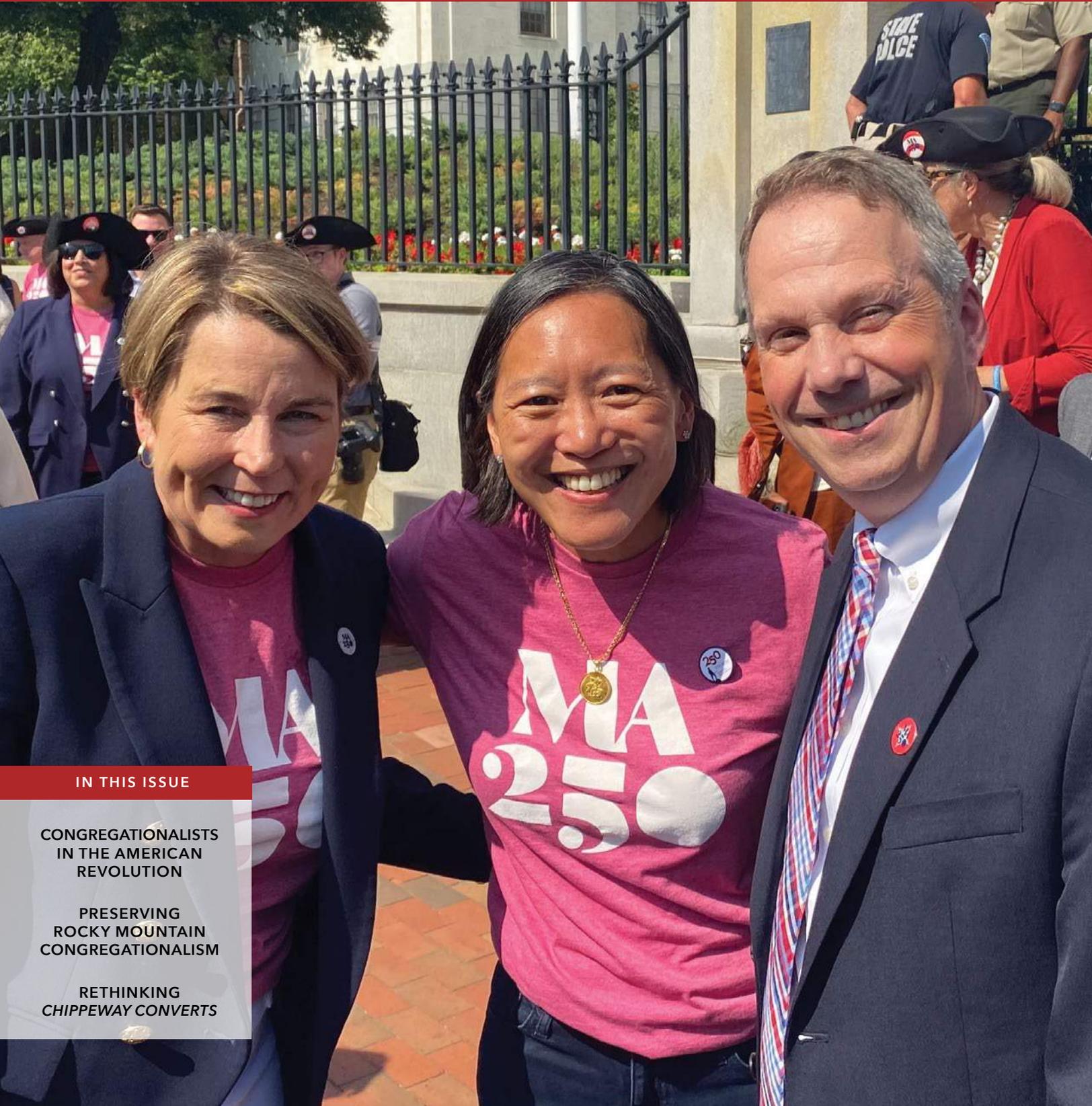


THE BULLETIN

OF THE CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY & ARCHIVES

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IN THE AMERICAN
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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: Congregational Library & Archives Executive Director Dr. Kyle Roberts (right) with Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey (left) and Massachusetts Secretary of Economic Development Yvonne Hao (center) at the MA250 launch event at the State Capitol, September 2024.

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Harvard graduate students Satoru Kimura (left), Seokweon Jeon (center right), and Anthony Trujillo (right) with Executive Director Dr. Kyle Roberts (center left) at the CLA's September 2024 Scholars of American Religious History Open House at 14 Beacon.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Anniversary years provide rich opportunities for reflection. While much of the nation is gearing up to think about what happened in Philadelphia in July 1776, we here at 14 Beacon are focused on April 1775. The

shot heard round the world was heard especially loudly in the Congregational meetinghouse on Concord Green.

What to do with 2025 has provided fodder for many staff and Board conversations over the past few years. Are we “celebrating” or “commemorating” this anniversary? Are we lauding the American Revolution for planting seeds that would blossom, in time, into one of the freest societies on earth? Or are we chastened by its inability to bring positive change to the lives of so many—women, enslaved people, Indigenous nations—more quickly?

These are heady questions. The two poles of Congregationalism—*independence and fellowship*—run throughout. They inspired people to throw off the only form of government they knew, but they could also cut short the true fulfillment of the radicalness of those ideas in the name of community consensus.

