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Marblehead, Mass. Old North Church records, 1684-1866. RG5043

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English

DACS2 - 2013

Congregational Library & Archives

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	Old North Church (Marblehead, Mass.)
Title:	Marblehead, Mass. Old North Church records, 1684-1866.
ID:	RG5043
Date [inclusive]:	1684-1866
Physical Description:	1.33 Cubic Feet (3 boxes, 1 reel)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	<p>The First Church of Christ of Marblehead was established on August 13, 1684 and Rev. Samuel Cheever was ordained the first minister. The first meeting house was built atop Old Burial Hill in 1638 and the second meeting house was constructed 1695. The third, and final, meeting house, built of stone, was constructed in 1824. Disagreements over the appointment of ministers led to the establishment of the Second Church in 1716 and the Third Church in 1858. Now known as the Old North Church, the First Congregational Church in Marblehead continues to serve the local community. This collection contains both the records of the church and of the Congregational Society. Included in the collection are meeting minutes, membership lists, vital records, and financial records.</p>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Marblehead, Mass. Old North Church records, 1684-1866, RG5043. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

While Marblehead, Massachusetts, was incorporated as a separate town in 1649, legally, the area was still under the direct governmental control of Salem long after incorporation. The result of arrangement was that congregants in Marblehead were required to travel to Salem in order to receive communion and other sacraments. Due in part to the difficulty of travel and in part due to the political turmoil following

the 1684 revocation of the Massachusetts Bay colonial charter, the town of Marblehead took steps to become independent of Salem in 1864. Parallel to this effort was the establishment of the First Church of Christ of Marblehead on August 13, 1684 with Rev. Samuel Cheever, who had been preaching in Marblehead since 1668, as the first minister.

The first meeting house was constructed in 1638 atop what is now known as Old Burial Hill. By 1695, the congregation had outgrown the dated structure. Construction on a new centrally located meeting house began in the early summer of 1695 and was completed before the year ended. Due to the success of the building fund drive, there were additional funds left after construction which were used to reuse materials from the old structure to construct a new schoolhouse.

Rev. Cheever served as pastor of the church until, due to age and health concerns, it was decided by the town, in 1714, to bring a new minister to help Cheever and relieve him of his pastoral duties. By 1715, three candidates had been identified: John Barnard, Ames Cheever, Rev. Cheever's son, and Edward Holyoke. In 1715, the town voted to invite Barnard to be the new pastor and he was ordained in 1716. Rev. Cheever continued to preach and participate in the church until 1719. The ordination of Rev. Barnard also caused a rift in the congregation with a significant minority of the congregation strongly preferring Edward Holyoke. Following Barnard's ordination, 28 members requested dismissal from the First Church in order to form the Second Congregational Church with Edward Holyoke as their minister. The Second Congregational Church now exists as the Unitarian Universalist Church of Marblehead.

The First Congregational Church saw some expansion during the early nineteenth-century under the pastorate of Rev. Samuel Dana. In 1817 he helped to establish the church's Sunday school and in 1824, he oversaw the construction of a new stone church building. This building continues to serve as the church building today. Following a protracted dispute related to the installation of Rev. Benjamin R. Allen in 1854, 49 members requested dismissal from the First Church in order to form the Third Church, known as the South Church, in 1858. Due to this separation, the First Church was renamed to Old North Church the same year. Following a catastrophic fire that destroyed the South Church building, many members of the South Church rejoined the Old North Church in 1877. In 1879 the Parish House was built beside the church and in 1886 the church underwent major renovations which included the rebuilding of the church front.

The church continued to serve the community during the twentieth-century. During the 1950s and 1960s the church membership increased dramatically. In 1950 the Parish House was rebuilt. In 1964 the Old North Church joined the United Church of Christ. The church continues to serve the local community today.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains the early records of First Church of Marblehead, Massachusetts. Records include church records, which primarily relate to the spiritual life of the congregation, and society records which encompass the bulk of the finances and administration of the parish as a legal entity. Included

in the collection are meeting minutes, membership lists, baptismal records, marriage records, records related to the maintenance of the church building, records of pew taxes, expense sheets, and contribution tabulations.

