

# A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HOLDINGS OF THE MANUSCRIPT DIVISION, PAYAP COLLEGE

by

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Among those areas of Thai history still awaiting full scholarly attention is the area of Protestant missionary and church history. Although this field of study is rich in resources of great potential value both to the general historian and to the student of religious history, very little serious work has been done to date. One may suppose several reasons for this state of neglect, but one of the prime reasons has been that until recently church history records, although numerous, have not been easily accessible to Thai researchers. The great bulk of these records have either been kept in overseas repositories or stored away unknown and unused.

In May 1978, Payap College, Chiang Mai, working in co-operation with the Church of Christ in Thailand, opened the Manuscript Division. The purpose of the Division is to become a center for historical study through the use of missionary and church records. The Division sought to increase the availability of such records thus making them more useful both to Thailand historical and religious studies. The Manuscript Division experienced a great deal of success in its first two years so that by May 1980, the Division held some 180 linear feet (roughly 215,000 pages) of original church history records. In addition it had acquired nearly 1,000 reference books and pamphlets and over 10,000 photographs (negatives or prints).

It is the purpose of these notes to describe briefly the more important holdings of the Manuscript Division, Payap College, and to suggest some of the research possibilities in those records. The Manuscript Division is still very much in the developmental stages of its work, and it will not be able to provide full reader service before mid-1981. However, interested researchers are encouraged to contact the Division to discuss special arrangements.

## **Microfilm records**

One of the obstacles to the study of missionary and church history in Thailand is that most of the truly significant collections of records are to be found only in American repositories. Generally these records are only a portion of larger missionary organization records groups, and the repositories have not been able to inform researchers in the particular field of Thai history of the existence of the records. In any event, such records remain fundamentally inaccessible to researchers in Thailand. Therefore, the Manuscript Division has established a

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program of acquiring microfilm copies of relevant records where such are available. By June 1980, the Division held the following microfilm records.

*American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1831-1849)*. These records include eight reels the originals of which are located at the Houghton Library, Harvard University. The ABCFM was the first established missionary organization in Siam, and included in these records are correspondence and reports from Bradley, Caswell and the other members of the mission. These records represent the home office files of the ABCFM. There are some financial records and printed matter. These records are an invaluable source of data not only for missionary history but also for Thai political, economic, social and religious history.

*American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society (1833-1900)*. These records include four reels of microfilm containing primarily correspondence and reports by Dean, Smith, Jones and the other Baptist missionaries. These records are spread out over a greater time span than are those of the ABCFM, and they contain important records of the work of the Baptists especially among the Chinese in Bangkok. Since Baptist work began almost at the same time as that of the ABCFM, these records form an important complement to the latter. The originals are housed at the American Baptist Historical Society library in Rochester, New York, USA.

*The Bradley Papers (1800-1873)*. This collection of four reels includes two reels of the personal papers of Dan Beach Bradley, including correspondence (calendar of correspondence is available) and two smaller reels that contain portions of Bradley's journal and Emelie Royce Bradley's diary. The original manuscripts are at the College Archives, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, USA. As these papers span the entire life of Bradley and his work in Thailand they provide a wealth of material about Bradley and his family, about mission work and about political and social conditions in Thailand.

The above three records groups comprise the records of virtually the first generation of missionaries in Thailand and include materials for some of the most influential and most famous of the missionaries. In addition to these three sets of microfilms, the Manuscript Division has ordered four reels of microfilm containing records of the Siam Mission of the American Missionary Association (1850-1893). The bulk of these records consists of letter reports sent by Bradley and his co-workers in that mission. The originals are housed at the Amistad Research Center of Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA.

*The Board of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (1840-1910)*. This records group consists of 12 reels covering the work of the largest and most sustained missionary organization to have worked in Thailand prior to World War II. A wide range of types of records are included: correspondence, official minutes, various types of reports, financial reports and printed matter. Unlike the above mentioned records groups, the work of the Presbyterians was not confined to Bangkok, hence these reels contain records from various parts of Thailand. Nearly all of the missionaries serving in these years are represented, including House, McGilvary, McFarland, Matton, McDonald, J. Eakin and Wilson. Significant subjects include the development of schools and hospitals in several parts

of Thailand, the opening of the mission in Chiang Mai, the basic beliefs and hopes of the missionaries, the slow growth of Thai Protestantism as well as a great deal of material on social and religious topics. All correspondence on these reels is indexed, making it one of the most convenient to use records groups on microfilm that is found at the Manuscript Division.

