

THE BULLETIN

OF THE CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY & ARCHIVES

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THE FOUNDING 56
EXHIBITION

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IN BOSTON

MISSIONARY
COLLECTION FROM
INANDA SEMINARY

HISTORICAL DIRECTORY of the CHRISTIAN DENOMINATION and
AFRO-CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

MODERNITY
PILGRIMS



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The Congregational Library & Archives fosters a deeper understanding of the spiritual, intellectual, cultural, and civic dimensions of the Congregational story and its ongoing relevance to contemporary society by collecting, preserving, and sharing materials and by actively engaging with faith communities, students, scholars, and the general public.

ON THE COVER: Archivist Billy McCarthy discusses some of the Congregational Library & Archives' most recent 56 acquisitions with Betsy and Mark Gabrielson during our 2023 Open House at 14 Beacon.

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The great ambition of Mary Wheelwright Codman's late husband, Rev. Dr. John Codman, had been the formation of a public library dedicated to Protestant learning in the United States. She gave his copy of the recently published catalog of Dr Williams's Library in London, the great library of English Protestant Dissent, to begin the CLA collection. Learn more about Codman and other donors in our *Founding 56* exhibition at bit.ly/founding56.

Courtesy of Historic New England. *Portrait of Mary Wheelwright Codman (1792–1857)* by Daniel Huntington (1806–1906). Oil on canvas. Gift of Mr. John Codman, Jr. and Susan S. Clark. 2005.20.2.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



One of the things I have enjoyed about our *Founding 56: The Congregational Library's Original Collection* online exhibition is learning about the motivations of the library's early donors. Some gave out of their love of the

past; others to document present concerns and future prospects. My favorite might be Mary Wheelwright Codman, who gave in memory of her beloved deceased husband (see opposite page). The vision and generosity of those eight individuals—ministers, a lawyer, a doctor, and a widow—set the path for the growth of the institution's collections over the subsequent 170 years.

In this issue of the *Bulletin*, we highlight individuals inspired by and contributing to the growing collections at the CLA. You will read about seventh graders transcribing the notes of a churchgoer in Revolutionary-era Boston, a grand-niece preserving the written record of her great

aunt's experience as a missionary in South Africa, and a scholar in Germany researching American missions to sailors, among others. Their scholarship lends a unique perspective to historical events and contributes to our understanding of the contemporary world.

Today, we can offer our members even more points of access for understanding the past, present, and future of Congregationalism than could have been imagined by the original founders. Online exhibitions, virtual programs, the digital archive, the reading room, in-person open houses, collections tours, and lunchtime talks are just a few of the ways we can connect you with our collections and staff expertise.

Whatever motivates you to invest your time, energy, and resources in the Congregational Library & Archives—love of the past, hope for the future, or family connection—we hope you will find even more inspiration in this issue. Thank you for your ongoing support!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle Roberts". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kyle Roberts, Executive Director

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

In the sanctuary of Park Street Church there are two plaques that honor soldiers who died during the Civil War. I wondered why these men should be graven to memory, but I could only guess what their lives might have been like.

However, during a visit to CLA's archives, I stumbled upon one of those names; it was Lieutenant Edgar Newcomb's testimony, just seven years before his death at the Battle of Fredricksburg:

"Am fifteen years old. . . . Hope I became a Christian three years ago. . . . Felt that I was a sinner,

attended the meetings [at Doctor Stowe's church], in a few days experienced a change. . . . This excitement passed away & began to lose interest, & for two years lived carelessly. I prayed still, but not from the heart, then revived again, have daily private prayer."

History holds the power to transform our understanding through the ongoing work of the CLA, and I am indebted to our Executive Director Kyle Roberts, our amazing staff, and the ongoing work of scholars, historians, and researchers for continuing to make history matter.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Elliott". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Richard Elliott, Chair of the Board

Telling the Story of the *Founding 56*

ZACHARY BODNAR

The origins of the *Founding 56* exhibit emerged from an archivist's everyday work. Any institution over 170 years old will have extensive lore, much of which is unverifiable or a stretch of the truth. One story often told about the Congregational Library was that it began with 56 books donated by a group of Boston-based ministers. While a compelling story, no one at the library in 2022 knew what those 56 books were—or if there even had been 56.

