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Ipswich, Mass. First Church records, 1724-1898. RG5288

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English

DACS2 - 2013

Congregational Library & Archives

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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Historical Note	4
Scope and Contents	5
Arrangement	5
Administrative Information	5
Related Materials	7
Controlled Access Headings	7
Technical Requirements	7
Bibliography	8
Collection Inventory	8

Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	First Church (Ipswich, Mass.)
Creator:	Kimball, David T. (David Tenney), 1782-1860
Title:	Ipswich, Mass. First Church records, 1724-1898.
ID:	RG5288
Date [inclusive]:	1724-1898
Physical Description:	7 Files (4 folders, 3 volumes)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	<p>Ipswich, Massachusetts, first known as <i>Agawam</i>, was settled by John Winthrop in 1633 and was incorporated the following year. The First Church in Ipswich was gathered on August 5, 1634, and the first meeting house was constructed the same year. Construction on the second meeting house was completed in 1647. In 1699 the third meeting house of the First Church was built on the north green. Members left to form new churches in 1681, 1714, 1747, and 1749. In 1749 the fourth meeting house was constructed. David T. Kimball was ordained as the fourteenth minister of the First Church in Ipswich on October 3, 1806. Construction on the fifth meeting house was completed by 1847. The South Church in Ipswich voted to reunite with the First Church in Ipswich in 1922. In 1965 the fifth meeting house was destroyed by a fire and the sixth meeting house was completed in 1971. Now a member of the United Church of Christ, the First Church in Ipswich continues to serve the local community today. This collection contains the early church and parish records of the First Church in Ipswich and includes meeting minutes, financial records, and vital membership records. This collection also contains records and correspondence kept by Rev. David T. Kimball.</p>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Ipswich, Mass. First Church records, 1724-1898. RG5288. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Historical Note

Ipswich, Massachusetts, first known as *Agawam*, was settled by John Winthrop, and twelve companions, in 1633. The town was incorporated in 1634. The town name, Ipswich, was chosen to honor the merchants of Ipswich, England, who were financial supporters of the Massachusetts Bay Company. The First Church in Ipswich was gathered on August 5, 1634, and the first meeting house was constructed the same year. Newly arrived from England, Nathaniel Ward and Thomas Parker were both settled as the first ministers, though Rev. Parker was dismissed after a year in Ipswich to become the pastor in Newbury. In 1646 the first meeting house was sold and construction on the second meeting house was completed in 1647. 1681 a group of parishioners left to form the Second Church in Ipswich, also known as the Chebacco Parish, which is now the Congregational Church of Essex.

In 1699 the third meeting house of the First Church was built on the north green. In 1702, a clock was added to the building; this construction was partially funded by the public sale of the stone remains of an old fort. In 1714 a group of parishioners left the church to form the Third Church in Ipswich, now First Congregational Church in Hamilton. In 1747 a group of parishioners left to the South Church in Ipswich after strong disagreements between the two settled pastors, Rev. Nathaniel Rogers and Rev. Walley, spilled into the public. In 1749 another group of parishioners left to form the West Farms Parish, now the Linebrook Church. In 1749 the fourth meeting house was constructed to replace the third which was too large for the parish following the 1747 and 1749 dismissals. A gilded weathercock was placed atop the spire of the fourth meeting house. In 1762 a tower clock was purchased and installed into the building. In 1773 the First and South Parishes jointly purchased a burial ground on the south side of town

David T. Kimball was ordained as the fourteenth minister of the First Church in Ipswich on October 3, 1806. He had graduated from Harvard in 1803 and studied theology under Rev. French in Andover following a year as an instructor at the Phillips' Academy. In 1816, Rev. Kimball helped to establish the first Sabbath School of the First Church. He served as the minister until he died of pneumonia on February 3, 1860. Construction on the fifth meeting house began in 1846 and the new building was dedicated in 1847. The building was one of only a few gothic churches constructed out of wood. The weathercock and tower clock of the fourth meeting house were incorporated into the fifth.

