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Braintree, Mass. First Congregational Church records, 1697-1871. RG5302

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English

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Congregational Library & Archives

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Boston, MA 02108

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

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	First Congregational Church (Braintree, Mass.)
Creator:	Niles, Samuel, 1674-1762
Title:	Braintree, Mass. First Congregational Church records, 1697-1871.
ID:	RG5302
Date [inclusive]:	1697-1871
Physical Description:	.44 Cubic Feet (1 box)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Mount Wollaston Parish Meeting House was established in 1639 in the present-day Quincy Area, and by 1640 the town was renamed Braintree. This Meeting House was the site of the original church, which first gathered on September 10, 1707. In 1708, old Braintree was divided into the North Precinct (Quincy) and the South Precinct (Braintree). When Quincy became an official town in 1792, the 1707 church was designated as the First Church in Braintree. The records in this collection include the journal of Samuel Niles dating 1697 to 1777, a volume of church records dating from 1707-1871, a volume of the Braintree Precinct's Financial Records dating 1708 to 1796, and a volume of church records dating 1790 to 1825.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Braintree, Mass. First Congregational Church records, 1697-1871. RG5302. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

The first Parish to settle in the Braintree area in 1634 was known as "Mount Wollaston," named after the founder of a trading post in 1624. The Mount Wollaston Parish Meeting House was established in 1639 in the present-day Quincy Area, and by 1640 the town was renamed Braintree. Braintree originally included present-day Braintree, Quincy, Randolph, and Holbrook. The Parish Meeting House was the

site of the original church, which first gathered on September 10, 1707. In 1708, old Braintree was divided into the North Precinct (Quincy) and the South Precinct (Braintree). At the time, Braintree was sometimes referred to as "Monatiquot," after the Massachusetts Indian village and home of Chief Wompatuck. When Quincy became an official town in 1792, the 1707 church was designated as the First Church in Braintree. Over the years, the church has been known as the First Congregational Church, Christ Church, and the Church of the Presidents. The first ministers of the church included Hugh Adams (ordained 1707), Samuel Niles (ordained 1711), and Ezra Weld (ordained 1762).

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Scope and Contents

The records from the First Congregational Church in Braintree, Mass. document the history of the organization, Braintree Precinct, and Pastor Samuel Niles, including membership, finances, church life, and the thoughts of the Pastor. Included in the records are meeting minutes, financial records, journal entries, and lists of marriages, baptisms, deaths, and admissions to the church.

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Arrangement

The four volumes are arranged chronologically by start date.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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

Restrictions on Access

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

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Acquisition Information

All materials besides "church records, 1707-1871" were temporarily deposited for digitization with the Congregational Library & Archives by the First Congregational Church in Braintree in November 2015; no accession number.

Church records, 1707-1871 were temporarily deposited for digitization with the Congregational Library & Archives by the First Congregational Church in Braintree in November 2018; 2018-37.

Location of Originals

The physical records are held and maintained by the First Congregational Church in Braintree, Massachusetts.

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 Corinne Bernstein, February 2016, using DACS Second Edition. Collection re-described by Jules Thomson in January 2020 to reflect accrual of 1707-1871 volume of church records.

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Related Materials

Related Materials

By Richard S. Storrs, D.D: American slavery, and the means of removal: a sermon, preached in the First Congregational Church, Braintree, April 4, 1844. (28.9.4 1534)

By First Congregational Church (Braintree, Mass.): Braintree, MA: First Congregational Church. (1907) (17.11.1 B73.4 FIRCC)

By A. A. Ellsworth: Christian unity: a sermon preached at the First Parish Church, Braintree, Mass. (1895) (15.5 5834.1)

By Rev. Richard S. Storrs: Continuance in the ministry: a discourse delivered in the First Congregational Church, Braintree, Mass., July 3, 1861, by Rev. Richard S. Storrs, on the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination. (15.4 5846 STOO-STOR)

Compiled by Ruth W. Shuster: Gathered in 1707: a history of the First Congregational Church, Braintree, Massachusetts, 1707-1957. (1957) (17.11.1 B73.4 FIRCC GS 1957)

