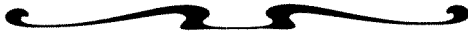


**Presbyterian Church
in the U.S.A.**



**Board of Missions for
Freedmen Annual Reports
1866-1923**

*Guide to the Scholarly Resources
Microfilm Edition*

Published in cooperation with the
Presbyterian Historical Society, Department
of History, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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INTRODUCTION

After the Civil War, many of the newly emancipated slaves were unchurched and lacked the wherewithal to begin life in freedom. Presbyterians of various denominations attempted to evangelize among these freedmen (former slaves). The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., southern Presbyterians who had withdrawn from the national assembly in 1861 and formed their own church, attempted various evangelization efforts among African Americans in their region. In 1865 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (northern stream) appointed a Committee for Freedmen to establish churches and schools for freedmen. The northern church declared the south to be missionary territory and sent teachers, evangelists, and missionaries to work in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, and fewer to Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, and Tennessee. The Reverend S. C. Logan served as the committee's first secretary. With the reunion of the Old and New Schools in 1870, this committee merged with the Freedmen's Department of the New School Board of Home Missions; the new committee was named Committee of Missions for Freedmen.

In 1883 the Freedmen's Committee was formally incorporated as the Board of Missions for Freedmen. The new board, like its predecessors, helped to educate and supply black teachers and preachers. It supported the teachers, missionaries, and evangelists who did the foundational educational work and organized most of the first independent African-American congregations, presbyteries, and synods.

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It built and supported black schools, churches, colleges, and seminaries and prescribed courses of study to be used.

In 1923 the Freedmen's Board was one of several boards and agencies that merged to become the Board of National Missions. Two units of the new board—the Unit of Schools and Hospitals and the Unit of Work for Colored People—took on the projects and responsibilities of the Freedmen's Board. However, the board continued its legal existence as a holding corporation until 1972, when the Board of National Missions was reorganized as the Program Agency.

Scope and Content

This microfilm represents a portion—the annual reports—of Record Group 376: Committee for Education of Freedmen (Old School)/Committee of Missions for Freedmen (PCUSA)/Board of Missions for Freedmen (PCUSA) Records, 1865-1972. Additional records of the board and its predecessor agencies, including correspondence, minutes, application books, and financial records, are available at the Department of History.

The annual reports kept the General Assembly informed about the growth and progress of the committee/board's work among African Americans. They supply summary information about the work of the committee/board starting in June 1865.

***Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—
Department of History
and Records Management Services***

The department is the national archives and historical research center of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Headquartered in Philadelphia, with a regional office in Montreat, North Carolina, and a records management program at the denomination's headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky, it serves the administrative, legal, and historical needs of the church's national agencies, middle governing bodies, and local congregations as well as scholars and the general public. The department houses the official records of the denomination and its predecessor denominations; personal papers of prominent Presbyterians; the records of ecumenical organizations such as the American Sunday School Union and the National Council of the Churches of Christ; and special collections and rare books supporting research in Presbyterian history. Collection emphases include church legal and administrative decisions; religion and life in Colonial America; the American Revolution; the First and Second Great Awakenings; missionary work among Asians, Africans, and Native Americans; the New Republic; the Civil War and Reconstruction; Westward expansion; Civil Rights and other race issues; social justice issues; and ecumenical movements.

The Department of History traces its lineage to the founding of the Presbyterian Historical Society in 1852. In 1925 the society was designated the Department of History of the Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian

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Church in the U.S.A. (northern stream). The Presbyterian Historical Society of the Synod of Texas was organized in 1902. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (southern stream) designated the society as its official historical society in 1926, moving its collection to Montreat, North Carolina, and renaming it the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches. As a result of the union of the northern and southern streams of the church, the Department of History and the Historical Foundation were merged in 1988. The Presbyterian Historical Society is now a voluntary support organization for the Department of History.

Additional information about the department's program, policies, and holdings are available from the department: 425 Lombard St., Philadelphia, PA 19147-1516; 215/627-1852; Fax 215/627-0509; preshist@shrsys.hslc.org; Montreat: Box 849, Montreat, NC 28757; 828/669-7061; Fax 828/669-5369; pcusadoh@montreat.edu.

*Margery N. Sly
Philadelphia, PA
September 1998*

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