



AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY
education that transforms lives

AMS Research Committee White Paper Series: Research Using AMS Archives

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AMS is providing this White Paper to encourage research on Montessori education to further its role in the broader education community. One of the goals of AMS is to support efforts which give Montessori education a voice in scholarly dialogue about educating children.

Montessori education has a rich history in the United States and many valuable sources documenting that history are housed in the AMS Archives at the **Thomas J. Dodd Research Center** at the University of Connecticut in Storrs. The collection is open to the public. Detailed information about the **AMS Collection** can be found on the Dodd Center Web site.

The early history of Montessori education in the United States provides valuable insight into what Keith Whitescarver and Jacqueline Cossentino (2008, p. 2571) call a case study of “enduring and ambitious educational reform” as well as a social movement. The AMS Archives provide a unique opportunity for researchers to explore these issues through primary source documents. Such research is valuable within the Montessori community and would also be of interest in the fields of educational history and women’s studies.

This White Paper provides some initial suggestions and guidance to help those interested in these issues to explore the possibilities.

Overview of AMS Archives

From a 2006 article in the University of Connecticut *Advance* publication, Richard Veilleux writes:

The AMS records, documenting the history of the country's most well-known alternative educational organization, consist of printed, typescript, and handwritten materials; sound recordings; films; and photographs and slides.

They reflect the professional and administrative activities of AMS, and provide historical information about the Montessori system of education.

They also include information on Montessori teaching methods and materials, and the records of some local schools.

<http://www.advance.uconn.edu/2006/061030/06103006.htm>

Examples of Archival Research Questions

The AMS archives can be used by scholars from a wide array of disciplinary approaches, including, women's studies, sociology, history, and cultural anthropology.

Possible research questions:

1. How does Montessori education in the United States illuminate the development of a reform-oriented, transnational, social movement?

2. Why has Montessori education remained on the margins of American education even though it is a time-tested, successful pedagogy?
3. What has been the impact of the American Montessori Society on the political and social lives of its primarily female membership?
4. How do the goals and philosophy of the American Montessori Society differ from larger societal views on the relationship between public and political understandings of educational purposes and values?
5. What has been the impact of the American Montessori Society on the public sector in education?

Support for Research Using AMS Archives

Dodd Center makes money available for travel grants for researchers interested in using the AMS collection that must travel long distances to use their facilities. To read more, [click here](#).

Whitescarver, Keith and Jacqueline Cossentino. "Montessori and the Mainstream: A Century of Reform on the Margins." *Teachers College Record* 110, no. 12 (2008): 2571–2600.