### **Original records**

For records of nineteenth century mission and church work, the Manuscript Division must rely primarily, but not entirely, upon microfilmed records. The vast majority of records on deposit at the Division come from the twentieth century of which a significant amount are post-World War II. For a variety of reasons pre-War records are scarce in Thailand. These reasons include: loss of records during World War II; periodic shipment of missionary records back to the United States; improper care and storage of existing records; and the relatively small number of Protestants and their organizations prior to the War.

The archival holdings of the Manuscript Division fall into two categories: Archives of the Church of Christ in Thailand, and Payap College Archives. Each of these archival groups is under restriction. CCT Archives records are under restricted access for a period of 35 years from the date of their origin. A document written in 1950 may not be used until 1985. This restriction does not apply to printed matter, nor to records that were reproduced for general distribution. The Payap archival material has a similar restriction for 25 years after the document originated.

#### *(a) Archives of the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT)*

The CCT Archives contains a wide variety of records originating from several different types of institutions. Records held in the CCT Archives fall into two general groupings: records of missionary organizations affiliated with the CCT; and records of institutions, organizations, committees, projects and administrative units of the CCT itself.

*The Records of the American Presbyterian Mission (1845-1979).* This records group totals some 50 linear feet (101 document boxes). It is divided into three series: (i) rare documents file and pre-World War I records of the Siam and the Laos Missions (2 boxes); (ii) pre-World War II records (15 boxes); and post-War records (84 boxes). Virtually every type of record is represented in this group including correspondence, minutes, reports, circulars, letters, financial records, building and property records, printed matter, and the like.

The mission's rare document file includes two holograph letters of H.M. Rama IV, early records from Bradley, the original minutes for the First Presbyterian Church of Chiang Mai (1868-1886), copies of U.S. diplomatic correspondence (1911), and other items. The inter-war records consist entirely of the files of the various Executive Secretaries of the Siam Mission, most notably Paul Eakin. The post-War records are drawn primarily from the mission executive of the post-War era, Dr. Horace Ryburn.

In a sense, these records form a continuation of the Presbyterian microfilm reels mentioned above. However, the point of origin differs in that those records are from the files of the

Board offices in New York City, while this records group consists of the on-the-field records of the missionaries themselves. These American Presbyterian Mission records display virtually every facet of Presbyterian work after 1930, and are a rich source of correspondence and reports. They include a great deal of material on the birth and the growth of the Church of Christ in Thailand, on the development of Protestant schools and hospitals, and on the work of the individual missionaries. Field and home office relationships are well documented as are the roles of key figures in the mission. The post-World War restoration of missionary activities is prominently displayed, as are the differing strategies of the mission after the War. Included in the records group are 442 photographs dating well back into the nineteenth century. Many of the photographs are portraits of the various missionaries.

*The Records of the United Christian Missionary Society (1934-1979)*. This records group totals 4 linear feet (10 boxes) of records consisting of three basic series: (i) correspondence related to the visits of people from overseas (1 box); (ii) UCMS work at the Sangkhlaburi Mission Station; and (iii) UCMS work in Nakhon Pathom. These last two series are roughly the same size. Although this is a small records group, it contains a sizeable amount of correspondence and reports, and provides important documentation regarding two aspects of missionary work in Thailand.

*The Records of the Thailand Baptist Missionary Fellowship (ca. 1953-ca. 1975)*. As of June 1980, these records had not yet been fully processed for scholarly use. They form a special case in the CCT Archives in that they are under only a 15-year instead of 35-year restriction. They comprise 10 linear feet (30 boxes and 1 other volume). These records have a significant proportion of correspondence and reports, and came to the Division in unusually complete and well-kept form. Among significant contents are records of Baptist work among the hill tribes particularly in northern Thailand and at Sangkhlaburi. This records group also contains good files for inter-mission co-operative activities such as the Union Language School in Bangkok.

These records originated in the office of the field secretary and the field treasurer of the Fellowship. They are primarily the records of the American Baptist Mission prior to its expansion to include Swedish, Australian and other Baptist national groupings which expansion took place in the early 1970s.

The second major division of the CCT Archives includes those records originating from official CCT institutions and activities. Since the Church of Christ in Thailand was founded only in 1934, these CCT records contain very few items from before World War II. The great bulk of the records date from 1960 to the mid-1970s. In nearly all cases, it is expected that records groups currently held by the Manuscript Division will receive regular additions thus increasing their completeness and usefulness to historical researchers. In June 1980, the CCT began working on a comprehensive archival policy towards that end.