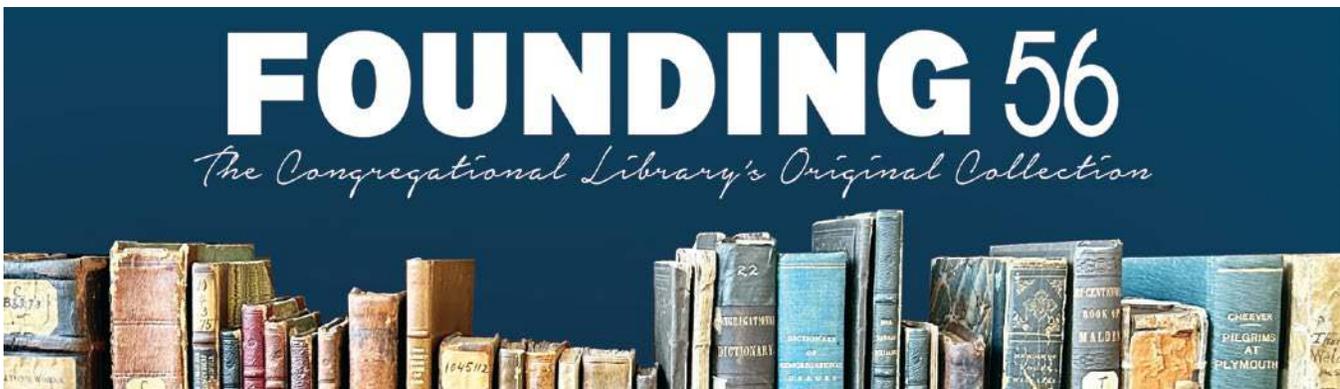
In spring 2022, I began reprocessing the records of the American Congregational Association, the Congregational Library & Archives' own institutional records. This involved looking at and categorizing every folder in the collection. In one of the 60 boxes of papers, I came across a folder titled "Catalogue of books belonging to the Congregational Library Association, 1853." I had found the list of 56 books that founded the Congregational Library!

It is tempting to use the language of discovery, or rediscovery, to describe finding the list. But upon further inspection, reference to this catalog of books was in an old version of the finding aid. What had been lost was knowledge of the list's existence because it had become divorced from the story the list told us about the founding of the Congregational Library. As archivists, we work with countless collections to uncover stories and make them accessible to anyone who searches for them. Unfortunately, we simply cannot retain all those stories ourselves; there are too many.

A digital exhibition seemed a good way to ensure the story would be remembered. The creation of this exhibit has been a thoroughly collaborative experience. Helen Gelinis, Director of Transcription for New England's Hidden Histories, created a diplomatic transcription of the original "Catalogue." The staff each selected two or three works from the *Founding 56* to explore, based on their own interests. Some, with a deep love of the Mathers, chose from the many Mather-related works. One, with an interest in political conspiracies, chose the pamphlet that had "Illuminati" in the title. And another, interested in apocalypses, chose the commentary on the Book of Revelation, all in Latin, of course.

Staff members worked independently to research their chosen books and, using a shared template, created narrative labels for each. My colleagues wanted to understand what the books were about, why they might have been a part of the original library collection, and what they mean to the CLA now, 170 years later. To better facilitate access, I provided links to digital copies of the books highlighted in the exhibit. As it turned out, most were already available online through the Internet Archive, Google Books, and University of Michigan. The library's copy of Mede's *Clavis Apocalyptica* (1649), however, was not. So, I digitized the copy of Mede's commentary on Revelation and made it available through the exhibition as well as the library's digital archive. All of this came together to create a singular exhibit.

As you explore the digital exhibit, I encourage you to find new and interesting connections between



our current moment, here in 2024, and the moment in 1853, when eight donors (not all of whom were Congregational ministers, by the way) brought together these 56 books. You will see that at the end of the exhibition, the original 56 works have been put into dialogue with the 56 most recent library acquisitions. This reveals just how much current collecting has been shaped both in agreement with and in departure from past practice.

