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Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

**Ebenezer United Methodist Church (Washington, D.C.) records**  
1865-1980

Processed by Victor Smythe.

## Summary

**Creator:** Ebenezer United Methodist Church (Washington, D.C.)

**Title:** Ebenezer United Methodist Church (Washington, D.C.) records

**Date:** 1865-1980

**Source:** Microfilm: Originals in Ebenezer United Methodist Church, 1992

**Abstract:** The records of Ebenezer United Methodist Church are divided into four series: Trustee Record Books, Financial and Vital Records, Historical and Vital Register Books, and Publications.

**Conditions Governing Use:** Permission from church is required to purchase copy of microfilm. Letter authorizing reproduction should be sent to the Curator of Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Book Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 515 Malcolm X Blvd., New York, NY 10037

**Location of Originals:** Originals in Ebenezer United Methodist Church; 4th & D streets, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003

**Preferred citation:** Ebenezer United Methodist Church (Washington, D.C.) records, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Processed by Victor Smythe; Machine-readable finding aid created by Apex Data Services; revised by Terry Catapano.

## Creator History

The Mother Church

The meeting place of the Methodist Episcopal Church is known to have been a dwelling located on Greenleaf Point, South Capitol and N Streets, Washington, D. C. in 1805. The membership consisted of sixty-one white and twenty-five black members. They moved to Dudley Carroll's barn on New Jersey Avenue, south of D Street, S.E. in 1807. In 1811 another move was made to a newly constructed church at Fourth Street, S.E. between South Carolina Avenue and G Street. This was the first church

built by Methodists in Washington and was named the Fourth Street Station.

In 1837, the black membership had outgrown the galleries which were reserved for them in the Mother Church. With the help and guidance of the Mother Church a lot was located at the corner of Fourth and D Street, S.E. and purchased on April 27, 1838. A small frame church building was immediately erected under the supervision of the pastor of the Mother Church assisted by three local preachers. The church was named Little Ebenezer.

The first black trustees, Alfred H. Perry, William Brown, Sr., William Brown, Jr., Benjamin Grant, Nathaniel Jackson, John Payne, James Hill, William Thomas and Noah Jones were appointed on October 18, 1860. The first black pastor, Rev. Noah Jones, was appointed in 1864. A choir was organized in the late 1860s to supplement the congregational singing which was the only form of musical worship at the time. Mr. William G. Miller, who had the idea to establish the choir, was appointed the first director.

After the start of the Civil War large numbers of black refugees from the South migrated to the District of Columbia. Between 1860 and 1863 the local black population increased by over two thirds; an increase which could not be ignored. The New England Freedmen's Aid Society of Boston responded by sending a teacher, Miss Frances W. Perkins. Miss Emma V. Brown, a prominent African-American, was later employed by the District Government to teach and on March 1, 1864 the first public, government-sponsored school for black children in Washington, D.C. was established and housed at Ebenezer.

In 1870, because of its progress and growth in the religious and civic activities in the southeast of Washington, D. C. the term 'Little' was dropped from the church name and the church became known as Ebenezer Methodist Episcopal Church. Ebenezer was incorporated on September 28, 1891.

The present church structure was dedicated on November 4, 1897. It was designated a Historical Landmark on April 29, 1975.

Noah Jones, 1864-1867. First public school for black children established at Ebenezer. Tillman Jackson, 1867-1870 C. G. Keys, 1870-1873. Second church was built and first organ installed. P. G. Walker, 1874-1875 Rev. Steele, 1875-1881 George Pinkney, 1881-1887. First Washington Annual Conference held at Ebenezer was in 1885. This was the 22nd Washington Annual Conference of black Methodist churches. William Draper, 1887-1890 Alexander Dennis, 1890-1896 Matthew W. Clair, 1896-1897 John Griffin, 1897-1903. Present church was completed in eight months. William T. Harris, 1903-1906 E. W. Peck, 1906-1907 Alexander Dennis, 1907-1910 Stewart Brown, 1910-1912. Annual conference held at Ebenezer once again. William Dean, 1912-1921. So much money was raised during his pastorate that at the close of one rally the bank was opened on Sunday to receive a deposit of \$6,000. The church was redecorated and the envelop system installed. John W. Waters, 1921-1926. Young People's Choir and Ebenezer Athletic Club were organized. Property behind church was bought. R. W. Thomas, 1926-1931 Walter English, 1931-1935 Fairfax King, 1935-1942. Several church organizations were begun, including Women's Society of Christian Service. Telephone was installed. John Peters, 1942-1952. Parsonage, church and kitchen were renovated. Cecil B. LaGrange, 1952-1954 Richard H. Johnson, 1954-1964 J. B. A. Dyson, 1964-1968 Stanford Harris, 1968-1979 Alfonso J. Harrod, 1979-1993

