



PAYNE THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

Archives Collection Development Policy
Bishop Reverdy C. Ransom Memorial Library
Payne Theological Seminary
Wilberforce, Ohio

Introduction

As the oldest freestanding African American seminary in the world, having been mandated in 1844 by its sponsor, the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC), Payne Theological Seminary is pleased to serve today as one of the denomination's primary archival centers. In response to this honor the Archive at the Bishop Reverdy C. Ransom Library, seeks to benefit all intersecting theological education communities within our history and heritage.

The Payne Theological Seminary Archives is dedicated to acquiring and preserving materials reflective the historical significance of the Afrocentric pedagogy, historic tradition, academic support. Payne Theological Seminary, accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), is this nation's oldest free-standing African American seminary. The institutional archives reflect the Church's long commitment to liberation and justice for oppressed people of various cultural experiences.

Library Mission

The Reverdy C. Ransom Memorial Library participates in the research and education program of Payne Theological Seminary by facilitating access to relevant information through the development of library, archival and closed research collections. Its purpose is to assist men and women in preparation for a Christian ministry within the A.M.E. Church, the African American community and other Christian traditions.

To fulfill the responsibility of being a link in local and state information programs, the Library enters into a variety of cooperative and reciprocal agreements, which also serve to increase the range of services and collections available to the Payne community for research and education. In addition, the library endeavors to fulfill the responsibility to make unique or unusual information resources accessible to the outside research community.

Core Mission and Scope

The mission of the Archives is to collect preserve, organize, catalog, and make available to researchers, et al, the historical records of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Payne Theological Seminary.

- To provide facilities for the retention and preservation of such records deemed historically relevant to the Church and Seminary.
- To serve as a resource and laboratory to encourage teaching, research, and learning.
- To promote through exhibits and public programming understanding and knowledge of the Church and Seminary.
- To practice records management through the creation of formulated policies and procedures that will preserve the archival value of the collections.
- To make available a body of records useful for student and scholarly research in history and other disciplines.
- To protect institutional information resources throughout their life cycle.
- To improve the flow of information.
- To establish a records management component in institutional information resource policy and planning.
- To provide for adequate data collection and information access and retrieval.



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The Archive undergirds the regular and research program of students pursuing the Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees at Payne Theological Seminary. The artifacts collected—letters, photographs, programs, newspaper clippings, books, manuscripts, and other ephemera—range from those that document the establishment of the Black Church in America to the physical changes and developments of a number of AMEC educational institutions.

Special Collections maintained by Payne Theological Seminary Archives Include:

George A. Singleton Collection memorializes the life and career of African Methodist Episcopal Church educator and pastor, long time editor of the *A.M.E. Church Review* (1951-1967), elected editor of the denominational journal *The Christian Recorded* (1936-1944), Dean of Turner Theological Seminary (1929-1930), Army Chaplain (1918-1919) George Arnett Singleton. Singleton earned degrees from Allen University (B.A 1915), Boston University (S.T.B. 1922), and the University of Chicago (M.A. 1929, B.D. 1930). He also published numerous pamphlets and a comprehensive history of the AMEC, *Romance of African Methodism: A Study of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*.

Reverdy C. Ransom Collection captures the legacy of the 48th elected and consecrated Bishop of the African Episcopal Church (1924-1952), advocate of the Black Social Gospel, founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, editor of the *A.M.E. Church Review*, founder of the Fraternal Council of Negro Churches, and civil rights activist Reverdy Cassius Ransom. The subject areas reflect his episcopal leadership, mission work, civil rights advocacy, and educational policy. The collection includes a significant number of handwritten sermons and addresses.

Payne Theological Seminary and A.M.E. Church Digital Archive

Payne Theological Seminary and A.M.E. Church Archive on the Princeton Theological Commons

In 2014, Payne Theological Seminary was awarded an Arthur Vining Davis Foundations Award for the Payne Archive Digitization Project. Payne's Digital Archive is a presidential initiative spearheaded by Dr. Lean Gaskin Fitchue, President of Payne Theological Seminary. Dr. Fitchue, a Princeton Theological Seminary graduate and has cultivated a strong connection with Princeton's Theological Commons Project. Arthur Vining Davis Foundation funding supports services for book digitization with the Princeton Theological Seminary Partner, Internet Archive.

Digital Archive and Internet Archive

In, March 2015, Payne Theological Seminary Digital Archive launched its first digital collection on the Internet Archive platform. At the link provided, you will find 47 items spanning four unique contextualized categories available for download. Please spend some time viewing the documents in the various formats provided and searching for key terms. The official launch of the Payne Theological Seminary and A.M.E. Church Digital Archive to be hosted on the Princeton Theological Seminary Commons will be announced in May. Included below are the unique contextualized categories to be offered on both the Internet Archive and Princeton portals. Approximately African Methodist Episcopal Church records from other institutions will be harvested from other digital collections and incorporated into the Payne portal at Princeton.

Processed manuscript collections and other cataloged items can be searched:

<https://archive.org/details/paynetheologicalseminary>

Collection digitization, with the goal of making Archives Collections more accessible, will be considered as funding and demand dictate.