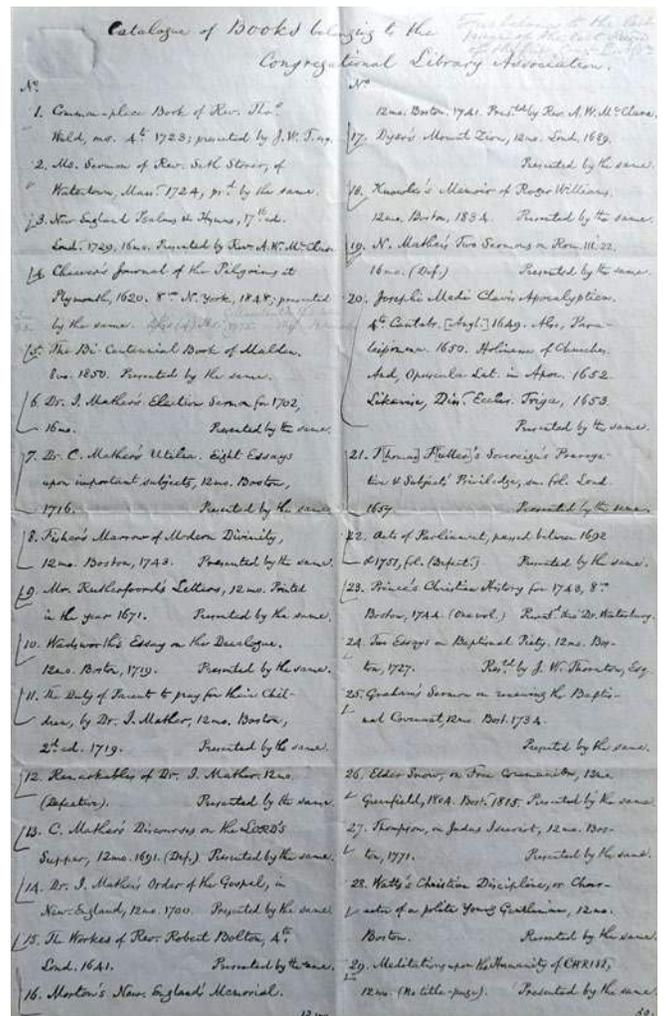
For the Congregational Library & Archives, this exhibit has been a moment of self-discovery. The library now has a much better understanding of how its collection was shaped; the forces that continue to shape it; and how it can make very real, physical books available within a digital space. We have a national audience, and it is our duty to make our resources, and experiences, as accessible as possible, even for those who cannot visit in person. The *Founding 56* digital exhibit ensures you do not need to come to 14 Beacon Street to browse the 56 works that founded this library—but you can if you would like. We will gladly pull the original books out for you!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Zachary Bodnar graduated with a Masters of Library and Information Science from Simmons University, in 2018. Zachary joined the CLA as an Archives Assistant in 2017 and, in 2018, he took on

the title of Archivist. His professional interests include metadata collection and management, digital archiving, and archives management.



Handwritten “Catalogue of books belonging to the Congregational Library Association” from 1853.

Visit our *Founding 56: The Congregational Library’s Original Collection* digital exhibition online anytime at bit.ly/founding56.

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The Seaman's Cause in Nineteenth-Century Boston

RYAN G. TOBLER

In many places in the United States—not least, in Boston—moral horizons expanded in the early nineteenth century, leading Americans to identify new social problems, launch new reform organizations, and devise new ways to help those they deemed in need. This was true of their engagements with slaves, alcoholics, and confined criminals. But it was also true of their actions toward other lesser-known constituencies—among them, American sailors.

Long considered an irredeemable class, seamen attracted new attention and new benevolence after the War of 1812. With the American whaling and maritime shipping industries booming, sailors were a rapidly growing labor class in one of the most robust

economic quarters of the early American Republic. Religious and moral zeal, meanwhile, were growing with equal intensity, and sailors became a subject of special interest.

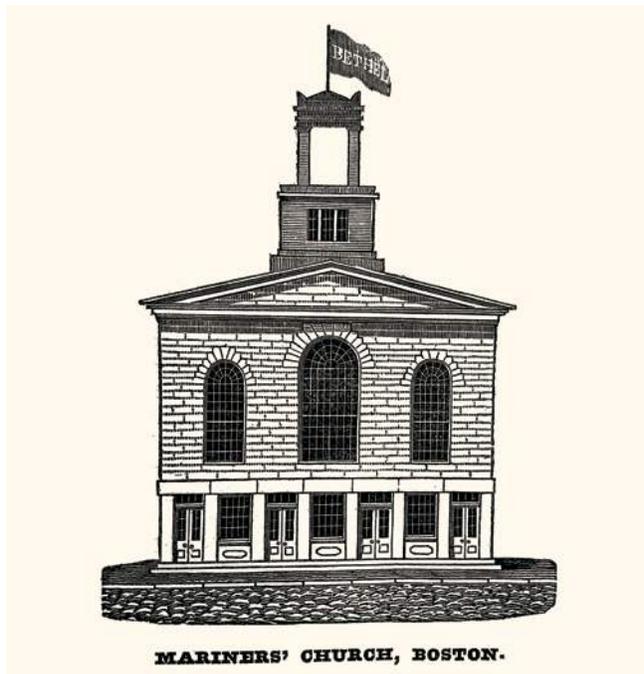
Banding together in reform and “Seamen’s Friend” societies, reformers launched efforts to evangelize seafaring men, built mariners’ churches and “sailors’ homes” (morally-regulated boarding houses), established seamen’s banks (to support saving and financial prudence), brought the temperance movement on board many vessels, and published a range of didactic literature for sailors’ consumption. Collectively these efforts comprise the maritime reform movement; or, as contemporaries sometimes called it, the “Seaman’s Cause.”

