

COLLEGE of  
CHARLESTON

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AVERY RESEARCH CENTER  
FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN  
HISTORY AND CULTURE

**Inventory of the  
Avery Normal Institute Records, 1862 - 1978**

Avery Research Center  
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## Descriptive Summary

<b>Title:</b>	Avery Normal Institute Records,
<b>Dates:</b>	1862 - 1978
<b>Creator:</b>	American Missionary Association.
<b>Abstract:</b>	<p>The Avery Normal Institute was established by the American Missionary Association (AMA) in Charleston, South Carolina in 1865. The Institute originally served as a school for former slaves and free persons of color, providing normal (or, teacher) training to students pursuing careers in education. The school eventually became known just as Avery Institute, operating as a high school with financial support from the AMA until 1947, when it became part of Charleston's segregated public school system. The school closed in 1954.</p> <p>The Avery Normal Institute Papers, 1862-1954 and 1978, consist of photocopied materials regarding Avery Normal Institute generated by the American Missionary Association office and housed by the Amistad Research Center. The materials are separated into six small series: Annual Reports, 1862-1945; Administrative Correspondence, 1931-1954; Financial Records, 1943-1946; Employee Files, 1926-1945; Writings and Publications, 1882-1952; and Miscellaneous Files, 1878-1978. 1.) Annual Reports consist of sections of AMA Annual Report publications highlighting Avery. 2.) Administrative Correspondence consists of miscellaneous correspondence exchanged between the AMA and Avery officials. 3.) Financial Records consist of reports regarding the financial status of the school compiled by Avery officials and submitted to the AMA. 4.) Employee Files consist of employment information on members of the Avery faculty. 5.) The Writings and Publications series contains issues of the school newspaper, the <i>Avery Tiger</i>; reports on Avery's history and other materials; and a master's thesis by Avery staff member Alphonso H. Hoursey on Avery graduates. 6.) Miscellaneous Files include various programs, flyers, and newspaper clippings. Throughout the collection, the following individuals are frequently mentioned: AMA officials Ruth Morton and Fred Brownlee and Avery principals Frank DeCosta, Samuel Washington, and John Potts.</p>
<b>Extent:</b>	1.5 linear feet(3 archival boxes)
<b>Repository:</b>	Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston
<b>Call Number:</b>	AMN 1012
<b>Language of Material:</b>	Material in English

## Historical Note

The Avery Normal Institute was established by the American Missionary Association (AMA) in Charleston, South Carolina in 1865. The Institute originally served as a school for former slaves and free persons of color, providing normal (or, teacher) training to students pursuing careers in education. Avery's educational mission evolved as its all-black administrators, faculty, and students played pivotal roles in combating racism and Jim Crow laws in Charleston. The school eventually became known just as Avery Institute, operating as a high school, with financial support from the AMA until 1947, when it became part of Charleston's segregated public school system. It school closed in 1954.

Decades after the school ceased to exist, many of its alumni were instrumental in creating the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, which is housed in the historic Avery building at 125 Bull Street.

## Collection Overview

The Avery Normal Institute Papers, 1862-1954 and 1978, consist of photocopied materials regarding Avery Normal Institute generated by the American Missionary Association office and housed by the Amistad Research Center.

The materials are separated into six small series: Annual Reports, 1862-1945; Administrative Correspondence, 1931-1954; Financial Records, 1943-1946; Employee Files, 1926-1945; Writings and Publications, 1882-1952; and Miscellaneous Files, 1878-1978. 1.) Annual Reports consist of sections of AMA Annual Report publications highlighting Avery. 2.) Administrative Correspondence consists of miscellaneous correspondence exchanged between the AMA and Avery officials. 3.) Financial Records consist of reports regarding the financial status of the school compiled by Avery officials and submitted to the AMA. 4.) Employee Files consist of employment information on members of the Avery faculty. 5.) The Writings and Publications series contains issues of the school newspaper, the *Avery Tiger*; reports on Avery's history and other materials; and a master's thesis by Avery staff member Alphonso H. Hoursey on Avery graduates. 6.) Miscellaneous Files include various programs, flyers, and newspaper clippings.

