



ArchivesSpace

Grafton, Mass. Evangelical Congregational Church records, 1731-1849. RG4921

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English

DACS2 - 2013

Congregational Library & Archives

14 Beacon Street

Boston, MA 02108

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

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	Church of Christ (Grafton, Mass.)
Creator:	Congregational Church (Grafton, Mass.)
Creator:	Evangelical Congregational Church (Grafton, Mass.)
Title:	Grafton, Mass. Evangelical Congregational Church records, 1731-1849.
ID:	RG4921
Date [inclusive]:	1731-1849
Physical Description:	0.28 Cubic Feet (1 box, 3 reels)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Congregational Church of Grafton traces its roots back to a church established in 1671 in what was then known as Hassanamisco Plantation (now Hassanamesit Reservation). In 1731 the body that would become known as the Congregational Church of Grafton was gathered, and four years later the town of Grafton was founded. The collection contains records of vital statistics, church membership, ordination, ecclesiastical councils, church meetings, and correspondence.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Grafton, Mass. Evangelical Congregational Church records, 1731-1849. RG4921. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA

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Historical Note

The Evangelical Congregational Church of Grafton traces its roots back to a church which had been established in 1671 by Rev. John Eliot, or one of his pupils, in an area known as the Hassanamisco Plantation (now known as the Hassanamesit Reservation). The membership of this church was entirely of Native Americans belonging to the Hassanamisco Nipmuc; at the time there was only one other

such church in Massachusetts. The church continued through the early and mid-1670s until it was destroyed during King Philip's War, along with much of the Hassanamisco tribe. In 1698, the Report of Commissioners counted five families living on the Hassanamisco Plantation. During the early 1700s, there was interest from European settlers to buy the plantation from the Hassanamisco and in 1727 the General Court of Massachusetts gave permission for the sale of 7,500 acres of land for the price of £2,500 to 40 English settlers. The "Church of our Lord Jesus Christ at Hassanamisco" was established on December 28, 1731, with the Rev. Solomon Prentice as the its pastor, and construction of the first meeting house was completed by the spring of that year. The town of Grafton was later incorporated in 1735 and the church was then known as the Church of Christ in Grafton.

After 1740, Rev. Prentice became a follower of George Whitefield. This led to a prolonged conflict between Prentice and his parish. Multiple ecclesiastical councils were called between 1744 and 1747 until the council dismissed him of his pastoral duties on the 10th of July, 1747. He was replaced by the Rev. Aaron Hutchinson who served the church from 1750 to 1772. Hutchinson was followed by the Rev. Daniel Grosvenor (1774-1778) and Rev. John Miles (1796-1826). Rev. Moses C. Searle served as pastor from 1826 to 1832. Under his pastorate, the church admitted 162 new members and built a Sunday school; however, the end of his pastorate also saw the separation of the church into two. In 1831, the majority of the church's members voted to dismiss Searle for his introduction of a doctrinal creed into the church which limited those who could be admitted. This vote of dismissal led to the eventual succession of Orthodox members in 1832 who formed their own church, the Evangelical Congregational Church. The remaining Unitarian members reformed the Church of Christ into the Congregational Church of Grafton.

These two churches served the Grafton communities throughout their separate histories. In 1931, the two churches held a joint bicentennial celebration. The Evangelical Congregational Church was renamed, in 2011, Congregational Church of Grafton, UCC. This church continues to serve the Grafton community today. The Unitarian church also continues to serve the Grafton and Upton communities as the Grafton-Upton Unitarian Universalist Societies.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains early records pertaining to the church. Included are records of church membership, ecclesiastical councils, church meetings, vital statistics, baptisms, marriages, sermons, ordinations, and confessions.

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Arrangement

This collection has been arranged into chronological order by the start date.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Congregational Library & Archives

14 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

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

Restrictions on Access

Access to this collection is unrestricted and open to the public.

Restrictions on Use

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Acquisition Information

No accession information for loose materials; was RG0888. Earliest record books were placed on permanent loan to the Congregational Library & Archives by the Evangelical Congregational Church, now known as the Congregational Church of Grafton, Massachusetts, in July 2009; no accession number.

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

Re-processed by Sari Mauro, with additional descriptive work by Robin Duckworth, September 2013, using DACS Second Edition. Re-described and merged with RG0888 by Zachary Bodnar, July 2018.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Confession.
- Congregational churches -- Massachusetts -- Grafton.
- Church membership.
- Lord's Supper.
- Marriage records.
- Nipmuc Indians.
- Ordination.
- Unitarian controversy.
- Church of Christ (Grafton, Mass.)
- Congregational Church (Grafton, Mass.)
- Evangelical Congregational Church (Grafton, Mass.)
- Prentice, Solomon, 1705-1733

Technical Requirements

A microfilm reader is required to access microfilm reels.

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

Harlow, Samuel Allen. *One Hundred and Seventy Years in the Life of a Church*. Worcester: The Davis Press, 1931.

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
<p>The Church Book Hasanamisco, 1731-1774</p> <p><u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1731-1774</p> <p><u>Digital Copies:</u> Digital Copies</p> <p>These church records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are available to view online.</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>The records found in this book detail the proceedings of both church meetings and ecclesiastical councils. Also included are lists of baptisms, marriages, and membership admissions and dismissions. Records also deal with admonitions and confessions. The front of the book contains records of the founding covenant and a brief historical sketch.</p>	box 1	volume 1
<p>Records of the Church of Christ in Grafton, 1774-1828</p> <p><u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1774-1828</p> <p><u>Digital Copies:</u> Digital Copies</p> <p>These church records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are available to view online.</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>These records document church meeting minutes, membership admissions and dismissions, baptisms, marriages, and deaths.</p>	box 1	volume 2

Also included are records of ordinations, sermons, and dates on which communion was given.

Church of Christ records, 1826-1828	box 1	folder 1
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Date [inclusive]: 1826-1828

Evangelical Congregational Church records, 1838-1849	box 1	folder 2
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Date [inclusive]: 1838-1849

Archival master reel, 20081731-1828	box 2	reel 1
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Date: 2008
Date [inclusive]: 1731-1828

Location of Originals:

Location of Originals

The original volumes are currently held by the Congregational Library & Archives.

Scope and Contents

This reel contains microfilm copies of the two earliest record books of the Church of Christ in Grafton, Mass.

Print master reel, 20081731-1828	box 3	reel 1
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Date: 2008
Date [inclusive]: 1731-1828

Location of Originals:

Location of Originals

The original volumes are currently held by the Congregational Library & Archives.

Scope and Contents

This reel contains microfilm copies of the two earliest record books of the Church of Christ in Grafton, Mass.

Service copy reel, 20081731-1828	box 4	reel 1
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Date: 2008
Date [inclusive]: 1731-1828

Location of Originals:

Location of Originals

The original volumes are currently held by the Congregational Library & Archives.

Scope and Contents

This reel contains microfilm copies of the two earliest record books of the Church of Christ in Grafton, Mass.