*Records of the Church of Christ in Thailand (1934-1979)*. This records group totals 23 linear feet (54 boxes) being divided into four series: (i) Office of the General Secretary (33 boxes); (ii) Division of Social Welfare (6 boxes); Office of the Treasurer (3 boxes); and Office of Property (12 boxes). Although the majority of these records are in Thai, both the General

Secretary's and Property Office's files contain large amounts of English language material. In the case of the General Secretary, these materials are primarily correspondence and other records relating to the ecumenical relations of the CCT. In all, printed matter and reproduced minutes and reports form a significant proportion of the total records. Most of the materials date from 1959 to 1976.

Significant themes include the work of Christian schools and hospitals, the structural development of the CCT, CCT attempts at social witness, and the continuing influence of missionaries in the work of the denomination. These records are less apt to reflect social and political conditions in Thailand than are the earlier missionary records. Also included are a large number of negatives (over 3,000) showing various aspects of church activities.

By June 1980, the Manuscript Division had fully processed and prepared for research use six other CCT Archives records groups. they are as follows:

*Records of the First District (1933-1979)*. The First District is headquartered in Chiang Mai. These records include 7.5 linear feet (16 boxes) of materials.

*Record of the Fourth District (1933, 1947-1979)*. The Fourth District centers on Phrae, and these records include 1 linear foot (3 boxes) of materials,

*Records of the Women's Division (1949-1980)*. These records include 1.5 linear feet (4 boxes) of materials.

*Records of the Lamp of Thailand (1971-1978)*. These records include one linear foot (3 boxes) of materials.

*Records of the Christian Association for Students in the North (1961-1978)*. These records include 1 linear foot (3 boxes) of materials.

*Records of the Church Development and Renewal Project-Chiang Mai Office (1975-1978)*. These records include 7.5 linear feet (16 boxes) of materials.

In all six of these records groups, printed matter and records reproduced for distribution tend to predominate. However, each group contains some important correspondence, most notably the First District. Each records group is very useful towards grasping some aspect of the over-all work of the CCT. In addition to these fully processed and prepared records groups, the Manuscript Division holds a number of non-processed records groups including: CCT Music Committee; Division of Education; District Three; District Thirteen; Wattana Church (Bangkok); Petburi Church; CCT Youth Department; and the Udorn Center. The records of the Petburi Church deserve special note as they form one of the oldest and most complete continuous local church history files in Thailand. The records of that congregation includes the original minutes of the church dating back to its founding in 1863.

#### b) *The Payap College Archives*

The Manuscript Division is the Official archives for Payap College. Since Payap College was founded only in 1974, the primary task of the Division in relation to College records is to prepare for the timely transfer of records as they become non-current. Nevertheless, the

Manuscript Division has already accessioned two very important records groups belonging to the College archives.

*The Ashmum Photograph Collection (1974-1980)*. The photographs in this collection were taken by the official College photographer and by other College officials. They number some 5,000 to 6,000 photos and negatives covering nearly the entire span of College activities since before classes opened in 1974. This collection provides excellent photographic evidence and information for Payap College, giving an outstanding visual record of the earliest years of Payap.

*Records of the Thailand Theological Seminary (ca. 1955-ca. 1975)*. In 1979 the Thailand Theological Seminary was merged into Payap College and became the McGilvary Faculty of Theology. Most of the files from the Office of the President of the seminary were transferred to the Manuscript Division. The unprocessed records group included some 10 linear feet (22 boxes) of records including significant amounts of correspondence, reports and minutes. This records group provides excellent insights into the issues and strategies of Protestant theological education. As many present and future leaders in the Church of Christ in Thailand are graduates of the seminary, these records form one set of evidence regarding the training and the ideas of church leaders.

In addition to the CCT Archives and the Payap Archives, the Manuscript Division is the repository for a number of collections of personal papers and collections of photographs. While most of these collections are fragmentary at best, they do provide further insights into the work of the church in Thailand. Most notable of the photograph collections are the McFarland Family Photographs (78 photos), the Thailand Theological Seminary Church History Project Photographs (80 photos), and a collection given by Dr. K. E. Wells (96 photos). In all three cases, there are fine old photographs dating back into the nineteenth century and giving interesting visual insights into missionary and church work in Thailand.

### **Oral history interviews**

Even though the Manuscript Division has attempted to augment its manuscript holdings with microfilmed records from overseas, researchers in Thai church and missions history still face the obstacle of lacking adequate records for various periods and places. Another reason for this lack of records is that in earlier times the importance of keeping files and records was generally little understood. As a result, records sometimes do not exist precisely because they were never kept in the first place. Especially in the period prior to World War II the missionaries tended to be dominant in the keeping of records. The voices of Thai leadership and the average church members tended to be muted and fragmented. Thai records of the Thai Christian experience and history were relatively few and far between.

