

First Presbyterian Church, Elizabeth, New Jersey

The First Presbyterian Church of Elizabeth, New Jersey, dates its origins to the founding of the town of Elizabeth in 1664. It was the first church to be organized in New Jersey for worship in the English language. Until 1717 it was a Congregational church. Services were held in a meeting house constructed in 1664 until a new building was erected in 1724. In 1717, Presbyterian articles of faith were adopted and affiliation with the Presbytery of Philadelphia followed. The church received its charter from King George II in 1753. The church has been rebuilt twice since 1724: once after the British set fire to it during the Revolutionary War and again following a fire in 1946 which destroyed all but the church's outer walls.

A search of our catalogs shows official records of the First Presbyterian Church, which contain genealogical information, in our holdings. Records deposited with the society include:

- First Presbyterian Church (Elizabeth, N.J.) Records, 1717-1913 / First Presbyterian Church of Elizabeth, N.J. Organized in six series: Ser.1, Session minutes, miscellaneous reports and lists, 1791-1903 -- Ser.2, Membership records, 1786-1870 -- Ser.3, Property records, 1717-1913 -- Ser.4, Financial records, 1794-1861 -- Ser.5, Correspondence, 1784-1868 -- Ser.6, Miscellaneous items, 1774-1846; chronological arrangement within series. 3 cubic feet. (Call number: RG 68.) Link to finding aid: <http://www.history.pcusa.org/finding/phs%2068.xml>

Records not included in Record Group 68 (above) include:

- Elizabeth, N.J. First Presbyterian Church. Minutes of the session, March 17, 1802-March 3, 1946. 6 volumes. Volume 1 includes some membership and baptismal information from 1802-1823. (Call number: V MI46 EI48fs.)
- Elizabeth, N.J. First Presbyterian Church. Pew rent records, 1783-1812; 1815-1894. 10 volumes. (Call number: V MI46EI48fp.)
- Elizabeth, N.J. First Presbyterian Church. Burial records, 1840-1901. 4 volumes. (Call number: V MI46 EI48fb.)
- Elizabeth, N.J. First Presbyterian Church. Pew lease from the trustees to Elihu Brittin, 1822. (Call number: Map Case Drawer 7.60.)

*As of 2011, First Presbyterian Church transferred a large group of additional unsorted records to the society. Check back in the future for specific information.

Other records include: Organ society minutes, trustees records, treasurer's records, Collector's account books, Sunday school documents and records, historical sketches (MS EL47), records of subscriptions and payments for bonds and subscription ledger, Young People's Society minutes, church manuals, and a picture postcard of the church.

First Presbyterian Church Elizabeth is an active congregation which maintains some of its own records in addition to the records on deposit elsewhere. You may wish to contact the Clerk of Session directly to discover what records they hold at the church:

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8/30/11 LHG

Presbyterian Historical Society
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215-627-1852
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