

# Guide to the John Sawyer Brooks Papers

GEN MSS 1435



Karen Spicher

2017 February

P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** GEN MSS 1435

**CREATOR:** Brooks, John Sawyer, 1823-1864

**TITLE:** John Sawyer Brooks papers

**DATES:** 1846-2000

**BULK DATES:** 1851-1859

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 2.29 linear feet (11 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The John Sawyer Brooks Papers contain correspondence, scrapbooks, photographs and drawings, and other papers, most relating to missionaries and mission administration at the Mendi Mission in Sierra Leone, 1851-1859. Also present are papers relating to the Mount Pleasant Mission in Peel Township, Ontario, 1846-1855, and to the Brooks family, 1850s-circa 2000.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.brooksjs>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.brooksjs>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Candace Brown on the Frederick W. and Carrie S. Beinecke Fund for Western Americana, the Chandler White and Philena Pennell Smith Acquisitions Fund, and the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2017.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Boxes 5-8, 11: Restricted fragile material. May not be seen without the permission of the appropriate curator.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The John Sawyer Brooks Papers are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

John Sawyer Brooks Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

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## John Sawyer Brooks (1823-1864)

John Sawyer Brooks (1823-1864), American clergyman and missionary. Brooks was born in Groton, Massachusetts, a son of Rufus Brooks (1800-1892) and Mary Wood Sawyer Brooks (1803-1876). His siblings included Asa Whitcomb Brooks (1821-1862) and Jonathan Brooks (circa 1837-1862), both of whom died in the Battle of Fair Oaks, Virginia, while serving in the 16th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment during the Civil War; Sarah Brooks Pierce (1832-1929), whose home in Greenfield, Massachusetts, was an underground railroad safe house; and Rebecca Stone Brooks Simmons (1840-). John Sawyer Brooks married Fidelia Coburn (1805-1850) in 1847, and during 1842-1847 both worked as missionaries among fugitives from American slavery at Mount Pleasant Mission, founded by the American Abolition Society in Peel Township, Queen's Bush Settlement, Ontario. In 1850, they succeeded George Thompson at the American Missionary Association's Mendi Mission in, Sierra Leone. Fidelia Coburn Brooks died in York, Sierra Leone, in 1850; in 1855 Brooks married Susan Teall, also formerly a missionary in Queen's Bush Settlement, who died in 1855 in Good Hope Station, Sierra Leone. John Sawyer Brooks continued to work as a missionary at the Mendi Mission until 1861. He died in Sierra Leone in 1864.

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## The American Missionary Association and the Mendi Mission

The American Missionary Association was founded in New York City in 1846 by Congregational and other Christian missionaries advocating abolition of slavery. In 1846, the Association merged with the Union Missionary Society and assumed direction of the Mendi Mission, founded in 1842 by the Society and former Amistad captives at Kaw Mendi, Sierra Leone, in the present Bonthe District, near Sherbro Island. George Thompson (-1893) worked as a missionary at the Mendi Mission, arriving in 1848, and was followed by other missionaries, including John Sawyer Brooks and Fidelia Coburn Brooks in 1850. During 1850-1854, the Mission opened Tissana, Mo Tappan, and Boom Falls Stations in the interior and Good Hope Station on Sherbro Island. The Mendi Mission and its stations were transferred to the Church of the United Brethren in Christ in 1882.

Sources:

Beard, Augustus Field. *A Crusade of Brotherhood: a History of the American Missionary Association* (New York, AMS Press, 1972)

Thompson, George. *Thompson in Africa* (New York: printed for the author, 1854)

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## Scope and Contents

The John Sawyer Brooks Papers contain correspondence, scrapbooks, photographs and drawings, and other papers, most relating to missionaries and mission administration at the Mendi Mission in Sierra Leone, 1851-1859. Also present are papers relating to missionaries in Queen's Bush Settlement, Ontario, 1846-1855, and to the Brooks family, 1850s-circa 2000.

Most correspondence, 1851-1859 and undated, consists of letters, some with reports and financial accounts, to Brooks from American Missionary Association officials, Mendi Mission missionaries and other employees, and members of the Mission church and students at the Mission school. Also present are letters from Brooks, some with drawings of Mendi Mission scenes, and letterpress copies of letters from Brooks, 1855-1859, to many of the same correspondents and to members of the Brooks family. Four scrapbooks contain additional similar correspondence, 1846-1859, and clippings from unidentified newspapers, probably 1850s, about religion, abolition, and missionary work, including articles about the Mendi Mission, George Thompson, John Sawyer Brooks, and Susan Teall Brooks. Correspondents in letters and scrapbooks include American Missionary Association officials Lewis Tappan and George Whipple; missionaries T. G. Cole, D. K. Flickinger, A. W. Hanson, David J. Lee, Hannah More, Morris Officer, J. Cutler Tefft, and George Thompson; phonographer Isaac Pitman, including letters in phonetic English, with printed material about phonetic English; and Brooks's sisters, Sarah Brooks Pierce and Rebecca Stone Brooks Simmons.