Throughout the collection, the following individuals are frequently mentioned: AMA officials Ruth Morton and Fred Brownlee and Avery principals Frank DeCosta, Samuel Washington, and John Potts.

## Collection Arrangement

1. Annual Reports, 1862-1945
2. Administrative Correspondence, 1931-1954
3. Financial Records, 1942-1946
4. Employee Files, 1926-1945
5. Writings and Publications, 1882-1952
6. Miscellaneous Files, 1878-1978

## Restrictions

### Access Restrictions

No restrictions.

## Copyright Notice

The nature of the Avery Research Center's archival holdings means that copyright or other information about restrictions may be difficult or even impossible to determine despite reasonable efforts. The Avery Research Center claims only physical ownership of most archival materials.

The materials from our collections are made available for use in research, teaching, and private study, pursuant to U.S. copyright law. The user must assume full responsibility for any use of the materials, including but not limited to, infringement of copyright and publication rights of reproduced materials. Any materials used for academic research or otherwise should be fully credited with the source.

## Subject Headings

African Americans -- Education -- South Carolina -- Charleston.

African Americans high school students -- South Carolina -- Charleston.

African Americans school administrators -- South Carolina -- Charleston.

African Americans school principals -- South Carolina -- Charleston.

African Americans teachers -- Training of -- South Carolina -- Charleston.

American Missionary Association.

American Missionary Association.

Amistad Research Center.

Avery Institute of Afro-American History and Culture.

Avery Normal Institute -- History.

Avery Normal Institute -- Records and correspondence.

Brownlee, Frederick Leslie, 1883-1962.

DeCosta, Frank A.

Education, Secondary -- South Carolina -- Charleston.

Hoursey, Alphonso H., 1900-1977.

Morton, Ruth, 1900-1989.

Potts, John F.

Private schools -- South Carolina -- Charleston.

Segregation in education -- South Carolina -- Charleston.

Washington, Samuel Walter, 1901-1978.

## Location of Originals

The originals of the majority of these materials are located in the American Missionary Association Records, which are housed at the **Amistad Research Center** in New Orleans, Louisiana.

## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Avery Normal Institute Records, Avery Research Center, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC, USA.

### Processing Information

Processed by Jessica Lancia, 2006

Encoded by Melissa Bronheim, July 2010

Edited by Melissa Bronheim, July 2010, and Amanda Ross, January 2011

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### 1. Annual Reports, 1862-1945

This series consists of sections of the American Missionary Association's annual report publications that highlight the Avery Normal Institute.

Box 1 Folder 1.1 American Missionary Association Annual Reports, 1862-1880

Photocopies of sections regarding AMA involvement in South Carolina, almost all mentioning Avery Normal Institute. Lists South Carolina ministers and teachers as well as reports on Avery Institute. Reports include reprints of correspondence and various statistics, including lists of teachers, number of students, and value of property.

Box 1 Folder 1.2 Annual Reports, 1881-1901

Photocopies of sections regarding Avery Normal Institute. Lists South Carolina schools and reports on Avery Institute. Reports include reprints of correspondence and various statistics, including lists of teachers, trustees, principals, and number of students.

Box 1 Folder 1.3 Annual Reports, 1902-1922

Photocopies of sections of regarding Avery Normal Institute. Lists South Carolina schools and reports statistics on Avery Institute. Statistics include lists of teachers, principals, and number of students.

Box 1 Folder 1.4 Annual Reports, 1923-1945

Photocopies of sections of regarding Avery Normal Institute. With statistical reports, listing teachers, principals, and number of students. Almost all contain principal reports which detail student attendance, programs, funding, and class sizes.

Box 1 Folder 1.5 Annual Reports, 1866-1941

Typed transcripts referring to Avery Normal Institute.

Box 1 Folder 1.6 Annual Reports, 1940-1942

Includes photocopies of records submitted to the AMA from Avery for publication into annual reports, 1940-1942. Includes two principal's reports and two completed facts and figures forms.

### 2. Administrative Correspondence, 1931-1954

This series consists of correspondence exchanged between the officials of the American Missionary Association and Avery officials.