Through it all, the researchers who come to our reading room or use our digital archive from their kitchen tables continually remind us that the American Revolution was just one chapter in the Congregational story. In this issue of the *Bulletin*, we learn more about planting churches in the Rocky Mountains, missionary endeavors across the upper Great Lakes, and the efforts being made today to preserve all these stories and more.

The past has something to teach us about the present and the future. Let’s engage with the rich collections entrusted to us and continue to learn.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle Roberts".

Kyle Roberts, Executive Director

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

The Congregational Library & Archives’ new online exhibition, *Religion of Revolution*, begins our observance of the American Revolution’s 250th anniversary. As I hope you’ll see, the manuscripts, correspondence, and official minutes from our collections provide a rich portrait of 1776 in Congregational churches and the hopes and anxieties felt on all sides. Of course, when Rev. Jonathan Mayhew warns in a sermon, “Let us prize our freedom, but not use our liberty for a cloak of maliciousness,” he manages to strike both notes at once. He also recalls the Congregational tradition’s

longstanding concern about the relationship between worldly power and the sin of pride.

Congregationalists were very certain that God provided. However, even in the best of times, they also saw the possibility of stern correction close at hand. More broadly, the many voices in the exhibition offer powerful nuance to our understanding of a moment in American history long-imagined as one of unqualified triumph and celebration.

This issue also highlights some of the other research happening here at the CLA and the fascinating ideas researchers have uncovered and explored



with the help of our collections. I hope it inspires you to come explore for yourself!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maxwell Grant".

Maxwell Grant, Chair of the Board

Listening to Congregational Voices from the American Revolution

DR. TRICIA PEONE

Since its founding, the Congregational Library & Archives has collected materials that tell the stories of Congregationalists and the important roles they played in the American Revolution. A deep dive into the collection to explore these materials has resulted in the creation of an exciting new digital exhibition, *Religion of Revolution: Congregational Voices on Liberty*, launched to commemorate the anniversary of war breaking out in New England 250 years ago this spring.

Religion of Revolution highlights the stories of New England Congregationalists through important and rarely seen print works of the period as well as church records, letters, and sermon literature drawn from the CLA's collections and the New England's Hidden Histories project. These objects illustrate how Congregationalists explored and defined the meaning of liberty while navigating the violence and destruction of war.

For example, records from the Byfield Parish Church in Massachusetts show a community debate over slavery towards the end of the war. At a meeting in December 1780, church deacon Benjamin Colman raised a public complaint against the minister, Moses Parsons. Colman had accused his minister of "the wicked practice of man-stealing" and of recently trying to sell an enslaved Black woman called Violet—a member of their church—for a large sum of money. Parsons felt that this was undermining his authority, and he accused Colman of doing Satan's

work. Colman argued in his defense that slavery was "evil wickedness" and that the reason the Americans were losing to the British was because of this sin.

The papers of Mary Counce provide a rare look at a woman's experiences living in Boston during the American Revolution. In a letter sent just after the Siege of Boston ended in March 1776, Counce wrote about some of the conflicts between loyalists and patriots. It disclosed a tense conversation about Old South Church, which had been occupied by British troops and used as a stable. Counce described a young man who told her that Old South was a "house of sedition." Even worse, he "hoped it would be a Riding house for horses as Long as he Lived." Counce reproached him and confidently said she would "hear the Gospell of Christ preached theire a gain."

A particular favorite from the exhibition is a one-of-a-kind manuscript music book created by a young woman from Connecticut named Abigail Cleaveland. After marrying the son of Separatist minister Rev. John Cleaveland, she moved to



Abigail Cleaveland's eighteenth-century manuscript music book (RG5534).



Norumbega Harmony performs at the CLA's 2024 Open House.

Massachusetts. She included the song "Providence" in her music book, a hymn with music by William Billings and lyrics by Issac Watts. It also contains many patriotic songs of the Revolutionary era. At the CLA's Open House in November 2024, Norumbega Harmony, one of the largest and most active groups of Sacred Harp and shape-note singers in New England, gave a stirring performance of songs from Cleaveland's music book. **You can listen to these songs in the video of their performance on our YouTube channel at youtube.com/@CongregationalLibrary.**

The objects in this exhibition show how Congregationalists interpreted liberty through their own religious framework, which included principles of autonomy, fellowship, and consensus. In their discussions, they gave voice to the tension between the idea of liberty and the reality of it for women, indentured and enslaved people, free African Americans, Indigenous nations, loyalists, and religious minorities.

As we commemorate the 250th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution in 2025, explore how this momentous event was shaped by Congregationalists in *Religion of Revolution: Congregational Voices on Liberty*. And watch for news about our in-person exhibition, *Sacred Rebellion: Congregationalists in Revolutionary Massachusetts*, opening at 14 Beacon April 4, 2025.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Tricia Peone joined the Congregational Library & Archives in 2022 as the Project Director for New England's Hidden Histories. Her scholarship focuses on early modern magic and witchcraft and her work on these subjects

has appeared in journals, books, blogs, and on radio and television. She holds a PhD in history from the University of New Hampshire.



