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Boston, Mass. Berkeley Temple Congregational Church records, 1827-1907. RG0029

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Description is written in: English.

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Congregational Library & Archives

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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Historical Note	4
Scope and Contents	5
Arrangement	5
Administrative Information	6
Controlled Access Headings	6
Bibliography	7
Collection Inventory	7
Church records	7
Administrative records	7
Vital records	9
Church community records	9
Sunday school records	10
Ecclesiastic council records	10
Church programming and events	11

Summary Information

Repository: Congregational Library & Archives

Creator: Berkeley Street Church (Boston, Mass.)

Creator: Berkeley Temple (Boston, Mass.)

Creator: Berkeley Temple Congregational Church (Boston, Mass.)

Creator: Pine Street Church (Boston, Mass.)

Title: Boston, Mass. Berkeley Temple Congregational Church records, 1827-1907.

ID: RG0029

Date [inclusive]: 1827-1907

Physical Description: 3.32 Cubic Feet (5 boxes)

Language of the Material: English .

Abstract: The Pine Street Church was formed in 1827. In April of 1857, the Committee of the Pine Street Church met to discuss the sale of the church's property. The church building was later sold in July of 1857. After the sale of the building, the Pine Street Church and Society purchased land for a new church building at the intersection of Berkeley Street and Warren Avenue in the South End of Boston. By 1861, the new church was completed and had changed its name to the Berkeley Street Church. In 1887, the Berkeley Street Church changed their name to Berkeley Temple. In 1904, the name of the church was changed once more to Berkeley Temple Congregational Church. At the suggestion of an ecclesiastical council, the Berkeley Temple Congregational Church merged with the Union Congregational Church in 1907, which later merged with the Old South Church in 1948. This collection includes church records of administrative and vital records, including church registers, correspondence, pew tax records, committee reports, and cash ledgers. The collection also includes community records such as Sunday school minute and roll books, ecclesiastical council letters, circulars, and a scrapbook.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Boston, Mass. Berkeley Temple Congregational Church records, 1827-1907, RG0029. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Historical Note

The Pine Street Church was formed in 1827 in Boston by the then five Orthodox Congregational Churches, those being Old South Church, Park St. Church, Essex St. Church, Green St. Church, and the Hanover St. Church, who voted to build two new meeting houses with the goal of expanding religious influence in the city. One meeting house was located in the North End and the other in the South End at the corner of Pine Street and Washington Street, which would later become the Pine Street Church. \$30,000 was raised to fund the construction; unfortunately the funds raised were insufficient to cover the costs of both buildings. After the funds were split between the churches, both meeting houses were forced to take on over \$20,000 of debt to complete construction. When the Pine Street Church was formed in September of 1827, just months after the building was completed, the forty two members of the church took on the debt that came with the construction of the building at the recommendation of the founding churches. The Pine Street Church had difficulties retaining members and pastors alike due, in part, to the difficulties the church faced managing their debt. After a failed attempt to renovate and lease a portion of the meeting house in 1851, the debt had climbed to over \$30,000. With few options left, in April of 1857, the five founding churches that had initiated its construction and the Committee of the Pine Street Church met to discuss the sale of the church's property. The church building was sold just months later in July of 1857. With the sale of the building, the Pine Street Church and Society was able to eliminate their debt and secure the funds necessary to purchase land for a new church building at the intersection of Berkeley Street and Warren Avenue in the South End of Boston. By 1861, the new church was completed and had changed its name to the Berkeley Street Church. In 1888, the Berkeley Street Church changed their name to Berkeley Temple. Free from their debt troubles, the church was able to eliminate the pew taxes that they had formerly relied on to pay expenses. The much larger church building was able to accommodate a growing number of members, as well as its Sunday school. They were able to increase their influence and membership by sending out circulars, as well as canvassing efforts in surrounding neighborhoods. They also promoted other church activities such as the Young Men's Institute and various classes on arithmetic, grammar, typewriting, and more, which were offered to men and women alike. In 1904, the name of the church was changed to Berkeley Temple Congregational Church. At the suggestion of the ecclesiastical council, the Berkeley Temple Congregational Church merged with the Union Congregational Church in 1907, which later merged with the Old South Church in 1948.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

This collection contains materials relating to the Berkeley Temple Congregational Church in Boston. The collection includes records of the church and its community, including administrative records such as pew tax records, cash ledgers, and examining committee records. The vital records include church registers, membership lists, and a necrology. The community records of this collection include Sunday school records, which contain minutes, rolls, and receiving books. The ecclesiastic council materials contain correspondence and documents regarding the continued involvement of an ecclesiastic council with church affairs and community from 1845-1906. The church programming and events materials contain bulletins, circulars, a print, and a scrapbook which detail annual and special events at the church.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

The Berkeley Temple Congregational Church records have been arranged into two series listed below. Series 1 has been further divided into 2 sub-series, and series 2 has been divided into 3 sub-series. Records in each series and sub-series have been primarily arranged chronologically by start date, and secondarily by topic.

