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Halifax, Mass. Congregational Church records, 1734-1932. RG5192

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English

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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:	Church of Christ (Halifax, Mass.)
Creator:	Halifax Congregational Church (Halifax, Mass.)
Title:	Halifax, Mass. Congregational Church records, 1734-1932.
ID:	RG5192
Date [inclusive]:	1734-1932
Physical Description:	1.09 Cubic Feet (1 box)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	A Congregational church was officially formed in Halifax in 1734, with 53 founding members. A second meeting house was built in 1852. In 1842 a Ladies Sewing Circle was organized and continued to be central to church life. The Halifax Congregational Church is now a member of the United Church of Christ, and continues to serve the community today. This collection consists of early administrative records for the Congregational Church and the associated parish in Halifax.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Halifax, Mass. Congregational Church records, 1734-1932, RG5192. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

The land which would become Halifax, Mass. was originally part of West Precinct of Plymouth, which included Plympton, Carver, and Wareham. In 1731, residents in northern Plympton lobbied successfully for permission to hold their own religious meeting in the home of Deacon Robert Waterman. The following year, local landowner John Bryant deeded a plot to the religious society's proprietors for the erection of a meeting house. In October of 1734 a church was officially formed by order of an ecclesiastical council, and its covenant signed by 22 male and 31 female members. Rev. John Cotton was the church's first minister, ordained in 1735 and remaining in the position for 20 years. Subsequent

early pastors included Rev. William Patten (1757-1765), Rev. Ephraim Briggs (1767-1799), and Rev. Abel Richmond (1800-1832), who was ousted after a 33-year pastorate due to disagreements with parishioners.

A Sunday school was founded in 1736, possibly the first such establishment in North America. In the 1750s the meeting house was deemed too small to accommodate the growing population. The building was split in half and expanded by 16 feet in the middle. In addition to being a locus for both town and church business, the meeting house was also used for the storage of munitions and gunpowder during the latter part of the 18th century. In 1821 a steeple and bell were built and installed via funds raised from the sale of pews. The expanded first meeting house continued to serve the needs of the church until the early 1850s, when it was sold to the town to be used as a town hall. Though remarkably long-lived, the building was destroyed in a fire in 1907.

After the dismissal of Rev. Abel Richmond in 1832, Rev. Eldridge Howe was invited to the ministry and accepted. A large portion of the congregation still professed loyalty to Rev. Richmond. In 1834, 15 members seceded from the church. This was followed by numerous other secessions over the following year, resulting in a significant decline in overall membership, to about half of its former size. The remaining congregants were unable to pay Rev. Howe's salary to his satisfaction, and he tendered his resignation in late 1835. The following decades were typified by short supply ministries, a notable exception being the 11-year pastorate of Rev. Timothy Brainerd from 1855-1866.

In 1842 a Ladies' "Missionary Sewing Circle" was officially organized, with the intent to provide clothing for a missionary station in Canada. The group changed names several times in subsequent years and was also known as the Ladies Sewing Circle, the Ladies Benevolent Society, and the Halifax Benevolent Society. Their mission also expanded to include general fundraising for the church and other charitable causes. Despite changes in name and emphasis, this women's group essentially persisted throughout the 19th and 20th centuries and remained an important part of church life.

In 1852 a second meeting house was built for the Church's use, slightly to the west of the original building. It was erected at a cost of \$5,200 and was dedicated on December 7, 1852 with its dedicatory sermon delivered by the Rev. Charles Porter from Plymouth. In 1921, during Sunday service, a violent wind gust caused the steeple to collapse and the spire to fall into an unoccupied pew. The mortgage for the church was paid in full in 1978, and subsequently burned ceremonially in a special service, a popular tradition at the time. The Halifax Congregational Church is now a member of the United Church of Christ, and continues to serve the community today.

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Scope and Contents

This collection consists of early administrative records for the Congregational Church and the associated parish in Halifax, as well as membership records, records of Ladies' societies associated with the church, and manuscript historical narratives. Member records include a large number of marriage intentions from the early to mid 1800s.

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Arrangement

This collection has been arranged into four series, listed below. Except within the membership series, records have been arranged in chronological order, by start date. Within the membership series, records have been grouped by topics, and further divided by either alphabetical or chronological order.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Congregational Library & Archives

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Boston, MA 02108

info@14beacon.org

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

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.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Materials were loaned to the Congregational Library & Archives by Halifax Congregational Church, in March 2019; 2014-41.