With the assistance of seed funding and staff assistance from the Dhamma Logos Project, the Manuscript Division began a church oral history project in 1979, the purpose of which was to try to use human memory to fill in some of the gaps in the written records. Although oral history interviews have a limited factual value and need to be used carefully, the Division has

found that these interviews provide an insightful, occasionally colorful picture not only of church history but also of Thai social history.

As of June 1980, the Division had conducted exactly 100 oral history interviews, 86 of which were in Thai and 14 of which were in English. The majority of those interviewed were individuals who had taken a leading role in church activities although in a few cases the individuals were elderly individuals who had been witness to important events. The English language interviews were with missionaries most of whom have retired from the Thailand field. The Manuscript Division is transcribing as many of the interviews as possible, but for the moment nearly all of them are available only on tape. Finding aids are available for each set of interviews. The length of interviews varies considerably but an 'average' interview would amount to between two and four hours of taping time.

### Reference materials

Other than records groups, photographic collections and oral history recordings, the Manuscript Division also holds approximately 1,000 reference items divided into three categories: (i) reference books; (ii) reference pamphlets and booklets (defined as any published item too small or too flimsy to be placed unprotected on the shelves; and, (iii) individual manuscripts including some xerox copies of original manuscripts. While some of the books and pamphlets held by the Division will be found in other libraries, many of the Division's reference volumes are in that sense unique. The Division attempts to collect as wide a range of Christian literature as possible whatever its source or literary merit. Thus, the Division's reference collection includes many small items and scripture portions that have otherwise been largely ignored. The aim of the Division is to build up as representative a collection of Thailand Christian reference materials as possible both for the purposes of historical research and for future theological and cultural studies.

The Division holds a number of rare books on Thailand church history including Gutzlaff's *Voyages* (1833), Cort's *Siam, Heart of Farther India* (1886), MacDonald's *Siam* (1871), and Bakus (ed.), *Siam and Laos* (1884). The Division also has copies of more recent but often difficult to locate books such as McGilvary, *A Half-Century Among the Siamese and the Laos* (1912), Freeman, *An Oriental Land of the Free* (1910), and Dodd, *The Tai Race* (1923).

Of particular significance are the several copies and editions of Northern Thai Bibles, Scripture portions, hymnals, and books acquired by the Division primarily from the church history project formerly conducted by the Thailand Theological Seminary. All of these items were printed at the old Mission Press in Chiang Mai and go back to the nineteenth century. Northern Thai language holdings of the Division also include various issues of *Sirikitisap*, held to be the first news publication in the north, which was published by the Presbyterian mission. These various issues date from 1913 to 1920.

Also of note is the Division's complete set of the *Laos News* published as the quarterly news magazine of the Laos Mission, the northern mission of the Presbyterians, and issued from 1904 to 1919. This is an invaluable source for missionary and church work, and for historical developments in northern Thailand.

The Manuscript Division has also embarked on a program of attempting to acquire representative amounts of hill-tribal Christian literature including Bibles, Scripture portions, hymnals and educational materials. Prior to June 1980, the Division had acquired some 90 volumes of Karen and Lahu language Christian literature.

### **Future acquisitions**

The acquisition program of the Manuscript Division has three main goals: (a) intensively to acquire records appropriate to the CCT Archives and the Payap College Archives; (b) to acquire significant and representative records from other Thai Protestant and mission groups; and (c) to bring back to Thailand in original or, if necessary, photocopied form as many church and missionary historical records as possible.

At mid-year 1980, the Division was in contact with over 20 institutions or individuals regarding possible future acquisitions for its holdings. While future donations are always problematic and subject to uncertainties, it seemed highly likely that at least half or more of those contacts would result in additions to the Division's resources. These contacts include institutions and units of the Church of Christ in Thailand at every level, from local churches to the national offices. They also include the personal papers of four missionary families all dating from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century. These papers are in each case now in the United States and basically unavailable for convenient scholarly use.

The wide range of possibilities for future acquisitions of high-quality archival records suggests that in years to come the Manuscript Division of Payap College will play an increasingly important role as a source of valuable historical records. Having begun as a strictly part-time, severely limited, experimental program of Payap College, the Division has already developed into a nearly fully staffed, responsible archival institution. It remains the only non-governmental archives in Thailand, and has the distinction of being the first archival institution outside of Bangkok. It is also the only church archives in the southeast Asian region. The ultimate goal of the Manuscript Division is to provide fully professional services acceptable to international standards for its readers and researchers.

Those seeking further information should contact Mr. Herbert R. Swanson, Head of the Manuscript Division, Payap College, P.O. Box 161, Chiang Mai.