

SCOPE AND CONTENT

Missionary materials in general have great research appeal to a variety of scholars. Denominational scholars have long realized their value in documenting the church's work at home and abroad. Scholars interested in developing Third World countries also have recognized their importance, as have students of diplomatic history. More recently, however, students of American social history have discovered their value in documenting the role of women and ethnic minorities in the United States as well as other diverse subjects.

This microfilm collection contains correspondence of the Board of Foreign Missions (BFM) of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and its predecessor, the Western Foreign Mission Society, from as early as 1835. Dates vary from country to country, but the correspondence generally extends through the first decade and a half of the twentieth century. Letter books containing the originals were microfilmed and then destroyed. Thirty-one volumes of calendars serve as the guide to the correspondence.

Documenting the church's educational, evangelical, and medical work, the records of the BFM provide invaluable information on social conditions in developing Third World nations and on efforts to spread the gospel during the nineteenth century. The vast majority of material is incoming correspondence from the mission field and outgoing correspondence from the Board headquarters. Other primary sources include:

- Receipts of sale;
- Inventories of supplies (food, tobacco, sundries, etc.);
- Diary accounts;
- Sermon manuscripts;
- Minutes of board meetings;
- Annual reports on mission work; and
- Personal and field reports, including information on the number of newly organized churches, ordained ministers, and members, as well as on average attendance.

This microfilm guide is arranged by geographical area or by country. The following subsections are included:

- India, 1835–1910
Reels 1 to 7, (8/9), 10 to 21, (22/23), (24/25), 26 to 40, (41/42), (43/44), 45 to 58, (59/60/60A), 221, 222, 264 to 271. Calendar reels: 298, 299
- Africa, 1835–1910
Reels 61 to 87, (217/218), 219, 220, 238, 239. Calendar reel: 296
- Syria-Lebanon, 1869–1910
Reels 65(1), 65(2), 65(3), 65(4), 88 to 100, 293, (294/295). Calendar reel: 301
- Iran (Persia), 1847–1911
Reels 101, (102/103), 118 to 132, 220, 222, 223, 271 to 275. Calendar reel: 299

- Japan, 1859–1911
Reels 104 to 115, (116/117), 230 to 232, 275 to 280. Calendar reel: 299
- Latin America, 1854–1911
 - Argentina, 1854–1859
Reel 133. Calendar reel: 300
 - Brazil, 1860–1911
Reels 133 to 150, 225, 226, 239 to 242. Calendar reel: 300
 - Chile, 1872–1911
Reels 153 to 160, 220, 242 to 244. Calendar reel: 300
 - Colombia, 1861–1911
Reels 135 to 139, 141 to 144, 150 to 153, 220, 225, 261 to 263.
Calendar reel: 300
 - Guatemala, 1882–1911
Reels 160 to 162, 226, 227, 263, 264. Calendar reel: 300
 - Mexico, 1872–1911
Reels 162 to 173, 227 to 229, 285 to 288. Calendar reel: 300
 - Peru, 1885–1887
Reel 229. Calendar reel: 300
 - Venezuela, 1897–1901
Reels 173, 220. Calendar reel: 300
- Korea, 1884–1911
Reels (174/175), (176/177), 178 to 181, 223, 224, 280 to 285.
Calendar reels: 299, 300
- Thailand (Siam), 1840–1910
Reels 181 to 186, (187/188), 229, 230, 290 to 293. Calendar reel: 301
- China, 1837–1911
Reels 189 to 191, 191A, 192 to 216, (217/218), 232 to 235, (236/237), 244 to 246,
(247/247A), 248 to 261. Calendar reels: 296 to 298
- Philippines, 1898–1910
Reels 287–290. Calendar reel: 300

The final six reels (296 to 301) consist of a thirty-one volume **Calendar of Correspondence**, arranged by broad geographical area or country (for example, Africa, China). The individual volumes of the calendar cover specific dates and may cover correspondence that is either incoming (from the mission field) or outgoing (from the Board headquarters), or both. The individual calendar volumes may cover one or several mission stations within the geographical area; the title page will indicate the coverage of incoming and outgoing dates. The entire calendar is microfilmed separately, and pertinent portions are reproduced at the beginning of each microfilm reel.

For each item described in the calendar, there is an item number, date, and brief description of the contents. For **incoming** correspondence, the writer of the letter is indicated. For **outgoing** correspondence, the person at the Board originating the letter is indicated at the beginning of the numerical sequence of item numbers, and each number in the sequence identifies the recipient of the letter. The item number is handwritten in the upper margin of the first page

of each item in the microfilm. Items marked “omit” in the microfilm do not appear in the calendar.

To locate an item described in the calendar, first make a note of the item number. Go back to the beginning of that particular numerical sequence of item numbers to find the volume number (from the original letter book). There are gaps in some sequences; the beginning of a sequence will not necessarily be number 1. The letter book volume number will be found in the upper right hand corner of the page at the beginning of the sequence of item numbers (e.g., “Africa, vol. 9, cont’d”). The title page of each volume of the calendar will refer from a volume number to a microfilm reel number(s).

Roll 301 also includes a **personal name index**, which is arranged by geographical area. It is therefore necessary to know where the individual served. Only persons writing and persons receiving the correspondence are indexed. Persons mentioned in the letters are not indexed. There are cross-references to the unmarried names of married women when known. The underlined number of the **personal name index** refers to a volume number of the calendar, the numbers following the underlined volume number refer to page numbers in the calendar. The calendar will then refer the researcher to the appropriate roll of microfilm.