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West Brookfield, Mass. First Congregational Church records, 1754-1917. RG1179

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English

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Congregational Library & Archives

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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Historical Note	3
Scope and Contents	4
Arrangement	4
Administrative Information	4
Controlled Access Headings	6
Technical Requirements	6
Collection Inventory	6

Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	Congregational Church (West Brookfield, Mass.)
Creator:	First Church (Brookfield, Mass.)
Creator:	First Congregational Church (West Brookfield, Mass.)
Title:	West Brookfield, Mass. First Congregational Church records, 1754-1917.
ID:	RG1179
Date [inclusive]:	1754-1917
Physical Description:	1.09 Cubic Feet (1 box)
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The town of Brookfield was first settled during the 1660s. The first meeting house in Brookfield was built atop Foster's Hill in Brookfield and shortly after construction began on the second meeting house, the First Church was officially organized in 1717. West Brookfield split from Brookfield in 1848 and the First Church became Congregational Church. The church joined the United Church of Christ in 1964. The records include membership lists, church correspondence, church and parish meeting minutes, and vital records.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the West Brookfield, Mass. First Congregational Church records, 1754-1929, RG1179. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Historical Note

The early history of Brookfield, and the congregational church within, is difficult to discern, with most of the earliest town records having been lost to fire and the earliest church records

too being lost to time. The town of Brookfield was first settled during the 1660s. The first meeting house in Brookfield was built atop Foster's Hill in Brookfield, though there were likely long periods where worship at that location was impossible due to ongoing conflicts with Native Americans. In 1715, construction began on the second meeting house and in 1717 the First Church was officially gathered. The third meeting house was constructed in 1755 about a half mile northwest of Foster Hill and in 1794 the fourth meeting house was constructed on the same spot as the third.

West Brookfield split from Brookfield in 1848. At that time the First Church changed its name to Congregational Church. The church joined the United Church of Christ in 1964 and likely around that time changed its name again to First Congregational Church. The church continues to serve its community today.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

The West Brookfield, Mass. First Congregational Church records document the history and life of the church, including membership lists, church correspondence, church and parish meeting minutes, committee reports, treasurer's reports, baptism and marriage documents, documents related to the burial grounds, documents related to the division of Brookfield, pew deeds, and certificates of organization.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

This collection has been arranged in chronological order and where appropriate materials have been grouped together by topic.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Suite 200
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Restrictions on Access

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Acquisition Information

Records deposited to the Congregational Library & Archives in October 1967 by the Rev. George Worcester. No accession number available.

Additional records gifted to the Congregational Library & Archives in 1998 by the First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, Massachusetts. No accession number available.

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 Zachary Bodnar, September 2017, using DACS Second Edition.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Cemeteries.
- Church records and registers.
- Church membership.
- Marriage records.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- Pews and pew rights.
- Brookfield (Mass.) -- Church history.
- Congregational Church (West Brookfield, Mass.)
- First Church (Brookfield, Mass.)
- First Congregational Church (West Brookfield, Mass.)
- West Brookfield (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 later, Opera 12 and later, Safari 5.x and later, or any version of Google Chrome are recommended.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
West Brookfield Parish records, 1754-1826	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 contains 342 pages of parish records dating from 1754 to 1826. Included within the parish records are parish meeting minutes, records of votes, records of petitions and lists of petition signers, notices of town

meetings, lists of committee members, appointments to church positions, committee reports, and certificates of membership.

West Brookfield Parish records, 1826-1860	box 1	volume 2
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Scope and Contents

This volume contains 537 pages of parish records dating from 1826 to 1860. Included within the parish records are parish meeting minutes, records of votes, notices of town meetings, lists of committee members, appointments to church positions, committee reports, treasurer's reports and other financial documents, pew deeds, lists of members, records of oath taking, and certificates of membership.

West Brookfield Parish records, 1860-1909	box 1	volume 3
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West Brookfield First Church records, 1756-1818	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 161 pages of church records dating from 1756 to 1818. Included within the church records are baptismal records, Covenant agreements, lists of dismissions, lists of admissions, marriage records, and records of church votes and meetings.

