

# Young Men's Christian Association of Alexandria, Virginia ledger

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1865-1872

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## Title Statement

Young Men's Christian Association of Alexandria, Virginia ledger  
Guide to the Young Men's Christian Association of Alexandria, Virginia ledger MSS 16506

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## Profile Description

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## Descriptive Summary

### Unit ID

MSS 16506

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**Unit ID**

/repositories/3/resources/1018

**Unit Date**

1865-1872

**Mixed Materials**

BW 29 (box)

**Container**

1 [X032669079] (folder)

**Language**

English

**Creator**

Young Men's Christian Association (Alexandria,VA)

**Extent**

0.04 Cubic Feet 1 legal sized folder

**Repository**

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

## Administrative Information

**Conditions Governing Access**

This collection is minimally processed and open for research.

**Immediate Source of Acquisition**

This collection was purchased from Caroliniana by the Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia Library on May 4, 2021.

**Preferred Citation**

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## Biographical / Historical

The Young Men's Christian Association of Alexandria, Virginia was founded in 1853. The Y.M.C.A. was founded in London in 1844, the first American Chapter was founded in Boston, in 1851. In 1844, industrialized London was a place of great turmoil and despair. For the young men who migrated to the city from rural areas to find jobs, London offered a bleak landscape of tenement housing and dangerous influences.

Twenty-two-year-old George Williams, a farmer-turned-department store worker, was troubled by what he saw. He joined 11 friends to organize the first Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), a refuge of Bible study and prayer for young men seeking escape from the hazards of life on the streets.

Although an association of young men meeting around a common purpose was nothing new, the Y offered something unique for its time. The organization's drive to meet social need in the community was compelling, and its openness to members crossed the rigid lines separating English social classes.

Years later, retired Boston sea captain Thomas Valentine Sullivan, working as a marine missionary, noticed a similar need to create a safe "home away from home" for sailors and merchants. Inspired by the stories of the Y in England, he led the formation of the first U.S. YMCA at the Old South Church in Boston on December 29, 1851.

The first YMCA established to serve African American people came into being in 1853, eight years before the American Civil War and ten years before the institution of slavery was officially ended in the United States. The principal founder was a formerly enslaved man, Anthony Bowen, who, with a group of friends, organized

the "YMCA for Colored Men and Boys" in Washington, D.C.. It opened just nine years after the world's first YMCA was founded in London, England and less than two years after the first North American YMCAs were organized in Boston and Montreal.

The American YMCA movement approved a revision to the National Council Constitution to support a variety of antidiscrimination laws, update the list of protected classes, and affirm the Y's commitment to diversity and inclusion. The appointment of Kevin Washington as CEO in 2015 marked the the first time that the YMCA of the USA was led by an African American (or a person of color).

Sources: Wikipedia <https://libguides.umn.edu/c.php?g=1088894&p=7940991>

## Content Description

This collection contains one ledger with a printed constitution of the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) of Alexandria, Virginia. The ledger contains 21 filled out pages. The first two pages contain lists of members for 1865 and 1866, followed by a four page "Treasurers list" recording members and dues paid between 1866 and 1871. The rest of the ledger contains 15 pages of accounts documenting the operation of the association between 1866 and 1872. Incomes listed include dues and fees collected, donations given, and proceeds from lectures by local scholars, including one by "Dr. Bagby, likely noted Virginia State Librarian(1828-1883)who was an American Physician and Humorist. He wrote for the "Southern Literary Messenger" and the "Charleston Mercury" where he used his southern humor and local dialect. Expenses listed include money appropriated for a "Suburban Prayer Meeting," the outfitting of a library, printers' fees, room rentals, expenses related to a "Moonlight Excursion", subscriptions to the national YMCA newsletter, and more.

Ledger binding of beige marbled boards with leather spine measuring 12.5 x 8". Pasted to the rear cover is a broadside printing of a list of the Associaton's officers for 1867 and 1868, and a brochure measuring 12 x 9" containing six panels of text of the Y.M.C.A. Constitution. Costs for the printing of the ledger and the constitution are listed in the ledger. Backsrip is torn, rear hinge damaged with rear cover detachinging, constitution creased with tears along margins.

## Keywords

Ledgers (account books)

Young Men's Christian Association (Alexandria,VA)