


11-15-2017

# Presbyterian Church - Bowling Green, Kentucky (MSS 623)

Manuscripts & Folklife Archives  
Western Kentucky University, [mssfa@wku.edu](mailto:mssfa@wku.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc\\_mss\\_fin\\_aid](https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_mss_fin_aid)

 Part of the [Christian Denominations and Sects Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Folklife Archives, Manuscripts &, "Presbyterian Church - Bowling Green, Kentucky (MSS 623)" (2017). *MSS Finding Aids*. Paper 4375.  
[https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc\\_mss\\_fin\\_aid/4375](https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_mss_fin_aid/4375)

This Finding Aid is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in MSS Finding Aids by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact [topscholar@wku.edu](mailto:topscholar@wku.edu).

Manuscripts & Folklife Archives  
 Department of Library Special Collections  
 Western Kentucky University  
 Bowling Green, KY 42101-1092

*Descriptive Inventory*

**MSS 623    PRESBYTERIAN Church – Bowling Green, Kentucky**

½ box. 11 folders. 28 items. 1825-1949. Photocopies.

1977.60.1

**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 that became known as the Bowling Green Female Academy.

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.

**COLLECTION NOTE**

This collection consists of a small selection of photocopies of church records pertaining to the history of the Presbyterian Church in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Construction of the new church building in the mid-1830s is documented by subscription and expense lists and

committee minutes (Folder 3). Subscriptions to purchase a church bell (Folder 4) are accompanied by an agreement between the now-split congregation to install it in their shared building. Contemporary narratives discuss the 1837 and 1868 schisms (Folders 2 and 7 respectively), the latter resulting in the incorporation of the First Presbyterian Church (Folder 6). The 1858 and 1888 reunifications are represented, respectively, by a letter of Reverend Archer C. Dickerson (Folder 5) and an invitation from the First Presbyterian Church to the Second (Folder 10). An early history of the Women's Missionary Society of the church (Folder 9) is also included.

### ***SHELF LIST***

<b>BOX 1</b>	<b>Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green</b>	<b>1825-1949</b>	<b>28 items</b>
Folder 1	Inventory		1 item
Folder 2	Dismissal letters; members' request to engage a pastor; agreement of Old and New Schools to share church building; resolution to retain Reverend A.C. Dickerson; Dickerson's views on the 1837 schism	1825-1842	5 items
Folder 3	Accounts, expenses, subscription lists, committee minutes relating to construction of church building and female academy	1834-1837	6 items
Folder 4	Subscription list for church bell; agreement to hang bell in church tower; undated newspaper clipping regarding bell	1837-1840	4 items
Folder 5	Reverend A.C. Dickerson's letter regarding pending reunification; minutes approving hire of Reverend R. K. Smoot	1858-1860	2 items
Folder 6	Act incorporating First Presbyterian Church	1868	1 item
Folder 7	Narrative of post-Civil War schism, placed at beginning of new volume of session records (photocopy and typescript)	1868	2 items
Folder 8	Resolutions and declarations regarding post-Civil War schism	1866-1867	3 items
Folder 9	History of Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society, 1874-1893	n.d.	1 item

Folder 10	Invitation for reunification from First Presbyterian to Second Presbyterian Church	1888	1 item
Folder 11	Proposals for union of Presbyterian Church U.S. and Westminster Presbyterian Church U.S.A. of Bowling Green under name "Presbyterian Church of Bowling Green, Kentucky"	1911?, 1949	2 items

### ***BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD***

MSS 623 PRESBYTERIAN Church – 1825-1949  
Bowling Green, Kentucky

Minutes, letters, resolutions, subscriptions and other documents relating to the early history of the Presbyterian Church in Bowling Green, Kentucky, including doctrinal schisms in 1837 and 1868 and the reunification of its congregation.

½ box. 11 folders. 28 items. Photocopies.  
1977.60.1

### ***SUBJECT ANALYTICS***

Bowling Green Female Academy – Bowling Green – Relating to B1,F3  
Churches – Warren County  
Dickerson, Archer Charles, 1806-1891 B1,F5  
Dickerson, Archer Charles, 1806-1891 – Relating to B1,F2,4  
First Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green  
Jones, Franklin, 1801-1846 – Relating to B1,F2  
Jones, Mary (Kendall), 1806?-1884 – Relating to B1,F2  
Missionary societies – Presbyterian B1,F9  
New School Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green – Relating to B1,F2,4  
Old School Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green – Relating to B1,F2,4  
Presbyterian churches – Warren County  
Second Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green  
Smoot, Richmond Kelley, 1836-1905 – Relating to B1,F5,7,9  
Religion – Warren County

### ***SEE or SEE ALSO***

First Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green  
See also:  
Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green

Second Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green  
See:  
Presbyterian Church – Bowling Green

Niedermeier/Jeffrey 11/15/2017