Processing Information

Processed and described by Jules Thomson, November 2019, using DACS Second edition.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Church discipline.
- Church membership.
- Church records and registers.
- Covenants (Church polity).
- Marriage records.
- Ordination.
- Registers of births, etc.
- Women -- Religious life.
- Women -- Societies and clubs.
- Church of Christ (Halifax, Mass.)
- Halifax (Mass. : Town) -- Church history.
- Halifax Congregational Church (Halifax, Mass.)

Bibliography

250th Anniversary Celebration: United Church of Christ of Halifax. Halifax, 1982. 17.11.1 H 13.5P H

Davis, Emerson. *Biographical Sketches of the Congregational Pastors of New England: Volume II*, n.d. 9.3.90

Perkins, Ruth V. *250th Anniversary of the Beginning of the Church.* Halifax, 1982. 17.11.1 H 13.5P

Wadsworth, Joseph III. *The History of the Halifax Congregational Church of Halifax, Massachusetts, Vol. 1* Halifax, 2008. 17.11.1 H 13.5 HalCC HW 2008

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Collection Inventory

Church and parish records, 1734-1932

Scope and Contents

This series contains the administrative records of the church and parish in Halifax, including three bound records books. The series includes meeting minutes, officer lists, financial records, ecclesiastical council records, correspondence, and other administrative documentation.

Title/Description	Instances	
Church records, 1734-1835	box 1	volume 1
Scope and Contents		
This bound volume of church records contains the earliest administrative documentation of the Church of Christ in Halifax. It includes the church's confession of faith, the earliest covenant, meeting minutes, baptisms, member lists, and disciplinary records.		
Officer lists, 1735-1885	box 1	folder 1
Scope and Contents		
This file contains loose records documenting lists of church officers, including deacons and clergy.		
Financial records, 1795-1844	box 1	folder 4
Scope and Contents		
This folder contains loose financial records, including itemized receipts to and from various individuals for everyday expenses, and Rev. Abel Richmond's receipts for payments to Rhode Island College.		
Parish records, 1824-1885	box 1	volume 3
Scope and Contents		
This bound parish record book primarily contains meeting minutes, as well as policy documents, copies of deeds, and copies of correspondence.		
Parish treasury records, 1825-1867	box 1	volume 4
Scope and Contents		
This bound volume of parish treasury records contains financial ledgers with lists of subscribers and rates.		
Ecclesiastical council records, 1832-1875	box 1	folder 13

Scope and Contents

This folder contains loose records containing the results of ecclesiastical councils, which were primarily called to settle disputes within individual churches, as well as for the ordinations of new ministers.

Meeting minutes, 1832-1878

box 1

folder 14

Scope and Contents

This folder contains loose records of meeting minutes for both the church and parish of Halifax, which include legal warnings, synopses of meetings, and votes on various issues.

Church records, 1832-1891

box 1

volume 5

Scope and Contents

This bound volume contains records for the Congregational Church in Halifax (referred to only as the "Church in Halifax"). The volume includes meeting minutes, baptisms, admissions, member lists, articles of faith, the church covenant, and ecclesiastical council minutes.

Correspondence, 1833-1932

box 1

folder 15

Scope and Contents

This folder contains loose correspondence, including letters relating to church disputes, missionary society correspondence and newsletter items, and invitations to ordination councils.

Photographs and prints, 1867; undated

box 1

folder 19

Scope and Contents

This folder contains two black and white photographic prints depicting the sanctuary of the second meeting house and the downstairs Sunday school room, an engraving of the Halifax town hall, and a missionary card depicting the ship "Morning Star".

Conference records, 1884; undated

box 1

folder 20

Scope and Contents

This folder contains 2 loose records relating to the Pilgrim Conference at Halifax and an invitation to the Boston Council of Congregational Churches.

Policy documents, 1919; undated

box 1

folder 21

Scope and Contents

This folder contains loose records relating to church policy, including undated early copies of the church's articles of

faith and covenant, as well as a constitution document from the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States.

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Membership records, 1788-1895

Scope and Contents

This series contains the membership records of the church in Halifax, and includes lists of admissions to the church, formal correspondence relating to dismissions and transfers to and from other churches, a large number of official marriage intention documents from the 1800s, and several relations of faith by potential members.