Visit our *Religion of Revolution: Congregational Voices on Liberty* digital exhibition online anytime at bit.ly/religionofrevolution.

COLLABORATIONS

Partnership with Old South Church Families Examines Indigenous History

In Fall 2024, the Congregational Library & Archives organized a collaborative project with Kate Nintcheu, Director of Children & Family Ministries at Old South Church. This collaboration centered around a family book study program in which families from Old South read and discussed Linda Coombs' *Colonization and the Wampanoag Story* together. The book is geared towards young readers and explores the history of early English colonization in Massachusetts from the perspective of the Wampanoag.

The project began in September, with eight families and seven other adults participating over the course of five weeks. In November, the CLA hosted a virtual book talk with Linda Coombs attended by 200 people. The events concluded with a special tour of 14 Beacon for Old South members and friends later in the month.

Reflecting on the project, Kate Nintcheu said that "Old South families were able to examine the disconnect between our understandings of local history and the truth of the Indigenous people's experiences through Coombs' book and truly live into our church's commitment to anti-racist truth. Our partnership with the CLA was the hopefully the first of many collaborations!"



LIBRARY

CLA Welcomes Collection Accessibility Project Specialist



Téa Belog joined the Congregational Library & Archives staff as a Collection Accessibility Project Specialist in January 2025.

"The CLA's collection inventory project has been a longstanding goal of the library that has had to pause for renovations and the pandemic," says Librarian Meaghan Wright. "I am very excited to have Téa on the team and dedicated to this project."

Early work by Téa has shown that some parts of the collection are very well catalogued, while others far less so. In the Biographies section, for example, individual biographies (class 20.2) are nearly all included in the online catalog, while collective biographies (class 20.1) are only partially represented.

Téa is currently pursuing her Masters of Library and Information Science (MLIS) with a concentration in archives from Simmons University. She will be working in this role for at least a year and says that she hopes to learn more about how special collections are built and maintained.

The inventory project seeks to improve discoverability and access of items in the CLA's collection. Téa's work will also improve the alignment of materials on the shelves with their catalog listings, paving the way for future cataloguing and organization projects.

PARTNERSHIPS

Congregationalists from Both Sides of the Atlantic Gather at 14 Beacon

In August 2024, the Congregational Library & Archives welcomed two groups to 14 Beacon: participants in the National Association of Congregational Churches' (NACCC) Boston Seminar and guests from the International Congregational Fellowship who were visiting from the United Kingdom.

The longstanding Boston Seminar welcomes seminarians, lay leaders, and ministers who are new to the NACCC for a series of educational workshops and hands-on time with the CLA's collections. Sessions were led by Gerry Krupp, Director of Programs for the NACCC; Margaret Bendroth, former CLA Executive Director and Norm Erlendson, retired Pastor of the First Congregational Church of Stonington, CT.

Joining them were several English Congregationalists connected with the International Congregational Fellowship. They had intended to come to Boston in 2020 to commemorate the Mayflower crossing, but the pandemic forced them to delay their plans.



EXHIBITIONS

Sacred Rebellion: Congregationalists in Revolutionary Massachusetts Opens at 14 Beacon on April 4th

By the time the American Revolution began, many Congregationalists had already embraced a theological justification for war and revolution. They believed that God favored them and that their cause was a morally justified, sacred rebellion.

Through sermons, books, poems, songs, and letters, Congregationalists shared their stories, reflected on their moral obligations to each other, and debated questions of liberty and loyalty. But consensus was elusive, and implementation proved difficult and unsatisfactory to many, especially those on the margins. These discussions shaped the legacy of Congregationalism and the way the Revolutionary War is remembered today.

Join us at 14 Beacon this spring to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution with a new,



in-person exhibition, *Sacred Rebellion: Congregationalists in Revolutionary Massachusetts*. The exhibition will be open from 11 am to 4 pm on Fridays and Saturdays beginning April 4th. Learn more at congregationallibrary.org/sacred-rebellion.

Funded by the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism.



FELLOWSHIPS

CLA Announces Inaugural Arvel M. Steece Fellows

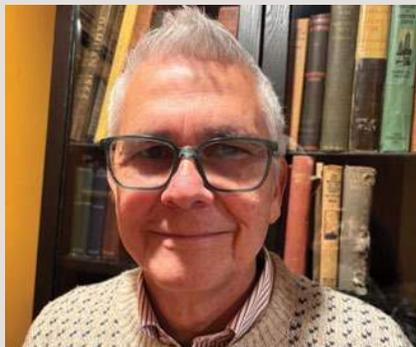
The Congregational Library & Archives is pleased to announce the inaugural recipients of its Rev. Dr. Arvel M. Steece Research Fellowship. Michael Passmore, the 2024–2025 Steece Fellow, will be working on a project titled, “Missionary

Accomplishments at Kawaiahao Church in Honolulu, 1820–1863.” Lisa Manning Bircher, the 2025–2026 Steece Fellow, will be working on a project titled, “Understanding Women’s Faith Relations: Hopkinton, NH, 1800–1840.”

This new fellowship opportunity supports a non-academic researcher working on a project focused on some aspect of Congregational

Christian history grounded in the CLA’s collections. It honors Rev. Dr. Arvel M. Steece, a well-respected and well-loved Congregational church leader who was a passionate historian of the Congregational story.