Recovering this story of maritime reform, now little known and neglected in scholarship on the history of both reform and religion, is the agenda behind my book project, *Souls at Sea: Religion, Reform, and the American Sailor*. During the summer of 2023, thanks in part to support from the New England Regional Fellowship Consortium (of which the CLA is a member), I spent a month in Boston working toward this end, examining the surviving records of maritime reform organizations.

Two major Seaman’s Cause organizations were affiliated with Congregationalism, and their archives reside at the CLA. These are, first, the Boston Society for the Moral and Religious Instruction of the Poor (BSMRIP, founded 1818), which hired Rev. William Jenks (1788-1866) to provide organized worship services for sailors on Central Wharf between 1818-1828. And second, the Boston Seamen’s Friend Society (BSFS, founded in 1828), which took up the same work and expanded it into other initiatives, including the construction of a nondenominational Mariner’s Church on Purchase Street (completed in



LEFT: Nineteenth-century engraved portrait of the American sailor, a new figure of interest for evangelists and social reformers. OPPOSITE, TOP: Engraved depiction of the Mariner’s Church in Boston, constructed for seafarers by the Boston Seamen’s Friend Society and put into use in 1830.



1830); the distribution of reform literature and Bibles; the operation of boarding houses (and ultimately the construction of a full-scale “Sailor’s Home,” also on Purchase Street); the incorporation of a Seamen’s Bank in 1833; and the creation of a seamen’s reading room and library.

Like many reform societies of the period—and to the great appreciation of historians—the BSMRIP and BSFS were conscientious about the creation and preservation of institutional records. In heavily-bound leather volumes stored at the CLA, they recorded the deliberations, decisions, and assignments of executive meetings, as well as (occasionally) the strategies and motives that moved them to action. The BSFS (still in existence and active today as The Seafarer’s Friend, a nondenominational ministry) also published annual reports that are likewise part of the archive.

Today these reports offer a critical sense of development over time and detailed information about a range of subjects, including the projects these reformers undertook and their sense of success

or failure, the money they collected and disbursed, and the institutional partnerships they formed. For much of the nineteenth century, for instance, the BSFS engaged in friendly crosstown competition with the Methodist-driven Boston Port Society, which operated in a different quarter of the city and left its own set of records, now held at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Alongside other documents like maritime reform periodicals and the journals of seamen and chaplains, these institutional records offer the resources to recover the history of the Seamen’s Cause and learn what it reveals about nineteenth-century religion and social reform.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ryan G. Tobler is a lecturer and historian at Universität Heidelberg with a dual appointment at the Heidelberg Center for American Studies and the Faculty of Theology. He specializes in

American religious and cultural history. His academic research currently revolves around two book projects: *American Sacraments*, a study of ritual and religion in the early United States (based on his Harvard dissertation); and *Souls at Sea: Religion, Reform, and the American Sailor*, a study of the nineteenth-century maritime reform movement.

Access finding aids for the Boston Seaman’s Friend Society and the Boston Society for the Moral and Religious Instruction of the Poor (under the organization’s later name, the City Mission Society) on our website at congregationallibrary.org/finding-aids.

New Staff and Newly Processed Collections Underscore Commitment to Sharing the Congregational Story



Meaghan Wright Hired as New Librarian

Meaghan Wright began her tenure as the CLA's new Librarian at the end of October. She came to the Congregational Library & Archives from the Phillips Library of the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) in Salem, Massachusetts, where she worked for more than six years as a reference librarian. At PEM, she was an active member of both the staff-led Climate + Environment Ideators and the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Working Group, and she remains committed to sustainability and DEIA.

