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### METROPOLITAN AME Church

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METROPOLITAN A.M.E. CHURCH RECORDS  
Collection 70-1 to 70-9

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March 1982

MANUSCRIPT DIVISION

## Scope Note

The Metropolitan A.M.E. Church Records include materials concerning the history of the church from its founding, and some of its activities up to about 1927. The records were acquired in 1972 and are approximately four linear feet in size. The collection spans the period 1825-1972, however the primary focus of the records date 1838-1927.\*

A large portion of the collection is bound ledgers that include board minutes, financial records, and church documents relating to membership, births, deaths; and marriages. In 1981 the ledgers were microfilmed then rebound to aid in the preservation of the records.

Other materials in the collection include notes related to members, history of various aspects of the church, reports, news articles, programs, and photographs. Of particular note are the many indentures some bearing the endorsement of Frederick Douglass, Recorder of Deeds of D.C. during the late 1800's. Also included are materials related to the Simms Family, who helped found the church, and records of the Bethel Literary and Historical Association a popular literary society that attracted prominent speakers to discuss issues of importance during the turn of the century.

**\* ALL REPRODUCTION OF BOUND VOLUMES ARE TO BE MADE FROM THE MICROFILM COPY ONLY**

Brief History

The Metropolitan A.M.E. Church located at 1518 M Street, N. W., is one of the oldest churches in Washington D.C. Recognized for its historical significance, the Joint Committee on Landmarks of the National Capital declared that the church should be restored and preserved, while the Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation selected the church as one of the District's most historic sites. This building constructed from 1882-1886 as the national cathedral of the A.M.E. denomination, is one of the few remaining structures of the once flourishing Black settlement along M and L Streets N.W.

The Metropolitan A.M.E. Church was founded in 1872, an outgrowth of the Union Bethel and Israel Bethel churches founded in 1821 and 1838 respectively. These two congregations were formed after racial strife divided the integrated churches in D.C., resulting in the Black people leaving to form their own places of worship.

Initially church services were held in homes, schools, and businesses until church structures could be built. From this strong heritage Metropolitan A.M.E. Church has continued to be a pillar in the community, boasting some of the most notable Washingtonians as members. Among them Frederick Douglass, whose state funeral was held at the church. The silver candelabras, Douglass gave the church in 1885 still grace the altar.

### Brief History continued

Throughout its history Metropolitan A. has been known for its community activities. The famed Bethel Literary Society organized in 1881 by Bishop Daniel A. Payne attracted to the church such speakers as Kelly Miller, Mary Church Terrell, Eleanor Roosevelt, Archibald Grimke, Mary McLeod Bethune, and U.S. Presidents; William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and William Howard Taft. For many years high school and Howard University graduations were held at the church. Today community and political groups still hold meetings and programs at the church.

Source: Metropolitan A.M.E. Church Records; Simms Family Papers; Vertical file - "Churches, Washington D.C. Methodist, Metropolitan A.M.E."

### Series Description

- Series A Indentures**  
Box 70-1 This series is comprised of indentures relating to property belonging to Union Bethel and subsequently Metropolitan A.M.E. Church, dated 1867-1892.
- Series B Union Bethel A.M.E. church**  
Box 70-1 to Box 70-2 Included in this series are materials related to the Union Bethel A.M.E Church including, constitutions, minutes, biographical notes, reports, and notes on the history and church activities dating from 1838-1883. There are materials documenting the Union Relief Association, Sinking Fund Association, colored schools, and the Bethel Literary and Historical Association.
- Series C Metropolitan A.M.E. Church**  
Box 70-3 to Box 70-6 These materials span the period 1871- and includes; minutes, financial records, reports, memorabilia and notes related to church activities and history. There are three programs documenting the laying of the cornerstone 1881, an anniversary celebration in 1918, and a church service in 1972.
- Series D Simms Family**  
Box 70-7 found- The materials in this series help to document the Simms Family, one of the founding families of Union Bethel and Metropolitan A.M.E. church. Noteworthy are the record of births, deaths, and marriages of the Simms Family dating 1825-1872. Additional materials can be found in the Simms Family Papers, also deposited in the MSRC Manuscript Division.
- Series E Various Church Records and Memorabilia**  
Box 70-7 This small series contains fragments of notes and printed materials related to the A.M.E. Church.
- Series F Bethel Literary and Historical Association**  
Box 70-7 This series is comprised of one bound volume of minutes dating Oct. 15, 1895- Oct. 28, 1902. Additional materials are located in the Bethel Literary and Historical Records, also deposited in the MSRC Manuscript Division.

