

COLLEGE of
CHARLESTON

AVERY RESEARCH CENTER
FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN
HISTORY AND CULTURE

**Inventory of the
Centenary Methodist Episcopal
Church Records, 1857-1994**

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Table of Contents

Descriptive Summary.....	3
Historical Note.....	3
Collection Overview.....	4
Collection Arrangement.....	4
Restrictions.....	4
Subject Headings.....	5
Administrative Information.....	5

Descriptive Summary

Title:	Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church Records, 1857-1994
Dates	1857-1994
Bulk	1866-1969
Creator:	Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church
Abstract:	<p>Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church, an African-American church, formed after the Civil War with the withdrawal of African-American members from Trinity United Methodist Church. In 1866, the congregation purchased its current building at 60 Wentworth Street, Charleston, South Carolina.</p> <p>The records in this collection cover the beginning of Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church (1866-1978). The collection is divided into two series: Member Records and Financial Records. Member records (1857-1978, with gaps) contain vital statistics from baptismal, marriage and donation records of church members. Financial Records (1899-1969, with gaps) include information regarding church expenditures and member donations.</p>
Extent:	4.0 Linear feet (6 archival boxes)
Repository:	Avery Research Center
Call Number:	AMN 1015
Language of Material:	Material in English

Historical Note

Prior to the establishment of Centenary United Methodist Church, free people of color had worshiped in the gallery of Trinity United Methodist Church. While the congregation was encouraged to continue worshipping in the gallery they decided to establish their own church. The Reverend T. Willard Lewis and the Reverend Alonzo Webster from New England assisted in the establishment of the new church, starting services in a room of the Memminger Normal School (and the first site of the Avery Normal Institute, at the corner of Beaufain and St. Phillip Streets). Due to growth of membership, a larger structure was necessary.

In 1865, Bishop Osmen C. Baker of the Methodist Episcopal Church appointed the Reverend Alonzo Webster of Vermont to take charge of the unsettled congregation. Bishop Baker was impressed by the earnest prayers of the congregation for a suitable building and promised them the aid of the Missionary Society of New England in their effort.

The Wentworth Street Baptist Church (formerly the Second Baptist Church) offered their building for sale. The structure at 60 Wentworth Street was designed by Edward Brickle White and erected in 1842. After a sacrificial struggle that challenged the congregation's devotion, the required purchase price of \$20,000 in gold was paid on April 10, 1866. Some of the gold had to be shipped from New York due to the lack of availability in Charleston. The deed was prepared to the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church on April 10, 1866, to be held in trust by Alonzo Webster, Charles Holloway, George Shrewsbury, John Gibbs, Jacob Mills, Samuel Weston, January Holmes and Archibald Walker, trustees of the church. The first seven pastors

(with the exception of the Reverend W.O. Weston, who carried out the unexpired term of the Reverend T. Willard Lewis) were white. The Reverend Joshua E. Wilson was the first African-American pastor to serve.

The Quarterly Conference of the Charleston District appointed the Reverend W.H. Lawrence to secure the deed of the property of Centenary United Methodist Church from Missionary Society of New England vesting title to the Charleston Board of Trustees on November 29, 1884.

SOURCES: Lilly, Edward G., edited. "Historic Churches of Charleston South Carolina" Charleston: Legerton and Co., 1966.

"The History of Centenary United Methodist Church: April 10, 1866-April 10, 2005." Charleston: Pearl's Desktop Publishing Services 2005.

Collection Overview

This collection is divided into two sections:

1. **Member Records** contains record books noting vital statistics from baptismal, marriage and donation records of church members. Of note is a record book initially titled, *Colored Members of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church 1857*, which includes a list of "Trinity Colored [Class] Leader, 1857", and a list of members of free people of color, or enslaved, in Class 1. Later records of Centenary Church (1866-circa 1868) lists names of class leaders, linked to lists of those in their classes, some with notations on their deaths, expulsions, transfer, etc. Also, includes listings of pastors, with salary notations (1866-1935); baptisms, noting date of baptism, and if an infant, child, or adult; a chronological record of marriages, noting name of parties, resident, places of birth, etc.; list of probationers (1868-1931), with some notations as to when received and by whom. The record book from 1919-1936 holds the complete meeting minutes of the Board of Trustees regarding church repairs, fund raisers, election of committee members, finances, etc. The "Stewards' Account" (1894-1897) record book names the leaders of 76 different classes of prominent families in the African-American community, including Ancrum, Fields, Fielding, Fludd, Heyward, McFall, Mickey, Mouzon, Noisette, Pequette, Rollerson, Seabrooke, Simmons and Washington among others. This book is a listing of classes with student and teachers, with some notations as to deaths, transfers, etc. In the "loose papers" folders, of note is a small envelope for a "Pound Party" for the Jenkins Orphanage (1908). Also, holds a photocopy of a brief history of Centenary Church (1994). NOTE: **The record books and loose documents are in Fragile Condition.**

2. **Financial Records** holds ledgers and loose documents regarding records of member donations, arranged by class; a "benevolence record;" donation receipts; church expenditures; and notations regarding attendance. NOTE: The financial ledgers and loose documents are in Fragile Condition.