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Arrangement

This collection has been arranged in chronological order by start date. Volumes were arranged together in order in cases where the contents of one volume began where another ended.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

Zachary Bodnar: Minor revision to the collection arrangement, minor revision to the description of the microfilm records, adjusted date range in title. July 15, 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

Microfilm was created by the Genealogical Society of Salt Lake City in October 1971 and originally given RG4850; no accession number.

Physical materials were permanently loaned to the Congregational Library & Archives by the Old North Church in Marblehead on September 25, 2012; 2012-09.

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

Collection originally processed by Jessica Steytler in October 2012. Re-described by Sari Mauro in November 2013 in accordance with DACS Second Edition. Reprocessed by Zachary Bodnar, January 2019, using DACS Second Edition.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Church discipline.
- Church membership.
- Church records and registers.
- Confession.
- Excommunication.
- Installation (clergy).
- Marriage records.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- Ordination.
- Pews and pew rights.
- Registers of births, etc.
- Wills.
- Marblehead (Mass.) -- Church history.

- Old North Church (Marblehead, Mass.)

Technical Requirements

A microfilm reader is required in order to access microfilmed 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.

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Bibliography

350th Anniversary Book Committee. *Under the Golden Cod: A shared history of the Old North Church and the town of Marblehead, Massachusetts, 1635-1985*. Canaan: Phoenix Publishing, 1984. 17.11.1 M32.75 OldNC u 1985

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
First Book of records, 1684-1800	box 2
<u>Restrictions on Access:</u> Restrictions on Access	
Due to the fragility of the volume, this physical item is not available to the public. Please use the digital surrogate in its place.	
<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.	

Scope and Contents

This volume contains the church's official declaration of separation from Salem and the original church covenant. The volume also contains lists of members, admissions, and baptisms, meeting minutes, and records of contributions to the church.

Second Book of records, 1740-1837

box 1

volume 1

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 church records contains lists of members, baptismal records, marriage records, records of admission. Also included are church meeting minutes and copies of some ministerial communications.

Third Book of records, 1837-1857

box 1

volume 2

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 largely contains membership records, such as marriage records, baptismal records, and lists of admissions, as well as administrative records, such as church meeting minutes and committee reports. Also included are the final wills and testaments of William and Hannah Reed.

Microfilm records, 1684-1857, 1971

reel 1

Scope and Contents

This microfilm record contains surrogate images of the First Book of records, 1684-1800, the Second Book of records, 1740-1837, and the Third Book of records, 1837-1857, of the First Congregational Church in Marblehead.

Meeting house book, 1695-1785

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 records related to the construction, maintenance, and administration of the first meeting house. The volume includes financial records, meeting minutes, lists of contributors and benefactors, and pew seat assignments.

Book of collections and expenses, 1717-1836

box 1

volume 4

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 financial records for the First Church in Marblehead. The records primarily list the expenses for bread and wine used in Communion, referred to as "Church Stock". Also indicated are the sum totals of daily collections. These daily collections would likely have been for the Sabbath School.

Old Meeting House Book, 1755-1795

box 1

volume 5

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 Congregational Society and Proprietors of the Church. The volume contains administrative records, such as meeting minutes and committee reports, and financial records, largely related to the valuation and taxation of pews.

Old Meeting House Book, 1795-1825, 1852, 1857

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 contains the records of the Congregational Society and Proprietors of the Church. The volume contains a list of society members, administrative records, such as meeting minutes and committee reports, and financial records, largely related to the valuation and taxation of pews. Also included is a copy of the 1824 acts of incorporation for the church and a copy of a manuscript written by Josiah Cotton about the Cotton family and its relation to Marblehead.

Society records, 1825-1866

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 records concerning the parish society and building proprietors. The records include treasurer accounts, tax collections, committee meeting minutes, quarterly and annual reports, and records of votes.

Proprietors's ledger, 1783-1803

box 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 lists individual member contributions, records of the collection of pew taxes, and extensive reports of expenses and maintenance costs.