West Brookfield First Church records, 1819-1867	box 1	volume 6
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Digitized Material:

Digitized Material

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 461 pages of church records dating from 1819 to 1867. Included within the church records are a historical sketch of the First Church, lists of members baptismal records, confessions of faith, church meeting minutes, and records of votes.

West Brookfield First Church records, 1867-1889	box 1	volume 7
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West Brookfield First Parish records, 1818-1876	box 1	volume 4
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Church pew deeds, 1799	box 1	folder 1
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Scope and Contents

This 1799 document is four pages and includes a list of names and the pew number they have been deeded.

Proposal for burial ground, 1807	box 1	folder 2
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Scope and Contents

This 1807 document is four pages and includes a proposal by Dwight Foster to buy a piece of land to become a new burial ground for the First Church.

Report to accept proposal for burial ground, 1807	box 1	folder 3
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Scope and Contents

This 1807 document is four pages and includes a committee report endorsing Dwight Foster's proposal for a new burial ground.

Petition to form "First Universal Society of Brookfield", 1808	box 1	folder 4
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Scope and Contents

This 1808 document is 2 pages and includes a petition to form a "First Universal Society of Brookfield" that was sent to the Massachusetts General Court.

H. Stebbins to Ebenezer Merriam, 1820	box 1	folder 6
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Scope and Contents

This 1820 letter from Herman Stebbins to Ebenezer Merriam is four pages and documents the lengths and costs of bridges and roads in the "West Parish."

Notice to levy taxes, 1823	box 1	folder 7
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Scope and Contents

This 1823 document is 2 pages and includes a notice given to Deacon A. White to levy taxes for the "Inhabitants of School District No. 3 in the West Parish."

Record of town meeting, 1828	box 1	folder 8
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Scope and Contents

This 1828 document is four pages and includes the records of a town meeting including a warrant to notify

the town of the meeting, acknowledgement of that notification, and the meeting minutes of that meeting.

Request made to legislature to divide town of Brookfield, 1829	box 1	volume 8
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Scope and Contents

This volume contains 23 pages of a request made to the MA Legislature to divide the town of Brookfield. The petition includes specific reasons for the request. Also included are some testimonies from church members in support of the divide.

H. Stebbins affidavit against M. Bains, 1829	box 1	folder 9
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Scope and Contents

This 1829 document is two pages and includes an itemized list of costs associated with work that Herman Stebbins did for Moses Bains in relation to proposals to divide the town of Brookfield.

Report of the Committee for Division of the Town, 1829	box 1	folder 10
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Scope and Contents

This 1829 document is four pages and is a report from the Committee for Division of the Town which authorizes payments to Herman Stebbins and states that the petition to divide the town was rejected by the state legislature.

Report of the Burial Grounds Committee, 1829	box 1	folder 11
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Scope and Contents

This 1829 document is two pages and includes a report of the Burial Ground Committee answering questions about the number of lots in the "new Burial Grounds" and the status of payment for those lots.

Report of committee to divide burial grounds, 1834	box 1	folder 12
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Scope and Contents

This 1834 document is two pages and includes a report of success from a committee appointed to divide the "North east corner of the burying grounds" into sections and lots.

Rules for the Sexton of the Meeting House, 1839	box 1	folder 13
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Scope and Contents

This 1839 document is four pages and provides a written set of rules to be followed by the Sexton of the Meeting House.

Deed of pew to George S. Duell, 1844	box 1	folder 14
Extract from the Will of Moses Barnes, circa 1852-1858	box 1	folder 15
Certificate of Organization, 1913	box 1	folder 18
Two Notices of Organizing Church meetings, 1913	box 1	folder 19
Letter from Rev. Samuel Dunham to Rev. J. H. Hoffman, 1917	box 1	folder 20
Petition to the legislature for division of the town, undated	box 1	folder 5

Scope and Contents

This undated document is two pages and includes a formal petition to the legislature of Massachusetts for the division of the town of Brookfield.

Resolution Statement to honor Miss Mary J. Holt, undated	box 1	folder 16
Report of Church Building Committee, undated	box 1	folder 17
