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Bradford, Haverhill, Mass. First Church of Christ records, 1682-1915. RG4843

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English

DACS2 - 2013

Congregational Library & Archives

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	First Church of Christ (Bradford, Haverhill, Mass.)
Title:	Bradford, Haverhill, Mass. First Church of Christ records, 1682-1915.
ID:	RG4843
Date [inclusive]:	1682-1915
Physical Description:	0.72 Cubic Feet (2 boxes, 3 reels)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The First Church of Christ was established in 1682 with Rev. Zechariah Symmes Jr. as its minister. Meeting houses were constructed in 1670, 1706, 1751, 1834, and 1849. In 1810 the church hosted the meeting of the General Association and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions came from that meeting. This collection includes records of vital statistics, financial reports, church meeting minutes, and ecclesiastical council reports.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Bradford, Haverhill, Mass. First Church of Christ records, 1682-1915, RG4843. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

The village of Bradford was originally a part of Rowley and often was called "Rowley on the Merrimack" for its location along the Merrimack River. The name changed to Bradford when the town was incorporated on January 7, 1672. The first meeting house was erected two years prior to this in 1670, but because no church was officially established residents had to cross the river to Haverhill in order to receive communion. The first minister was Zechariah Symmes Jr. who had moved to the village for health reasons; he preached in the town for the 14 years prior to the establishment of the first church. The First Church of Christ was established in 1682 and Symmes was immediately ordained as the first pastor. The first meeting house was replaced in 1706. In 1751 a third church building was constructed on the Bradford Common.

The First Church of Christ in Bradford became the host for the 1810 General Association meeting. During this meeting clergy and students from the Andover Theological Seminary set forth a proposal which would shortly lead to the founding of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). Two young women of the congregation, Ann Judson and Harriet Newell, were among the first missionaries sent out by the ABCFM. The third meeting house, having fallen into a state of disrepair and being too small for the congregation, was torn down and replaced by a fourth building in 1834. This church was replaced with the fifth, and final, meeting house in 1849. In 1850 the eastern portion of Bradford separated and was incorporated as the town of Groveland. In 1896, the towns of Haverhill and Bradford voted in favor of the annexation of Bradford into Haverhill, a process which was completed on January 1, 1897.

The church organization was incorporated in 1901, and along with the adoption of a new covenant, the parish and proprietors organizations were dissolved. In 1915, the corporation was dissolved and administrative control was handed to the officers of the church. The First Church of Christ in Bradford continues to serve the community today.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains records pertaining to both the church and the parish. Included are records of vital statistics, membership, covenants, financial reports, ministerial salaries, church meeting minutes, ecclesiastical councils, and pew subscriptions. Also included are records pertaining to the dissolution of the Parish and the shifting of administrative control to Church officers in 1915.

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Arrangement

This collection has been arranged in chronological order by start date.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Congregational Library & Archives

14 Beacon Street

Boston, MA 02108

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URL: <http://www.CongregationalLibrary.org>

Revision Description

Zachary Bodnar: Minor revision to the description of microfilm records, minor change to the arrangement, changed the date range in the collection title, added Haverhill to the collection title, minor adjustments made to notes. July 17, 2019

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.

Digital Reproductions are protected by copyright and/or related rights. You are free to use the Digital Reproductions in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. In addition, no permission is required from the Congregational Library & Archives for educational uses. For other uses, you need to obtain permission from the Congregational Library & Archives. For additional information regarding copyright, please consult the Congregational Library & Archives' [Digital Collections Copyright & Use](#) policy.

Acquisition Information

This collection was permanently loaned to the Congregational Library & Archives, 2008, by the First Church of Christ in Bradford.

Accruals

Additional accruals are expected for this collection in the form of full-text transcription. There is no anticipated date for this accrual.

Processing Information

Redescribed by Sari Mauro, September 2013, using DACS Second Edition. Additional description by Robin Duckworth. Reprocessed by Zachary Bodnar, August 2018, using DACS Second Edition.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Church discipline.
- Church finance.
- Church membership.
- Church records and registers -- Massachusetts -- Bradford.
- Necrologies.
- Marriage records.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- Pews and pew rights.
- Bradford (Haverhill, Mass.) -- Church history.
- First Church of Christ (Bradford, Haverhill, Mass.)

Technical Requirements

Microfilm reels require the use of a microfilm reader to access.

To access digital user's copies via online-interface, a java-enabled web browser is required. Internet Explorer 8.x and later, Firefox 5.x and later, Opera 12 and later, Safari 5.x and later, or any version of Google Chrome are recommended.

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Bibliography

Cary, George Emerson. *First Church of Christ, Bradford, Massachusetts: Its Five Buildings*. 1950.
17.11.1 B72.7 FIRCC

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
A Church Book, 1682-1806, 1824	box 1	volume 1

Digital Copies:**Digital Copies**

These church records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are [available to view online](#).

Scope and Contents

The first volume primarily contains membership records and vital statistics, including admissions and dismissions, marriages, and baptisms. It also has a copy of the original covenant signed by the founding members and records of church business. The original book was damaged by both water and fire, resulting in text that is sometimes incomplete or difficult to read.

Microfilm records, 1682-1915, 2008

Restrictions on Access:**Restrictions on Access**

Only the service copy is available for library use. The archival master and print master copies are restricted for preservation purposes.

reel Service
Copy

reel Archival
Master

reel Print
Master

Scope and Contents

This microfilm contains photographic copies of A Church Book, 1682-1806, 1824, the Financial records, 1738-1852, A Book of Records, 1787-1866, the Records of the First Church of Christ in Bradford, 1824-1904, and the Record of Meetings, 1852-1915 which are all part of this collection.

Financial records, 1738-1852

box 2

volume 1

Digital Copies:**Digital Copies**

These church records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are [available to view online](#).

Scope and Contents

This volume includes treasurers' reports, ministerial salaries, pew subscriptions, and balance sheets documenting the general expenses of maintaining the building and its staff.

A Book of Records, 1787-1866

box 1

volume 2

Digital Copies:

Digital Copies

These church records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are [available to view online](#).

Scope and Contents

This volume contains both parish financial records and administrative records, as well as correspondence relating to the matters discussed at meetings of church committees. There is also a section toward the end listing members for the early 19th century.

Records of the First Church of Christ in Bradford, 1824-1904

box 1

volume 3

Digital Copies:

Digital Copies

These church records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are [available to view online](#).

Scope and Contents

This volume mostly consists of administrative records. It includes notes about missionary work, discipline of members, selection of ministers, and preparations for the church's bicentennial celebration. There is also a short section at the end listing membership records for most of the 19th century.

Rent collections, 1840

box 2

folder 1

Record of meetings, 1852-1915

box 2

volume 2

Digital Copies:

Digital Copies

These church records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are [available to view online](#).

Scope and Contents

These records mostly pertain to annual meetings, including the 1915 decision to dissolve the Parish as a corporation and hand

over its duties to the officers of the church. It also contains a list of new members for the early 20th century.