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Types of Materials Collected

- Minutes, memoranda, correspondence and reports of the Board of Trustees
- Records of the Office of the President, including correspondence, reports, etc.
- Correspondence, files, reports of the Academic Services Office
- Minutes, memoranda, correspondence, reports of all academic units
- Correspondence, files and reports of all major and administrative committees, including the faculty and its committees
- Accreditation reports and supporting documentation
- Departmental records, including minutes, reports, correspondence, syllabi
- Faculty publications, including books, scholarly articles, conference papers, etc.
- Alumni records, including minutes, correspondence, publications, etc.
- Audio and visual items documenting the history and development of the institution
- All publications, newsletters, catalogs, yearbooks, student newspapers, faculty and staff newsletters, alumni magazines
- Minutes, memoranda, correspondence, reports, and ephemera from The Friends of Payne
- Audio and recordings of events, including chapel services, commencement and other events
- Audio and visual recordings of fine arts productions and performers on campus
- Accreditation reports and supporting documentation
- Annual budget and audit reports
- Reports of the Registrar, including timetables, class schedules, enrollment reports, graduation rosters and other reports issued on a regular basis
- Alumni records, including minutes of the alumni association
- Reports of the Admissions Office
- Reports of student organizations
- All publications, newsletters and booklets distributed in the name of Payne Theological Seminary
- Microfilm reels containing vital records
- Maps, prints and architectural drawings documenting the physical changes and development of the Seminary
- Report of research projects, including grant records
- Special manuscript collections
- Material culture including clothing (official robes and clerical vestments)
- Artifacts relating to the history of the A.M.E. Church and to Payne Theological Seminary



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Deeds of Gift

Payne Theological Seminary accepts donations of materials appropriate to the historical mission and scope of the Archives, as outlined in the Archives Collection Development Policy and determined by the Seminary Archivist. The Archives at the Bishop Reverdy C. Ransom Memorial Library welcomes gifts appropriate to its collection, such donations include books of importance to the history of Payne Theological Seminary, the African Methodist Episcopal Church and its conferences and departments. Selection for additions to the Archives Collections, including gifts, will be based on collections scope as defined by this policy. The Archives welcome inquiries regarding gifts to the Archives Collections. For further information please contact Shaneé Yvette Murrain, Seminary Archivist at 937-376-2946 ex 101 or smurrain@payne.edu

Due to space and staff limitations the Archives is not able to accept the following:

- Bibles
- Sermon notes, except selections from those before 1900
- Religious books not related to the history of the Black Church and Spirituality of African Diaspora peoples, or African Methodist Episcopal Church unless volumes are rare biblical, ecclesiastical, historical and theological materials predating the 1900s
- Books that duplicate those in the collection
- Scrapbooks containing unidentified photographs or unattributed newspaper clippings
- Payne Theological Seminary does not accept furniture due to space concerns

Size

The Archives of Payne Theological Seminary is projected to remain limited, selective and focused in the areas noted above. Collections size will be limited by adherence to collection parameters and by the amount of physical space available to house and protect the collections appropriately.

Access

The Library's closed-stacked archives room is dedicated to the collection and preservation of A.M.E Church and Payne Theological Seminary history and memorabilia. While this active, carefully acquired collection of historical artifacts is accessible for all serious researchers, it is not available for general browsing. The Archives has limited space for research, but is open to all who wish to use the collection, in particular, local churches and conference agencies. Persons interested in historical, genealogical, and scholarly research are welcomed by appointment.

Access to the Archives is limited to those times when the Seminary Archivist is available (generally regular library hours). Research requiring the Seminary Archivist is by appointment only. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.



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If you are planning a research visit to the Archives, please contact us 7 business days before you arrive, as many of our collections are being processed and digitized and may be restricted based upon the terms of access. The Bishop Reverdy C. Ransom Memorial Library has special rules and regulations governing Archives use for the students, researchers and the community. The holdings of the Archives are available to Payne Theological Seminary administrators, students, faculty, staff, alumni and the general public for research under the following conditions:

- All patrons entering the Archives are required to register at the front desk with a valid Student ID or other valid I.D and sign the visitor's registry.
- Use of archival materials will be supervised by the Seminary Archivist.
- All researchers are required to alert the Archives staff when they leave the research room and to return all requested archival materials.
- Notepaper, note cards, or materials actually in use are allowed on the work tables in the research room.
- Smart phones, digital cameras and tablets may be used to photograph items in the research room at the Seminary Archivist's discretion.
- All Seminary Archives and Special Collections materials are non-circulating.
- All book bags, briefcases: large purses, packages, outerwear, and the like must be placed in the library reception area.
- No food or drink is allowed in the area. Smoking is prohibited.
- You may be asked to submit for inspection any briefcase, laptop case, or any other purses, book, notebook or other personal property before leaving the premises.
- Materials are available for use in the Archives but do not circulate
- Rare books are to be used within the archives area-these books do not circulate outside the building.
- Some records may be restricted by law, by Payne Theological Seminary policy, or by request of the donor.
- Archival records are never to be altered or defaced by any markings whatsoever.
- Patrons are asked to keep records in the same order in which they are found.
- To the extent possible, and with preservation as a priority, photo duplication and/or scanning of collection pages will be allowed.
- Payne Theological Seminary Archives is to be credited on all documents and photographs used in publication or display.
- Payne Theological Seminary reserves the right to restrict access to all or any portion of its records to researchers.
- Use of materials in the University Archives is governed by applicable copyright laws. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain all necessary copyright permissions to quote or publish any material located in the Payne Theological Seminary Archives.