Ordained as a minister on June 20, 1947, Rev. Dr. Steece served churches in Illinois, Minnesota, Connecticut, Michigan, Vermont, and Massachusetts. An active leader in the Congregational community, he helped to form the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC) in 1955 and was a founder of the Congregational Press. Throughout his life, Steece’s dedication to social justice was evident through his advocacy for civil rights, civil liberties, the separation of church and state, and non-violence.



South Acton Congregational Church Entrusts 150 Years of History to the CLA

When South Acton Congregational Church UCC (SACC) made the brave decision to finish its ministry faithfully and well in 2024, it also decided to entrust the Congregational Library & Archives with the archive of its ministries and memories.

Founded in 1876, SACC served a growing village 30 miles northwest of Boston, Massachusetts. Its 1892 structure was the first in town to have stained glass windows. And for 148 years, the church has been known for its strong commitment to justice and service. One neighbor described it as “the moral background of the community.” What began as a transition process in 2023 to prepare for a formal search for a new minister became a legacy process

when the transition team realized the congregation lacked the leadership, membership, and long-term financial viability to continue.

The legacy process included making decisions about the future of their members, their building, and their nearly 150-year-old archive. SACC first heard about the Congregational Library & Archives through their conference leadership and its legacy specialist. Members came to see the CLA as a place where their church’s story and the impact of its ministry would be preserved and shared for future generations.

“Working with the Congregational Library & Archives was an enriching experience, and it was the staff that made all the difference,” reflected Rev. Ross Allen, the church’s designated term minister. “Kyle Roberts, in particular, went above and beyond. He even joined us for worship, participating in our last ‘normal’ Sunday service, which made us feel deeply honored. He affirmed that our story mattered and that preserving it would make a lasting difference.”

Reflecting on the process, Deacon Martha Rounds saw first-hand the value of engaging with her church’s archive. “I now understand that churches should think about legacy documents even before they’re in a legacy situation—I wish we had done this years ago!” says Rounds.

Church members are optimistic for the future as they begin the process of joining with the

nearby West Concord Union Church through a covenantal partnership. “This new chapter holds the promise of renewal, collaboration, and continued service,” reflected Allen. South Acton Congregational Church’s records are now preserved and accessible at the Congregational Library & Archives. For Rounds and other congregants, “to know that our precious documents will be safeguarded indefinitely is a great comfort.”



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A historic image of South Acton Congregational Church’s sanctuary. | CLA Librarian Meaghan Wright and Archivist Zachary Bodnar (back, right) on a visit to South Acton Congregational Church to bring materials back to 14 Beacon. | South Acton Congregational Church surrounded by signatures of its members.

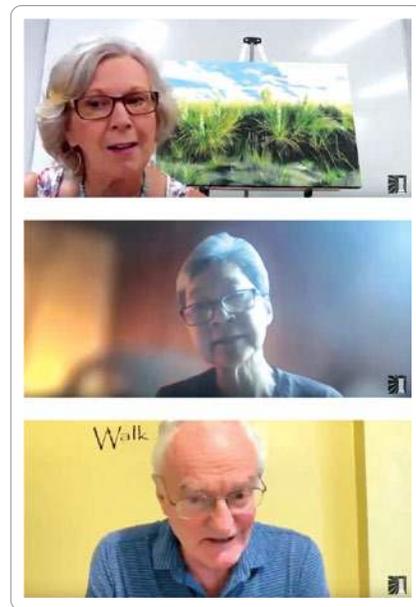
Programming Highlights



CLA Librarian Meaghan Wright (back left) visits with attendees during our December 2024 *Christmas with the Congregationalists* program.



Dr. Tricia Peone (left), New England's Hidden Histories Project Director, and CLA Archivist Zachary Bodnar (center) discuss items from the CLA's collection with an attendee during the October 2024 GEMMS Preachers, Hearers, Readers, and Scribes Conference at 14 Beacon.



Linda Lacy, Keiko Denbeau, and Norm Erlendson (top to bottom) discuss their experiences with planning church anniversaries during our September 2024 *Celebrating Your Church's Anniversary* virtual program.



CLA Archivist Billy McCarthy (standing, back center) shares some of the extensive material in the CLA's collection related to Jo Nijima, Doshisha University, and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) with a tour group from Japan.



Director of Development Heather Kurtz and Archivist Zachary Bodnar visit with neighbors at Beacon Hillfest 2024.

Who and What is Being Converted in *Chippeway Converts*?

ANTHONY TRUJILLO

Over the past several years, the Congregational Library & Archives, together with other New England institutions, has been at the forefront of a tremendous and painstaking project to identify and digitize records relating to Indigenous and Black people in New England archives. This has been a massive undertaking that has entailed scouring church records for traces of people of color, digitizing hundreds of manuscripts of New England clergy and missionaries, and compiling published works relating to colonial and early American missionization efforts.

But what are we to make of these sources? What kind of interpretive strategies might we use to get a sense of what was happening in the encounters between Indigenous people and colonial figures?

One of the documents I spent time with during my research fellowship at the CLA is the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) pamphlet, *Notices of Chippeway Converts* (1834), which includes Christian testimonies that Rev. W. M. Ferry, a missionary at Mackinaw, compiled to show the fruits of his labors to missionize Anishinaabe and Odawa nations in what is now Michigan. There are several ways we could read such a source.