Series Description continued

**Series G Photographs and Drawings**

Box 70-7 This series includes 3 sketches of the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church, a photograph of the War & Navy Department baseball team, and a photograph of two unidentified men.

**Series H Oversize Items**

Box 70-8 This series includes one bound volume recording baptisms deaths, finance, historical sketches, and war records, dating 1838-1927. Also there are 4 posters related to church activities.

**Series I Microfilm**

Box 70-9 The entire collection was microfilmed in 1981 as a preservation aid. The microfilm arrangement differs from the arrangement of the collection, so an index is provided for easier access between the original document and the microfilm.

Container List

**Series A Indentures**

Box	Folder
70-1	1 Aug. 20, 1867 - Nancy Stewart et al, and Armistead Reed et al
2	Mar. 20, 1867 - St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum and Joseph Stewart
3	Aug. 5, 1874 - Thomas E. Green and Armistead Reed et al
4	Aug. 5, 1874 - William H. Ward and Joseph Stewart
5	Aug. 10, 1876 - John A. Simms et al and John E. Kendall
6	Feb. 12, 1880 - John E. Kendall and John A. Simms et al
7	July 25, 1874 - Armistead Reed et al and Frank P. Rollins
8	Aug. 10, 1876 - Frank T. Rawlings and Armistead Reed et al
9	Feb. 23, 1874 - Samuel Proctor et al and Thomas McGill
10	Apr. 23, 1880 - Thomas McGill and Samuel Proctor et al
11	Oct. 31, 1881 Samuel Proctor et al and Andrew Twine
12	Nov. 22, 1881 - Andrew Twine and Isaac L. Johnson et al
13	Dec. 28, 1881 - Andrew Twine and George R. Dolley et al
14	Apr. 12, St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum and the Union Bethel A.M.E. Church
15	June 9, 1885 - Union Bethel A.M.E. Church and Samuel Morsell et al
16	May 10, 1892 - Surviving Trustees of Union Bethel A.M.E. Church and Trustees of the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church
17	May 10, 1892 - Andrew and Carrie Twine, and Trustees of the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church
18	Nov. 1, 1881 - Election of Trustees Dec. 30, 1846 - George Bomford and Charles Stewart et al/ Dec. 15, 1882 - Andrew Twine et al and Jonathan B.H. Smith et al/ Dec. 23, 1882 - Jonathan B.H. Smith and Union Bethel A.M.E. Church/Dec. 28, 1882 Samuel Morsell et al and Union Bethel A.M.E. Church
19	Sept. 21, 1881 - Union Bethel A.M.E. Church and Andrew Twine
20	June 19, 1882 - John F. Ennis and Union Bethel A.M.E. Church
21	Dec. 20, 1861 - Charles and Nancy Stewart, and James L. Thomas et al

**Series B Union Bethel A.M.E. Church**

- 22 Constitution March 7, 1855
- 23 Minutes July 6, and 24; Oct. 2, 1838
- 24 Minutes Oct. 1841
- 25 Board of Trustees Minutes July 19, 1844 - 1854 (bound volume)

Container List

**Series B Union Bethel A.M.E. Church**  
Box Folder



- 70-2 26 Minutes July 14, 1850
- 27 Minutes Jan. 1854-March 1856
- 28 Minutes Apr. 23, 1854
- 29 Recording Steward's Book May 16, 1854 - Apr. 30, 1872 (bound volume)
- 30 Reports of the Board of Stewards Oct. 10, 1856 - May 15, 1865 (bound volume)
- 31 Constitution of the Sinking Fund Assn. (pl-6)
- 32 Ladies Sinking Fund Society - Deposit Book, 871-1883
- 33 Union Relief Assn. (notes-history)
- 34 Notes - history of various church activities
- 35 Notes - School, communion set, Bethel Literary & Historical Society
- 36 Letter of the Sec'y of the Interior ... Colored School of the Cities of Washington...1869
- 37 1st Annual Report the Superintendent of Colored Schools for Washington ...  
1870 (page 1 - xerox)
- 38 Biographical Notes - Abram Dent
- 39 Biographical Notes - Henry Lassiter
- 40 Biographical Notes - Charles Sawyer
- 41 Biographical Notes - James A. Shorter
- 42 Biographical Notes - Edward M. Thomas
- 43 Minutes (incomplete - 1 page) - recommendation for erection for building 1872
- 44 Report authorizing completion of building

