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## Presbyterian Church - Bowling Green, Kentucky (MSS 316)

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Manuscripts & Folklife Archives  
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 Western Kentucky University  
 Bowling Green, KY 42101-1092

*Descriptive Inventory*

**MSS 316    PRESBYTERIAN Church – Bowling Green, Kentucky**

9 boxes. 27 folders. 26 items. 1819-2000. Originals, photocopies, typescripts.

1971.18.1

**ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY**

“The Presbyterian Church of Bowling Green” was formed on 9 April 1819 with 27 members, including two African Americans. Under its first pastor, Joseph B. Lapsley, the church was established near the present-day Pioneer Cemetery in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Between the time of Lapsley’s death in 1823 and the destruction of its building by fire about 1831, the church languished. After the arrival of Reverend Samuel Calvert from Tennessee in 1831, however, the church expanded its membership and built a new church building on land donated by James Rumsey Skiles at State and Tenth Streets. Franklin and Mary Kendall Jones, missionaries from Massachusetts, established a school for girls in the basement of the church.

After Samuel Calvert’s death in 1837, doctrinal differences within the Presbyterian Church split the congregation. In November 1839, 33 members withdrew to form the more liberal New School Presbyterian Church under Reverend Archer C. Dickerson, while the remaining 45 members united in the more conservative Old School. The two factions remained divided for the next 19 years but continued to share the church building. In August 1858, the Old School, finding difficulty in supporting its separate existence, reunited with the New School.

Political differences during the Civil War revived the Old School-New School divisions within the church. In 1868, the congregation again split into the First Presbyterian Church (corresponding to the Old School) and the Second Presbyterian Church (corresponding to the New School). The Second Presbyterian Church built its own building at the corner of Center and Eighth Streets and became known as the “Pine Knot Church.”

In 1888, the Second Presbyterian Church accepted an offer to reunite with the First Presbyterian Church. Its property was sold and the proceeds used to expand the church at State and Tenth Streets.

Bibliographical note  
 Duncan, Kate Clagett. *Divided Way: The Story of The Presbyterian Church of Bowling Green, Kentucky.*

## **COLLECTION NOTE**

The collection consists primarily of original and photocopied session minutes of the Presbyterian Church of Bowling Green, Kentucky, from 1819 to 1906. Session Book 1 (Box 1, Folder 2) covers 1819-1858 and includes minutes of the New School Presbyterian Church from 1839-1858). A typescript of Session Book 1 is also in the collection (Box 1, Folder 2a).

Session Book 1-A (Box 1, Folder 3) covers 1819-1862 and includes minutes of the Old School Presbyterian Church from 1839-1858. (Session Book 1-A is so designated because after the church split into the two schools, the clerk of the New School retained the original session book and the clerk of the Old School began by recopying the first 20 years of church minutes into this book.) A duplicate copy of Session Book 1-A, which in some cases provides more readable copies of certain pages, is in Box 1, Folder 3a. Also in Box 1 is the Session Book, 1870-1888 (Folder 4) and three memoranda and cash books (Folder 5) for the Second Presbyterian Church.

Box 2 contains Session Book 2 covering 1861-1867 (Folder 1); the First Presbyterian Church's Session Book 3 covering 1868-1888 (Folders 2 and 3); and session minutes covering 1889-1906 (Folders 4 and 5). These books include members lists as well as lists of elders, deacons, marriages, baptisms and deaths.

Also included (Box 2, Folder 6) is a consolidated index of church members prepared by the church history committee and covering 1819-1888. This index includes membership in the various church factions for that period, together with a citation to the session book in which the information appears. It should be noted that this index also contains the names of members of the Bowling Green Cumberland Presbyterian Church from 1866-1884 as listed in the first session book of that church. (The Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized on 12 August 1866 and a church building was constructed at the corner of Center and Eleventh Streets in Bowling Green.)

Boxes 3 through 9 contain the Session Books from 1906-2000, with the exception of the years 1925-1935. Also included (Box 9, Folder 3) are notes from a review of the session books, 1906-1998, conducted by the History Committee.