We could read this pamphlet “straight” and take the missionary at his word when he writes that a young Anishinaabe woman (C.W.R. are the initials we are given as her name) “[gave] to be what she knew to be the truth, no more no less. . . . I have only felt at liberty . . . to shape her own ideas into the most intelligible English.” Perhaps we would do well to believe that C.W.R. means what she says when she effusively concludes her testimony by recounting: “the whole hymn possessed my soul in mingled joy, and wonder and love. Now I had such a love for all around, as well as for the Savior, that I could have folded them into my bosom.” This is a profound expression of Christian experience.

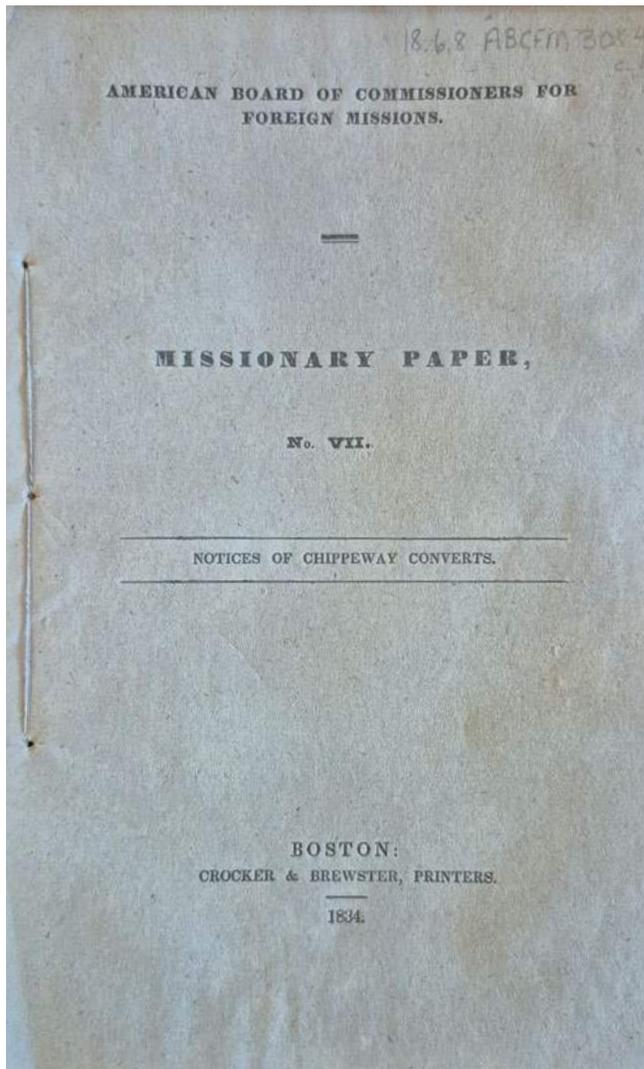
If we were to accept this without any deeper questioning of the testimony, the pamphlet, or the aims of the missionary project, it could lead readers to conclude that the missionary program worked as Rev. Ferry and his supporters intended: with Indigenous people wholly disavowing their Indigenous cosmologies and the assumption that the enterprise as whole was an unqualified “good” for Ojibwe people.

Conversely, those who are reticent to adopt this triumphalist narrative could adopt a much more critical perspective on this pamphlet. From this perspective, we would notice the uneven power relationship between an adolescent Indigenous girl and an adult white missionary. We can tune into the extreme psychological, social, spiritual, territorial, and political strain Indigenous peoples were experiencing as the newly formed United States pressed ever deeper into Indigenous homelands. We can consider how missionaries were belittling and attempting to dismantle Indigenous lifeways and cosmologies, what Ferry called “mummery.”

This is a necessary critical intervention into missionary accounts. But, on its own, this can also have the effect of diminishing the agency of Indigenous people and treating Christianity as though it can only ever be a colonial imposition.

A third way of reading a pamphlet like this retains the insights of the approaches noted above by treating the pamphlet and other missionary documents as “borderlands” sources, sites where Indigenous worlds, power, and cosmologies push and pull toward and against colonial worlds, power, and cosmologies.

In many respects, this text fits the genre of a “conversion narrative,” but C.W.R. is applying her own intellectual, spiritual, and creative imprint onto the genre. How does this shift the force and purpose of the form? The presence of the missionary is clear, but there is an Indigenous community as well; a peer of C.W.R. and a woman elder are integral to her story. What kind of community is taking shape, and whose



Notices of Chippeway Converts (18.6.8 ABCFM BOX 4, 1834 no. 7).

bodies, experiences, and power animates this body politic? These are not easy questions to answer.

What we begin to discern when we look closely is that Indigenous people are exerting a pull on each other; they are exerting a pull on Christianity; and they are exerting a pull on the missionaries. In this sense, these Anishinaabe women are not only in the process of reorienting Christianity, they are also fashioning Indigenous community and even Indigenous nationhood. Perhaps, when taken together with the multitudes of Indigenous people who have applied their creative imprint to Christianity, we might also begin to perceive how these Anishinaabe women have been vital for shaping and shifting North American religiosity.