Title/Description	Instances	
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Dismissions and transfers (A-H), 1788-1891	box 1	folder 2
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Scope and Contents

This folder contains official correspondence between churches, relating to the transfer and dismissal of members to and from the Congregational Church in Halifax. It includes documentation relating to members with surnames A-H.

Dismissions and transfers (I-Z), 1822-1895	box 1	folder 3
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Scope and Contents

This folder contains official correspondence between churches, relating to the transfer and dismissal of members to and from the Congregational Church in Halifax. It includes documentation relating to members with surnames I-Z.

Marriage intentions (A-B), 1804-1849	box 1	folder 5
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Scope and Contents

This folder contains marriage intentions, official documents recording marriages in Halifax and surrounding areas. The intentions record the names of the betrothed and their location, and are typically signed by the town clerk. Records are arranged alphabetically by the groom's surname.

Marriage intentions by surname, A-B

Melzar Adams Jr. and Olive Inglee

1804 (Halifax)

Melzar Adams Jr. and Olive Inglee

1804 (Kingston)

Daniel Alden and Joanna Tilson

1804

Seth Allen and Lucy Holmes

1809

Sidney Allen and Elizabeth Hayward
1849
John Attwood Jr. and Martha Thomson
1828
Jabez Bosworth and Sarah Bradford
1806
Francis Bourne and Jannet Thomson
1823
William Bozworth and Lucy Hayward
1807
Zalmon Brigg and Mary Briggs
1819
Thomas Bryant and Nancy Sturtevant
1827
Zenas Bryant and Judith Sturtevant
1822
Robert Byram and Mercy Faxon
1814

Marriage intentions (C-G), 1802-1827

box 1

folder 6

Scope and Contents

This folder contains marriage intentions, official documents recording marriages in Halifax and surrounding areas. The intentions record the names of the betrothed and their location, and are typically signed by the town clerk. Records are arranged alphabetically by the groom's surname.

Marriage intentions by surname, C-G

Sebery Child Hathaway and Sarah Porter
1818
Ebenezer Colwell Jr. and Elizabeth Bosworth
1822
Galen Colwell and Lucy Bosworth
1827 (West Bridgewater)
Galen Colwell and Lucy Bosworth
1827 (Plympton)
Isaac Cook and Jane Drew
1802
Thomas Cornish and Deborah Leach
1826 (Halifax)
Thomas Cornish and Deborah Leach
1826 (Plymouth)
Melven Crooker and Mary Thomson
1807
George Drew and Sarah Thomson III
1810
Silvanus Eddy and Joanna Fuller Jr.
1808
Nathaniel French and Betsey Waterman
1811
Nathaniel French and Eliza Waterman
1811
Benjamin Fuller and Anne Bosworth
1826

Ebenezer Fuller and Rebecca Fuller

1808

Thomas Fuller and Sally Sturtevant

1811

Marriage intentions (H), 1802-1839

box 1

folder 7

Scope and Contents

This folder contains marriage intentions, official documents recording marriages in Halifax and surrounding areas. The intentions record the names of the betrothed and their location, and are typically signed by the town clerk. Records are arranged alphabetically by the groom's surname.

Marriage intentions by surname, H

Benjamin Hammonds and Hannah Sturtevant

1802 (Carver)

Benjamin Hammonds and Hannah Sturtevant

1802 (Halifax)

Ebenezer Hall and Nancy Dunbar

1816 (Halifax)

Ebenezer Hall and Nancy Dunbar

1816 (Bridgewater)

Silvanus Hall and Almiry Cushman

1816 (Bridgewater)

Silvanus Hall and Almaria Cushman

1816 (Halifax)

John Harris and Rebecca Wood

1811 (Bridgewater)

John Harris and Rebecca Wood

1811 (Halifax)

Ephraim Harden and Harty Harden

1823

Ebenezer Hathaway and Lucia Hill

1839

Benjamin Hayward and Cynthia Wade

1831

Ziba Hayward and Sally Bozworth

1806

Ziba Hayward and Sarah Bosworth III

1806

Eleazer Holmes and Ruth Waterman

1803

Ellis Holmes and Content Chipman

1808 (Bridgewater)

Ellis Holmes and Content Chipman

1808 (Halifax)

Marriage intentions (J-M), 1801-1848

box 1

folder 8

Scope and Contents

This folder contains marriage intentions, official documents recording marriages in Halifax and surrounding areas. The intentions record the names of the betrothed and their

location, and are typically signed by the town clerk. Records are arranged alphabetically by the groom's surname.

