

United Methodist Archives

Archival Guide to Women and Decorum in early 19th century Methodism

This archival guide lists early to mid-nineteenth century archival sources on gender expectations of decorum in speaking, writing, thought, behavior, and dress, for both men and women, with particular attention to early nineteenth century women's experience of these expectations.

Entries are organized alphabetically by collection entry title. For collections marked "Unprocessed," see the archivist for the collection background information; for all others, refer to the indicated guide. Some collections have more than one listed source or title within the entry.

1. Addison Family. Correspondence. 1644-2-6:11. Reference Finding Aid.

Gives a wide-reaching account of family relations, decorum in writing and speaking, romantic love, and marital expectations for men through letters back and forth between the Addison brothers, and between the Addison parents and their sons.

2. Anthony Atwood. Sermon Pocketbook. 1644-1-6:01. 1644-61-6:02. Reference Finding Aid.

Circa late 1820s to the early 1830s. Includes sermons on character, proper behavior, and women's piety.

3. Bennet, Grace (Norman) Murray 1646-5-1:22. Reference Finding Aid.

Letter from 1799.

4. Blackstock, Eleanor. 1646-5-1:27. Reference Finding Aid.

This folder contains the Reminiscences of Eleanor Blackstock with passages on the behavior and struggles of both of her parents, as well as her siblings', her parents' courtship, and Eleanor Blackstock's childhood.

5. Brown, Elizabeth. 1647-3-1:65. Unprocessed.

One letter to her aunt from 1839. Brown writes about the Methodist parsonage five miles away and indicates that if her cousins are anxious to get married, they might want to come visit as “I have not seen but very few young ladies since I have been in this country.”

6. Emory Papers. Letters to Father 1832-1864. 2139-3-1:01. Unprocessed.

Includes 1835 monthly reports from Dickinson College sent home to Emory’s father with explanations about why he was missing the literary exercises, or prayers, or public worship (also included were the categories “Known Absences from Room at improper hours of the night,” as well as “Attention to study” and “Department”).

Letters to Family 1825-1841. 2139-3-1:06. Unprocessed.

Letters home during college years.

7. Garrettson Family Papers (1760-1885). Drew University Methodist Collection Archival Finding Aid.

Both Catherine Garrettson’s and Mary Garrettson’s papers are excellent aids for understanding women’s roles and impact in early 19th century American Methodism. Their papers include (but are not limited to) correspondence to friends, family, and Methodist leaders in Great Britain, speeches, funeral remarks, and Catherine Garrettson’s journal. Catherine and Mary Garrettson’s papers are also incredibly useful for understanding how important letter writing was to the Methodist community at the time.

Catherine Garrettson’s correspondence from Martha Pasca (Martha Pasca refers to Catherine Garrettson as Cathy or Kitty) often references social situations of women/men and is a great place to start for understanding the decorum expected of each gender.

These papers are invaluable for the wealth of women’s writing they offer, both written by women to women, and by women to men, and by men to women.

8. Gay, Mrs. Diary. 1646-5-3:01. Reference Finding Aid.

Diary of the newly married Mrs. Gay from May 20th, 1845 to February 8th, 1846. She writes about her husband, her journaling, her problems with her mother-in-law, and the impropriety of Martin Pickett wanting to steal a kiss from her as she was the May queen (during her childhood). She also speaks of her husband wishing her to act with more emotional restraint.

9. Maria E. Gloninger. Correspondence. 1645-6-8: 10. Reference Finding Aid.

Three love letters from John Hiloth from 1830, 1831, and 1839.

10. William P. Graves. 1463-7-7:04. Reference Finding Aid.

A typed letter to his children, circa 1903 about how he and their mother (his wife) met in 1842 and how their life continued from there. Describes in detail the education of the time (elementary and college) and the social relations between men and women.

11. Charles Hammer. Autobiography. 1643-6-6:10. Unprocessed.

Gives an account of married life.

12. Lee, Anna Maria Pittman (Poem) 1643-1-2:01. Reference Finding Aid.

Actually a poem set to music titled "Where Thou Goest" and subtitled "The Pledge of a Pioneer Bride." Supposedly written in 1837 as her response to her husband asking her to marry him.

13. Roy Benton Leedy Collection. UMC Archives Manuscript Finding Aid.¹

Bates, Joshua. *Happy Death of Mary Ann Clapp: Who Died At Dedham, Mass., A.D. 1816*. New York: American Tract Society.

The author, Mary Ann Clapp's former pastor, recounts her current goodness and her transition to piety from her earlier childhood obstinacy. Tells of his visits with her and his ministry to her as she was dying.

¹ Many more sources on decorum may exist in this collection, but in German.

Cooley, Timothy M. *Memoir of Mary West, A Sabbath Scholar, Who Died at Granville, Mass., May 19, 1829, In the Thirteenth Year of Her Age*. Boston: Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, 1837.

Recounts all of her good character and her confession, supplication, and thanksgiving just before her death (includes a dialogue between her and her mother in which her mother gladly gives her to God).

