

Boston MA. Bowdoin Street Church

Records, 1825-1865

RG 0806

2 linear feet (2 boxes)

Processed July 1981 by Mary Morgan; reprocessed October 1996.

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INTRODUCTION

The records were probably donated to the Congregational Library upon the dissolution of the Bowdoin Street Church in 1863. An initial inventory was made July 1981; a more complete finding guide and container list was prepared October 1996. Volumes were labeled, placed in folders and the bundles of correspondence were opened and arranged in October 1996. The Congregational Library Small Collections contains a form of notice for missionary collection, 1835 from the Bowdoin Street Church. As always, the researcher should check the Congregational Library card catalog for printed material related to the local church history.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The Hanover Street Church was gathered July 18, 1825 in the North End. In 1830, during the pastorate of Lyman Beecher (1776-1863), the meeting house burned and the church voted to move to Bowdoin Street on Beacon Hill. Beecher was minister 1825-1832; he left Bowdoin Street Church to become president of Lane Seminary. Hubbard Winslow (1799-1864), was the pastor from 1832-1844; Winslow resigned in 1844. Edwin Johnson (1826-1883) was installed in 1859 and dismissed in 1861; from Bowdoin Street Church, Johnson went to Hammond Street Church, Bangor, Maine. Bowdoin Street church dissolved in 1863 and building was sold to Church of the Advent. In 1981, this church was St. John the Evangelist (Cowley Fathers, Episcopal).

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Series I- **Committee records**, is very incomplete and only contains material from 1856-1863. It contains miscellaneous votes, meeting minutes and reports, 1861, 1863; rules of the Standing Committee, 1856; minutes of one meeting of Committee for Supplying the Pulpit, 1861; and miscellaneous material on the sale of the church property, 1861. The bulk of series II covers the call and dismissal of Rev. Edwin Johnson, 1859-1861; there is also a letter from Rev. E. R. Webb declining the call of the church in 1858.

Series II. **Ministerial standing records**, 1858-1861 (see Series VI for material on Rev. Lyman Beecher and Rev. Hubbard Winslow).

Series III-**Membership records, 1824-1865**

A, folder 1 contains the articles of faith for what appears to be Bowdoin Street Church, as well as the signatures of the church membership from 1825-1861, listed by date of membership. It appears as if the signatures were collected at a later point in the church history and not upon membership, as there are many gaps. There are also printed forms for membership dismissal inserted into this volume. The spine cover is disconnected from the volume in folder 1/7. The volume in folder 1/8 contains the names and previous church membership of new members. The spine is missing from the volume.

B contains the records of the Examining Committee, 1824-1863, as well as profiles of potential members. The profiles contain previous church membership, as well as a sort of spiritual profile for the potential members. "Approved," "deferred," "with inquiry" and "favorable" are some of the notations jotted in the margins of the volumes. By 1861 this committee had begun to discuss the sale of the building. Use caution handling the volumes in folder 1/22-24, as the front covers are coming unhinged; the volume in folder 1/24 is almost completely unhinged.

C contains the records of a committee checking the currency of membership. The volume in folder 1/26 contains an alphabetical listing of the church membership in 1843, along with an address listing. Both covers of the volume in folder 1/27 are unhinged. The cover of the volume in folder 1/28 is almost completed unhinged; the front and back cover of the volume in folder 1/29 are completed unhinged. Series III-D contains certificate of admission and dismissal; application for admission and dismissal; letters of recommendation; letters missive; and membership transfer circulars, 1863. This material was previously tied into tight bundles and grouped by year; the papers were opened and arranged alphabetically by last name.

E folder 1/30 contains member names, addresses and "remarks" 1825-1863; the remarks often contain occupational information, home and business addresses and transfer or dismissal information. The volume in folder 1/31 is a name index to the volume in folder 1/30.

Series IV- **Correspondence from other churches, 1857-1862** contains financial records, including receipts and collections for home missions and the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missionaries. The material is very incomplete and the series does not contain any account books or financial reports.

Series V- **Correspondence from other churches, 1857-1862** A primarily contains letter missives and invitations to ecclesiastical councils by Trinitarian Congregational Churches in the greater Boston area. Some are manuscript letters and some are printed. Series V-B mostly contains invitations for the Bowdoin Street Church to worship with or join Trinitarian Congregational Church in the greater Boston area, ca. 1860s. There are short notes about the contents of the letters on the back of the letters, possibly made by the church clerk.

Series VI **Historical material** is a manuscript copy of documents considered important to the church and was compiled in 1846, according to a vote of the church. The table of contents on page 2 of the volume lists:

- Articles of faith and church government first adopted by Hanover Street Church
- Report of committee recommending Rev. Dr. Beecher as pastor
- Report of committee recommending Rev. Dr. Payson as pastor
- Letter from Dr. Beecher accepting the call of Hanover Church
- Dr. Beecher's resignation July 1832
- Resolutions of the church on Dr. Beecher's resignation July 5, 1832
- Report of committee recommending Rev. Hubbard Winslow
- Rev. Hubbard Winslow's resignation of his pastoral charge
- Second communication from Dr. Winslow respecting his resignation
- Resolutions adopted Feb. 29, 1844 asking Dr. Winslow to withdraw his resignation and revise his determination
- Records of pew proprietor's meeting, with action on the above, May 7, 1844
- Rev. Hubbard Winslow's reply to the request to withdraw his resignation
- Record of parish meeting called to act on the above March 22, 1844
- Report of committee recommending Rev. Dr. Waterbury as pastor.

