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Wenham, Mass. First Church in Wenham Congregational records, 1643-1847. RG4929

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English

DACS2 - 2013

Congregational Library & Archives

14 Beacon Street

Boston, MA 02108

info@14beacon.org

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

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	Congregational Church (Wenham, Mass.)
Creator:	Congregational Parish and Society (Wenham, Mass.)
Creator:	First Church in Wenham Congregational (Wenham, Mass.)
Title:	Wenham, Mass. First Church in Wenham Congregational records, 1643-1847.
ID:	RG4929
Date [inclusive]:	1643-1847
Physical Description:	0.28 Cubic Feet (1 box, 3 reels)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	In 1642 the first meeting house was constructed in Wenham and the church was established in 1644 with the Rev. John Fiske as its first minister. The Congregational Parish and Society was established in 1833 and remained active until the church was incorporated in 1925. This collection includes meeting minutes, vital records, ecclesiastical council results, and early town records.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Wenham, Mass. First Church in Wenham Congregational records, 1643-1847, RG4929. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

The town of Wenham, originally a part of Salem, was first settled in 1635 though land grants were not issued until around 1638. John Fiske, a wealthy minister and physician, moved from Salem proper to the Wenham area around 1641. He was instrumental in the establishment of a church in the community. In 1642 the first meeting house was constructed and in 1643 the General Court of Massachusetts recognized Wenham as an independent town. The Congregational Church in Wenham was established on October 8, 1644 after previous petitions to organize had been denied. Rev. Fiske was left Wenham to settle in

Chelmsford in 1654 and seven other Wenham families followed him. The remaining members called Rev. Antipas Newman. In 1663, the second meeting house was constructed after a year of difficult planning. Rev. Joseph Garrish was called to be minister in 1673 and the town provided him with a parsonage to ensure he accepted the offer. He served as the minister for 47 years until his death in 1720. The third meeting house was constructed in 1688.

The fourth meeting house was constructed in 1748 on the same spot as the third meeting house. An informal Sunday school was established in 1815 and taught by Miss Elizabeth Shaw; the church formally established a Sunday school in 1822. The Congregational Parish and Society was established in 1833 following the formal separation of church and state in Massachusetts. The fifth and final meeting house was constructed in 1843 and this building was further enlarged a few years later in 1853. The church purchased an organ in 1851. This organ was replaced in 1910 with an Esty organ with the help of a small grant from Andrew Carnegie. This was also replaced in 1959 after the organ became inoperable in 1955. In 1925, the Parish and Society were dissolved and the First Church in Wenham Congregational was incorporated. The fifth meeting house underwent additional renovations and expansions in 1953 and 1986.

The First Church in Wenham Congregational, UCC, continues to serve the local community today.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains the earliest records of the First Church in Wenham and document the administrative history of the church and the major life events of its members. Included in the materials are meeting minutes, baptismal records, marriage records, records of death, membership lists, ministerial records, ecclesiastical council results, and early town records.

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Arrangement

Materials in this collection have been arranged in chronological order by the start date.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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

Revision Description

Zachary Bodnar: Minor revision to the description of microfilm records, adjusted date range in title, minor revision to notes, minor revision to subject headings. 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

There is no acquisition information for the early town records. This collection's volumes were placed on permanent loan at the Congregational Library & Archived, May 2009, by the First Church in Wenham Congregational; Accession: 2009-11.

Technical Requirements

A microfilm reader is required in order to access microform 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.

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 membership.
- Church records and registers.
- Evangelical Revival.
- Marriage records.
- Necrologies.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- Congregational Church (Wenham, Mass.)
- Congregational Parish and Society (Wenham, Mass.)
- First Church in Wenham Congregational (Wenham, Mass.)
- Wenham (Mass.) -- Church history.

Bibliography

Harrington, Joseph, Jr. *Historical Outline: First Church in Wenham*. 1993. 17.11.1 W48.4 FirCWC

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Extracts of early town records, 1643-1813	box 1	folder 1
Church records, 1643-1805	box 1	volume 1
<p><u>Digital Copies:</u> Digital Copies</p> <p>These church records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are available to view online. In addition, transcriptions of this volume can be seen along side the digital images linked to above.</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>This volume of records contains lists of admissions, members, marriages, deaths, and baptisms. Also included are records of church meetings. Also included are records pertaining to the ministers who served the church during this period.</p>		
Church records, 1792-1847	box 1	volume 2
<p><u>Digital Copies:</u> Digital Copies</p> <p>These church records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are available to view online.</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>The second volume of records contains records of deaths, marriages, baptisms, and membership records. The volume also contains records of church meetings and ecclesiastical councils which pertain to the call or dismisison of new ministers. Also included are records of correspondence, censures, admonitions, and charitable actions.</p>		
Microfilm records, 1643-1847, 2009	reel Service Copy	
<p><u>Restrictions on Access:</u> Restrictions on Access</p> <p>Only the service copy is available for library use. The archival master and print master copies are restricted for preservation purposes.</p>		
	reel Archival Master	
	reel Print Master	

Scope and Contents

This microfilm contains photographic copies of the Church records, 1643-1805 and Church records, 1792-1847, which are both part of this collection.