After years of declining membership, the South Church voted to reunite with the First Church in Ipswich in 1922. Following the merger the new church organization was called the First and South Congregational Church. Members from the Linebrook Church rejoined the First and South Congregational Church in 1958, though the Linebrook Church continues to exist today as an independent church. In 1965 the fifth meeting house was struck by lightning and was destroyed in the ensuing fire. The tower clock, thought to be the oldest in-use tower clock in the United States in 1965, was destroyed, but the weathercock survived. Construction on the sixth meeting house was begun in 1970 and completed in 1971; the weather clock was once again incorporated into the new building. At some point between 1961 and 1984 the First and South Congregational Church reverted to its original name, First Church in Ipswich. Now a member of the United Church of Christ, the First Church in Ipswich continues to serve the local community today.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

This collection contains the church and parish records of the First Church in Ipswich. The collection documents the history and parish life of the church through meeting minutes, reports, financial documents, and vital statistics. In addition, topics such as ministry work, pew rights, land discussions, hymns in church, and lists of the sacraments that occurred at the different parishes are included within the records. The vital records include birth and baptismal records, marriage records, and death records. The collection also contains records kept by Rev. David T. Kimball. His papers include both church and personal correspondence, manuscript sermons, personal writings, church records, and committee reports.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

This collection is arranged chronologically by start date.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Restrictions on Access

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

Restrictions on Use

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Acquisition Information

The David T. Kimball papers were donated to the Congregational Library & Archives, October 2014, by Michael Moran; accession 2014-79. Originally given identifier RG5232.

The record books were temporarily loaned to the Congregational Library & Archives, 2015, by the First Church in Ipswich, Massachusetts, UCC; accession 2015-19.

Location of Originals

The physical record books are currently held by the First Church in Ipswich, Massachusetts, UCC.

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 Marya Shotkoski, October 2015, using DACS Second Edition. Additional processing and finding aid work by Zachary Bodnar, November 2017. Merged with Ipswich, Mass. First Church records, 1808-1863, RG5232, and redescribed by Zachary Bodnar, July 2019, using DACS Second Edition.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Materials

The Congregational Library & Archives has digitized materials from the South Church in Ipswich and made [them available to view online](#).

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Church correspondence.
- Church records and registers.
- Installation (clergy).
- Marriage records.
- Music in churches.
- Necrologies.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- Pews and pew rights.
- First Church (Ipswich, Mass.)
- Ipswich (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 alter, Opera 12 and later, Safari 5.x and later, or any version of Google Chrome are recommended.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Bibliography

In Gratitude to Almighty God for Three hundred and Fifty Years of Service and Witness. Ipswich: 1984.
17.11.1 I68.7 FirC

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
Parish and town records, 1724-1756	
<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 .	
Scope and Contents	
This volume contains the minutes of the First Parish dating from 1724 to 1755, and also contains the minutes of Ipswich town meetings. The minutes document church and town happenings and record the votes that took place. The volume chronicles the history and development of the town and First Parish of Ipswich. The topics covered include salaries, ministry work and assistance, discussions of building a meeting house on the South side of the river and its development, and the governance of the parish. The volume includes a list of members divided by geographical locations.	

Church record book, 1739-1806

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 lists of vital statistics including the birth, baptismal, marriage, admission, dismissal, and death records of the church from 1739 to 1806. The volume

also contains hand copied excerpts from other sources
pertaining to the founding and history of the church.

Parish record book, 1757-1830

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 warrants and meeting summaries of
the First Parish in Ipswich from 1757 to 1830. The meeting
summaries cover both the development and governance of
the First Parish and of the town of Ipswich. Principal topics
include payments to pastors, records of votes, the burial
grounds of the parish, and the role of song in church service.
Other topics include the pew allocations, including a diagram,
division of land, and the digging of graves.

Church and committee records, 1807-1856, undated	box NEHH- Small 1	folder 26
Kimball's church correspondence, 1813-1898, undated	box NEHH- Small 1	folder 27
Kimball's personal correspondence, 1829-1863, undated	box NEHH- Small 1	folder 28
Kimball's papers and sermons, 1850, undated	box NEHH- Small 1	folder 29