Series 1: Church records, 1827-1907

Subseries 1: Administrative records, 1827-1907

Subseries 2: Vital records, 1827-1906

Series 2: Church Community records, 1836-1906

Subseries 1: Sunday school records, 1836-1906

Subseries 2: Ecclesiastic council records, 1845-1906

Subseries 3: Church programming and events, 1867-1906

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Restrictions on Access

Access to this collection is unrestricted and open to the public.

Restrictions on Use

Items in this collection are subject to U.S. Copyright Law. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine the copyright status of collection items and to secure any permissions necessary for their reproduction and publication. Requests for permission to publish material must be discussed with the archivist or librarian.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

No acquisition information is available for this collection.

Processing Information

Originally processed in 1988. Re-processed by Rachel Groh, April 2024, using DACS second edition.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Church correspondence.
- Church finance.

- Church membership.
- Church property.
- Church records and registers.
- Marriage records.
- Necrologies.
- Pews and pew rights.
- Sunday schools.
- Berkeley Street Church (Boston, Mass.)
- Berkeley Temple (Boston, Mass.)
- Berkeley Temple Congregational Church (Boston, Mass.)
- Pine Street Church (Boston, Mass.)

Bibliography

Committee of the Pine St. Society. *A Church for the Masses in Boston*. Boston: Press of Edward L. Balch, 1858. 7.11.1 B65.5 BerTC

Dickinson, Charles. *The work of Berkeley Temple, Boston, organized for city evangelization, Christian nurture, practical Christianity*. Boston, 1888. 7.11.1 B65.5 BerTC

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Collection Inventory

Church records, 1827-1907

Physical Description: 20 Folders

Physical Description: 21 Volumes

Scope and Contents

This series contains administrative records and vital records of the Berkeley Temple Congregational Church. Administrative records include financial records, pew plans and records, committee reports, and general society correspondence. The vital records include church registers, membership and dismissal documents, membership applications, and a necrology.

Administrative records, 1827-1907

Physical Description: 15 Folders

Physical Description: 16 Volumes

Scope and Contents

This sub-series contains administrative records from the Berkeley Temple Congregational Church including general society documents and correspondence, pew tax records, financial ledgers, deeds, Examining Committee records and reports, and general church record books.

Title/Description	Instances	
General society materials, 1827-1830	box 2	folder 1
Deeds, 1827-1853	folder 1	
Church records, 1827-1861	box 2	volume 1
General society materials, 1830-1831	box 2	folder 3
General society materials, 1832-1844	box 2	folder 4
General society materials, 1850	box 2	folder 5
General society materials, 1852	box 1	folder 3
General society materials, 1851	box 2	folder 6
General society materials, 1858-1859	box 2	folder 7
General society materials, 1860	box 2	folder 8
General society materials, 1861-1862	box 2	folder 9
Pew proprietors and transfers, 1828-1864	box 2	folder 2
Pew purchase and tax record, 1830-1839	box 1	volume 1
Pew tax records, 1830-1857	box 3	volume 1
Pew tax records, 1833-1839	box 1	volume 2
Pew payment receipts, 1851-1857	box 1	folder 2
Pew plans, 1856, 1877, undated	folder 2	
Pine Street Association deed records, 1839-1857	box 2	volume 2
Prudential committee records, 1848-1864	box 1	volume 3
Examining committee special meetings, 1849-1867	box 1	folder 1
Examining committee records, 1850-1858	box 1	volume 4
Examining committee reports, 1853-1870	box 1	folder 4
Examining committee records, 1858-1866	box 1	volume 6
Constitution and records of Pine Street Association, 1857-1864	box 1	volume 5
Church records, 1861-1887	box 2	volume 3
Cash ledger, 1881-1882	box 2	volume 4
Berkeley Temple pew records, 1882-1883	box 2	volume 7

Cash ledger, 1882-1885	box 2	volume 5
Cash ledger, 1886-1888	box 2	volume 6
Cash book, 1891-1897	box 1	volume 7
Church reports, 1901-1907	box 2	folder 10
Cash ledger, 1906-1907	box 1	volume 8
Acceptance and resignation letters, 1849-1901	box 5	folder 13

Vital records, 1827-1906

Physical Description: 6 Folders

Physical Description: 5 Volumes

Scope and Contents

This sub-series contains vital records of the Berkeley Temple Congregational Church including membership records, church registrars, admittance, dismissal, and transfer documents, a handwritten necrology, and the correspondence pertaining to the purchase of the formerly enslaved John Henson's freedom.