"Meaghan brings a wealth of experience working in an independent research library to the Congregational Library," said Executive Director Kyle Roberts. "I am excited for her vision to make our historic print collections more visible, better described, and more accessible for twenty-first century users across the nation and around the world."

Reflecting on her first few weeks at 14 Beacon, Meaghan said that "managing these fascinating collections in the heart of Boston is an incredible experience," and that she was "looking forward to making them more accessible with improved organization, description, and outreach."

Two Newly Processed Collections Now Available

BRIGHTON, BOSTON, MASS. FANEUIL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH RECORDS, 1884–1984.

The records of the Faneuil Congregation Church in Brighton were given to the CLA in 1975, shortly after the church's dissolution. The church, which grew out of the Faneuil Sunday School, had a 72-year history serving the Brighton community. Thanks to the work of Simmons University intern, Madison Bellew, the collection has been fully reprocessed. The collection includes vital membership records, records of the church's Women's Association and Pilgrim League, a film produced at the church's 50th anniversary, photographs, and administrative meeting minutes.

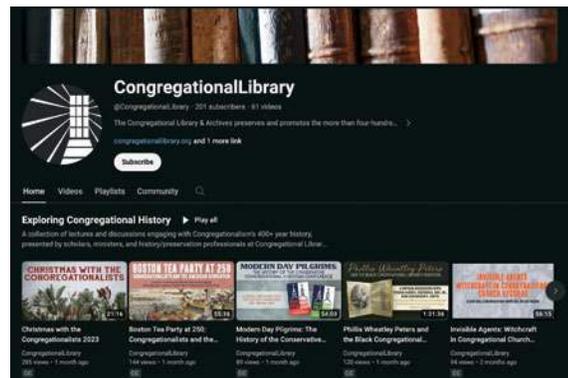
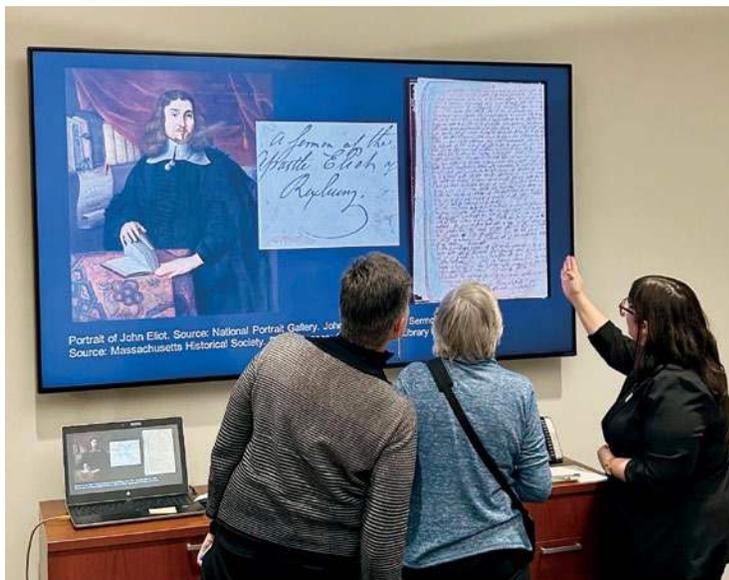


CAPRON FAMILY PAPERS, 1830–1931.

Sarah Brown Capron (née Hooker) and William Banfield Capron were missionaries with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) who worked in and around Madurai, India. Throughout their careers, they wrote extensively to their close and immediate family members, primarily women, and received letters in return. This collection is unique because it not only documents, through hundreds of letters, the challenges and joys of two Congregational missionaries, but it also shares stories of adventure, religious experiences, loss, familial ties, and love spanning five generations.



Programming Highlights



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Dr. Tricia Peone (back, left), New England's Hidden Histories Project Director, speaks to members of the Partnership of Historic Bostons in July 2023. Steven Harris (top), Dr. Cassander Smith (middle), and Rev. Dr. Stephen Ray, Jr. (bottom) speak during our October 2023 program honoring the 250th anniversary of the publication of Phillis Wheatley Peters' *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*. Attendees look on as NEHH Project Director Dr. Tricia Peone (right) discusses a manuscript during our 2023 Open House at 14 Beacon. Visit our YouTube channel at youtube.com/@CongregationalLibrary for a growing archive of videos from our virtual programs.

