 -- 1914	box 7	folder 16
Japan: Doshiba University, Kyoto, and Kobe College, Nishinomiya Report Letters, 1949	box 7	folder 17
Japan Mission: Sapporo Station and Sendai Station Report Letters, 1907 -- 1908	box 7	folder 18
Philippine Islands Report Letters, 1911 -- 1913	box 7	folder 19

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)