I would suggest that C.W.R and her kin are the kinds of world-shaping Indigenous actors whose stories might be buried in an archive but also hidden in plain sight. The question is how, as readers, we might defamiliarize ourselves enough we the sources (such as missionary pamphlets) we think we know and hold our biases and aversions at bay so that we can develop the ears to hear the power of Indigenous voices—especially when we encounter them in multivalent places and forms.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Anthony Trujillo is a member of Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo, one of the six Tewa speaking pueblos located in the upper Rio Grande Valley. His research examines a suite of identity-forming,

nation-constituting, and world-making enactments of religio-political power in North America Indigenous and settler nations. He pays particular attention to Indigenous engagements with—and resistance to—colonial Christianities from the 17th into the 19th centuries with attention the effects of Christianity on Indigenous connections to their homelands and waterspaces and the downstream impacts on territorial, spiritual, and political sovereignties of contemporary Native nations and descendent communities.

Explore more sources of Black and Indigenous history in the Congregational Library & Archives' collection in our Black and Indigenous Research Guide at congregationallibrary.org/black-indigenous-research-guide.

Preserving the Stories of Rocky Mountain Congregationalism

ZACHARY BODNAR

In early 2021, the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC) was undergoing a major records retention project. Erin Gilmore, then the Associate Conference Minister who was heading up the project, reached out to the Congregational Library & Archives to ask if we might be interested in taking on some of the records that they had determined should best be kept by another repository.

Among the initially listed items were the records of completed German Congregational Churches, records from completed pre- and post-merger Congregational Churches from Colorado, and the records of associations and conferences that eventually merged to become the modern Rocky Mountain Conference.

The CLA already held records of conferences and associations, though none as far west as the Rocky Mountains. It was excited to ensure the preservation of the history, memories, and missions

of Colorado churches. In September 2021, the collection arrived at the CLA.

Though an initial assessment of the collection was completed shortly after its arrival the time between a collection's arrival and its full processing can unfortunately be significant. This is particularly true for complex collections, such as the Rocky Mountain Conference records that included about a dozen churches' records in addition to those of associations and the conference itself.

Processing began in May 2024. The first task was to identify the individual churches within the collection and begin processing those records as unique collections. Over the course of the following months, church records from Pueblo, Creede, Golden, Paradox, Cripple Creek, Berthoud, Milliken, Colorado Springs, Cope, Denver, and Littleton, Colorado were processed and new finding aids were created for each collection.

As a whole, those records spanned more than a century, from 1884 to 1999, and contained vital memories of these communities beginning,

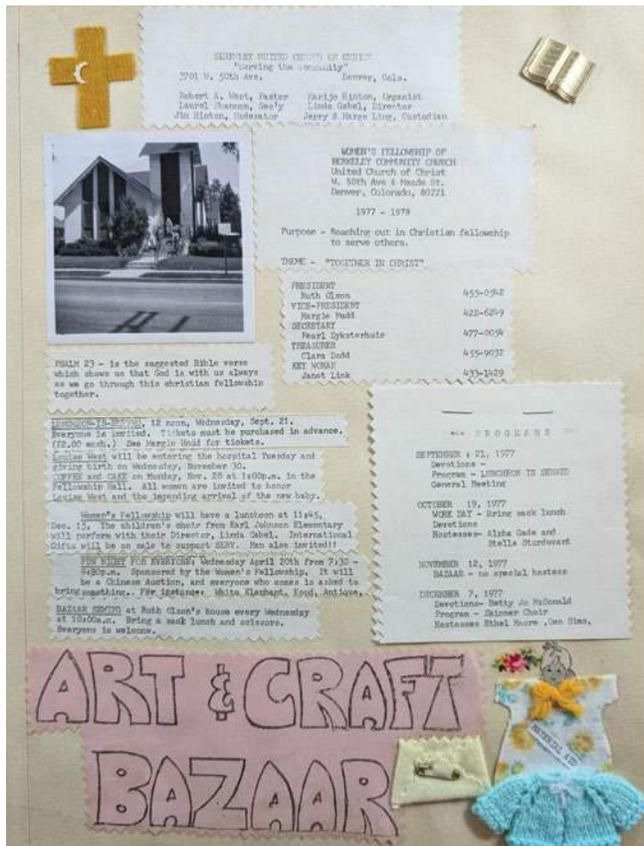
growing, and adapting to the rapidly changing urban and rural landscapes of Colorado.

Of particular interest were the German Congregational churches that sprouted in Colorado's north as a result of immigration, such as the movement of the Volga Germans. Many of these records begin in German but transition to English, especially during the World Wars when German Americans faced discrimination and distrust. These stories were hidden, but can now easily be accessed by anyone interested in the history of these churches and communities.

