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# Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, Washington, DC

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FIFTEENTH ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH RECORDS, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Collection 34-1

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June 1980

## Scope Note

John F. Cook, founder of the Fifteenth St. Presbyterian Church, had been a teacher in a private school for Negroes in Washington and a class leader in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He was encouraged by the Rev. John C. Smith, pastor of the Fourth Presbyterian Church to become a Presbyterian and shortly after he was licensed by the Presbytery of the District of Columbia in 1841. He then called a meeting in his school room to explain the principles of Presbyterianism to a group of Negroes. At this meeting, following a sermon by the Rev. Mr. Stratton of Portsmouth, Virginia, some nineteen Negro members joined in forming a Presbyterian Church. Most of the original members were Presbyterians coming from local white Presbyterian churches in Washington, D.C.

The Fifteenth St. Presbyterian Church was organized when the white Presbyterian churches pressured their Negro members to withdraw. The church was received by the Presbytery the following year. John F. Cook was ordained as its first pastor in 1843, after having met the educational requirements of the Presbyterian Church. The records of the Fifteenth St. Presbyterian Church which span « linear foot are xerox copies of the original constitution and minutes of sessions from 1841 to 1890.

The records indicate that the church was organized as the First Colored Presbyterian Church and its name was later changed to Fifteenth St. Presbyterian Church. The Church register is also included with the Fifteenth St. Presbyterian Church records.

### Scope Note continued

Dated 1874, the records include the register of Pastors, register of Elders, list of the trustees and officers of the church, names of church members, register of funerals in general, register of infant baptisms and register of marriages.

Also included in the collection is a subscription book signed by John F. Cook who was in charge of receiving and recording pledges from the members of the congregation towards the purchase of a new building. The book is organized by subscriber's name, residence, amount subscribed, amount paid and remarks. The subscription book also identifies the church as The First Colored Presbyterian Church.

## Series Description

**Series A**  
Box 34-1

**Records**

Include xerox copies of the original minutes and documents, an the founding and organization of the Fifteenth St. Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. One book of records include: the register of pastors, elders, trustees and officers of the church. Also included are registers of church members, funerals, infant baptisms and marriage. There is a subscription book signed by John F. Cook used in the pursuit of pledges and funds that were to be used in a building project. There is a souvenir program dated 1916 for the Seventy-Fifth anniversary of the Fifteenth St. Presbyterian Church. The Rev. Francis Grimke was pastor of the church at this time.

## Container List

| <b>Series A</b> | <b>Records</b>  |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Box</b>      | <b>Folder</b>   |
| 34-1            | 1 Fifteenth St. Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C. - Records of session and the church records. 1841-1868. Volume I Copy I                   |
|                 | 2 Fifteenth St. Presbyterian Church Washington, D.C. - Records session and the church records. 1841-1868. Volume I Copy 2                       |
|                 | 3 Fifteenth St. Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C. - Records of session and the church records. 1874-1890 Volume II Copy I                   |
|                 | 4 Fifteenth St. Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C. - Records of session and the church records. 1874-1890. Volume II Copy 2                  |
|                 | 5 Fifteenth St. Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C. - Subscription book for the First Colored Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C. 1852-1855 |
|                 | 6 Souvenir Program - Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church. November 19-21, 1916.                               |