By the pastor, Rev. A.A. Ellsworth: Law and order: a sermon preached at the First Parish Church, Braintree, Mass., on Sunday, April 5, 1891.) (15.4 5846 ELL-ELY)

By Rev. Richard S. Storrs, D.D.: The pastor's farewell benediction. A sermon delivered in the First Congregational Church of Braintree, Mass., July 2, 1871, the day following being the sixtieth anniversary of his settlement, July 3, 1811, / (1871) (15.0.5 5621 S-TE)

By Ebenezer Gay, A.M.: The untimely death of a man of God lamented: in a sermon preach'd at the funeral of the Reverend Mr. John Hancock, pastor of the First Church of Christ in Braintree, who died May 7th. 1744, aetatis suae 42. (1744) (15.0.7 5625 HAL-HAZ)

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Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Church membership.
- Church records and registers.
- Diaries.
- Marriage records.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- First Congregational Church (Braintree, Mass.)

- Niles, Samuel, 1674-1762
- Braintree (Mass.) -- Church history.

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 alter, Opera 12 and later, Safari 5.x and later, or any version of Google Chrome are recommended.

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
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Samuel Niles journal, 1697-1777

Scope and Contents

The entries in this journal, dating from 1697 to 1777, document the Pastor, Samuel Niles', thoughts and activities within the church as well as the organizational and membership history of the First Congregational church of Braintree. The journal includes entries regarding the Covenant of Redemption, the Episcopacy, the Godhead of the Christ, the Protestant Power, the Papal Power, the 1665 plague in London, and the Pastor's work, "A Prospect of Death- A Pindarique Essay," written on March 19, 1721. Also included in the entries is the Pastor's own account of his birth, wives, children, marriages, and ordination.

The volume also includes records of the marriages, baptisms, and members admitted into communion, which the Pastor oversaw. On page 48, there is a written history of Samuel Niles. The records also include the Abington church covenant that was in place during Niles' ministry, records of burials near the Braintree church meeting house, Niles' financial account with the church and a list of the Churches of Christ living in December of 1777.

Although the journal does not include mention of the Stamp Act, the son of the journal's author, Deacon Samuel Niles, was the chairman of a committee of five from Braintree enlisted to draft instructions for the townspeople to react to the Act in 1765. This committee commissioned John Adams "to draft the documents recounting the freedoms expected by American colonists," which became the Braintree Instructions. Forty more Massachusetts towns endorsed the Braintree

Instructions, a precursor of the American Revolution. The Stamp Act was repealed a year later in the spring of 1766.

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](#).

Financial records, 1708-1796

Scope and Contents

The records in this volume document the financial and organizational history of the Braintree District from 1708 to 1796. The records include the Precinct's meeting minutes, financial records, bills of credit and credit payments. Meeting minutes include discussion to build the new Precinct meeting house, beginning on page 82, a list of citizens who bought the thirty-six pews of the new meeting house on pages 93-94, and a report of the Precinct lines being drawn on page 128.

The different names used to refer to the Precinct within the records also reflect the evolution of the Braintree region. From pages 1 to 24 the area is referred to as the "South Precinct," from pages 25 to 27 it is referred to as "the South or Middle precinct", from pages 28 to 192 it is referred to as the "Middle Precinct," from pages 193 to 200 it is referred to as the "First Precinct, formerly the Middle Precinct," and from page 201 onward the region is referred to as the "Braintree Precinct."

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](#).

Church records, 1707-1871

Scope and Contents

This bound volume comprises the earliest church records, with some apparently copied from a previous version, as well as later records continuing to 1871. The front cover label on the volume reads: "Copy of Older Record Book and Dr. Storrs' Record Book." It contains meeting minutes, lists of members, baptisms, marriages, deaths, a copy of the church covenant, and copies of official correspondence.

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](#).

Church records, 1790-1825

Scope and Contents

Two sets of records were kept within this volume, and are presented here consecutively for ease of use. The first set of records includes lists of the church's minsters and members, covenants, and meeting minutes. The second set of records contains lists of baptisms, marriages, deaths, and admissions to the church. This volume is stated to be a direct continuation of Samuel Niles's Journal, which he originally took with him to Abington when he left this church.

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](#).