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Abington, Mass. First Church records 1714-1949. RG4969

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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:	Dodge, Ezekiel, 1722-1770
Creator:	First Congregational Church (Abington, Mass.)
Title:	Abington, Mass. First Church records 1714-1949.
ID:	RG4969
Date [inclusive]:	1714-1949
Physical Description:	0.57 Cubic Feet (2 boxes)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	<p>The First Congregational Church of Abington, MA was established in 1711 and in addition to the 1st Church there were three additional churches founded in the same town: 2nd church of south Abington, now Whitman, 3rd church of east Abington, now Rockland, and 4th church at North Abington. The First Church in Abington also housed a Sunday school that was established in 1818 and is thought to be one of the oldest Sunday schools in the country. The motto of the church is "None too old to study the word of God!" In 1968, the First Congregational and the North Congregational Churches on Abington merged and reformed as the Church of Christ in Abington. The records for First Church Abington are primarily made up of vital records recording baptisms, marriages, and deaths along with Church records detailing meeting minutes, Church changes and bills. The collection specifically includes a book from a Christian Convention in New York and also houses the church records of the infamous "Singing Controversy" and the effect that it had on the members of the church and town.</p>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Abington, Mass. First Church records 1714-1949, RG4969. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

The First Congregational Church of Abington, MA was established in 1711 and in addition to the 1st Church there were three additional churches founded in the same town: 2nd church of south Abington, now Whitman, 3rd church of east Abington, now Rockland, and 4th church at North Abington. The First Church in Abington also housed a Sunday school that was established in 1818 and is thought to be one of the oldest Sunday schools in the country. The motto of the church is "None too old to study the word of God!"

The First church was located in front of an old burial ground described as a "small meeting house" that was "without steeple, bells, or pews, only benches being used for seats." It was demolished in 1751 so that a larger building could be built near the same location. The third building was erected in 1819 and was known as "Masonic Hall" which was later enlarged and remodeled in 1871. Along with its repairs and remodeling it was outfitted with a new organ, gifted by W.S. O'Brian and family in 1911. Part of the repairs that were done were to the church's steeple, which had been blown off in the famous gale of 1869, were completed over a century later.

The Abington church was also home to multiple societies and organizations throughout the centuries, including the Woman's Guild, Men's group, Woman's Missionary Society, Christian Endeavors Society, and Boy's Work Org. In 1968, the First Congregational and the North Congregational Churches on Abington merged and reformed as the Church of Christ in Abington. This church is still active today and continues to serve the Abington community today.

Ministers	
S. Brown	1711-1749
E. Dodge	1750-1770
S. Niles	1771-1814
H. Weeks	1815-1820
S. Spring, D. D.	1822-1826
W. Shedd	1829-1830
M. G. Wheeler	1831-1833
J. W. Ward	1834-1856
F. R. Abbe	1857-1870

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G. E. Freeman	1871-1880
R. W. Haskins	1881-1893
W. S. Fritch, Ph.D	1896-1899
D. Goodyear	1900-1906
T. J. Lewis	1907-1911
A. S. Hawkes, S. T. M.	1912-1914
W. Wordsworth	1916-1920
A. Sloan	1921-1922
J. C. Millian	1923-1925
R. J. Black	1925-1928
C. S. Knott	1929-1948
H. L. Carnes	1948-1951
T. H. Campbell	1951-1962
M. M. Morse	1963-1967
W. G. Sewell	1967-1968
C. B. Adams	1967-1974
A. M. F. Coad	1969-1974
T. A. Hunt	1972-1974
A. H. Blake	1974-1984
O. Clarke	1983-1984
M. E. Mahl	1985-1986

D. E. Mehl	1985-1986
L. Delaplain	1986-1991
H. L. Greer	1991-1992
R. D. Colby	1992-1995
S. G. Duncan	1995-2008
S. J. Mederios	2001-2010
E. E. Alger	2008-2010
K. L. Coburn, P	2011-Present

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Scope and Contents

The records for First Church Abington are primarily made up of vital records recording baptisms, marriages, and deaths along with Church records detailing meeting minutes, tax books, the Church Manual, the changing of pastors and repairs to the church building. This collection also contains a Church Ledger with the summary of payments made for repair work on the church. One in particular church record details the infamous "Singing Controversy" and the effect that it had on the members of the church and town. There are also small pamphlets to celebrate the church's centennial and bi-centennial along with an official souvenir program book from one of the Christian conventions they were a part of in NYC.

