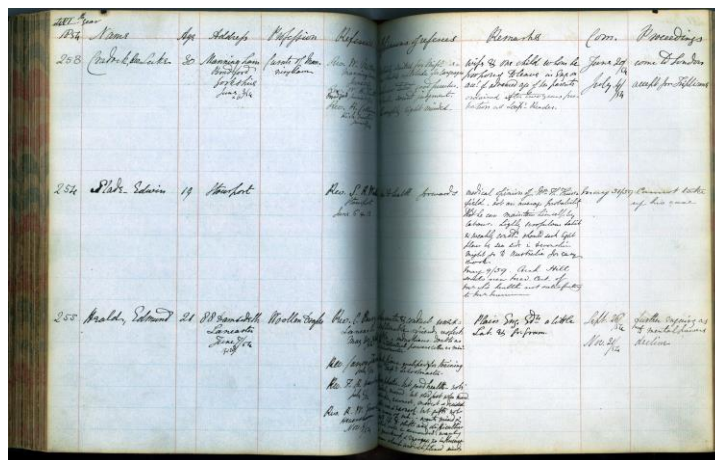


Guide to the records of the Candidates Department of the Church Mission Society
1846-1968

Records of the first 70 years of the Candidates Department 1897-1968, together with correspondence between the CMS, candidates, and intending candidates, prior to the establishment of the Department 1846-1875 and 1887, and compilations of candidate papers and registers of candidates spanning the two time periods. The Candidates Department dealt with the recruitment, selection and training of CMS missionaries. It was responsible for prospective missionaries from the time of their first enquiry about missionary service until their departure to the mission field (a period which for some spanned several years); it also dealt with missionaries who re-offered for service after retirement or at the ending of a short service contract. The Men Candidates Secretary was responsible for corresponding with overseas branches of the CMS whose acceptance of candidates from the 1890s until about the 1920s had to be approved by CMS London.



Register of Candidates
1850-1859
(CMS/C/ATm 5/1)

Early history of work with candidates

- The Society began to correspond with prospective candidates from 1800 although it was not until March 1804 that the first two missionaries, Melchior Renner and Peter Hartwig, departed for the mission field. The first women offered for service in 1815; the first female recruits, Mary Bouffler and Hannah Johnson, offered for service in 1819 and sailed in 1820.
- Missionaries were selected for a variety of roles including amongst their numbers clergy, school teachers, printers, catechists, skilled artisans, doctors, nurses and others. Reverend Christian Ludwig Korck, departing in 1827, was the first CMS medical missionary; Kate H. Corner, the first woman recruited as a medical missionary, sailed in 1895.
- A number of the Society's earliest candidates, including Renner and Hartwig, were recruited from missionary training institutions in Europe, namely the Berlin Seminary and, from 1819, the Basle Institution. Some candidates were trained by Reverend Thomas Scott, CMS [General] Secretary 1799-1803 or prepared by clergy from around the UK. The first CMS training college opened in Islington in 1825.
- From the founding of the Society, the work of seeking out and training missionary candidates was the responsibility of the General Secretary (apart from a time during Henry Venn's period in office when one of his fellow Secretaries was given the primary responsibility). In 1891 an Assistant Clerical Secretary was appointed whose sole job was to work with prospective candidates. In 1897 the Assistant was made a full Secretary of

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the Society and the Candidates Department was formed (although the General Secretary continued to consider himself chief Candidates Secretary until the major reorganisation of the Secretary's headquarters' administration in 1982).

- Initially the committee responsible for recruitment and selection of candidates was the Committee of Correspondence (which became the Foreign Committee 1916-1919, and the Home and Foreign Committee 1919-1923). The Committee of Correspondence and its successors reported to the CMS General Committee, nominating candidates for acceptance as missionaries. Over time much of the work of selection was delegated to sub-committees: the Clerical Sub-Committee, the Training Colleges Committee (formerly the Islington College Visitors 1825-1915 and Training College Visitors 1916-1929), the Women Candidates Committee (known as the 'Ladies' Candidates Committee' until December 1913) and, from 1906, the Men Candidates Committee (initially known as the 'Candidates Committee'). From its appointment in 1923, the CMS Executive took over from the General Committee responsibility for approving candidates nominated by the candidates committees.

Type of records

The records concern the Society's approach to recruitment and training, its training institutions, and individual candidates including those who did not go on to become CMS missionaries either because they decided not to proceed or were unsuccessful in their application. Predominantly comprising:

- correspondence 1846-1913 and 1942-1950
- training records relating to candidates who offered for service 1850-1968 (application papers, referee and interviewers' reports, training college reports, candidate file records, registers of candidates and terms and conditions for missionaries recruited under short service contracts and special agreements)
- committee minutes and meeting papers 1903-1951
- finance papers 1907-1948
- statistics and administrative data 1925-1947
- policies and procedures 1908-1949

with additional miscellaneous correspondence, memoranda and papers 1933-1949.

There is also a separate sequence of correspondence with affiliated organisations in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada and the West Indies 1892-c 1939 and small series of papers concerning enquiries and offers of service from refugees and others of Jewish descent immediately prior to and during the early years of World War II 1938-1942, records of the CMS Women's Health Advisory Group 1940-1944 and Home Preparation Union correspondence 1910-1913 (the Union provided home study material and support for people of 17 years and over who were not yet able or ready to make an offer of service but wished to prepare for missionary work or to find out more before committing themselves to an offer).

Why consult the records of the CMS Candidates Department?

