

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions records, 1821-1871

Overview of the Collection

Creator	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
Title	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions records
Dates	1821-1871 (inclusive) 1821 1871
Quantity	0.7 cubic feet, (1 legal document case; 1 slim legal document case; 1 shared reel of microfilm)
Collection Number	Mss 1200
Summary	Journal extracts, reports, correspondence, and financial documents of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (A.B.C.F.M.) concerning its missionary operations in the Oregon Territory. Includes materials relating to discussion by Hawaii missionary Jonathan S. Green and others on the feasibility of having a mission in the Pacific Northwest; and correspondence of missionaries Marcus Whitman, Henry H. Spalding, Cushing Eells, Elkanah Walker, William H. Gray, and A.B.C.F.M. secretaries David Greene and S. B. Treat. Almost all materials are typescript copies, many of them made from originals in the A.F.B.C.M. archives at the Houghton Library of Harvard University.
Repository	Oregon Historical Society Research Library 1200 SW Park Avenue Portland, OR 97205 Telephone: 503-306-5240 Fax: 503-219-2040 libreference@ohs.org
Access Restrictions	Collection is open for research.
Languages	English

Historical Note

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was organized in 1810 and was the first missionary society in the United States. Headquartered in Boston, it served as the missionary arm of several major Protestant church denominations, particularly the Congregational, Presbyterian, and Dutch Reformed Churches. The Board established missions all over the world, including the Whitman mission in what would become the Oregon Territory, and later Washington state. The Board was absorbed into the United Church Board of World Ministries in 1961.

Other Descriptive Information

Unless otherwise noted, all materials are typescript copies.

Content Description

The bulk of the collection consists of typescript copies of journal extracts, reports, correspondence, and financial documents of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions concerning its missionary operations in the Oregon Territory. Many of the typescripts are based on originals held in the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions archives in the Houghton Library at Harvard University, and are referred to by the sequential numbers that the Houghton Library assigned. The collection includes the reports of Jonathan S. Green (a missionary based in Hawaii) on his exploration of the northwest coast of North America, and correspondence and records relating to discussions on whether establishing a mission in the Pacific Northwest would be worthwhile. Missionaries to the Pacific Northwest who are represented in this collection are William H. Gray, Henry H. Spalding, Cushing Eells, Elkanah Walker, and Marcus Whitman, as well as Board secretary David Greene. There are a few original items and photostatic copies of documents in the collection in addition to the typescripts.

Use of the Collection

Preferred Citation

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions records, Mss 1200, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

Restrictions on Use

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Administrative Information

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in two series: Series 1. Copies of records from A.B.C.F.M. Archives; Series 2. Other A.B.C.F.M. records.

Acquisition Information

Acquired prior to 1971, most likely in the early 20th century (RL2021-016-RETRO). Microfilmed materials most likely acquired in 1964 (RL2021-037-RETRO).

Location of Originals

Originals of most the materials are housed at the Houghton Library, Harvard University, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, ABC 1-91. Original of January 14, 1851, letter from Henry H. Spalding to S. B. Treat is housed in the Whitman College and Northwest Archives, Walla

Walla, Washington. Originals of microfilmed materials are held in the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society Library, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Related Materials

Additional papers relating to missionaries in the Pacific Northwest are designated Mss 1201 through Mss 1225, and Microfilm Mss 1200-1225, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series 1: Copies of records from A.B.C.F.M. Archives, 1828-1859

Container(s)		Description	Dates
		Subseries 1: Archives of the A.B.C.F.M., Volume 71	1835-1836
Box	Folder		
1	1	Letters 196-204: Henry H. Spalding to David Greene; journal of Henry H. Spalding	1835-1836; 1836 September 21-October 31
		Subseries 2: Archives of the A.B.C.F.M., Volume 137	1839-1840
Box	Folder		
1	2	Letters 121-125: E. O. Hall to R. Anderson and Henry H. Spalding	1839-1840
		Subseries 3: Archives of the A.B.C.F.M., Volume 138	1837-1844
Box	Folder		
1	3	Index	undated
1	4	Letters 1-20: Various correspondents, including Henry H. Spalding, Marcus Whitman, William H. Gray, and Elkanah Walker	1837-1843
1	5	Letters 21-30: Henry H. Spalding to David Greene	1837-1839
1	6	Letters 31-40: Henry H. Spalding to David Greene	1838-1843
1	7	Letters 41-47: Cushing Eells to David Greene	1840-1844

Container(s)		Description	Dates
1	8	Letters 48-60: Asa Bowen Smith to David Greene	1838-1840
1	9	Letter 61: Asa Bowen Smith to H. Bingham	1840 September 28
1	10	Letters 62-70: Asa Bowen Smith to David Greene	1840-1842
1	11	Letters 71-82: Elkanah Walker to David Greene	1838-1844
1	12	Letters 83-90: Marcus Whitman to David Greene	1837-1840
1	13	Letters 91-107: Marcus Whitman to David Greene	1840-1844
1	14	Letters 108-120: William H. Gray to David Greene	1837-1838
1	15	Letters 121-135: William H. Gray to David Greene	1838-1842
1	16	Letters 136-141: William H. Gray to various correspondents including John McLoughlin; report of William H. Gray	1839
1	17	Letters 142-146: Cornelius Rogers to David Greene	1839-1841
1	18	Letter 147: P. B. Littlejohn to David Greene; fragment of letter pasted to end of Volume 138	1843 March 31; undated
Subseries 4: Archives of the A.B.C.F.M., Volume 248			1828-1859
Box	Folder		
1	19	Index to Letters 76-139 and 159-175	undated
1	20	Letter 76: Memorandum of letter from General William H. Ashley to Edward Bates dated February 20, 1828, written by Jeremiah Evarts	1828 April 10
1	21	Letter 77: List of distance between Independence, Missouri, and Walla Walla, Oregon Territory	circa 1843
1	22	Letter 78: Report of Marcus Whitman submitted to the Prudential Committee	1843 April 4