**Series C Metropolitan A.M.E. Church**

- 70-3 45 Board of Trustees Minutes 1871-1878 (bound volume)
- 46 Minutes of the official Board Jan. 20, 1879 - July 1884 (bound volume)
- 47 Minutes of the official Board July 28, 1884 - April 23, 1894 (bound volume)
- 48 Minutes of the Board of Trustees Nov. 21, 1894 - Nov. 12, 1901 (bound volume)
- 70-4 49 Financial Record Nov. 1874 - Jan. 1882 (bound volume)
- 50 Monthly Subscribers to Board of Trustees from Mar. 4, 1878 (bound volume)
- 51 Receipts & Cost of Building Apr. 12, 1881 - Dec. 20, 1892 (bound volume)

Container List

**Series C Metropolitan A.M.E. Church continued**

Box	Folder
70-5	52 Receipts & Expenditures Nov. 7, 1885 Nov. 17, 1886
	53 Receipts & Expenditures Nov. 1885 - Apr. 13, 1888
	54 Certificate of payment to J.W. Bowser, 1887
	55 Financial Reports April 1888-April 1893 (xerox copy)
	56 Financial Reports April 1888-April 1893 (original)
	57 Quarterly Account of Receipts & Disbursements April 1893 - Nov. 12, 1901 (bound volume)
	58 Treasurer's Report June 10, 1896 - May 1, 1907 (bound volume)
	59 Financial Report, Secretary Board of Trustees May 25, 1903
	60 Notes - Sale of Bethel Hall property July 25, 1904
70-6	61 Financial papers - church improvement 1 10-1924
	62 Financial papers - Trustees Report Jan. 30, 1917
	63 Financial papers - form letter (blank) 1919
	64 Trustee Volunteers Club - reports July 11, 1921 - Jan. 22, 1922
	65 Bills & receipts 1921-1922
	66 The History of the Memorial Windows (xerox)
	67 Letter of reference for Miss Alberta Williams Oct. 2, 1918
	68 Bibliography (A.M.E. Church History)
	69 List of gifts for use in the church
	70 News article (xerox) "Missing Girl, Nude, Is Found Wedged In Organ of Church"
	71 Program - Laying of the cornerstone Oct. 3, 1881
	72 Program - Anniversary March 24-April 15, 1918
	73 Program - Sunday Service March 19, 1972

**Series D**

**Simms Family**

70-7	74 Record of births, deaths and marriages, 1825-1872
	75 Fannie M. Simms - Obituary
	76 John A. Simms - correspondence Oct. 8, 1885
	77 John A. Simms - notebook 1911
	78 Louna M. Simms - daily notebook, 1904

Container List

**Series E Various Church Records and Memorabilia**

Box	Folder
70-7	79 Notes - fragments
	80 The Budget for 1881...Annual Report of the General Officers of the A.M.E

Church ...  
81 Sunshine Hall (book)

**Series F Bethel Literary and Historical Association**  
82 Minutes Oct. 15, 1895 - Oct. 28, 1902 (bound volume)

**Series G Photographs and Drawings**  
83 Sketches (3) Metropolitan A.M.E. Church  
84 Photograph - 2 unidentified men (John A. Simms?)  
85 Photograph - War & Navy Dept. Baseball Team

**Series H Oversize Items**  
70-8 Records of Baptism, deaths, finances, historical sketches, marriages and  
war  
records 1838-1927 (bound volume)  
Posters (4) of church activities

**Series I Microfilm**  
70-9 Index to Microfilm  
Unbound Records  
Bound Volumes Reel I  
Bound Volumes Reel 2  
Bound Volumes Reel 3