- Biographical research/family history. For men and women who went on to work as CMS missionaries, the records complement the overseas (mission) papers, providing information on their life and personal circumstances prior to the start of their service for

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the Society. They can also provide brief information on candidates and intending candidates who corresponded with the Society but did not proceed to missionary service.

- Social history. Candidate letters and application papers provide evidence of education, employment and family circumstances.
- History of the relationship between the Church of England overseas and national churches.
- History of Anglican missions overseas.

Issues to be aware of when using the Candidates Department records

- There are extensive gaps in the records. Some have been lost through fire and bomb damage and some are not yet available for research.
- The candidate registers are not comprehensive – they do not record every candidate who applied during the date ranges that they cover.
- Papers relating to recruitment, selection and training are split between the Candidates Department sequences and records of other CMS departments.
- If it is not possible to locate an individual in the papers, it cannot be assumed that they did not apply to the CMS and the records need to be used in conjunction with those of other CMS administrative departments.

What if I can't find what I want in the records of the Candidates Department?

Material relating to missionary candidates can also be found in the records of other CMS departments most notably the General Secretary's Department ([CMS/G](#)), the Medical Department ([CMS/M](#)) and the Home Division (CMS/H). Including:

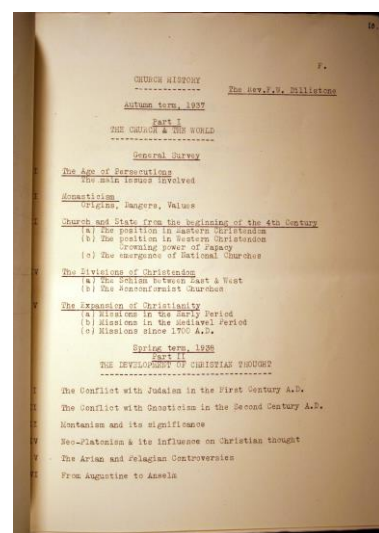
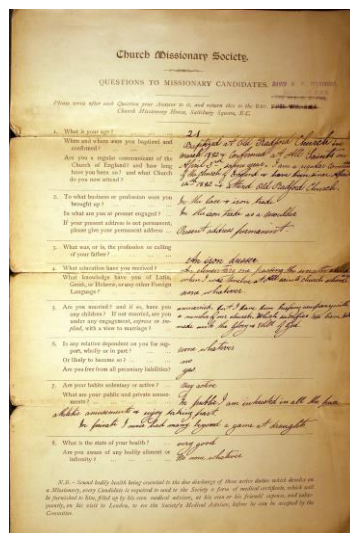
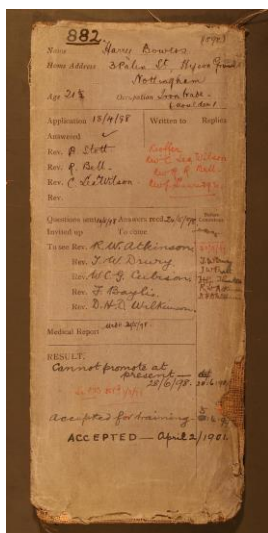
- correspondence with, and about, candidates predominantly 1799-1897 ([CMS/G/AC](#))
- correspondence, memoranda and papers relating to men and women's training institutions (Islington College, Liskeard Lodge, Kennaway Hall, Foxbury) 1826-1949 ([CMS/G/AT](#))
- minutes and papers of committees routinely involved in the recruitment, selection and training of candidates, including the Committee of Correspondence and its successors 1799-1923; the Clerical Sub-Committee 1838-1909, and Islington College Visitors' Committee and its successors 1825-1915 ([CMS/G/C](#) and [CMS/G/AT](#))
- records of committees appointed to review the work of the Society which addressed candidate and training issues as part of their remit, including Section 9 of Centenary Committee B ([CMS/G/CCb 8](#)) and the 1906-1907 Review Committee ([CMS/G/CR 1/2](#))
- minutes and papers of sub-committees on recruiting, selection and/or training of candidates 1895-1937 ([CMS/G/C 23](#); [CMS/G/C 26](#) and [CMS/G/CS 3-5](#))

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- brief notes of candidates' medical examinations compiled by the Society's Physician 1890s-1903 ([CMS/M/M 1](#))
- minutes and papers of the Medical Board that assessed candidates' fitness for service 1863-1921 ([CMS/M/C 3](#))
- minutes of the Medical Training Home Committee (the governing body for the Bermondsey Home and the Guilford Street Hostel) 1900-1907 ([CMS/M/C 4](#))
- small sequences of papers relating to the recruitment of missionary candidates including general publicity material, study material for the Home Preparation Union and appeal pamphlets (CMS/H/H 11 and CMS/H/H 5/E2)

Also:

- for candidates who were successful, the printed 'Register of Missionaries (Clerical, Lay and Female) and Native Clergy 1804-1904' gives brief biographical details including country of origin, educational establishments, qualifications, nature of employment at time of applying, age at which they left for their first mission overseas etc; manuscript additions to the Register and supplementary manuscript registers 1905-1918 are also available.
- the Overseas (Mission) Series in the records of the CMS Foreign Division (CMS/B/OMS) includes correspondence relating to offers of service from missionaries recruited in local connexion (through the local overseas corresponding committee rather than the national organisation).



Examples from the Candidate Papers: a typical filing docket and the top sheet of a completed 'Questions to missionary candidates' form (CMS/C/ATm 2)

'Foxbury' [training institution] papers showing part of the syllabus for autumn 1937 and winter 1938 (CMS/C/AT 1)

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