The front and back covers of the volume in folder 2/36 are unhinged.

Series VII **Miscellaneous** contains miscellaneous meeting announcements from societies and associations, an application for funds from Elizabeth Sherman, obituary for Salome Keep and Lyman Beecher, 1863. This series also contains an undated essay (ca. 1850s?) "Sunday School Teacher's Story."

Material in series III-B, 4, 5 and 7 was previously arranged by year in tightly bundled packets. October 1996 the papers were opened and arranged chronologically; series III-B was arranged alphabetically by last name. Most of the correspondence (including the material in III-B) has a short note on the back of the letter describing the contents; the notes appear to have been made by the church clerk.

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

- Folder 01 Votes, meeting minutes, reports
- Folder 02 Standing Committee rules, 1856
- Folder 03 Sale of property, 1861
- Folder 04 Committee for Supplying the Pulpit, 1861
- Folder 05 Webb, E. R. declining call
- Folder 06 Johnson, Edwin admission/dismissal 1859-1861
- Folder 07 Articles of faith, membership records, 1825-1861
- Folder 08 Membership records, ca. 1825-1859
- Folder 09 Examining Committee membership records, 1824
- Folder 10 Examining Committee membership records, 1826
- Folder 11 Examining Committee membership records, 1826-1827
- Folder 12 Examining Committee membership records, 1827
- Folder 13 Examining Committee membership records, 1828
- Folder 14 Examining Committee membership records, 1829
- Folder 15 Examining Committee membership records, 1830
- Folder 16 Examining Committee membership records, 1831
- Folder 17 Examining Committee membership records, [1831?]
- Folder 18 Examining Committee membership records, 1833
- Folder 19 Examining Committee membership records, 1834
- Folder 20 Examining Committee membership records, 1837
- Folder 21 Examining Committee membership records, May 1833-March 1837
- Folder 22 Examining Committee membership records, May 1837-March 1842
- Folder 23 Examining Committee membership records, June 1842-April 1860
- Folder 24 Examining Committee membership records, May 1860-June 1863
- Folder 25 Examining Committee membership records, [n.d.]
- Folder 26 Committee checking currency of membership alphabetical directory
- Folder 27 Committee checking currency of membership attempt to bring membership current as of Feb. 1, 1849
- Folder 28 Committee checking currency of membership, 1856-1861
- Folder 29 Committee checking currency of membership, 1861-1863
- Folder 30 Membership memoranda membership records, 1825-1863
- Folder 31 Membership memoranda membership records, 1825-1863 name index to folder 30
- Folder 32 Admissions and dismissals, 1856-1864

Box 2

- Folder 01 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 A-B
- Folder 02 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 C
- Folder 03 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 D
- Folder 04 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 E-F
- Folder 05 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 G
- Folder 06 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 HA-HI
- Folder 07 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 HO-HZ
- Folder 08 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 J

Folder 09 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 K
Folder 10 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 L
Folder 11 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 M
Folder 12 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 N-O
Folder 13 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 P-R
Folder 14 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 S
Folder 15 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 T
Folder 16 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 U-V
Folder 17 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 WA-WH
Folder 18 Membership correspondence, 1856-1865 WI-Z
Folder 19 Membership transfer circular, 1863, blank and A-L
Folder 20 Membership transfer circular, 1863, M-W
Folder 21 Receipts, 1854-1856
Folder 22 Receipts, 1857
Folder 23 Receipts, 1858
Folder 24 Receipts, 1859
Folder 25 Receipts, 1860
Folder 26 Receipts, 1861
Folder 27 Receipts, 1862
Folder 28 Home missions receipts 1861, including women of Bowdoin Street Church
Folder 29 Collections from ABCFM, 1835,1847-1858
Folder 30 Letter missive/invitations to ecclesiastical councils from Boston area churches, 1856
Folder 31 Letter missive/invitations to ecclesiastical councils from Boston area churches, 1857
Folder 32 Letter missive/invitations to ecclesiastical councils from Boston area churches, 1860
Folder 32 Letter missive/invitations to ecclesiastical councils from Boston area churches, 1861
Folder 33 Other correspondence from Boston area churches, 1857-1858
Folder 34 Other correspondence from Boston area churches, 1861
Folder 35 Other correspondence from Boston area churches, 1859-1862
Folder 36 Historical material
Folder 37 Miscellaneous correspondence, 1858-1862
Folder 38 Miscellaneous--application for funds, 1858
Folder 39 Miscellaneous--obituary for Salome Keep, 1863; Lyman Beecher, 1863
Folder 40 Miscellaneous--Sunday School Teacher's Story, [n.d.]