Donor Reflections on Giving a Collection to the Congregational Library & Archives

MARNIE WARNER

On May 23, 1915, the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (ABCFM), housed at 14 Beacon Street, held a Farewell Service at the Second Congregational Church in Codman Square, Dorchester to commission 55 missionaries to placements throughout the world. Minnie E. Carter (1886-1974), a member of the First Congregational Church in Bethel, Connecticut, participated in that ceremony and spent the next 40 years of her life at the Inanda School of Girls in Natal, South Africa.

Inanda School for Girls was founded in 1869 by missionaries from the ABCFM with the objective of helping Zulu girls improve their home life through education and industrial arts. The South African government provided funding for teachers; however, churches in the United States were essential in ensuring adequate funding for the expenses of boarding at the school. Over the years, the school's enrollment hovered around 250 girls. Inanda also had an active intramural sports program for basketball, tennis, and tennikoit.

Inanda Seminary Car Fund. 1949

Estimate	Date	Receipts
✓ Bal. brought forward	1736.00	
✓ 4 Springs @ 11	44.00	Shilford \$10.00, Harrington \$10.00
✓ 10.00	5.49	6.4 Mrs. N. C. Leonard
✓ 10.00	7.4	7.4 Mrs. Williams
✓ 10.00	7.4	7.4 Junior High School - United Baptist
✓ 45.00	2.349	2.349 Mrs. Smith - Mrs. Suddell, Newtown
✓ 10.00	3.49	3.49 Mabel Taylor - 5 wheels, Bethel Ch. Sch.
✓ 10.00	19.2	19.2 Wm. 2nd.
✓ 45.00	2.349	2.349 Mrs. Smith - Mrs. Suddell, Newtown
✓ 8.00	2.349	2.349 Mabel Taylor - 5 wheels, Bethel Ch. Sch.
✓ 7.50	5.349	5.349 Object Beneficent Women
✓ 7.50	5.349	5.349 Bristol's S. Ind. Mrs. Pauline Sanford
✓ 7.50	7.3.49	7.3.49 Lane etc. - Bead Ch. Torrington
✓ 22.00	20.3.49	20.3.49 Madison Church & S.S. 7.00 (typo)
✓ 6.00	1.3.49	1.3.49 Ladies Aid So. United Ch. New Haven
✓ 5.00	1.3.49	1.3.49 Mrs. Carson, Stamford
✓ 5.00	4.5	4.5 Ladies - 1st Ch. Torrington
✓ 5.00	7.3.49	7.3.49 E. Woodbury, New Haven
✓ 4.00	1.3.49	1.3.49 Ladies Aid So. United Ch. New Haven
✓ 12.00	10.3.49	10.3.49 Part of two H.C.'s - 1st Congregational
✓ 12.00	21.3.49	21.3.49 Part of two H.C.'s - 1st Congregational
✓ 2.50	24.3.49	24.3.49 Richmond Hill Union Ch. School
✓ 2.50	28.3.49	28.3.49 Bristol S.S. Mrs. P. Sanford
✓ 2.00	24.3.49	24.3.49 Richmond Hill Union Ch. School
✓ 1.50	27.1.49	27.1.49 Agnes Frothingham
✓ 16.00	7.4.49	7.4.49 Helen C. Cole
✓ 4.00	24.3.49	24.3.49 Richmond Hill Union Ch. School
✓ 6.00	17.2.49	17.2.49 Dr. J. D. Taylor (or window)
✓ 6.00	24.3.49	24.3.49 Richmond Hill Union Ch. School
✓ 3.00	7.4	7.4 Mrs. H. H. H. H. H.
2006.00		

The history of Inanda is particularly important to me because Minnie Carter was my great aunt. Recently while cleaning the attic in our family home, I found pamphlets, photos, newspaper articles, and letters about her life in Inanda. From August 1934 to December 1940, Minnie wrote her mother weekly about her experiences. It felt wrong to throw this material in the recycle bin as what Minnie had written gave a glimpse into the daily life of a missionary at that time. I approached the Congregational Library & Archives, who I had worked with previously on archiving the UCC's Open and Affirming Coalition collection. Not only was the CLA's Librarian willing to take the materials, but she was enthusiastic about preserving them.

Here are a few snapshots of what I have learned about Minnie's work at Inanda while preparing the collection for donation:

LANGUAGE: The girls spoke Zulu but had to learn English to take the government's standardized tests. In 1916, the staff ate in two separate dining

Minnie Carter's handwritten records from her 1949 car fundraiser for Inanda.