Box 1 Folder 1.7 Administrative Correspondence, 1931-1940

Includes correspondence to and from AMA officials (Ruth Morton and Fred Brownlee) and active or prospective Avery staff (Frank DeCosta, Charles Parker, Thelma Menchan, Fannie Frazier, and Charles Nichols) regarding Avery Normal Institute, hiring faculty, salary disputes, and opportunities for employment advancement.

Box 1 Folder 1.8 Administrative Correspondence, 1941

Includes correspondence to and from AMA officials (Fred Brownlee, Ruth Morton) and active and prospective Avery staff (Florence Clyde, Margaretta Poinsette, Charles Parker, Thelma Menchan, Thomas Bennett) regarding Avery Normal Institute and hiring and retiring faculty (including replacing Principal Frank DeCosta with Howard Bennett), garnering donations (including for restoring deteriorating building and improving teacher housing) and acquiring supplies. Enclosed materials include fact sheet and policies and procedures of AMA.

**Box 1 Folder 1.9 Administrative Correspondence, 1942-1943**

Includes correspondence to and from AMA officials (Ruth Morton, Fred Brownlee) and active and prospective Avery staff (Howard Bennett, Charles Nicholas, Hattie Greene, Frank DeCosta, Elizabeth Jackson, A.W. Hoursey) regarding Avery Normal Institute, hiring and resigning faculty, acquiring supplies, salaries, repairing building, and comments on financial reports. Enclosed materials include a curriculum outline and wedding invitation.

**Box 1 Folder 1.10 Administrative Correspondence, 1944**

Includes correspondence to and from AMA officials (Ruth Morton, Fred Brownlee) and active and prospective Avery staff (Florence Clyde, Howard Bennett, Josephine Nichols, C.S. Ledbetter) regarding Avery Normal Institute and hiring and resigning faculty, acquiring supplies, salaries, \$10,000 fund drive, possibly selling 54 Montagu Street property. Enclosed materials include retirement fund, tax deductions, and sewing class schedules, news clippings, and flyers regarding \$10,000 fund drive.

**Box 2 Folder 2.1 Administrative Correspondence, 1944**

Includes correspondence to and from AMA officials (Ruth Morton) regarding Avery Normal Institute matters such as financing Institute, employment, selling property, replacing principle, and Advisory board. Of note are newspaper clippings and correspondence regarding reaction to Avery students applying for admission to white-only College of Charleston.

**Box 2 Folder 2.2 Administrative Correspondence, 1944**

Includes correspondence to and from AMA officials (Ruth Morton) regarding Avery Normal Institute matters such as teacher employment, recommendations, replacing the principal, possibility of making Avery into Junior college, and getting financial government support.

**Box 2 Folder 2.3 Administrative Correspondence, 1945**

Includes correspondence to and from AMA officials (Ruth Morton) regarding Avery Normal Institute matters such as school's financial status, teacher salaries and employment, administrative council proceedings including copy of its constitution; fire damaging building including inspection of damage and inventories.

**Box 2 Folder 2.4 Administrative Correspondence, 1945**



Includes correspondence to and from AMA officials (Fred Brownlee, Ruth Morton) and Avery staff (Samuel Washington, John Potts, Thelma Manigault, Charlotte Tracy) regarding Avery Normal Institute matters such as fire damage, teacher salaries and employment, administrative council proceedings, financial matters such as ending AMA appropriations to Avery, connecting curriculums with Burke High School, resignation of Samuel Washington as Director, and the hiring of John Potts as replacement. Enclosed materials include a report on certification requirements for elementary teachers, and a commencement invitation.

Box 2 Folder 2.5 Administrative Correspondence, 1948-1954

Includes correspondence to and from AMA officials (Fred Brownlee and Ruth Morton) and Avery staff (John Potts and Lois Simms) regarding Avery Normal Institute matters such as selling 54 Montagu Street property, acquiring supplies for the school, getting access to Avery records housed in AMA office, and closing of Avery. Enclosed materials include a calendar of school events for 1947-1948, a complete list of principals and teachers from 1900-1954, and newspaper clippings regarding the abandonment of Avery.

