

# Genealogist's Guide to Overseas Missionary Fellowship & Africa Inland Mission

Over the last century hundreds of North American, nondenominational, Christian workers went to Africa and China as missionaries. Information documenting the lives of many of these individuals is located in the records of [Africa Inland Mission, International](#) and the [United States Home Council of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship \(formerly China Inland Mission\)](#).

## **Finding a Missionary with Overseas Missionary Fellowship (China Inland Mission)**

First determine if the individual you are searching for was sent out by the American or British branch of the mission. The records of the British branch are in the [School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London Archives](#) while the BGC Archives holds the records of the United States branch in [Collection 215 Records of Overseas Missionary Fellowship](#).

Next check the [index](#) for individuals for whom there are Personnel Cards or Post Council Questionnaires; 1887-1934. Personnel Cards are brief records of the pertinent information on many CIM/OMF missionaries sent by the U.S. Council. The cards contain spaces for the following information: name, home address, birthplace, date of birth, nationality, date and place of marriage, date accepted, ordination, church affiliation, colleges and Bible schools attended, medical training, degrees, passport number, passport location and validation date, places of service; name, birthplace, date of birth, nationality of children; name, address, phone, nationality of father, mother, and nearest friend, furloughs granted, dates and ports of arrival and departure. In many cases, some information is not provided.

Post Council Questionnaires are forms filled out by missionary candidates after they had been accepted for work in China by the mission council. The forms for United States candidates include spaces for the following information: name, age, date of birth, home address, country of birth, citizenship, vaccinations, dental work needed, is will made, postal address, denominational preference, who to notify in case of emergency. The forms for Canadian candidates include spaces for the following information: name, address, application, question paper, medical certificates, referees, doctrinal statement, decision of council, journey to China, support, parents' names and address, pastor's name and address.

Other sources:

[OMF/CIM Directories](#) which list every missionary (American, British and others) and the area where they were serving during the years 1900 to 1990 and the year they joined the mission. The directories in boxes 1 and 2 have been microfilmed and may be borrowed by [interlibrary loan](#).

[Minutes of the China Council](#) contain information on the arrival, departure, movements, marriages, problems, and deaths of missionaries. These can only be searched chronologically as there is no index to the missionaries.

The Missions and Evangelism Collection has many books about OMF/CIM as well as the mission's periodical *China's Millions* which launched in 1875 and contains hundreds of articles by missionaries describing their work and memorials for some of staff who died. Be sure to check the [library catalog](#) for specific issues of *China's Millions*.

### **Finding a Missionary with Africa Inland Mission**

Check the [index](#) for individuals whom there are Personnel Files. Personnel Files were kept for over seven hundred missionaries who served with Africa Inland Mission. These files contain a variety of materials which document the lives of these missionaries. Materials may include applications to AIM, life sketches, medical examination reports, character references, correspondence between the missionary and mission representatives, lists of relatives, and other documents. Information in these papers may include place and date of birth for the applicant and his/her parents (sometimes including mother's maiden name), marriage dates, educational background, occupation, residences, places of service in Africa, etc.

AIM Officers, Field Directors, Staff Workers. If your ancestor was a leader with AIM be sure to consult the [lists](#) for these individuals. Information on the positions they held and dates of service is given.

Miscellaneous Information on AIM missionaries is located in the twenty-four loose-leaf notebooks of Stanley Kline in [Collection 477](#). These [notebooks \(photo albums\)](#) are arranged in alphabetical order and contain clippings, photographs, notes and other materials about individual AIM missionaries whose careers fell between the 1890s and 1990s. Most of the clippings came from Inland Africa or other AIM publications.

The Missions and Evangelism Collection has the publications of AIM going back to 1896 when it was first published under the name *Hearing and Doing*, later *Inland Africa*, and now *AIM International*. Be sure to check the [library catalog](#) for specific issues.

### **Materials of Missionaries to Africa or China**

The Archives has many collections of materials on individual missionaries who served in Africa or China with AIM or OMF/CIM or other mission organizations. Some of these collections contain oral history interviews and/or the missionaries' personal papers consisting of correspondence, prayer letters, diaries, clippings, photographs, photo albums, articles, etc. To locate these go to the Archives online [database](#) and do a search for the individual you are researching.

#### Sample Documents

[Theodore and Olive Fischbacher's OMF/CIM Personnel Card](#)  
[Alexander Reid Saunders' OMF/CIM Canadian Council Candidate Questionnaire](#)  
[China Council Minutes about Mr. & Mrs. Young](#)  
[Laura Colins Application to AIM](#)  
[AIM missionary John Buyse's 1918 letter](#)