Minnie Carter at the FCCB Reception, 1949.



Students greeting the school's new car on its arrival at Inanda.

rooms, one for European teachers and one for native teachers. Minnie learned Zulu by eating dinner in the native teachers' dining room. This included mastering the click that is part of the Zulu language.

TEACHING: Minnie enjoyed teaching scripture and biology. She also taught English or any subject needed when substituting for another teacher. Minnie went on to serve as principal of the high school division for 24 years.

SUNDAYS: Minnie would go on horseback to a rural village, usually five to six miles away, on Sundays to engage folks in learning about the Bible, to challenge them to memorize passages, and to lead services and sing hymns. Usually, several school girls walked with her and acted as teachers. Some Sundays, Minnie would listen to the children who had memorized Bible passages and give them pictures as a reward for a solid presentation.

CAR FUND: During Minnie's furlough in 1949, she raised money for the purchase of an American Ford car for use at Inanda. Her papers include the list of car parts with assigned costs. Her fundraising pitch to churches and friends was to fund a part of the car. Surviving in her papers is a list of the car parts and the donors who sponsored them.

LEGACY: Although proud of all the students who graduated from Inanda, Minnie was most gratified by those students who went on to become teachers and nurses. Some even went on to become doctors and religious educators dedicated to improving the lives of many people beyond their families.

In 1996, I visited Inanda for two days to see where my great-aunt had devoted so much of her life. It was emotional to speak to current students and see family names listed on the roll of donors on the back wall of the chapel given that I was 8,000 miles away from Boston. By donating Minnie Carter's papers to the Congregational Library & Archives, I am happy to ensure that her ministry in Inanda will be remembered and available to researchers and those interested in the history of Congregational missions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Marnie Warner retired in 2013 after 40 years as a law librarian in a law firm, setting up prison libraries, and as Law Library Coordinator for the Massachusetts Trial Court. One of her first volunteer activities

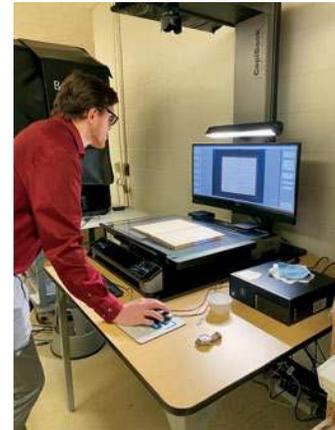
was to help organize the Congregational Library & Archives' materials on the history of the UCC Open and Affirming Coalition. Marnie is currently the Chair of the LGBTQ Religious Archives Network.

Digitization and Transcription Projects Increase Access to NEHH Documents

NEHH Expands Access to Connecticut Church Records

This year, New England's Hidden Histories (NEHH) is working with partners at the Connecticut State Library to digitize thousands of pages of material from some of Connecticut's oldest churches. The digitization work is being completed by Dan MacNeil, a graduate student at Central Connecticut State University completing his MA degree in Public History. Dan is working onsite with Anna Newman, Digital Projects Manager at the Connecticut State Library. The work is funded by a Humanities Collections and Reference Resources grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

This phase of the project will more than double the NEHH collection of Connecticut materials. These early records contain valuable information for researchers such as baptisms, marriages, deaths, sermons, and relations of faith from congregations in colonial Connecticut including Hartford, Old Lyme, Stonington, and Groton. Once digitization is completed, these early Congregational church records will be published online in our NEHH digital archive. We look forward to sharing these records with you in the coming months.



Dan MacNeil digitizing Congregational church records at the Connecticut State Library. Photo courtesy of Anna Newman.



Mr. Sanzone's seventh-grade history students from St. Mary of the Annunciation School in Danvers, MA. Photo courtesy of Zach Sanzone.

Danvers Students Learn from Manuscript Transcription Project

Over the years, Dr. Robert Allison has frequently contacted NEHH Director of Transcription, Helen Gelinas, to request pages from NEHH records for his graduate students to use as they learn to transcribe original manuscripts. One of his graduate students, Zach Sanzone, took a particular interest in this assignment, not only as an exercise he enjoyed, but for its potential use in his own middle school history classroom.

Zach reached out to Helen asking if it might be possible to have his students at St. Mary of the Annunciation School in Danvers, MA, try their hands at reading and deciphering some documents. Delighted, she sent him 20 pages of sermon notes written in 1775 by Joshua Green (1731-1806) of Boston. Mr. Sanzone's students enthusiastically tackled them. As one seventh-grader expressed it, "being an archivist is a lot harder than I thought!"

