

**GUIDE TO THE
MICROFILM EDITION OF**

**AMERICAN MISSIONARY
ASSOCIATION ARCHIVES
1839-1882**

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Amistad Research Center at
Tulane University*

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**Scholarly Resources Inc.
An Imprint of Thomson Gale**

12 Lunar Drive, Woodbridge, CT 06525
Tel: (800) 444-0799 and (203) 397-2600
Fax: (203) 397-3893

P.O. Box 45, Reading, England
Tel: (+44) 1734-583247
Fax: (+44) 1734-394334

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Note to Researcher

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Introduction to the Collection

The American Missionary Association (AMA) was established in 1846 as an interdenominational missionary society devoted to abolitionist principles. The Association grew directly from the committee organized in 1839 to defend the Africans who had revolted and seized the schooner *La Amistad*. From its beginning, the major support for the Association came from Congregationalists, but it also received backing from Wesleyan Methodists, Free Presbyterians, and Free Will Baptists. In 1865 the AMA became the official agency of the Congregational Church for conducting educational work among the Freedmen. Support from other denominations gradually declined until the Association became exclusively a Congregational organization. This collection is a valuable resource for the study of the abolitionist movement.

This collection currently includes approximately 350,000 manuscript pieces. The mass of these was written during the period from 1839 to 1882, but several thousand are dated before and after that time. The manuscripts include some of the treasurers' papers and minutes of Executive Committee meetings, as well as other items such as sermons, statistical reports, drawings, pictures, and essays; however, letters make up the large majority of the items. More than 100,000 letters are reports from foreign and home missionaries and teachers.

The papers provide the detailed history of the AMA from its origin to 1882. The materials dated prior to 1846 relate to several subjects, of which the most important are the *Amistad* case and the futile efforts of evangelical abolitionists to promote abolitionism among northern churches and religious societies such as the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Home Missionary Society, and the American Bible Society.

The history of the AMA before 1861 includes its missions in Sierra Leone, Jamaica, Egypt, Siam, and Hawaii, and among American Indians and fugitive slaves in Canada, as well as extensive home missionary activities. Approximately 150 home missionaries were scattered throughout the North and in the border slave states, but most of them were located in the states and territories west of the Appalachians. In their monthly and annual reports the ministers frequently commented extensively on social, economic, and political conditions of the communities in which they worked.

Most of the papers from the Civil War and Reconstruction Period are statistical and written reports from the missionaries and teachers in the South. By 1865 the AMA had laborers among blacks in every Confederate state and in Kansas, Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, and the District of Columbia. Following the collapse of the Confederacy, with the cooperation of the Freedmen's Bureau during its existence, the work among blacks was expanded and made more systematic. The AMA was not only the first of the northern benevolent societies to undertake educational and relief work among the Freedmen, but it also supported more workers in the southern field during Reconstruction than any other organization.

In addition to describing the number, size, curricula, and progress of the schools for Freedmen, the reports from the missionaries discuss the political, economic, moral, and spiritual conditions of the South; the opposition of southern whites to the missionaries and Reconstruction policies; relations with the U.S. Army and the Freedmen's Bureau; denominational rivalry and conflicts among the various

philanthropic societies; and their own criticisms of the war and Reconstruction policies of the federal government. This collection is an excellent source on the history of Reconstruction and on the history of the individual states during this period.

In relating the history of the AMA's work among the Freedmen, the Archives contain the basic primary source materials that explain in detail the early histories of Fisk University, Hampton Institute, Atlanta University, Howard School (at Chattanooga), Emerson Institute, and hundreds of other schools.

The papers are divided into two main classifications: home (United States) and foreign. Home papers are filed according to the state of origin, and foreign letters are arranged by country of origin.

