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Oxford, Mass. First Congregational Church records, 1721-1850. RG4841

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English

DACS2 - 2013

Congregational Library & Archives

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Boston, MA 02108

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	First Congregational Church of Oxford (Oxford, Mass.)
Title:	Oxford, Mass. First Congregational Church records, 1721-1850.
ID:	RG4841
Date [inclusive]:	1721-1850
Physical Description:	0.24 Cubic Feet (1 box, 1 folder, 3 reels)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The First Congregational Church of Oxford (MA) was established in the house of Rev. John Campbell on January 18, 1721 and construction of the first meetinghouse followed. The second meetinghouse was completed in 1748. The church split in 1813 with some members forming a Universalist church in the South Meetinghouse. The Third and final meetinghouse was constructed in 1829. The church joined the United Church of Christ in 1961 and continues to serve the local community today. This collection contains the earliest extant records of the church and includes vital records, administrative records, records of the church library, and financial records related to unpaid ministerial salary.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Oxford, Mass. First Congregational Church records, 1721-1850, RG4841. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

The town of Oxford was incorporated in 1713. Following incorporation, town selectmen began searching for a minister. Over the next seven years, a string of short term ministers came to preach while the town figured out how to procure money to build a meetinghouse and provide the minister with salary. In July of 1720, Rev. John Campbell was called and in September of that year plans for the first meeting house were made. The First Congregational Church in Oxford (MA) was established in the house of John

Campbell on January 18, 1721. He was ordained as the minister a few months later on March 1. The first meetinghouse was also likely completed in either 1721 or 1722. In 1744, it was voted to replace the simple first meetinghouse. Construction on this new meetinghouse was completed by July of 1748.

Following the death of Campbell in 1764, Rev. Joseph Bowman was called and installed as minister. He continued to serve as minister during the American Revolutionary War. During the way, the town was unable to provide Bowman with a salary. This led to some conflict between Bowman in the town which culminated in a 1784 suit and his request for dismissal, which was initially rejected. As a result of the town failing to respond to the suit, the town of Oxford had to levy a special tax to pay Bowman's unpaid salary. The first church library was founded under Rev. Elias Dudley in 1791. This library collection later became a part of the town's public library.

The church split in 1813, following some members' dissatisfaction with Rev. Josiah Moulton. The First Congregational Society, also known as the First Religious Society, was formed as a result of this split. They established a Universalist Church with services held at the "South Meetinghouse." The second meetinghouse, also sometimes called the "North Church," was replaced with the third, and final, meetinghouse, in 1829. In 1853, the meetinghouse edifice was moved to its present location on the town common. In 1860, the meetinghouse underwent a complete remodel and an organ was added in 1885.

On February 19, 1905, the church caught fire from an overheated stovepipe in the basement. The building's slate roof was cited as the principal reason the whole building was not destroyed. The building was repaired and rededicated on September 24, 1905. On January 11, 1961, the church adopted the constitution of the United Church of Christ. The First Congregational Church in Oxford (MA) continues to serve the local community today.

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Scope of Collection

This collection contains the earliest extant records of the church. Included in the collection are records of baptisms, marriages, church meetings and votes, the church covenant, church library, church communications, and ministerial installations. Also of note are records pertaining to the tax collected to pay Rev. Bowman's back wages.

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Arrangement

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

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

Zachary Bodnar: Revised the collection's date range, revised the rescription of microfilm materials. July 16, 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

Materials were placed on permanent loan to the Congregational Library & Archives by the First Congregational Church of Oxford in July 2017; no accession number.

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

Collection underwent preservation work at NEDCC in 2008 which resulted in the disbinding of the church record book. Collection re-described by Sari Mauro, September 2013, using DACS Second Edition. Portions of description written by Robin Duckworth. Collection was reprocessed and re-described by Zachary Bodnar, January 2019, using DACS Second Edition.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Church finance.
- Church libraries.
- Church membership.
- Creeds.
- Marriage records.
- Necrologies.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- Ordination.
- First Congregational Church of Oxford (Oxford, Mass.)
- Oxford (Mass.) -- Church history.

Technical Requirements

A microfilm reader is required in order to access microfilmed materials. One microfilm reader is available to the public upon request.

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

Moore, Harlan P., Olney, Helen G., and White, Raymond E. *250th Anniversary First Congregational Church in Oxford, Massachusetts*. 1975. 17.11.1 O94.8 FirCC

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Church records, 1721-1850	box 1	folder 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](#).

Location of Copies:

Location of Copies

Three microfilmed preservation copies of this recordbook exist. Only the service copy is available for public use.

Scope and Contents

This ledger contains records pertaining to the formation of the church, proceedings of church meetings, membership rolls, and foundational documents such as covenants and articles of association. Also included within the volume are records of correspondence, baptismal records, marriage records, records of the church's library, and financial records.

Microfilm records, 1721-1850, 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

Location of Originals:

Location of Originals

This item is a microfilmed copy of the Church records, 1721-1850, which is housed, as part of this collection, at the CLA.

List of board members, circa 1784

box 1

folder 2

Digital Copies:

Digital Copies

This record was digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are [available to view online](#).

Taxes paid by residents, 1784

folder 7

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 folder contains records of special taxes collected from the residents of Oxford to cover the salary of Rev. Joseph Bowman who was unpaid during the American Revolutionary War.

Correspondence, 1784, 1787

box 1

folder 3