Collection Arrangement

1. Member Records, 1857-1994
2. Financial Records, 1899-1969

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

No Restrictions

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Subject Headings

African American churches -- South Carolina -- Charleston.

African American churches.

African Americans--South Carolina--Charleston--History

Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church--South Carolina--Charleston

Church records and registers--South Carolina--Charleston

Jenkins Orphanage Institute (Charleston, S.C.)

Methodist--South Carolina--Charleston

Trinity United Methodist Church--South Carolina--Charleston

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church Records, Avery Research Center, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC, USA.

Acquisition Information

Records donated by Howard Wine for Centenary United Methodist Church, 1993

Processing Information

Reprocessed by Georgette Mayo, May 2014

Edited by Aaron Spelbring, May 2014

Encoded by Aaron Spelbring, May 2014

Series 1: Member Records, 1857-1994

Contains records books which notes vital statistics from baptismal, marriage, donation, among other records of church members. Also, holds a photocopy of a brief history of Centenary Church (1994).

Box 1 Folder 1 History of Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church, 10 April, 1994

Brief history with listing of ministers from 1866-1994, photocopied

Box 1 Folder 2 Record Book, 1857

Initially titled, "Colored Members of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church 1857." Contains a list of "Trinity Colored [Class] Leaders, 1857" and a list of members of free people of color, or slaves in Class 1. Later records of Centenary Church (1866-circa 1868) lists names of class leaders, linked to lists of those in their classes, with some notations on their deaths, expulsion, transfer, etc. Also includes a list (1867) of baptisms, noting date of baptism and indicating if person was an infant, child or adult

Box 2 Folder 1 Record Book, 1866-1935

Contains list of pastors, with salary notations; lists of leaders, local preachers, exhorters, trustee and stewards, with some notations as to election, resignation, withdrawal and death, etc. (1866-1935); lists of classes, (with earlier and later numbering systems) noting leader and members with some notations on death, address, removal, etc.; a chronological list (1883-1927) of probationers, often with notations by whom received, address, and when and how baptized; list (1897-1927) of full members, noting address and by whom received; a chronological record (1879-1934) of marriages, noting name of parties, resident, places of birth, groom's occupation, ages, minister and witnesses; and a record (1879-1931, with breaks) of baptisms, noting adult, child or infant, with some birthdates, addresses, and names of parents, etc. given. Loose materials contain brief notes regarding various people, various lists of names of people giving money, and other miscellaneous materials; with a small envelope for a Pound Party for the Jenkins Orphanage, 1908.

Box 2 Folder 2 Record Book, 1868-1931

Includes a list of probationers, with some notations as to when received and by whom, class membership and death; lists of classes (1869-1878) noting leader and members with some notations regarding death, transfer, removal, expulsions, etc.; list of full members (1869-1877) in alphabetical order with notations on when, how and by whom received, death, expulsion, etc. and class number; record (circa 1868-1877) of official members, listing officers and position held, when appointed and when removed; record of salaries paid for A. Webster and W.O. Weston; record (1868-1879) of baptisms, noting if infant or adult, mode of baptism, officiating minister, place of baptism and names of parents; record (1872-1879) of marriages, noting date, name of couple and officiating minister. Some records provide residence, occupation of groom, location of marriage and witnesses. Loose materials contains the "Unit Worker's Prayer List and Record" (1920), which lists member contributions and an invitation to Centenary's "Annual Fellowship Tea," 1958.

Box 3 Folder 1 Record Book, 1885-1975

Contains a brief handwritten historical sketch of the southern Methodist Episcopal Church and of Centenary (1885) by Reverend W.H. Lawrence and a history of Centenary's organ (1936); published program from 70th Anniversary (1936), containing a brief history of Centenary; list of pastors with notations when appointed and removed; list (1891) of elders, exhorters, trustees, stewards and class leaders and list of committees, with

notations regarding ; class records (1887-1893) listing name of and member, martial status, residence, and notations as to death, removal, transfer, etc.; list (1934-1945, with one name for 1962) of probationers listing marital status, when and by whom received; list (1872-1975, with breaks and one member joining for 1837) of full members, occasionally noting marital status, when how and by whom received, class number and a few remarks; record (1885-1969, with breaks) of marriages, noting date, names of couple, residence, place of birth, occupation of groom, age, officiating minister and witness; record (1886-1975, with breaks) of baptisms, noting date, name, adult or infant, names of parent, mode of baptism, place, officiating minister and some remarks on death; list (1935-1978, with breaks) of deaths, noting date and location of funeral.