## **SHELF LIST**

| <b>BOX 1</b> | <b>Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green</b>                                    | <b>1819-1879</b>               | <b>8 items</b> |
|--------------|---|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Folder 1     | Inventory   |                                |                |
| Folder 2     | Session Book 1 (includes members lists and minutes of New School 1839-1858)   | Apr. 9, 1819-<br>Sept. 1, 1858 | 1 item         |
| Folder 2a    | Typescript of Session Book 1  | Apr. 9, 1819-<br>Sept. 1, 1858 | 1 item         |
| Folder 3     | Session Book 1-A (includes members lists and minutes of Old School 1839-1858) | Apr. 9, 1819-<br>Mar. 19, 1862 | 1 item         |

|              |   |                                 |                |
|--------------|---|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Folder 3a    | Session Book 1-A – Duplicate copy with foreword by church history committee   | Apr. 9, 1819<br>Mar. 19, 1862   | 1 item         |
| Folder 4     | Session Book (Second Presbyterian Church)   | 1870-1888                       | 1 item         |
| Folder 5     | Memoranda and cash books (Second Presbyterian Church)   | 1870-1879                       | 3 items        |
| <b>BOX 2</b> | <b>Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green</b>  | <b>1861-1906</b>                | <b>6 items</b> |
| Folder 1     | Session Book 2; includes members lists  | May 3, 1861-<br>May 17, 1867    | 1 item         |
| Folder 2     | Session Book 3 (pp. 1-139)<br>(First Presbyterian Church)   | Mar. 11, 1868-<br>June 21, 1882 | 1 item         |
| Folder 3     | Session Book 3 (pp. 140-189);<br>(First Presbyterian Church); includes<br>register pages 1-143 of elders, deacons,<br>members, baptisms, marriages, deaths  | July 5, 1882-<br>Dec. 23, 1888  | 1 item         |
| Folder 4     | Session minutes   | Jan. 6, 1889-<br>Apr. 12, 1899  | 1 item         |
| Folder 5     | Session minutes; includes register of<br>elders, members, deacons, baptisms,<br>marriages   | Apr. 16, 1899-<br>Apr. 2, 1906  | 1 item         |
| Folder 6     | Consolidated index of members;<br>includes all divisions of the church for<br>this period as well as members of<br>Cumberland Presbyterian Church 1866-1884 | 1819-1888                       | 1 item         |
| <b>BOX 3</b> | <b>Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green</b>  | <b>1906-1949</b>                | <b>3 items</b> |
| Folder 1     | Session Book  | 1906-1924                       | 1 item         |
| Folder 2     | Session Book  | 1936-1943                       | 1 item         |
| Folder 3     | Session Book  | 1943-1949                       | 1 item         |
| <b>BOX 4</b> | <b>Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green</b>  | <b>1949-1959</b>                | <b>2 items</b> |
| Folder 1     | Session Book  | 1949-1954                       | 1 item         |

|              |   |                  |                |
|--------------|---|------------------|----------------|
| Folder 2     | Session Book  | 1955-1959        | 1 item         |
| <b>BOX 5</b> | <b>Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green</b>                                      | <b>1960-1965</b> | <b>2 items</b> |
| Folder 1     | Session Book  | 1960-1962        | 1 item         |
| Folder 2     | Session Book  | 1963-1965        | 1 item         |
| <b>BOX 6</b> | <b>Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green</b>                                      | <b>1966-1970</b> | <b>2 items</b> |
| Folder 1     | Session Book  | 1966-1968        | 1 item         |
| Folder 2     | Session Book  | 1969-1970        | 1 item         |
| <b>BOX 7</b> | <b>Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green</b>                                      | <b>1971-1979</b> | <b>2 items</b> |
| Folder 1     | Session Book  | 1971-1974        | 1 item         |
| Folder 2     | Session Book  | 1975-1979        | 1 item         |
| <b>BOX 8</b> | <b>Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green</b>                                      | <b>1980-1990</b> | <b>2 items</b> |
| Folder 1     | Session Book  | 1980-1986        | 1 item         |
| Folder 2     | Session Book  | 1986-1990        | 1 item         |
| <b>BOX 9</b> | <b>Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green</b>                                      | <b>1991-2000</b> | <b>3 items</b> |
| Folder 1     | Session Book  | 1991-1994        | 1 item         |
| Folder 2     | Session Book  | 1995-2000        | 1 item         |
| Folder 3     | Notes on Session Books, 1906-1998 and memorials, collected by History Committee | 1998             | 1 item         |

## **BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD**

MSS PRESBYTERIAN Church – 1819-2000  
316 Bowling Green, Kentucky

Session books of the Presbyterian Church, Bowling Green, Kentucky. Includes session minutes and membership lists. An index of all members from 1819-1888 includes members of Bowling Green Cumberland Presbyterian Church from 1866-1884.

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## **SUBJECT ANALYTICS**

African Americans – Warren County  
Churches – Warren County  
Cumberland Presbyterian Church – Warren County – Relating to  
First Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green  
Herdman, James Makemie, 1803-1891 – Relating to B2, F4  
New School Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green  
Old School Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green  
Pine Knot Church – Bowling Green  
Presbyterian churches – Warren County  
Second Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green  
Religion – Warren County

## **SEE or SEE ALSO**

Cumberland Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green

See also:

Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green

First Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green

See also:

Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green

Pine Knot Church – Bowling Green

See:

Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green

Second Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green

See:

Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green

Niedermeier/Jeffrey 03/25/2010