Fletcher, Alex. *Lectures, Adapted to the Capacity of Children*. Vol. II New York: American Tract Society.

Among other stories, tells the story of a young boy who dies in piety, exhorting his sister to be good and act with propriety.

Kennaday, J. *The Sunday School Speaker or Exercises for Anniversaries and Celebrations. Consisting of Addresses, Dialogues, Recitations, Bible Class Lessons, Hymns, Etc. Adapted to the Various Subjects to which Sabbath School Efforts Are Directed*. Philadelphia: Perkinpine & Higgins, 1847.

Includes dialogues between boys and between girls (or between the speaker and the audience) giving small, short lessons on proper behavior (the first dialogue entreats good Sunday school attendance and behavior) and age-appropriate recitations to perform.

The Sabbath School Visitor. Vol. XI. Ed. Rev. Asa Bullard. Boston: Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, 1843.

Excellent source for examining the relationship between children and adults and ideas of decorum (propriety).

14. McClintock, Jane. Autograph album. 1643-3-1:01. Reference Finding Aid.

An album, circa 1830s (dates of 1832, 1835, 1839, 1832), stamped with her name (it appears that at the time she was unmarried—in one place, she's addressed as Miss McClintock). Includes engraved drawings of famous Methodist preachers and various religious places, plus some pictures of flowers that have been carefully pasted in. She apparently collected quotations, selections (mostly poems) and writings from people, even the preachers whose portraits she had pasted into her album. Includes personal notes for those whose autographs she solicited.

15. Mary W. Mason. Correspondence. 1645-6-8:09. Reference Finding Aid.

Letters to and from Mrs. Mason on missionary work. Contains letters mostly from the 1830s and 1840, but the finding aid indicates that one may be from 1819. Mrs. Mason was part of the Female Missionary Society. Letters include references to the moral and educational state of natives and their children, as well as arrangements for clothing.

16. McAnally, David. Manuscripts. 1643-3-5:15. Reference Finding Aid.

Spends several pages of his diary (1837-September 1846) of the Jan. 3, 1838 critiquing L. G. Goodrich's *A System of Universal Geography* (2nd edition) that David McAnally absolutely disagrees with on its characterization of Virginians, especially in relation to dress, morality, and behavior.

17. Mortimer, Mrs. E. 1647-3-2:127. Unprocessed.

Two copies of letters from Mrs. E. Mortimer to Mrs. Tripp, 1804 and 1808. The first talks about how her mother recently died; the second regards Mrs. Tripp's eyesight.

18. Sargent, Samuel. 1646-7-1:01. Reference Finding Aid.

Commonplace book from 1804 with Sargent's exercises on various topics, including suicide, sublimity, vulgarity, humility, and historical figures like Alexander Hamilton. Fascinating with regards to concepts of gender and proper behavior, but a very delicate document to handle.

19. Simeon, Charles. 1646-6-2:07. Reference Finding Aid.

Includes a letter to Rev. Dr. Sprague, Albany, New York, undated. The letter talks about Paul's expectations for behavior, and how Charles Simeon thinks a young man should act.

20. Shaw Jacob. 1646-6-2:-06. Reference Finding Aid.

Circa 1837. Addresses what kinds of theatrical performances are appropriate for children and children's Sunday schools; also addresses women's dress, making note of the fact that one young woman fainted because her undergarments were too tight.

21. Suggestions for the Improvement of the Mind. 1837. Manuscript. 1646-6-2:2. Reference Finding Aid.

No indication of the author, other than Trinity, June 28, 1837. Addresses how thought, reason, and judgment fit together, and how passion and fancy (animal instincts) may darken these.

22. Pelatiah Ward Collection UMC Archives Manuscripts Finding Aid.

Folder 1 Letters includes a statement of improper behavior between Pelatiah Ward and Miss Aura Husted a student at Spencertown Academy. The collection also includes letters to Ward's wife.

23. Wentworth, Erastus. Speech. 1646-6-2:53. Reference Finding Aid.

Oration give to the young men's Lyceum of St. Lawrence College, New York on June 21st 1839. Wentworth is a "teacher of Natural science in Gouverneur High School," and his lecture gives a good picture of 19th century ideas of tasteful and proper oratory and writing.

24. Wesley, John. *Advice to the People Called Methodists, with regard to dress*. Baltimore: Butler for Hagerty and Kingston, 1808. Methodist Library.

Wesley's tract on dress and proper behavior that circulated in early 19th century America.

25. Wilkins, Ann. Correspondence. 1646-6-2:54. Reference Finding Aid.

In a letter to Sister Blanding, February 4th, 1843, Wilkins comments on how difficult it is to get natives to give up their daughters to the mission school, though not boys.

Wilkins, Ann. Biographical Material. 1646-6-2:55. Reference Finding Aid.

26. Wilson, Chloe Aurelia Clarke 1643-6-2:05. Reference Finding Aid.

Wilson's typed diaries. She and her husband were missionaries in Oregon. Includes, on page 28, her useful rules for "the important work of training a daughter for heaven." Includes references to the importance of English grammar.