Helen and members of the NEHH team have been equally thrilled to see these young students engage with hand-written, primary documents, including records from Granville, MA, and Bennington, VT, over the past few years, inspiring a love of history passed from generation to generation. As she puts it, "this is the way future historians are born!"



The New England's Hidden Histories project has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom.

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The Congregational Library & Archives Acquires the Southern New England Women's Connection Collection

The Southern New England Women's Connection of the United Church of Christ collection arrived last fall at the Congregational Library & Archives. Full of rich material, it is one of the largest collections documenting Congregational women's missionary and regional activities in the library's collection.

The history of the Women's Connection collection began with female missionaries in Connecticut working with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the Woman's Board of Missions. These two groups merged in 1926 and became the Council of Congregational Women of Connecticut on October 2, 1928.

Nearly a century later, and after a number of mergers and name changes, the organization is now called the Southern New England Women's Connection. Throughout its history, the Women's Connection has supported home and foreign missions, maintained a lending and art library, raised money to support disaster relief, and participated in protests and boycotts in support of labor movements and against corporate overreach.

The CLA began working with treasurer Martha Lape and member-at-large Karen Gravino in 2023 to bring this group's records, and its stories of generations of Connecticut women, to 14 Beacon to be preserved and made accessible for all. This partnership aims to provide access to valuable information about how Congregational church women in New England organized themselves and worked together to support each other, their communities, and those in need nationally and internationally. As Archivist Zachary Bodnar explains, this project reflects the Congregational Library & Archives' commitment "to ensuring the accessibility of Congregational stories from underrepresented groups."

The collection, which includes scrapbooks, photographs, slides, and born-digital records, is currently being processed by Karen Clausen-Brown,



Martha Lape (left) and Karen Gravino (right) carefully went through the collection in advance of donating it to the Congregational Library & Archives, following some of the lessons they learned from the Church Stewardship Initiative videos.

a former archives intern from Simmons University, whose work has been funded by the generous contributions of CLA donors who are committed to the preservation and accessibility of women's



Karen Clausen-Brown at work processing the SNEUCC Women's Connection collection in the archives office at 14 Beacon.

history. Karen began processing the collection in January and shares that she is "delighted to be back at the CLA working on such a fascinating collection about women's history."

Learn more about the Southern New England Women's Connection at their website: ctwomenucc.org. The archival collection of their papers will be available later this spring.

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Save the Date for These Spring Programs

To Keep or Not to Keep: The Value of the Retention Schedule, A Church Stewardship Initiative Workshop

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024
1-2 PM EDT

Church stewardship encompasses all the records your church is producing today. This might include vital records, meeting minutes, financial documents, and legal records, among others. Some need to be kept for a set period of time and can then be safely disposed of, while others will have lasting historic value.

Join us for this next program in the Congregational Library & Archives' Church Stewardship Initiative, a series devoted to empowering churches to steward and preserve their valuable records. In this program, the CLA's archivists Billy and Zachary will present a model retention schedule, speak to how federal and state regulations may affect the policy, and explain how to implement such a policy at your church.

The Sound of Congregationalism, 1720–1820

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2024
1-2 PM EDT

The “sound of Congregationalism”—the musical sound, at any rate—changed markedly several times during the hundred years from 1720–1820, as musical philosophies shifted between two sets of poles: ritual versus art, and worship versus performance.

As the 18th century dawned, music in New England's meetinghouses was an aspect of worship practice. The Regular Singing movement of the 1720s and the eventual formation of church choirs changed all that. By the 1770s, much of the singing had been wrested away from congregants, but as a new century approached, music in the meetinghouse returned to older, simpler tunes that everyone sang together.

Learn more about this fascinating period of change from noted musicologist Dr. Nym Cooke in this virtual program, part of the CLA's spring series, “What Does Congregationalism Sound Like?”

Congregationalists and the American Revolution: A Collections Tour with Kyle Roberts and Tricia Peone

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2024
5:30-7 PM EDT

With the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution approaching, join us at 14 Beacon Street for an in-person viewing of original materials related to the American Revolution with Executive Director Kyle Roberts and New England's Hidden Histories Project Director Tricia Peone.

See first-hand Revolutionary-era treasures from the collections, learn more about the stories of how Congregationalists experienced the period leading up to, during, and immediately following the war, and reflect on what this pivotal event means 250 years later.