Box 3 Folder 2 **Various documents, 1935-1936, 1956 and undated**

Holds loose materials from the previous volume titled, "Order of Business for the Colored Leaders Meeting, City Colored Mission, Charleston, South Carolina,"(undated) outlines the agenda for their meetings and details the role of secretaries and superintendents, and a photocopy of the 70th anniversary program (1936) of Centenary as week as an invitation (1956) to the Bricklayer's and Plasterer's Benevolent Association's annual meeting. Also, contains a receipt for donations to the Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society and a summary (1935) of organ repairs for the church.

Box 4 Folder 1 **Record Book: "Stewards' Account", 1894, 1891, 1896-1897**

Lists members and leaders of 76 different classes of prominent families in the African American community; record (1896-1897) of all four quarterly conference of Centenary, with minutes of the meetings and committee reports; list of local preachers, exhorters, stewards and trustees; list (1897) of members and leaders by class with some notations as to deaths, transfers, etc. Loose materials include an invitation (1891) to a lecture by Reverend C.N. Grandison, "The Only Solution to Our Problem."

Box 4 Folder 2 **Financial Ledger, 1919-1924**

Includes record of donations by church members. Also, includes addresses; "World Service Collections" (1923-1924) list donations of members of this committee

Box 5 Folder 1 **Record Book, 1913**

Lists members by class and address, with financial information regarding pastor salary and church expenses and the money collected in various benevolent activities including, "Freedmen Aid Missions." Also, contains probationers records; converts; and infants baptized. Transferred from Mickey Funeral Home Papers

Box 5 Folder 2 **Directory, 1914-1918**

Lists church members by class, noting addresses and as their financial contributions; list (1915-1916) of committees, stewards and trustees; list (1914) of committees and total amount of money raised; list (1917) of stewards and trustees as well as committees and salaries paid

Box 5 Folder 3 **Record Book, 1919-1936**

Contains complete meeting minutes (typed and handwritten) of the Board of Trustees regarding church repairs, fund raisers, election of committee members, finances, etc.; list (1923) of all furniture in the Parsonage.

- Box 5 Folder 4 Various documents, 1917-1937
- From the previous volume. Includes various meeting minutes of Board of Trustees as well as correspondence regarding repairs done to the church and financial statements from local banks. NOTE: **Documents are in Fragile Condition.**
- Box 5 Folder 5 Record Book, 1926-1928
- Entitled, "Official Record for the Sunday School Secretary, No. 1." Includes list of members, officers and donations. Also, includes attendance and record (1927, 1928) of two board meetings.
- Box 5 Folder 6 Various documents, 1929-1931
- Materials from previous volume includes invitations to a party (1930) given by the Epworth League; a costume party (1931) at Centenary and "Picture Story Paper" (1929).

Series 2: Financial Records, 1899-1969

- Holdes ledgers and loose documents regarding records of member donations, arranged by class; donation receipts; church expenditures and notations regarding attendance. NOTE: The financial ledgers are in Fragile Condition.
- Box 6 Folder 1 Financial ledger, 1899
- Includes record of donations by church members arranged by class.
- Box 6 Folder 2 Various documents, 1900, 1921-1922 and undated
- Loose materials from previous volume includes various notes regarding attendance, probation, and class members. Note: **Documents are in Fragile Condition.**
- Box 6 Folder 3 Financial Ledger, 1933-1945
- Includes record of donations by church members and attendance for 1941, 1942 and 1945. Loose materials include donation receipts.
- Box 6 Folder 4 Financial Ledger, 1946-1952
- Includes record of donations by church members and a record (1947-1952) of receipts, noting reimbursements, salaries of church leaders and deposits for the church; a record (1947-1952) for "World Service," listing donations; a record (1952) of a board meeting.
- Box 6 Folder 5 Various documents, 1952 and undated
- Materials from the previous volume includes papers regarding member donations, church expenditures and a copy of a letter (1952) regarding painting of Centenary.
- Box 6 Folder 6 Financial Ledger, 1952-1958
- Includes record of donations by church members, church expenditures and salaries paid. Loose materials contain a list of donations for 1953.
- Box 6 Folder 7 Financial Ledger, circa 1959
- Includes record of donations by church members, noting street address.

Box 6 Folder 8

Financial Ledger, 1968-1969

Includes record of donations by church members and money disbursed. Also, a listing of some church members by address and phone numbers.