

**Titus Coan Family Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2009**

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

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Prepared by Anita Nolen

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## Collection Summary

**Title:** Titus Coan Family Papers

**Span Dates:** 1806-1923

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1832-1882)

**ID No.:** MSS76760

**Creator:** Coan, Titus, 1801-1882

**Extent:** 5,000 items

**Extent:** 31 containers

**Extent:** 10.3 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English, with Hawaiian

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm74076760>

**Summary:** Family and general correspondence, diaries, journals, books and writings by Coan on Hawaii, and Coan family material relating mainly to Coan's missionary work in Hawaii, Patagonia, and the Marquesas Islands.

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

### People

Coan family.

Coan, Fidelia Church, 1810-1872.

Coan, Harriet Fidelia, 1839-1906.

Coan, Lydia Bingham.

Coan, Samuel Latimer, 1846-1887.

Coan, Titus, 1801-1882.

Du Pont, Sophie Madeleine, 1810-1888--Correspondence.

Lyman, Chester Smith, 1814-1890--Correspondence.

Oliphant, Mary--Correspondence.

Oliphant, Sarah--Correspondence.

Robinson, Maria Church.

### Subjects

Missions--French Polynesia--Marquesas Islands.

Missions--Hawaii--Hilo.

Missions--Patagonia (Argentina and Chile)

Presbyterian Church--Missions.

Religion.

Volcanoes--Hawaii.

### Places

Kilauea Volcano (Hawaii)

### Occupations

Clergy.

Missionaries.

## Provenance

The family papers of Titus Coan, Presbyterian minister and missionary, were given to the Library of Congress by the Sarah Coan Acheson in 1969.

## Processing History

The collection was processed in 1975. The finding aid was revised in 2009.

## Other Repositories

The New-York Historical Society, New York, N.Y., has a collection of Titus Coan papers and also of his son, Titus Munson Coan (1836-1921). Duplicate and extraneous printed matter deemed inappropriate for retention in the Library's Titus Coan Papers was transferred to the Lyman Museum, Hilo, Hawaii.

## Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Titus Coan Family papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

## Access and Restrictions

The Coan Family Papers are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Titus Coan Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

Date	Event
1801, Feb. 1	Born, Killingworth, Conn.
1819-1826	Taught school in Connecticut
1826-1830	Taught school, Riga, N.Y.
1828	Received into Presbyterian Church, Riga, N.Y.
1831-1933	Attended Auburn Theological Seminary, Auburn, N.Y.
1833	Licensed as a minister by Cayuga County, N.Y. Presbytery Ordained a missionary by American Board of Foreign Missions
1833-1834	Went on missionary expedition to Patagonia
1834	Married Fidelia Church (1810-1872)
1834	Sailed for Hawaii
1834-1882	Missionary, Hilo, Hawaii
1836	Birth of son, Titus Munson Coan (died 1921)
1839	Birth of daughter, Harriet Fidelia Coan (died 1906)
1843	Birth of daughter, Sarah Eliza Coan (died 1916)
1846	Birth of son, Samuel Latimer Coan (died 1887)
1860 and 1867	Made voyages to Marquesas Islands for Hawaiian Missionary Society
1870-1871	Visited the United States
1873	Married Lydia Bingham (died 1915)
1880	Published <i>Adventures in Patagonia</i> . New York; Dodd, Mead
1882	Published <i>Life in Hawaii</i> . New York: A. D. F. Randolph
1882, Dec. 1	Died, Hilo, Hawaii

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of the Titus Coan family span the period 1806-1923, with the bulk from 1832 to 1882. Consisting mainly of correspondence between members of the families of Titus Coan and his wife, Fidelia Church Coan, these letters document the Coans' lives in Hilo, Hawaii, from 1834 to 1882 and reflect the missionary spirit of that period. The collection organized in five series: [Diaries and Journals](#), [Family Correspondence](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Printed Matter](#).