Container(s)		Description	Dates
1	23	Letters 79-81: Inventories of A.B.C.F.M. material goods lost or destroyed in the Whitman killings, and related affidavits	1849
1	24	Letter 82: Statement of expenses of the Oregon mission	circa 1851
1	25	Titles of letters 83 and 84 (text of letters was not copied)	undated
1	26	Letters 85-91: Various correspondence, including by Amory Holbrook, George H. Atkinson, and Benjamin Alvord	1850-1854
1	27	Letter 92: Correspondence from Andrew Rogers and Henry H. Spalding to David Greene	1847 October 13-14
1	28	Letters 93-95: Correspondence from Cushing Eells, Henry H. Spalding, and Elkanah Walker to S. B. Treat	1851 October 22-December 1
1	29	Letters 96-107: Cushing Eells to David Greene	1847-1848
1	30	Letter 108: Letter from John Lee Lewes, chief factor of Hudson's Bay Company, commending Cushing Eells	1848 June 1
1	31	Letters 109-127: Cushing Eells to S. B. Treat	1849-1859
1	32	Letter 128: William H. Gray to David Greene (2 copies)	1843 May 15
1	33	Letters 129-133: Henry H. Spalding to David Greene	1843-1846
2	1	Letters 134-139: Henry H. Spalding to David Greene	1847-1859
2	2	Letter 159: Elkanah Walker to William G. Armstrong and David Greene	1844 April 20; 1845 October 8
2	3	Letters 160-166: Elkanah Walker to David Greene; extract of letter from Mary Richardson Walker to "Mrs. Hill"	1845-1848
2	4	Letters 167-175: Elkanah Walker to S. B. Treat	1851-1859

Series 2: Other A.B.C.F.M. records, 1821-1871

Container(s)	Description	Dates	
Reel			
1	Mss 1200-Mss 1225 Microfilm: Agreement for Jonathan S. Green's passage aboard the bark Volunteer to the Pacific Northwest (microfilm of original)	1829 February	
1	Mss 1200-Mss 1225 Microfilm: Letters from Jonathan S. Green to Levi Chamberlain and William Richards during Green's expedition in the Pacific Northwest (microfilm of originals)	1829 August 4-11	
Box Folder			
2	5	Letters from Jonathan S. Green to the Board about the feasibility of establishing a mission in the Pacific Northwest	1828-1829
2	6	Extracts from the "Missionary Herald," including pieces about Jonathan S. Green's exploration of the Pacific Northwest coast	1821-1831
2	7	Report of the Sandwich Island Mission Standing Committee on Oregon Mission	1830 January 20
2	8	Printed volume, "Extracts from the Records of the Hawaiian Association from 1823 to 1836," listing Jonathan S. Green's name (original)	1837
Reel			
1	Mss 1200-Mss 1225 Microfilm: Letters to Samuel Northrup Castle from missionaries in the Oregon Territory, including from William H. Gray, Henry H. Spalding, and George Atkinson (microfilm of originals)	1839-1851	
Box Folder			
2	9	Letter from William H. Gray to David Greene (photostatic reproduction)	1838 September 19
2	10	Letters from David Greene to John Dunbar, Samuel Allis, Jr., and Cyrus Kingsbury	1834 March 29-September 10
2	11	Letter from Henry H. Spalding to the Board, asking to be appointed as missionary	1835 August 7

Container(s)	Description	Dates
2 12	Letters from Henry H. Spalding to David Greene Includes copies of letters that were designated Letters 196-204 in Volume 138 of the A.F.C.B.M. Archives.	1835-1836; 1847
2 13	Letters from Henry H. Spalding to S. B. Treat	1850-1871
2 14	Letter from Henry H. Spalding to the secretaries of the A.B.C.F.M.	1857
2 15	Letter from Henry P. Strong to unidentified person, possibly David Greene	1834 December 1
2 16	Handbill for A.B.C.F.M. meeting at the Broadway Tabernacle on May 14, 1847 (original)	1847
2 17	Instructions of the Prudential Committee to Elkanah Walker, Cushing Eells, Alvin B. Smith, and William H. Gray (original and two typescript copies)	1838 March 18
2 18	Receipt of expenditures for Henry H. Spalding, Marcus Whitman, and William H. Gray (photostatic reproduction)	1836 September 5
2 19	Supply lists	1841; 1847

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Indians of North America--Missions--Northwest, Pacific
Missionaries--Northwest, Pacific

Personal Names :

Eells, Cushing, 1810-1893
Gray, W. H. (William Henry), 1810-1889
Green, Jonathan S. (Jonathan Smith), 1796-1878
Greene, David, active 1838-1847
Spalding, Henry Harmon, 1803-1874
Walker, Elkanah, 1805-1877
Whitman, Marcus, 1802-1847

Corporate Names :

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

Form or Genre Terms :

correspondence
typescripts

Geoffrey B. Wexler; revised by Jeffrey A. Hayes
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