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Union Theological Seminary, New York**

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 3

Finding Aid for

American Marathi Mission Records, 1813 – 1962

Finding Aid prepared by: Brigette C. Kamsler, December 2011
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: Louise Gleam Fisher
Title: American Marathi Mission Records
Inclusive dates: 1813 – 1962
Abstract: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) created first Protestant mission in Western India. General background; Reports: Ahmednagar, Bombay, Poona, Rahuri, Satara, Sholapur, Vadala, and Wai Stations. Louise Gliem Fisher compiled number of sources including minutes, reports, diaries, brochures, and correspondence; typescript copy.
Size: 1 box, 0.50 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance:** Originally part of the independent Missionary Research Library, these records were moved with the MRL to the Brown Memorial Tower of Union Theological Seminary in 1929. In 1976 the records were accessioned to the Burke Library archives with the closure of the MRL.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. Burke Library staff is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions:** The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, MRL3: American Marathi Mission Records, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

History

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) established their first foreign mission with the American Marathi Mission in Bombay December 21, 1813. It was the first protestant mission in Western India and spread into hundreds of villages. The mission center moved from Bombay to Ahmednager in 1831 because it was closer to the center of Marathi County.

The mission did a number of things for the community. By 1911, Christians were attending church and school, learning academic subjects, practical farming, basic medicine and industry including carpentry and weaving. Aiding famine and plague victims and beginning a women's Bible training school increased the goodwill towards the Marathi Mission. Colleges and a theological institution were created by the Marathi Mission in the late 1800s to mid-1900s. It created an institution for care of the blind, as well as a leper colony in 1899 at Sholapur. Although the number of Christians was growing, caste prejudices and the scarcity of Christian leaders continued to be an issue for the organization.

The move for Indian independence led to a downturn in relations between Indian Christians and missionaries. In 1922 the Marathi Mission created an Indian Mission Board to help give locals more independence over their Christianity. India gained its independence from Britain in 1947 and Christianity is still the country's third-largest religion.

Sources:

Biographical information was gleaned from the archival material itself and the following books. David, M. D. *Missions: Cross-Cultural Encounter and Change in Western India*. Delhi: ISPCK, 2001.

Memorial Papers of the American Marathi Mission, 1813 – 1881. Bombay: Education Society's Press, Byculla: 1882.

Collection Scope and Content Note

Collection of papers relating to the American Marathi Mission in India, which were compiled by Mrs. Louise Gliem Fisher in 1962. Mrs. Fisher had been a nurse in the Public Health field in Satara District, India beginning in 1934. The records are typescript and pull together information from a number of sources including minutes, reports, diaries, brochures, and correspondence that begin in 1813 with the founding of the mission and continue to 1962.

Processing

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed.

Further Sources

For more information on ABCFM, see [MRL12: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Records, 1878-1958](#) housed at the Burke Library, Union Theological Seminary.

The main records of the ABCFM are held by the Houghton Library, Harvard College Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts and the following link is to the Finding Aid of that collection: <http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/~hou01467>. Microfilms of various sections of the Houghton Library collection, most commonly of the earliest pre-1919 correspondence, can be found in many academic libraries.

Yale University also has an ABCFM collection which includes American Marathi Mission records, which can be viewed here: <http://www.library.yale.edu/div/fa/HR1004.htm>.

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1	5	Rahuri
1	6	Satara, 1835-1849-1962, Volume 1
1	7	Satara, Excerpts Fisher-Pickens Letters, Volume 2
1	8	Sholapur
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1	10	Wai