Marriage intentions by surname, J-M

George Washington Jackson and Molly Briggs Jr.

1804

William Jackson to Joanna Crooker

1848

Ebenezer Johnson and Lucinda Sears

1826 (Londonderry)

Ebenezer Johnson and Lucinda Sears

1826 (Halifax)

Arnold Leach and Polly Fuller

1812 (Middleborough)

Arnold Leach and Polly Fuller

1812 (Halifax)

Joseph Leach and Susanna Sturtevant

1801 (Halifax)

Joseph Leach and Susanna Sturtevant

1801 (Middleboro)

Joshua Leach and Celia Dean

1804

Alpha Lyon and Tabatha Leach

1829

Isaac Lyon and Polly Thomson

1816

Joshua Lyon and Lucy Thomson

1809

Albert Morton and Rachel Hadley

1825

Cyrus Morton and Lucy Drew

1825

Lloyd Morton and Mercy Tilson

1820

Marriage intentions (P-R), 1801-1832

box 1

folder 9

Scope and Contents

This folder contains marriage intentions, official documents recording marriages in Halifax and surrounding areas.

The intentions record the names of the betrothed and their location, and are typically signed by the town clerk. Records are arranged alphabetically by the groom's surname.

Marriage intentions by surname, P-R

Friend Perkins and Anna Inglee

1832

John Pool and Bethiah Lucas

1826

Henry Pope and Lydia Sturtevant

1826

Asa Pratt and Lydia Lyon

1802

Asa Pratt II and Rebecca Leach

1818

Bela Pratt and Sophia Weston

1801

Cornelius Pratt and Lucina Thompson

1823 (Bridgewater)

Cornelius Pratt and Lucina Thompson

1823 (Halifax)

David Pratt and Lydia Corthell

1812

Ebenezer Pratt and Olive Wood

1824

Jonathan Pratt and Nabby Phillips

1822

Samuel Ramsdel Jr. and Rebecca Thompson

1809

Isaiah Ripley Jr. and Zerviah Fuller

1805 (Plympton)

Isaiah Ripley Jr. and Zerviah Fuller

1805 (Halifax)

Marriage intentions (S), 1801-1848

box 1

folder 10

Scope and Contents

This folder contains marriage intentions, official documents recording marriages in Halifax and surrounding areas. The intentions record the names of the betrothed and their location, and are typically signed by the town clerk. Records are arranged alphabetically by the groom's surname.

Marriage intentions by surname, S

William Seares and Mary Wood

1825

James Smith and Mercy Colwell

1847

Daniel Soule and Lucy Waterman

1818 (Plympton)

Daniel Soule and Lucy Waterman

1818 (Halifax)

Ebenezer Soule and Mary Thompson

1828 (Dorchester)

Ebenezer Soule and Mary Thomson

1828 (Halifax)

isaac Soule and Ruth Fuller

1805

Thomas Soule and Betsy Soule

1823

Thomas Standish and Bethiah Waterman

1810

John Stebbins and Mary Ford

1848

Thomas Stilman and Clairra Thomson

1831

Bela Sturtevant and Hannah Chandler

1808

Dependence Sturtevant and Sarah Soule

1816

John Sturtevant and Martha Waterman

1822

Josiah Sturtevant and Charlotte Cushing

1804

Ward Sturtevant and Lucinda Christian

1816

Marriage intentions (T), 1801-1826

box 1

folder 11

Scope and Contents

This folder contains marriage intentions, official documents recording marriages in Halifax and surrounding areas.

The intentions record the names of the betrothed and their location, and are typically signed by the town clerk. Records are arranged alphabetically by the groom's surname.

Marriage intentions by surname, T

Walter Thomas and Fanny Clark

1815 (Halifax)

Walter Thomas and Fanny Clark

1815 (Plympton)

Eliab Thomson and Levina Washburn

1819 (Halifax)

Eliab Thomson and Levina Washburn

1819 (Bridgewater)

Ire Thomson and Sophie Drew

1802

Eliab Thomson and Lydia Thomson`

1826

Lewis Thomson and Huldah Wood

1821

Nathan Thomson and Elizabeth Fobes

1802 (Bridgewater)

Nathaniel Thomson and Molly Foster

1812

Ward Thomson and Molly Holmes

1814

Adam Tomson Jr. and Salvina Wood Jr.