Other papers relating to the Mendi Mission include autograph manuscript sermons and sermon notes by Brooks, 1859 and undated; autograph manuscript compositions by students at the Mission school, 1854 and undated; printed treaties relating to war in Sierra Leone, 1849-1853; a manuscript document transferring ownership of a slave to the Mission, undated; other legal and administrative documents, 1853-1855 and undated; *Mendi Garamo*, a printed publication about the Mende language, 1857 October; an issue of *The Early Dawn*, a newspaper published in Good Hope, Sherbro Island, 1861 May; and drawings by Brooks of Mendi Mission and other African scenes, 1850s.

Papers relating to missionaries in Queen's Bush Settlement, Ontario, include a small amount of correspondence of Fidelia Coburn Brooks, 1846; letters to Brooks from Susan Teall Brooks, 1853-1855; legal documents relating to Brooks, 1849; and drawings by Brooks of mission buildings, 1840s. In addition to correspondence, papers relating to the Brooks family include an ambrotype of John Sawyer Brooks, 1850s-1860s, and photographs of his parents, Rufus Brooks and Mary Wood Sawyer Brooks, 1870s-1890; his brothers Asa Whitcomb Brooks and Jonathan Brooks, circa 1862; and his sisters, Rebecca Stone Brooks Simmons and Sarah Brooks Pierce, and her daughter, Susanne Fidelia Pierce, circa 1880 and 1927.

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## Arrangement

Organized into four series: I. Correspondence, 1846-1859. II. Scrapbooks, 1846-1859. III. Photographs and Drawings, 1840s-1927. IV. Other Papers, 1849-2000.

## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, 1846-1859, undated

1.25 linear feet (4 boxes)

See also: correspondence in Series II, Scrapbooks

Arranged chronologically.

b. 10 (Oversize), f. 55	Letters See also: Series II, Scrapbooks, Box 8, Folder 67	1846
b. 1, f. 1	Letters	1851-1852
b. 1, f. 2	Letters	1853 January- June
b. 1, f. 3	Letters	1853 July
b. 10 (Oversize), f. 56	Letters	1853 August
b. 1, f. 4	Letters	1853 August- December
b. 11, f. 61	Letters Restricted fragile material. May not be seen without the permission of the appropriate curator.	1853
b. 1, f. 5	Letters	1854 January- February
b. 1, f. 6	Letters	1854 March
b. 1, f. 7	Letters	1854 April-May
b. 1, f. 8	Letters	1854 June-July
b. 1, f. 9	Letters	1854 August- September
b. 1, f. 10	Letters	1854 October- November
b. 10 (Oversize), f. 57	Letters	1854 November
b. 1, f. 11	Letters	1854 December
b. 11, f. 62	Letters Restricted fragile material. May not be seen without the permission of the appropriate curator.	1854
b. 1, f. 12	Letters	1855 January- February
b. 1, f. 13	Letters	1855 March- April

b. 1, f. 14	Letters	1855 May
b. 2, f. 15	Letters	1855 June-July
b. 2, f. 16	Letters	1855 August-September
b. 2, f. 17	Letters	1855 October-November
b. 2, f. 18	Letters	1855 December
b. 11, f. 63	Letters Restricted fragile material. May not be seen without the permission of the appropriate curator.	1855
b. 2, f. 19	Letters	1856 January-March
b. 2, f. 20	Letters	1856 April
b. 2, f. 21	Letters	1856 May
b. 2, f. 22	Letters	1856 June
b. 2, f. 23	Letters	1856 July
b. 2, f. 24	Letters	1856 August
b. 2, f. 25	Letters	1856 September
b. 2, f. 26	Letters	1856 October-November
b. 2, f. 27	Letters	1856 December
b. 10 (Oversize), f. 58	Letters	1856 December
b. 3, f. 28	Letters	1857 January-February
b. 10 (Oversize), f. 59	Letters	1857 January-February
b. 3, f. 29	Letters	1857 March-May
b. 3, f. 30	Letters	1857 June-July
b. 3, f. 31	Letters	1858-1859
b. 3, f. 32	Letters	undated
b. 11, f. 64	Letters Restricted fragile material. May not be seen without the permission of the appropriate curator.	undated
b. 3, f. 33	Letters (fragments)	undated

b. 4, f. 34	Letterpress copybook	1855-1857
b. 4, f. 35	Letterpress copybook	1857-1859



**Series II: Scrapbooks, 1846-1859***0.33 linear feet (4 boxes)*

Restricted fragile material. May not be seen without the permission of the appropriate curator.