## Scope and Content Note

The records of Ebenezer United Methodist Church were microfilmed by the *The Preservation of the Black Religious Heritage Project*(PBRHP) of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

during the month of April 1992. Originals were retained by the church. The records were arranged for microfilming according to the existing church filing system. Pages of bound ledgers were microfilmed sequentially as they appeared.

Note: Some records are illegible, faded, stained and torn. Loose pages are not in alphabetical or chronological order. Bound volumes were not separated for microfilming.

**Arrangement:** Records organized into four series: I. Trustee Record Books; II. Financial and Vital Records; III. Historical and Vital Register Books; and IV. Publications

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American churches -- Washington (D.C.)

African American Methodists

African Americans -- Religion

African Americans -- Washington (D.C.)

Methodists -- Washinton, D.C

### **Titles**

Preservation of the Black Religious Heritage Project funded by the Lilly Endowment

### **Names**

Ebenezer United Methodist Church (Washington, D.C.)

## Container List

r. 1 Trustee Record Books 1866-1896

The *TRUSTEE RECORD BOOKS, 1866-1896*, series consists of the registers containing records of membership, which includes probationers and members in full connection, 1866-1895, as well as vital records, marriages, 1873-1896, baptisms 1872-1895, and deaths, 1873. Trustee meeting minutes, 1874-1895, are also recorded which include action taken on disciplinary cases, readmissions and dismissals.

r. 1 Death Records 1873

r. 1 Disciplinary Cases 1874

r. 1 Probationers Records Sept. 15, 1872-Nov. 9, 1873

r. 1 Class Records 1874

r. 1 Alphabetical Record Of Members In Full Connection 1873-1974

r. 1 Marriages 1873-1874

r. 1 Baptisms Mar. 20, 1872-Jan. 17, 1873

r. 1 Official Members Dec. 1866-Mar. 30, 1874

r. 1 Pastoral Historical & Statistical Records 1882

r. 1 Trustees Meeting Minutes 1882-1888

r. 1 Official Members 1879-1881

r. 1 Class Record 1882

r. 1 Church Record Book 1872

r. 1 Probationers 1883-1887

r. 1 Marriage Records May 23, 1883-April, 1884

r. 1 Baptisms 1886-1887

r. 1 Trustees Meetings And Finance Minutes 1889-1896

r. 1 Official Members 1892

r. 1 Probationers 1891-1895

r. 1 Members In Full Connection Feb. 1, 1892-1895

r. 1 Baptisms 1892-1895

r. 1 Marriages 1892-1896

r. 1 Preachers' Meeting Minutes 1894-1895

r. 1 Financial And Vital Records 1896-1950

The *FINANCIAL AND VITAL RECORDS, 1896-1950*, series comprise registers of financial records, 1896-1950, which also contain vital records of membership, 1899-1931, some trustees minutes, 1896-1950, and miscellaneous correspondence.

r. 1 Roll Book Of Epworth League, Names & Addresses 1910

r. 1 Financial Records/Trustees Meetings June 1, 1896-1904

r. 1 Official List Of Names/Monthly Subscription Collections 1899-1900

r. 1 Expenditures 1899-1903

r. 1 Trustee Meetings/Finance 1903-1914

r. 1 Probationers 1918-1921

r. 1 Members In Full Connection 1913-1921

r. 1 Baptism Records 1916-1929

r. 1 Marriage Records 1919-1931

Financial And Vital Records (cont.)