1808

Nathan Tomson and Elizabeth Fobes

1802 (Halifax)

Samuel Tomson and Clare Sturlevant

1801`

Zebadiah Tomson Jr. and Martha Briggs

1805

Bethuel Tilson and Pemela Bosworth

1808

Bethuel Tillson and Peranelia Bosworth

1809

Marriage intentions (W), 1802-1826

box 1

folder 12

Scope and Contents

This folder contains marriage intentions, official documents recording marriages in Halifax and surrounding areas. The intentions record the names of the betrothed and their location, and are typically signed by the town clerk. Records are arranged alphabetically by the groom's surname.

Marriage intentions by surname, W

James Wade and Sabina Lyon
1802
Melven Wade and Lydia Holmes
1803
Cephas Washburn and Mercy Parris
1826 (Bridgewater)
Cephas Washburn and Mercy Parris
1826 (Halifax)
Cephas Waterman and Bathsheba Richmond
1818
Abial White and Joanna Fuller
1808
Martin Willis and Sabina Thompson
1825
Cyrus Wood and Lucy Fuller
1820
John Wood and Dianthy Waterman
1819
Judah Wood Jr. and Rhoda Shaw
1812
Timothy Wood Jr. and Mercy Bosworth Jr.
1818

Admissions, 1840-1867

box 1

folder 16

Scope and Contents

This folder contains loose records relating to admissions, specifically lists of admitted members with dates of admission. Some documents recording early admissions appear to be in a more modern hand.

Relations, 1842-1867

box 1

folder 17

Scope and Contents

This folder contains relations of faith documents, formalized personal religious statements written by individuals seeking admission to the church. The relations are organized alphabetically by surname.

Relations by surname

Bosworth, Mary
undated
Fuller, Mary
1858
Fuller, Levesta

1863
Fuller, Mary
 1867
Fuller, Mary
 1867 (copy)
Fuller, Nelson
 1861
Morton, Lydia
 1842
Sturtevant, Mary
 1858
Sylvester, L. H.
 1869
Thomson, Salvina
 undated

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Historical narratives, 1807-1812, undated

Scope and Contents

This series contains handwritten historical accounts, mainly by Halifax local Ignatius Thomson. In his voluminous manuscripts he describes the historical events leading up to the foundation of Halifax as well as a history of the town and region. There are also a small number of undated handwritten historical notes.

Title/Description	Instances	
Ignatius Thomson historical manuscript and ledger, 1807-1812	box 1	volume 2

Scope and Contents

This manuscript volume contains a broad-ranging historical narrative focusing on the history of Halifax. A tête-bêche financial ledger is also present at the back of the volume.

Ignatius Thomson historical manuscripts (loose), undated	box 1	folder 23
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Scope and Contents

These loose manuscript pages were removed from the Ignatius Thomson historical manuscript and ledger, 1807-1812, and contain similar historical narrative material.

Historical narratives, undated	box 1	folder 22
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Scope and Contents

This folder contains undated historical notes relating to the history of Halifax, including a handwritten historical sketch, and part of an unidentified published tract.

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Ladies Societies records, 1842-1890

Scope and Contents

This series consists of four record books and one folder of loose documents relating to various iterations of the Ladies Society of the Halifax Congregational Church. The record books are largely sequential with occasional gaps and changes in name.

Title/Description	Instances	
Ladies Benevolent Society records, 1842-1855	box 1	volume 6

Scope and Contents

This record book of the Ladies Benevolent Society contains a preamble with the organization's mission statement, meeting minutes, lists of officers, lists of subscribers, and financial records.

Ladies Benevolent Society records, 1855-1863	box 1	volume 7
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Scope and Contents

This volume contains the records for the Ladies Benevolent Society, including meeting minutes, officer lists, financial records, and records of charitable contributions including collections for Union soldiers during the Civil War.

Ladies Sewing Society records (loose), 1860-1864; undated	box 1	folder 18
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Scope and Contents

This folder of loose records relating to the Ladies Sewing Society were found inside the Ladies Benevolent Society record book, 1855-1863. They include correspondence, including a letter relating to Civil War charity donations, and financial records.

Ladies Sewing Society records, 1873-1881	box 1	volume 8
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Scope and Contents

This bound volume of Ladies Sewing Society records includes a copy of the organization's constitution, meeting minutes, officer lists, and financial ledgers.

Ladies Sewing Circle records, 1881-1890	box 1	volume 9
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Scope and Contents

This bound volume of the Ladies Sewing Circle records includes meeting minutes, officer lists, and copies of correspondence.

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