**AMERICAN MISSIONARY
ASSOCIATION ARCHIVES
1839-1882**

Reels 1-261

Reel Nos.	State/Country	Dates
1-7	Alabama	July 2, 1858 - May 1, 1878
7	Arkansas	October 25, 1847 - June 13, 1878
8	Arizona	November 1, 1867
8	California	August 10, 1850 - n.d.
9	Colorado	April 13, 1864 - September 29, 1879
10-23	Connecticut	February 19, 1844 - November 20, 1878
23	Delaware	December 1, 1853
24-27	District of Columbia	December 15, 1828 - January 1, 1874
28-29	Florida	May 22, 1863 - April 1, 1870
30-42	Georgia	April 1, 1863 - May 16, 1878
43-44	Hawaii	September 25, 1843 - March 1, 1856
45-59	Illinois	January 16, 1843 - January 1, 1876
60-61	Indiana	October 27, 1847 - January 1, 1864
62-65	Iowa	June 28, 1847 - July 1, 1875
66-67	Kansas	November 4, 1854 - January 3, 1859
68-71	Kentucky	June 10, 1847 - November 2, 1870
72-74	Louisiana	October 1, 1851 - January 1, 1876
75-78	Maine	September 27, 1846 - January 1, 1872
79-80	Maryland	October 28, 1847 - March 4, 1865
81-103	Massachusetts	July 20, 1845 - January 1, 1878
104-108	Michigan	January 1, 1852 - January 1, 1875
109-110	Minnesota	August 9, 1847 - January 1, 1858
111-113	Mississippi	December 13, 1860 - June 1, 1876
114-115	Missouri	August 9, 1845 - July 1, 1864
115	Montana	July 18, 1882 - September 19, 1882
115	Nebraska	March 30, 1855 - October 23, 1882
116-119	New Hampshire	May 29, 1846 - July 1, 1877
120-121	New Jersey	January 1, 1829 - January 1, 1869
121	New Mexico	February 28, 1850 - June 30, 1853
122-149	New York	December 25, 1828 - November 1, 1877
150-156	North Carolina	June 22, 1852 - January 1, 1876
157-178	Ohio	July 1845 - October 1, 1877
178	Oklahoma	July 22, 1873 - October 23, 1882
178	Oregon	February 17, 1862
179-184	Pennsylvania	August 29, 1846 - January 1, 1876
185-186	Rhode Island	June 21, 1845 - July 20, 1868
187-192	South Carolina	October 13, 1854 - May 16, 1884
192	South Dakota	October 26, 1872 - January 1883

Reel Nos.	State/Country	Dates
193-198	Tennessee	January 14, 1867 - June 1, 1876
199	Texas	September 30, 1865 - n.d.
200-205	Vermont	August 15, 1845 - January 8, 1872
206-218	Virginia	February 8, 1848 - January 2, 1872
219	Washington	July 24, 1862 - November 16, 1882
219	West Virginia	November 23, 1863 - n.d.
220-223	Wisconsin	December 7, 1843 - January 9, 1875
223	Wyoming	April 15, 1870
224	Barbados	December 18, 1857
224	Bermuda	May 6, 1858
224	Brazil	October 14, 1861 - December 1864
224	China	February 2, 1861
224	Dominican Republic	February 25, 1872 - February 19, 1873
224	Egypt	February 9, 1853 - May 13, 1882
224	France	March 23, 1867 - March 27, 1874
224	Gambia	October 2, 1849 - August 20, 1850
224	Germany	February 23, 1866 - April 30, 1878
224	Greece	April 2, 1872 - July 30, 1872
224	Guiana (British)	March 13, 1861
224	Guinea (Spanish)	October 13, 1858
224	Haiti	March 31, 1861 - November 10, 1865
224	India	1858 - May 20, 1868
225-230	Jamaica	January 1844 - July 2, 1866
231	Liberia	December 2, 1860 - May 22, 1869
231	Marquesas Islands	May 6, 1854 - May 1855
231	The Netherlands	August 22, 1867 - April 14, 1877
231	Panama	December 21, 1854
232-242	Sierra Leone	November 1, 1841 - January 4, 1870
243	Switzerland	February 16, 1867 - September 2, 1873
243-245	Thailand	February 4, 1847 - January 30, 1854
245	Turkey	July 25, 1859 - September 29, 1877
245	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	May 13, 1861 - May 13, 1867
246-248	United Kingdom	February 20, 1844 - January 2, 1875
249-250	Canada	November 2, 1846 - January 5, 1853
251	Unidentified Places	
252-261	Addendum	