Titus Coan's journals tell of his travels to distant lands in missionary endeavors. In 1833-1834 he recorded a trip to Patagonia to explore the possibility of mission fields in that region. Much of this journal was published in his book *Adventures in Patagonia*. Journals of two trips to the Marquesas Islands made in 1860 and 1867 describe the land and its inhabitants as well as the progress of missions there, while other journals tell of his journey and early years of residence in Hawaii, where he served for over forty-five years. These experiences were further amplified in his autobiography, *Life in Hawaii*.

The Coans' correspondence is primarily with family members, including their daughter, Harriet Fidelia Coan, a teacher at Punahou, Hawaii, and their son, Samuel Latimer Coan, who was living in San Francisco in the late 1860s and the 1870s, and describes the day-to-day events of their lives. Other correspondence relating to missionary work is that with Fidelia Coan's sister, Maria Church Robinson, who served with her husband as missionary to Siam from 1834 to 1847, at the same time that the Coans were beginning their service in Hawaii.

The [General Correspondence](#) series also reflects the religious feeling and missionary endeavors of the period. The Coans corresponded with other missionaries in the Hawaiian Islands and with friends at home, many of whom were active in societies that supported such work. Correspondents include Sophie Madeleine Du Pont (wife of Admiral Samuel Francis Du Pont), Chester Smith Lyman, Mary Oliphant, and Sara Oliphant.

An extensive collection of printed matter is preserved with the collection. Much of this constitutes, in effect, an article file for Titus Coan consisting of journals to which he contributed. He was particularly interested in volcanoes and wrote many observations on the eruptions of Kilauea, the volcano on the slope of Mauna Loa on the island of Hawaii. These he contributed to the *American Journal of Science and Arts*. He also contributed extensively to missionary journals such as *Missionary Herald* and *The Friend*.

Copies of Titus Coan's two books are included in the [Miscellany](#) series along with numerous clippings and articles about him, a copy of *Titus Coan; a Memorial* (Chicago, Revell [1884] 248 pp.) by his second wife, Lydia Bingham Coan, and some material written in Hawaiian.

## Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in five series:

- [Diaries and Journals, 1818-1881](#)
- [Family Correspondence, 1818-1916](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1828-1915](#)
- [Miscellany, 1832-1957](#)
- [Printed Matter, 1806-1923](#)

## Description of Series

Container	Series
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BOX 2-13	<p><b><u>Family Correspondence, 1818-1916</u></b></p> <p>Letters received and sent between family members. Arranged alphabetically by writer of letter. Typed copies of correspondence between Titus and his wife, Fidelia Church Coan, 1832-1872, are arranged chronologically at the end of the series.</p>
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BOX 17-18	<p><b><u>Miscellany, 1832-1957</u></b></p> <p>Clippings about Titus Coan, wills, drafts of writings by members of the Coan family, and pamphlets and copies of books by Titus Coan. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.</p>
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BOX 19-26	<p><b><u>Serial Publications, 1822-1923</u></b></p> <p>Journals, magazines, and serials publications containing writings of Titus Coan or references to him. Arranged by title and therein chronologically.</p>
BOX 27-31	<p><b><u>Books, 1806-1911</u></b></p> <p>Books relating to missionary work Hawaii and Polynesia, and containing references to Titus Coan and his work in Hawaii. Unarranged.</p>