Arranged chronologically

b. Box 5 (Oversize)	Scrapbook	1846-1855
b. Box 6 (Oversize)	Scrapbook	1852-1857
b. Box 7 (Oversize)	Scrapbook	1856-1858
b. Box 8 (Oversize)	Scrapbook	1857-1859

**Series III: Photographs and Drawings, 1840s-1927, undated***0.21 linear feet (part of 1 box)*

b. 11, f. 66	Brooks, John Sawyer (ambrotype) Restricted fragile material. May not be seen without the permission of the appropriate curator.	[1850s-1860s]
b. 9, f. 36	Brooks, Rufus (cabinet photographs)	1890
b. 9, f. 37	Brooks, Mary Wood Sawyer (carte-de-visite and drawing)	[circa 1870]
b. 9, f. 38	Brooks, Asa Whitcomb; Brooks, Jonathan; and United States Army, Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, 16th (reproductions of photographs)	[circa 1862]
b. 9, f. 39	Pierce, Sarah Brooks; Simmons, Rebecca Stone Brooks; and Pierce, Susan Fidelia (cabinet photograph, drawing, and photograph)	[circa 1880], 1927
b. 9, f. 40	Unidentified people (photographs)	[circa 1900]
b. 9, f. 41	Mount Pleasant Mission (drawings)	[1840s]
b. 9, f. 42	Mendi Mission and unidentified places (drawings) See also: Series I, Correspondence	[1850s]

**Series IV: Other Papers, 1849-2000, undated***0.21 linear feet (part of 1 box)*

See also: clippings in Series II, Scrapbooks

b. 9, f. 43	Advertisement for phonetic English publications. Print (London: Fred. Pitman; Bath: Isaac Pitman) See also: Series I, Correspondence	undated
b. 9, f. 44	Clipping about Sarah Brooks Pierce (photocopy)	[circa 2000]
b. 10 (Oversize), f. 60	<i>The Early Dawn</i> , Vol. 1, No. 3. Print (unidentified publisher: Good Hope, Sherbro Island)	1861 May
b. 9, f. 45	Legal and administrative documents relating to the Mendi Mission	1853-1855, undated
b. 11, f. 65	Legal and administrative documents relating to the Mendi Mission Restricted fragile material. May not be seen without the permission of the appropriate curator.	1854
b. 9, f. 46	Legal documents relating to the Mount Pleasant Mission	1849
b. 9, f. 47	<i>Mendi Garamo</i> , Nr. 2. Print (unidentified place and publisher)	1857 October
b. 9, f. 48	Notes about farming in Africa	undated
b. 9, f. 49	Peace treaty between Sierra Leone, Great Britain, Careybah Caulker, and Thomas Stephen Caulker. Print (no place or publisher)	1849-1853
b. 9, f. 50	Poems	undated
b. 9, f. 51-52	Sermons and sermon notes	1859, undated
b. 9, f. 53	Talisman text, in Arabic	undated
b. 9, f. 54	Writings of Mendi Mission students	1854, undated

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## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### Subjects

Abolitionists -- Massachusetts  
Abolitionists -- Ontario -- Queen's Bush Settlement  
Antislavery movements -- United States  
Clergy -- Sierra Leone  
English language -- Phonetics  
Fugitive slaves -- Ontario -- Queen's Bush Settlement  
Mende language -- Sierra Leone  
Missionaries -- Ontario -- Queen's Bush Settlement  
Missionaries -- Sierra Leone  
Missionary settlements -- Ontario -- Queen's Bush Settlement  
Missionary settlements -- Sierra Leone  
Missions -- Ontario -- Queen's Bush Settlement  
Missions -- Sierra Leone  
Slavery -- Sierra Leone  
Slavery -- United States

### Geographic Names

Peel (Ont. : Regional municipality) -- Religion -- 19th century  
Queen's Bush Settlement (Ont.) -- Religion -- 19th century  
Sierra Leone -- Description and travel  
Sierra Leone -- Politics and government -- 1808-1896  
Sierra Leone -- Religion -- 19th century  
Sierra Leone -- Social conditions -- To 1961

### Genres / Formats

Ambrotypes (photographs)  
Cabinet photographs  
Drawings (visual works)  
Letterpress copybooks -- Sierra Leone -- 19th century  
Photographs  
Scrapbooks -- Sierra Leone -- 19th century  
Sermons -- Sierra Leone -- 19th century  
Visiting cards

### Occupations

Clergy -- Ontario -- Queen's Bush Settlement -- 19th century  
Clergy -- Sierra Leone -- 19th century  
Missionaries -- Ontario -- Queen's Bush Settlement -- 19th century  
Missionaries -- Sierra Leone -- 19th century

### Preferred Titles

*Early dawn*

### Names

Brooks, Asa Whitcomb, 1821-1862  
Brooks, Fidelia Coburn, 1805-1850  
Brooks, John Sawyer, 1823-1864  
Brooks, Jonathan, approximately 1837-1862  
Brooks, Mary Wood Sawyer, 1803-1876  
Brooks, Rufus, 1800-1892  
Brooks, Susan Teall, -1855  
Cole, T. G.  
Flickinger, D. K. (Daniel Kumler), 1824-1911  
Hanson, A. W.  
Lee, David J.  
More, Hannah, 1808-1868  
Officer, Morris, 1823-1874  
Pierce, Sarah Brooks, 1832-1929  
Pitman, Isaac, 1813-1897  
Simmons, Rebecca Stone Brooks, 1840-  
Tappan, Lewis, 1788-1873  
Tefft, J. Cutler, -1855  
Thompson, George, -1893  
Whipple, George, 1805-1876

### Families

Brooks family

### Corporate Bodies

American Abolition Society  
American Missionary Association  
Amistad (Schooner)  
United States. Army. Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, 16th -- Pictorial works