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Arrangement

The materials in this collection have been arranged in chronological order by start date.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Restrictions on Access

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Acquisition Information

Materials were loaned to the Congregational Library & Archives by the First Church of Abington, Massachusetts in 2017 and given RG5330. However, there is record of an earlier donation from the church given RG4969. Various Abington accruals were collected into a single collection; Accession number 2017-06.

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 and described by Delali Davies, November 2018, using DACS Second edition. Additional processing by Zachary Bodnar, December 2018. Legacy processing by Sari Mauro, 2012.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Church controversies.
- Church discipline.
- Church finance.
- Church membership.
- Church records and registers.
- Congregational churches -- Handbooks, manuals, etc.
- Congregational churches -- Massachusetts -- Abington.
- Excommunication.
- Marriage records.
- Necrologies.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- Public worship.
- Abington (Mass.) -- Church history
- First Congregational Church (Abington, 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

First Parish Congregational Church. *250th Anniversary 1711-1961*. Abington, 1961. 17.11.1 AB55.37 CalCC

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Abington Church Book, 1714 – 1749 <u>Digital Copies:</u> Digital Copies These church records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are available to view online . Transcriptions for this volume are also available and may be viewed alongside digital images.	box 1	volume 1
Scope and Contents This volume contains the earliest administrative and membership records of the church. Included in the volume is the original covenant, meeting minutes, baptismal records, and disciplinary. Of particular note are records relating to accusations of premarital sexual relations. Also included are records related to the acceptance and dismissal of deacons.		
Church records, 1750 – 1774 <u>Digital Copies:</u> Digital Copies These church records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are available to view online .	box 1	volume 2
Scope and Contents This volume contains both the administrative and membership records of the church during the pastorate of Rev. Ezekiel Dodge. Included within the volume is the covenant, meeting minutes, council minutes, and miscellaneous membership records.		
Church records, 1779 – 1785	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 contains the minutes of meetings held by the church. These records largely pertain to members and include questions concerning church membership and disciplinary cases. Of note is testimony related to a case of public drunkenness.

Church records about the "singing controversy", 1804 – 1807	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 contains the records of a debate which followed an incident where two choirs, one hired by the church and a second hired by the town, both claimed the right to lead the singing. The result was that, at mass, each choir sang the hymn to different tunes at the same time. Debate continued for three years following the incident.

Parish records, 1808 – 1852	box 1	volume 4
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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 contains the records of the Parish. Included in the volume are the minutes of largely routine meetings which cover topics such as furnishings, the parsonage, and ministerial salary.

Treasurer's book, 1808 – 1877	box 1	volume 5
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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 contains the financial records for the church. Included in the volume are meticulous records of both payments received and payments paid. Most of the financial transactions indicate the person involved in the payment and the specifics of services rendered.

Parish records, 1812-1821

box 1

volume 6

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 parish records contains parish meeting minutes and lists of admitted members. Of particular note are the records related to a motion to excommunicate Rev. Holland Weeks who held Swedenborgian views.

Church records, 1820 – 1822

box 1

volume 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 volume contains the administrative records of the church. Of particular note are the minutes of meetings relating to Rev. Holland Weeks's Swedenborgian views and his subsequent departure from the church. The volume also contains records related to the ordination of Samuel Springs as pastor of the church.

Church records, 1822 – 1831

box 1

volume 8

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 primarily contains the administrative records of the church. Of note are meeting minutes related to temperance in the church and the failing health of the Rev. Shedd. Also included in the volume are baptismal records, an 1829 record of female members, and copies of church correspondence.

Church records, 1831 – 1897

box 2

volume 2

Scope and Contents

This volume contains the administrative records of the church, as well as vital records for the members of the church. Included in the volume are a copy of the church covenant, meeting minutes, committee reports, baptismal records, records of deaths, and marriage records.

Church tax records, 1867

box 1

volume 9

Church ledger, 1869

box 1

volume 10

Church manual, 1874

box 2

volume 3

Young People's Society convention program, 1892

box 2

volume 4

Centennial celebration order of service, 1949

box 1

folder 1