

**The Burke Library Archives (Columbia University Libraries)  
Union Theological Seminary, New York**

**Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 1**

**Finding Aid for**

**German Missionaries in Cameroon Reports, 1914-1915**

Finding Aid prepared by: Brigette C. Kamsler, January 2012  
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

**Summary Information**

**Creator:** Missionary Research Library  
**Title:** German Missionaries in Cameroon Reports, 1914-1915  
**Inclusive dates:** 1914 – 1915  
**Abstract:** Copies of thirteen (13) typewritten reports from Swiss and German Basel Missionaries. Captured by British and French troops while stationed in Cameroon in September and October 1914; held captive until 1915 during World War I. Reports were given and recorded in 1915 in Basel, Switzerland and Berlin and Connstadt, Germany. The thirteen missionaries are Friedrich Bärtschi; J. Bühler; Chr. Gehr.; J. Gutbrod; Philipp Hecklinger; Johannes Ittmann; Johannes Köngeter; Johannes Leiberspeiger; G. Lorch.; Johannes Georg Meier; Robert Schwarz; H. Stahl; and Karl Wittwer. Records are in German.  
**Size:** 1 box, 0.25 linear feet  
**Storage:** Onsite storage  
**Repository:** The Burke Library  
Union Theological Seminary  
3041 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027  
Phone: 212-851-5612  
Fax: 212-851-5613  
Email: [archives@uts.columbia.edu](mailto:archives@uts.columbia.edu)

### Administrative Information

- Provenance: Originally part of the independent Missionary Research Library, these records were moved with the MRL to the Brown Memorial Tower of Union Theological Seminary in 1929. In 1976 the records were accessioned to the Burke Library archives with the closure of the MRL.
- Access: Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by phone, fax or email [archives@uts.columbia.edu](mailto:archives@uts.columbia.edu), as far in advance as possible.
- Access Restrictions: The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation: Item description, MRL 1: German Missionaries in Cameroon Reports, 1914-1915, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library Archives (Columbia University Libraries) at Union Theological Seminary, New York.

### History

The Basel Mission, a protestant missionary society named for the Swiss city, was founded in 1815. All the directors; most of the lecturers in the Mission college; as more than half of the overseas staff were recruited from Wurttemberg, Germany. Missionaries were first sent to Africa in the 1820s; however due to illness, their presence was not truly felt until the 1840s. The Cameroon mission was started in 1886, undertaking the duties begun by the London Baptist Missionary Society after Cameroon became a German protectorate in July 1884.

After the outbreak of World War One, British troops were sent to German colonies throughout the world. In September and October 1914, German missionaries including those of the Basel Mission were interned by the allies and held as prisoners of war until 1915. After this point, the missionaries were sent back to Switzerland and Germany.

The Paris Mission took over work in the Basel Mission's absence. Missionaries from the Basel Mission returned in 1925 and limited their work to the British part of Cameroon.

### Sources:

- Dah, Jonas N. *Missionary Motivations and Methods: A Critical Examination of the Basel Mission in Cameroon 1886-1914*. Basel: Basel Mission, 1983.
- Ndamukong, Patrica N. "From Basel Mission to Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, an Expanding Landscape in the Grassfields," in *50 Years of Selfhood*, edited by Jonas N. Dah, 15-33. Buea, Cameroon: Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, 2007.

### Collection Scope and Content Note

This collection contains the thirteen typewritten copies of reports from missionaries who were held captive during World War One by British and French troops. Arranged in alphabetical order by last name of missionary, the detailed description of events also includes names of other missionaries and dates of each event.

**Processing**

Metal clips were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes.

**Related Collections**

See MRL1: Basel Mission (Gold Coast) Papers, 1894 – 1904 and MRL1: Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast Papers, 1908 – 1942 for related information and collections.

**Contents list**

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	Friedrich Bärtschi - 5pg
1	2	J. Bühler - 12pg
1	3	Chr. Gehr. - 3pg
1	4	J. Gutbrod - 6pg
1	5	Philipp Hecklinger - 4pg
1	6	Johannes Ittmann - 8pg
1	7	Johannes Köngeter - 7pg
1	8	Johannes Leiberspeiger - 5pg
1	9	G. Lorch. - 5pg
1	10	Johannes Georg Meier - 5pg
1	11	Robert Schwarz - 5pg
1	12	H. Stahl - 8pg
1	13	Karl Wittwer - 9pg