Title/Description	Instances	
Church register, 1827-1843	box 1	volume 9
Church register, 1827-1853	box 1	volume 10
Articles of faith and member list, 1842	box 4	volume 7
Transfer requests, 1845-1906	box 1	folder 5
Membership and attendance reports, 1846-1868	box 1	folder 6
Dismissal documents, 1848-1873	box 1	folder 7
Membership record, 1851	box 1	volume 11
John Henson purchase, 1858	box 2	folder 11
Reverend Wright necrologies , 1861-1867	box 1	folder 8
Church register, 1889-1895	box 3	volume 3
Membership applications, 1905	box 1	folder 9

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Church community records, 1836-1906

Physical Description: 18 Folders

Physical Description: 14 Volumes

Scope and Contents

This series contains community records for the Berkeley Temple Congregational Church, including Sunday school roll and minute books, ecclesiastical council letters, circulars, bulletins, and a scrapbook.

Sunday school records, 1836-1906

Physical Description: 13 Volumes

Physical Description: 2 Folders

Scope and Contents

This sub-series contains records of the Sunday school at Berkeley Temple Congregational Church, including roll books, minute books, receiving books, lesson record books, and annual reports.

Title/Description	Instances	
Sunday school minute book, 1836-1837	box 1	volume 12
Sunday school receiving book, 1836-1839	box 4	volume 1
Sunday school minute book, 1838-1839	box 1	volume 13
Sunday school receiving book, 1839	box 1	volume 14
Sunday school annual reports, 1839-1906	box 5	folder 1
Sunday school minute book, 1840-1841	box 1	volume 15
Sunday school minute book, 1846-1847	box 1	volume 16
Record of Pine Street Sabbath school, 1848-1851	box 4	volume 2
Record of Pine Street School, 1853-1863	box 3	volume 2
Sunday school roll book, 1857	box 4	volume 3
Sunday school roll book, 1858	box 4	volume 4
Sunday school roll book , 1859	box 4	volume 5
Sunday school anniversary , 1860	box 5	folder 2
Sunday school roll book, 1860	box 4	volume 6
Sunday school roll book, 1861	box 5	volume 1

Ecclesiastic council records, 1845-1906

Physical Description: 11 Folders

Scope and Contents

This sub-series contains letters and documents pertaining to the ecclesiastical council that Berkeley Temple Congregational Church was part of.

Title/Description	Instances	
Ecclesiastical council letters, 1845-1849	box 5	folder 3

Ecclesiastical council letters, 1850	box 5	folder 4
Ecclesiastical council letters, 1851	box 5	folder 5
Ecclesiastical council letters, 1852-1853	box 5	folder 6
Ecclesiastical council letters, 1854-1855	box 5	folder 7
Ecclesiastical council letters, 1856	box 5	folder 8
Ecclesiastical council letters, 1857-1867	box 5	folder 9
Ecclesiastical council letters, 1867-1868	box 2	folder 12
Ecclesiastical council letters, 1869-1871	box 5	folder 10
Ecclesiastical council letters, 1873-1876	box 5	folder 11
Ecclesiastical council letters, 1878-1906	box 5	folder 12

Church programming and events, 1867-1906

Physical Description: 5 Folders

Physical Description: 1 Volume

Scope and Contents

This sub-series contains church programming and event materials, including circulars, bulletins, a scrapbook, and week of prayer and semi-centennial celebration materials.

Title/Description	Instances	
Church circulars , 1867-1882	box 5	folder 14
Berkeley Street Church scrapbook, 1868-1879	box 1	volume 17
Semi-centennial celebration, 1876-1877	box 5	folder 15
Week of prayer, 1876-1878	box 5	folder 16
Church bulletins, 1906	box 5	folder 17
Print of church, undated	box 5	folder 18

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)