The records of Denver's Seventh Avenue Congregational



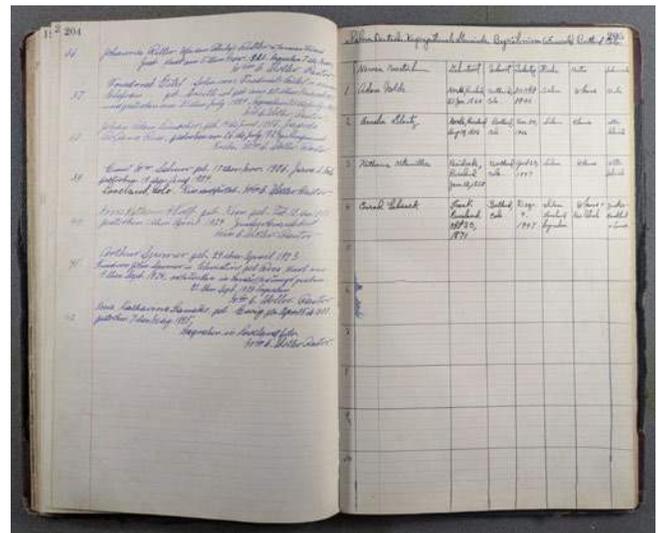
Sorting legal records from Colorado, Utah, Idaho, and Oregon while processing the Rocky Mountain Conference records.



A page of the Rocky Mountain Women's Fellowship Scrapbook documenting activities at the Berkeley UCC Church.

Church documents how economics, population shifts, immigration, and changes in urban development deeply affected their church's story. The church was gathered in 1890 as the Villa Park Congregational Church and then renamed the Seventh Avenue Congregational Church when it moved to the Barnum neighborhood in West Denver. These stories are best captured in the work of the church's Ladies Guild, later the Women's Fellowship, and a series of scrapbooks that include materials from 1896 to 1992.

The conference and association records were last to be processed. Though most of the records are related to various Colorado associations and conferences, including the German Congregational Conference, other states are also present within the records. Today, the conference includes churches from Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. But before the modern Rocky Mountain Conference was formed, churches and conferences from Oregon and Idaho also were represented.



Vital records from the register of the Salem Congregational Church in Berthoud, Colorado, a German Congregational Church.

The Congregational story is neither monolithic nor fixed. Congregationalists in West Denver interacted with their faith differently than the Volga Germans did in Northern Colorado. And the story changes with each decade that passes. The CLA is excited to have made these collections accessible for all and to ensure that the stories of these communities will be preserved.

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, he took on the title of

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

Browse finding aids for the Rocky Mountain Conference and its past and present associations and congregations on our website at congregationallibrary.org/finding-aids.

NEHH Digitizes 1,400 Pages of Revolutionary War Era Sermons

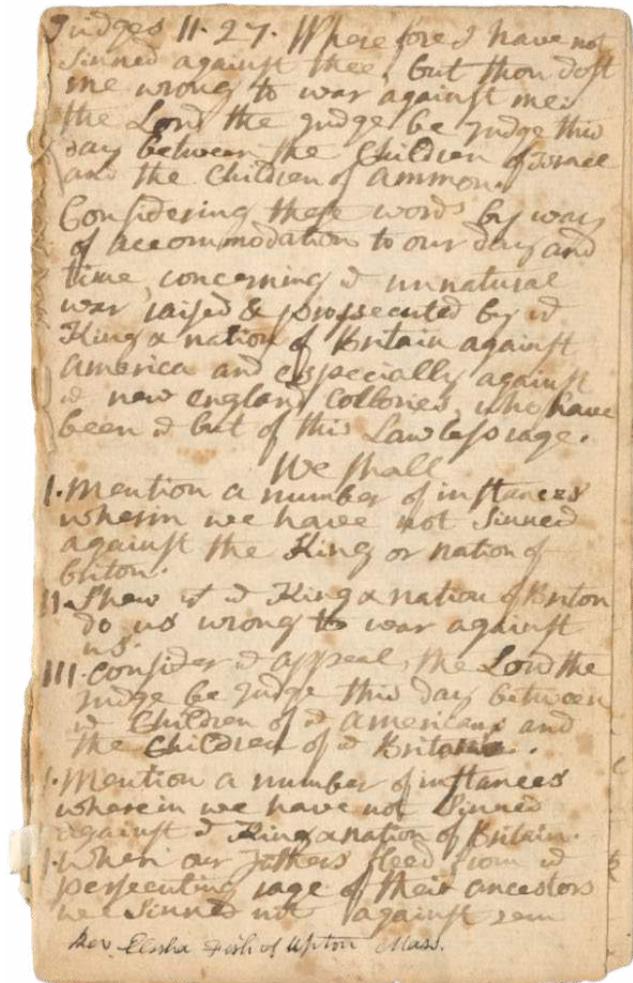
In 2024, the New England's Hidden Histories project (NEHH) was awarded a digitization grant from Atla, a membership organization committed to advancing the study of religion and theology. The grant allowed the CLA to purchase a new flatbed scanner and hire a project intern, Rebecca Maitland, to scan over 1,400 pages of materials.

For this project, NEHH digitized a selection of the CLA's extensive collection of manuscript sermons. The 56 digitized sermons represented works by ministers from 30 New England towns, drawn primarily from the years of the Revolutionary War (1775-1783).

These sermons are a valuable resource for studying the history of American religion and the period of the American Revolution. They illuminate how ministers responded to the onset of tensions with Great Britain, the outbreak of war, and the creation of a new nation.