### 3. Financial Records, 1942-1946

This series consists of reports regarding the financial status of the school compiled by Avery officials and submitted to the American Missionary Association. These financial reports were compiled monthly by the principal of Avery and submitted to the AMA. Includes information on expenses (such staff salaries, plant operation and maintenance, auxiliary enterprises such as book supplies) and income (from student fees, gifts), with detailed lists of checks written during daily operations of the school.

Box 2 Folder 2.6 Financial Reports of Avery Normal Institute, 1942

Also includes list of accounts payable and receivable, along with report analysis and cash forecasts.

Box 2 Folder 2.7 Financial Reports of Avery Normal Institute, 1943

Also includes list of accounts payable and receivable, along with report analysis and cash forecast for subsequent month. Enclosed materials include correspondence explaining report incongruities.

Box 2 Folder 2.8 Financial Reports of Avery Normal Institute, 1944

Also includes list of accounts payable and receivable, along with report analysis and cash forecasts

Box 2 Folder 2.9 Financial Reports of Avery Normal Institute, 1945-1946

Also includes list of accounts payable and receivable, along with report analysis and cash forecast for subsequent month. Enclosed materials include correspondence explaining report incongruities.

Box 2 Folder 2.10 Financial Correspondence, 1945-1946

Regarding financial reports including AMA audit reports, explanations of incongruities, and changes made to reports.

## 4. Employee Files, 1926-1945

Arranged alphabetically, by surname of employee

This series consists of employment information for Avery faculty and staff members. Materials include appointment contracts, completed candidate applications, health screening information, recommendation forms, and, at times, pictures of candidates and college transcripts. Also includes correspondence regarding employment between teachers and the American Missionary Association.

- Box 3 Folder 3.1 Employee Files: A-B
- Box 3 Folder 3.2 Employee Files: C-G
- Box 3 Folder 3.3 Employee Files: H-N
- Box 3 Folder 3.4 Employee Files: P-Z

## 5. Writings and Publications, 1882-1952

This series consists of writings and publications related to Avery, including issues of the school newspaper, the *Avery Tiger*; reports on Avery's history and other materials; and a master's thesis by Avery staff member Alphonso H. Hoursey on Avery graduates

- Box 3 Folder 3.5 *Avery Tiger*, 1931-1951

Incomplete photocopies of four issues (October 1931, November 1942, October 1951, and November 1951) of the *Avery Tiger*, Avery's monthly student-run newspaper. Includes miscellaneous news regarding Avery (such as participation in war efforts), editorials, sports commentary, humor column, a short story by Alphonso Hoursey, and advertisements.

- Box 3 Folder 3.6 Writings on Avery, 1882-1885 and 1944-1952

Includes reports and memoranda regarding the history and progress of the school by Avery employees (such as Principle M. A. Holmes), and AMA officials (Ruth Morton and Fred Brownlee). The folder also includes an essay entitled "Negro Higher Education in South Carolina" by Lewis McMillan and an excerpt of the *City of Charleston Yearbook* regarding damages sustained to the building from a hurricane in 1885.

- Box 3 Folder 3.7 *A Follow Up Survey of Graduates of Avery Institute, Charleston, South Carolina, For Years 1930-1940* by Alphonso W. Hoursey, 1941

## 6. Miscellaneous Files, 1878-1978

This series consists of various programs, flyers, and newspaper clippings.

- Box 3 Folder 3.8 Avery Miscellaneous Materials, 1878-1978

Includes graduation ceremonies programs list of student art exhibits; catalogue of courses of study; statement of philosophy and long-term plans written by principal John Potts, 1947; constitution of the Avery Administrative Council; photograph (possibly of 1978 class reunion); a floor plan regarding repairs to Avery building; a flyer entitled "News from Avery Institute"; and two teacher blurbs.

- Box 3 Folder 3.9 Non-Avery Materials, 1943-1951

Includes News and Courier clippings regarding black voting in Charleston and race relations, segregation, and racism. Two issues of *Scholastic Roto -- The High School World in Picture and Paragraph*.