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	To Connie Ferson (niece), 1864; 1870-1882
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- BOX 24** 1860, May-1885, Feb.
- BOX 25** Hawaiian Mission Children's Society  
*Annual Reports*  
1853-1903
- BOX 26** 1904-1911  
*The Friend*, 1852-1855, 1923  
*Hawaiian Forester and Agriculturist*, 1905
- BOX 27-31** **Books, 1806-1911**  
Books relating to missionary work Hawaii and Polynesia, and containing references to Titus Coan and his work in Hawaii.  
Unarranged.
- BOX 27** Brigham, William T., *The Volcanoes of Kilauea and Mauna Loa on the Island of Hawaii* (Honolulu, Bishop Museum Press, 1909. 222 pp.)  
Pickering, William H., *Lunar and Hawaiian Physical Features Compared* (1906. 179 pp.)  
Brigham, William T., *Notes on the Volcanoes of the Hawaiian Islands* (Cambridge, Riverside Press, 1868)  
Griffin, A. P. C., *List of Books Relating to Hawaii* (Washington, Govt. Print Off., 1898. 26 pp.)  
U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, *The International Metric System of Weights and Measures* (Washington, Govt. Print. Off., 1906. 15 pp.)

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- A Geography of the Hawaiian Islands* (New York, A.S. Barnes, 1889. 26 pp.)  
*The New England Medical Gazette* (v.8, no. 2, Feb. 1873)  
 Churchill, William, *Beach-La-Mar* (Washington, Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1911. 54 pp.)  
 Hitchcock, Charles H., *Hawaii and Its Volcanoes* (Honolulu, Hawaiian Gazette, 1909. 314 pp.)
- BOX 28**  
 Anderson, Rufus, *Foreign Missions* (New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1869. 373 pp.)  
 Wise, Lt., *Los Gringos* (New York, Baker and Scribner, 1849. 453 pp.)  
 Featherman, A., *Social History of the Races of Mankind: Oceano-Melanesians* (London, Triibner, 1888. 420 pp.)  
 Cumming, C. F. Gordon, *Fire Fountains* (London, W. Blackwood, 1883. 2 v.)  
 Bishop, Isabella Bird, *Six Months Among the Palm Groves, Coral Reefs, and Volcanoes of the Sandwich Islands* (New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1894)
- BOX 29**  
 Melville, Herman, *Omoo* (New York, United States Book, 1892. 365 pp.)  
 Bliss, William R., *Paradise in the Pacific* (New York, Sheldon, 1873. 207 pp.)  
 Hawaiian Mission Children's Society, *Jubilee Celebration of the Arrival of the Missionary Reinforcement of 1837* (Honolulu, Daily Bulletin Steam Print, 1887. 204 pp.)  
 Mariner, William, *An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands in the South Pacific Ocean* (Edinburgh, Constable, 1827. 2 v.)  
*Life in Feejee, or Five Years Among the Cannibals*, by a lady (Boston, W. Heath, 1851. 423 pp.)  
 Kotzebue, Otto von, *A New Voyage Round the World* (London, H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1830. 2 v.)  
 Grant, M. Forsyth, *Scenes in Hawaii, or Life in the Sandwich Islands* (Toronto, Hart, 1888. 203 pp.)
- BOX 30**  
 Stevenson, Robert Louis, *In the South Seas* (New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1908. 370 pp.)  
*A Memoir of Daniel Wheeler* (Philadelphia, Book Association of Friends, 1885. 250 pp.)  
 Tyerman, Daniel, a George Bennet, *Journal of Voyages and Travels*, compiled by James Montgomery (New York, J. Leavitt, 1832. 3 v.)  
 Anderson, Rufus, *History of the Sandwich Islands Mission* (Boston, Congregational Pub. Society, 1870. 408 pp.)  
 Anderson, Rufus, *The Hawaiian Islands: Their Progress and Condition Under Missionary Labors* (Boston, Gould and Lincoln, 1865. 450 pp.)  
 Ellis, William, *Narrative of a Tour Through Hawaii* (London, H. Fisher, Son, and P. Jackson, 1826. 442 pp.)
- BOX 31**  
*Memoirs of Marmontel* (London, Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1806. 4 v.)  
*The Sugar Producing Capacity of the Hawaiian Islands* (Judd and Detweiler, Printers, 14 pp.)  
 Ellis, William, *Polynesian Researches* (Fisher, Son, and P. Jackson, 1831. 4 v.)