Many of the ministers represented in the collection served as chaplains during the Revolutionary War. NEHH has digitized several sermons by chaplains such as Samuel Wales of Milford, Connecticut. Wales delivered a sermon titled "Patriotism" on April 30, 1775, just days after the Battles of Lexington and Concord. Another sermon by Rev. Elisha Fish of Upton, Massachusetts described the feelings of many New Englanders in 1776. Fish begins his fiery sermon with Judges 11:27: "Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou dost me wrong to war against me." He goes on to describe the war as "unnatural" and entirely the fault of the British.

New England's Congregational clergy were largely united in support for the war. There were, of course, some exceptions. Rev. Abraham Hill was ordained as minister in Shutesbury, Massachusetts in 1742 and served there for over 35 years. When the Revolutionary War broke out, Hill was suspected of being a loyalist after discouraging young men



The first page of Rev. Elisha Fish's 1776 sermon.

from joining the Continental Army. As a result, Hill was banned from preaching to his congregation and formally dismissed in 1778. NEHH digitized a sermon he delivered to his congregation on Psalms 9:9: "The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble."

You can explore these fascinating sermons from the American Revolution now in the NEHH digital archive at congregationalibrary.org/nehh.

Make plans to visit the CLA's upcoming exhibition, *Sacred Rebellion: Congregationalists in Revolutionary Massachusetts*, opening on April 4, 2025, to see some of these sermons in person.

Donor and Volunteer Generosity Makes a Difference

Bequest from Tappan Society Member to Support Young Professional Development

The Congregational Library & Archives is grateful to announce the receipt of a generous bequest from the estate of librarian, genealogy enthusiast, and CLA member Alden Milton Rollins, Jr. Rollins, who passed away on August 20, 2024, was a longtime member of the CLA's Tappan Society, a group of members devoted to supporting the organization in their estate planning.



Rollins received his Masters in Library Science from the University of Rhode Island and in 1973 accepted a position at the Consortium Library at the University of Alaska, Anchorage where he served as the Reference Librarian and Head of Government Documents for 35 years. In addition to a successful professional career, Rollins was a known scholar, having published two books on Roman history: *The Fall of Rome: A Reference Guide* and *Rome in the Fourth Century A.D.: An Annotated Bibliography With Historical Overview* (MacFarland Publishing, 1983 and 1991, respectively) and several volumes on New England genealogical history.

In honor of Rollins' lifelong love for history and his successful professional career in libraries, the CLA plans to use his gift to support opportunities for new library and history professionals.

To learn more about estate planning at the CLA, contact Director of Development Heather Kurtz at 617.523.4075 ext. 230 or via email at hkurtz@14beacon.org.

Thank You, Volunteers

We are thankful to our volunteer transcribers whose hard work makes important documents digitized through our New England's Hidden Histories project more accessible and understandable to people around the world.

Anonymous

Robert Allison

Brandon Daniel Bellefontaine

Ashley Combs

Timothy Crist

Diane Fiske

Francis Frost

Linda Gard

Marlene A. Groves

David Allen Lambert

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7th Grade at St. Mary of the Annunciation School

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Save the Date for These Upcoming Programs

Sacred Rebellion: Congregationalists in Revolutionary Massachusetts Opening Reception

FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 2025
5:30-7 PM EDT

Make plans to join us at 14 Beacon to celebrate the opening of our new in-person exhibition, *Sacred Rebellion: Congregationalists in Revolutionary Massachusetts*. The evening will feature an opportunity to visit the exhibition and hear curator's comments from New England's Hidden Histories Project Director and *Sacred Rebellion* curator, Dr. Tricia Peone.

By the time the American Revolution began, many Congregationalists had already embraced a theological justification for war and revolution. They believed that God favored them and that their cause was a morally justified, sacred rebellion.

Join us to learn how these discussions shaped the legacy of Congregationalism and the way the Revolutionary War is remembered today.

Lower Than The Angels: A History of Sex and Christianity – A Virtual Book Talk with Prof. Diarmaid MacCulloch

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2025
1-2 PM EDT

Few matters produce more public interest and anxiety than sex and religion. Much of the political contention and division in societies across the world centers on sexual topics, and one-third of the global population is Christian in background or outlook. The issue goes to the heart of present-day religion.

In *Lower Than The Angels*, Prof. Diarmaid MacCulloch seeks to calm fears and encourage understanding through telling a three-thousand-year-long tale of Christians encountering sex, gender, and the family.

Join us to learn more about an epic of ordinary and extraordinary Christians trying to make sense of themselves and of humanity's deepest desires, fears and hopes.

Insensible of Boundaries: Studies in Mary Ann Shadd Cary – A Virtual Book Talk with Dr. Kristin Moriah

THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2025
1-2 PM EDT

Our 2025 Juneteenth Lecture focuses on Mary Ann Shadd Cary (1823–1893), a trailblazing Black feminist, activist, journalist, and educator whose achievements can be traced across Canada and the United States.

Born in the antebellum era, Shadd Cary taught in schools in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania before becoming an advocate for immigration to Canada. Once she moved to Ontario in the mid-1850s, she dove headfirst into early Black Canadian debates, fighting to integrate schools in the States and Canada before becoming the editor of the *Provincial Freeman*, the first Black woman to edit a newspaper in North America.

Join us to hear Dr. Kristin Moriah discuss *Insensible of Boundaries*, the first collection of essays published on this remarkable thinker.