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Manchester, Mass. Orthodox Congregational Church records, 1717-1917. RG5361

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on June 05, 2019.

English

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Congregational Library & Archives

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Boston, MA 02108

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	Congregational Church (Manchester, Mass.)
Creator:	Orthodox Congregational Church (Manchester, Mass.)
Title:	Manchester, Mass. Orthodox Congregational Church records, 1717-1917.
ID:	RG5361
Date [inclusive]:	1717-1917
Physical Description:	0.79 Cubic Feet (2 boxes)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The First Congregational Church in Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts, was formed on November 7, 1716 with 21 members. The first meeting house was constructed in 1656, the second in 1695, and the third in 1719. The fourth and final meeting house was constructed in 1809. The church name was changed to Orthodox Congregational Church in 1843. The church split in 1857 due to ecclesiastical differences and was reformed in 1869. The church, now known as the First Parish Congregational Church in Manchester-by-the-Sea continues to serve the community today. The collection includes the earliest extant records of the church. Included within the records are administrative records, vital records, financial records and records relating to the 1957 ecclesiastical council that led to the church splitting.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Manchester, Mass. Orthodox Congregational Church records, 1717-1917, RG5361. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

The First Congregational Church in Manchester-by the-Sea, Massachusetts, was formed on November 7, 1716 with 21 members, 71 years after the incorporation of the town of Manchester. The first minister of the newly formed church was Rev. Ames Cheever. Prior to the formation of the church, the inhabitants of Manchester worshipped first at Salem and then at Beverly. However, the town of Manchester still had a meeting house, with the first constructed in 1656 and the second constructed in 1695. A third meeting house was constructed shortly after the formation of the First Church in 1719.

The fourth and final meeting house was built in 1809 and was co-owned by both the town of Manchester and the church proprietors. The church's Sunday school was founded in June of 1810. In 1843 the name of the church was changed to the Orthodox Congregational Church. In 1844 the church proprietors bought out the town and therefore fully controlled the meeting house thereafter. The building underwent further renovations in 1846. In 1857, an ecclesiastical dispute resulted in about two-thirds of the parish separating from the church and forming a new church with Rev. F. V. Fenny as the minister. The two churches were reunited in 1869.

In 1902 the church was officially incorporated under Massachusetts law and a new covenant and revised by-laws were adopted. In 1979 the church adopted the name First Parish Church Congregational. A member of the United Church of Christ, the First Parish Church Congregational continues to serve the community of Manchester-by-the-Sea.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains the earliest extant record books of the first congregational church in Manchester, Massachusetts, later called the Orthodox Congregational Church. Within the collection are records related to the administration of the church, including the financial records of the church and meeting house, and vital member records, which include baptismal records, marriage records, necrologies, lists of active members, and disciplinary records.

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged primarily in chronological order, by start date, and secondarily by topic.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Congregational Library & Archives

14 Beacon Street

Boston, MA 02108

info@14beacon.org

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

Restrictions on Access

Access to this collection is unrestricted and open to the public.

Restrictions on Use

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Acquisition Information

Materials were permanently loaned to the Congregational Library and Archives, December 2017, by the First Parish Church Congregational; Accession 2017-18.

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

Processed by Zachary Bodnar, February 2019, using DACS Second Edition.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Church charities.
- Church discipline.
- Church membership.
- Church records and registers.
- Installation (clergy).
- Marriage records.
- Necrologies.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- Congregational Church (Manchester, Mass.)
- First Parish Church Congregational (Manchester, Mass.)
- Manchester (Mass.) -- Church history.
- Orthodox Congregational Church (Manchester, Mass.)

Technical Requirements

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

Manual and List of Members of the Orthodox Congregational Church of Manchester, Massachusetts.
Salem: Newcomb & Gauss, 1904. 17.11.1 M31.57 FirPCC

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Church records, 1717-1743	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

This volume, representing the earliest extant records of the church, primarily contains records related to the church's early members. The volume contains membership lists, records of admitted members, baptismal records, marriage records, statistics, by year, of both births and deaths in the parish, and communion records. Also included are some administrative records, including collection records and lists of church expenses by year.

Church records, 1743-1827	box 2	volume 1
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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 of church records contains both administrative information and the records of the church's members. Included in the volume are meeting minutes and records of votes, installation records, records of deaths, baptismal records, marriage records, and church membership lists. The volume also contains some information related to the construction of the 1809 meeting house and the first Sunday worship within the new building.

Church records, 1825-1875	box 2	volume 2
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Scope and Contents

This volume contains both the administrative records of the church as well as vital membership records. Within

the administrative records are meeting minutes, records of votes, and some financial records. Also included are extensive records on a 1957 ecclesiastical council meeting and disciplinary records recording the excommunications and suspensions given to some members. The vital records include marriage records, baptismal records, necrologies, and membership lists. The volume also contains the 1851 revision of the articles of faith and covenant.

Church membership, 1771-1881

box 2

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 of membership records includes lists of members at the church, lists of deacons who served the church, short genealogies of the families of pastors, and a list of church members who lived past the age of 80.

Proprietor's book, 1809-1845

box 2

volume 4

Scope and Contents

This volume, kept by the church proprietors, includes the financial records of the fourth meeting house from its construction in 1809 to the aftermath of the church purchasing the portion of the meeting house that was owned by the town in 1844.

Parish records, 1836-1875

box 1

volume 2

Scope and Contents

This volume contains the records of the "first religious Society in Manchester." The volume contains the parish's meeting minutes, records of votes, and committee reports. Also included is the 1969 By-Laws of the parish and a 1969 list of members. Pasted on the final page of the volume is the "Order of Exercises" for the reopening of the Orthodox Congregational Church in 1846.

Treasurer's book, 1837-1917

box 1

volume 3

Scope and Contents

This "day book" contains the financial records of the church and parish. Included in the volume are detailed lists of expenditures and income by year and period.

Treasurer's book, 1857-1864

box 2

volume 5

Scope and Contents

This volume of financial records includes reports from the Chapel Association, the pastoral account, and the contributions collected for other church groups, such as mission groups, the Poor Fund, the Sabbath School, the Bible Society, and the New York and Boston tract societies.