

Christiansburg Institute Museum & Archives

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Collection Number:	2021.12
Title:	Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church
Repository:	Christiansburg Institute Museum & Archives
Processed by:	Demiah Smith, CIMA Scanning Technician Ashley Palazzo, CIMA Metadata Specialist Jenny Nehrt, CIMA Curator
Physical Characteristics:	49 Digital Entries
Creator:	Michael Blankenship
Language:	English

Abstract

This collection includes photographs, church meeting minutes, research material about prominent families that attended Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, newspaper articles, and a typed history of the church. Please note this collection is digital only and the physical archive materials reside at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in Roanoke, Virginia.

Biographical / Historical Note

Fifth Avenue United Presbyterian Church was founded in 1890. Dr. L. L. Downing, born in Lexington, Virginia only a few months before the Emancipation Proclamation, and educated at Lincoln University and School of Theology, was commissioned by the "Northern" branch of the Presbyterian Church to establish a Presbyterian church among former slaves and the sons and daughters of slaves. Two Sunday School missionaries, Rev. P. R. Twine, followed by Rev. Moses Spurlock, had managed to organize a small Presbyterian study group before Dr. Downing's arrival. This beginning congregation of seven grew rapidly under Dr. Downing's

leadership and, with some financial assistance from the Freedman's Board, property was purchased and a church building erected.

Today's church stands on the original site, on Patton Avenue (formerly Fifth Avenue) at the corner of Third Street N.W., in the heart of the Gainsboro neighborhood. Although not the oldest Presbyterian congregation in the Roanoke Valley, Fifth Avenue has the distinction of being affiliated with the original body of Presbyterianism in America. (Now referred to as the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.) The other Presbyterian churches disaffiliated with this body to become the Presbyterian Church of the Confederate States of America. (Now referred to as the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.)

Fifth Avenue became a landmark in the black community during the ministry of Dr. Downing. Miss Lucy Addison, for whom Lucy Addison Middle School is named, taught Sunday School here. Dr. I. D. Burrell, for whom Burrell Hospital was named, was an elder in this church. In November 1959, a fire destroyed the church building. The congregation had different feelings as to where the new church building should be located. Some felt that the congregation should rebuild at a new site, further out in Northwest Roanoke, where many of the church's members were now living. Others, including the family of the late Dr. L. L. Downing, gave both historical and sentimental reasons for rebuilding in the same location. The majority of the congregation voted to rebuild on the original site, which is where the church stands today.

Collection Description

This collection contains the digital files of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church archives. This collection includes photographs, church meeting minutes, research material about prominent families that attended Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, newspaper articles, and a typed history of the church. Please note this collection is digital only and the physical archive materials reside at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in Roanoke, Virginia.

Arrangement Description

This collection is arranged into series by the type of archival material.

Separated Materials

The physical archive materials reside at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church.

Related Materials

The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church archives at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in Roanoke, Virginia.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Digital files acquired from Michael Blankenship, the church archivist at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church.

Subject Headings

- Church -- History
- African Americans--Virginia--Roanoke County--History.
- African Americans--Virginia--Roanoke County--Biography.
- Roanoke County (Va.)--Biography.
- African Americans--Virginia--Roanoke County--History

Using the Collection

ACCESS STATEMENT

The digital collection is open and available for use on the Christiansburg Institute Digital Archive.

RIGHTS STATEMENT

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PREFERRED CITATION

[ITEM DESCRIPTION], Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Collection. [DATE] Christiansburg Institute Museum & Archives. Christiansburg, VA.

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Church History

Binder 1:

Church History

Binder 2:

- Section 1: Church History
- Section 2: Rev. P. R. Twine
- Section 3: Rev. J. L. Spurlarke
- Section 4: Rev. L. L. Downing
- Section 5: Rev. H. L. McCrorey
- Section 6: Rev. W. J. Simmons
- Section 7: Rev. C. A. Kearns

Binder 3:

- Section 1: Rev. William G Heck III
- Section 2: Rev. James R. Ephraim Jr
- Section 3: Rev. Dr. Vernie L. Bolden Sr.
- Section 4: Rev. Michael Lynn Moore
- Section 5: Rev. Dr. William T. Reinhold
- Section 6: Dr. Russ Merritt
- Section 7: Rev. Vernie L. Bolden Jr
- Section 8: Miscellaneous

Binder 4: Life Events: Births, Marriages, and Deaths

- Section 1: A
- Section 2: B
- Section 3: C
- Section 4: D
- Section 5: F
- Section 6: G
- Section 7: H
- Section 8: I
- Section 9: K
- Section 10: M
- Section 11: P
- Section 12: R
- Section 13: S
- Section 14: T
- Section 15: W
- Section 16: Y

Series 2: Session Meetings

- Binder 1: 1942-1972 Session Minutes
- Binder 2: 1973- 1976 Session Minutes
- Binder 3: 1977-1989 Fifth Ave Presbyterian Church Membership

1989-1994 Session Minutes
Binder 4: 1995-2002 Session Minutes
Binder 5: 2001-2004 Session Minutes
2002-2010 Session Minutes
Subseries 1: Bulletins
Subseries 2: Directory
Subseries 3: Golden Jubilee

Series 3: Women's Organization Meetings

Binder 1: 1957-1962 meeting minutes
Binder 2: 1962-1965 meeting minutes
Notebooks 1-3: 1963-1973 meeting minutes

Series 4: Photographs

Photo Album 1
Photo Album 2

Series 5: :

Newspaper Article 1993

Series 6: Digital Files (not on CIDA)

Subseries 1: Folders
Folder 1: Audrey Whitlock
Folder 2: Board of Freedman
Folder 3: Bolden Jr.
Folder 4: Bolden Sr.
Folder 5: Church Anniversary Booklets and Bulletins
Folder 6: Church Fire
Folder 7: Church History Older Files
Folder 8: Church Plans
Folder 9: Downing
Folder 10: Downing - Parks File
Folder 11: Dupree
Folder 12: Early Church Members
Folder 13: Ephraim
Folder 14: Fifth Avenue - New
Folder 15: Fifth Avenue - Old
Folder 16: Fifth Avenue Church Directory
Folder 17: Fifth Avenue Church Plans
Folder 18: Fifth Avenue Contracts and Documents

Folder 19: Fifth Avenue Founders - Early Members
Folder 20: Fifth Avenue Funeral Bulletins
Folder 21: Fifth Avenue Prehistory
Folder 22: First Presbyterian
Folder 23: Gorum
Folder 24: Hayes
Folder 25: Heck
Folder 26: Historic Photos
Folder 27: Joyce Bolden Pics
Folder 28: Kearns - Fires - New Church
Folder 29: Lucy Addison
Folder 30: Lylburn Downing School
Folder 31: McCrorey
Folder 32: Merritt
Folder 33: Moore
Folder 34: Powerpoint
Folder 35: Presbyterian-Synod meetings
Folder 36: Reinhold
Folder 37: Simmons - Marion Anderson - Roland Hayes
Folder 38: Spurlake
Folder 39: Stonewall Jackson Window
Folder 40: Twine

Subseries 2: Individual Files

5th Avenue Logo - 4 Files
5th Avenue Survey
Fth Pres Founding
25th anniversary Booklet
0227