- r. 1 Funerals 1919-1920
- r. 1 Board Of Trustees Meetings July 10, 1936-May 22, 1942
- r. 1 Miscellaneous Correspondence, Receipts, Disbursements, Government Documents, Trustees Reports 1936-1942, 1949-1950
- r. 2 Historical And Vital Register Books 1865-1980
 

The *HISTORICAL AND VITAL REGISTER BOOKS, 1825-1980*, series contains registers with pastors' reports and comments, 1865-1907, property purchase documents and certificate of incorporation, 1891-1929. Vital records, 1865-1980; some trustees minutes, 1943-1947; and financial reports, 1950-1951, are also attached.
- r. 2 Historical Records 1865-1870
- r. 2 Probationers 1865-1869
- r. 2 Class Records 1868-1869
- r. 2 Alphabetical Record Of Members In Full Connection 1865
- r. 2 Chronological Record Of Official Members 1866
- r. 2 Pastoral, Historical And Statistical Records 1865-1870
- r. 2 Baptisms 1865-1870
- r. 2 Marriage Records 1866-1872
- r. 2 Appendix 1871
- r. 2 Bishop's Commendation 1872
- r. 2 Historical Record 1886-1903
- r. 2 Pastoral And Statistical Record 1887-1897
- r. 2 Chronological Record Of Official Members 1889
- r. 2 Class Records, (?) 1890
- r. 2 Probationers Record 1896-1902
- r. 2 Alphabetical Record Of Members In Full Connection 1837-1909
- r. 2 Marriages 1887-1903
- r. 2 Baptisms 1887-1903
- r. 2 Appendix 1897
- r. 2 Bishops Commendation N.D.
- r. 2 Historical Record 1903-1907
- r. 2 Pastoral And Statistical Record 1898-1907
- r. 2 Chronological Record Of Official Members 1903-1907
- r. 2 Probationers Record 1904-1912
- r. 2 Alphabetical Record Of Members In Full Connection, Baptisms 1903-1912
- r. 2 Marriages 1903-1912
- r. 2 Appendix N.D.
- r. 2 Probationers 1913-1919
- r. 2 Record Of Members In Full Connection 1912-1919
- r. 2 Record Of Baptisms 1913-1919
- r. 2 Marriage Records 1912-1921
- r. 2 Marriage Certificate Of Booker T. Washington, Jr. And Clara Bowser Dated November 11, 1918
- r. 2 Trustees Meetings Minutes 1943-1947

Historical And Vital Register Books (cont.)

- r. 2 Miscellaneous Correspondence 1941
- r. 2 Insurance Documents 1943
- r. 2 Financial Report 1950-1951
- r. 2 Government Correspondence
- r. 2 Certificate Of Incorporation Sept. 28, 1891
- r. 2 Quarterly Conferences 1894-1897, 1898-1901, 1902-1906, 1906- 1909, 1909-1912, 1912-1919
- r. 2 Historic Papers 1897-1929
- r. 2 Property Purchase, Tax Certificates, Legal Correspondence
- r. 2 Church Membership Register 1944-52, 1952-54, 1954-64
- r. 2 Baptisms 1959-1979
- r. 2 Record Of Preparatory Members 1965-1969
- r. 2 Official Record Of Full Membership 1959-1980
- r. 2 Marriages 1964-1979
- r. 2 Death Records 1959-1980
- r. 2 Sunday School Board Meetings Minutes 1902-1907
- r. 2 Expenditure Book 1910
- r. 2 Publications

The *PUBLICATIONS, 1904-1959*, series comprises church publications of annual financial statements, anniversary journals and programs. The church organ, *The Ebenezer Messenger* for the years 1957-1959 is included.

- r. 2 Annual Financial Statements 1904, 1905, 1912, 1913
- r. 2 Mortgage Burning And Jubilee Program October 18-26, 1914
- r. 2 Anniversary Journals, 80th, 84th, 100th, 104th, 108th, 115th, 119th
- r. 2 History Of The Choirs 1867-1938
- r. 2 The Ebenezer Messenger Dec. 15, 1957, Sept. 6, 1959