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Berkley, Mass. Congregational Church records, 1737-1949. RG1061

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English

DACS2 - 2013

Congregational Library & Archives

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	Andros, Thomas, 1759-1845
Creator:	Congregational Church (Berkley, Mass.)
Creator:	First Church (Berkley, Mass.)
Creator:	Free Church (Berkley, Mass.)
Creator:	Trinitarian Congregational Church (Berkley, Mass.)
Creator:	Tobey, Samuel, 1715-1781
Title:	Berkley, Mass. Congregational Church records, 1737-1949.
ID:	RG1061
Date [inclusive]:	1737-1949
Physical Description:	.22 Cubic Feet (1 box)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The First Church of Christ was first gathered in 1737 in the newly incorporated town of Berkley, Massachusetts. In 1737, the town agreed to settle Samuel Tobey, a young graduate of Cambridge. In 1788, Thomas Andros, a self-taught veteran of the American Revolutionary War, was settled in Berkley. The Berkley, Mass. Congregational Church records document the early history, administration, and life of the church and its members. The collection includes financial records, church and parish records, vital statistics, and the records of the Trinitarian Congregational Church which split from the Congregational Church in Berkley.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Berkley, Mass. Congregational Church records, 1737-1949, RG1061. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

The First Church of Christ, in Berkley, Massachusetts, was gathered in 1737. The town of Berkley was incorporated in 1735 from an area of land that had belonged to the neighboring towns of Dighton and Taunton. The request to create a new town apparently came about in part due to dissatisfaction with the new pastor at the church in Taunton. Part of the conditions for the formation of the new town was that a new minister needed to be settled in the town within a two year period. In 1737, the town agreed to settle Samuel Tobey, a young graduate of Cambridge. His was a successful pastorate and he continued to serve the Congregational Church in Berkley until his death in 1781.

For nearly seven years, a new minister to replace Tobey could not be found. Then, in 1788, Thomas Andros was settled in Berkley. Andros was largely a self-taught minister from Connecticut who had also fought in the American Revolutionary War and spent time as a prisoner of war in 1781. Under Andros, the name of the church changed to the Free Christian Church in 1814. Andros also had a long pastorate and served the church until his resignation in 1834 and he continued to be active in church life until his death in 1845.

In part due to conflicts regarding the salary of the minister among other complaints, a group of church members separated from the Congregational Church in Berkley and formed the Trinitarian Congregational Church, also known as the Second Congregational Church in 1847. The first minister of this church was Rev. Mr. Eastman and he was followed by Rev. Mr. Roberts. In 1873, this church reformed as the Methodist Episcopal Church of Berkley.

After the formation on the United Church of Christ in 1957, the Congregational Church in Berkley reorganized as the Berkley Congregational Church, UCC which continues to serve the local community today.

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Scope and Contents

The Berkley, Mass. Congregational Church records document the early history, administration, and life of the church and its members, as well as a major split that occurred within the community. The collection includes financial records, church and parish records, including meeting minutes, committee reports, records of votes, sermons, and certificates of membership, disciplinary cases, and vital statistics, such as marriage and baptismal records. Also present in the collection are record books which relate to the Trinitarian Congregational Society, which split from the Congregational Society in 1848, and include narratives for why they split from the church as well as foundational documents for their new church society.

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Arrangement

The records are arranged chronologically by start date.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Congregational Library & Archives

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

Restrictions on Access

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Acquisition Information

The volume, "Formation of the Trinitarian Society records," was gifted to the Congregational Library & Archives in 1912 by the Rev. Lucius R. Eastman; no accession number.

Discipline Cases removed from RG4769 and placed here. No acquisition information available regarding that collection.

All other materials were temporary loaned to the Congregational Library & Archives, November 2015, by the Congregational Church, Berkley, Massachusetts. Collection initially given identifier RG5300; Accession 2015-21.

Location of Originals

Original records for digital objects are located at the Berkley Congregational Church, U.C.C., Berkley, MA.

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, October 2017, using DACS Second Edition.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Church discipline.
- Church membership.
- Church records and registers.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- Marriage records.
- Sermons, American -- Early works to 1800.
- Berkley (Mass.) -- Church history.
- Congregational Church (Berkley, Mass.)
- First Church (Berkley, Mass.)
- Free Church (Berkley, Mass.)
- Trinitarian Congregational Church (Berkley, Mass.)

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.

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Bibliography

Hopkins, S. *The Observance of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Organization of the Congregational Church in Berkley, Mass., November 2, 1887*. Taunton: Charles H. Buffington, 1888. (17.11.1 B45.72 CONC)

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
First Church records, 1737-1778	
<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

The Records of the Old Church is a softbound volume which contains the earliest written records of the Congregational church in Berkley, Massachusetts, dating back to the gathering of the church through the whole of Samuel Tobey's ministry. The volume contains administrative records such as records related to the gathering of the church, meeting minutes, records of votes, and officer appointments. The record book also contains vital records such as a list of original members, baptismal records, marriage records, and sacramental records.

Separated Materials:

Separated Materials

Three sermons were removed from this volume and its envelope and placed together in a separate folder.

Sermons, 1737, 1790-1796

Digital Copies:

Digital Copies

These sermons were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are [available to view online](#).

Scope and Contents

This folder contains three handwritten sermon pamphlets. The first, written and preached in 1737 by Reverend Samuel Tobey, is based on 1 John 3:8 and speaks of sin and the devil. The other two sermons were written in the 1790s and were preached by Reverend Thomas Andros. The first is based on Genesis 42:21-22 and the second is based on Psalm 78:25.

Disciplinary cases, 1799-1814

box NEHH-
Small 1

folder 17

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

There are two cases of church discipline, the first dating from May 4, 1799 and the second dating from April 6, 1814. The first is a letter written to Israel French, from Thomas Andros, suspending him from the church for stealing apples. The second is a deposition from the employer of Isaac Sanford in defense of his conduct while at work in Taunton.

Ministerial Fund reports, 1813-1949

Scope and Contents

The Ministerial Fund reports include the financial and administrative records for the ministerial fund from the incorporation of the fund in 1813 through 1949. The ledger includes financial documents such as expenditure reports and sources of income. Also included are materials related to the incorporation of the ministerial fund, committee meeting minutes, trustee appointments, and records of votes.

Proceedings and meetings of the Congregational Society, 1824-1851

Scope and Contents

The Proceedings and Minutes of the Congregational Society is a hardbound volume containing administrative documents covering the period of time between 1824 and 1851. The types of materials present within the volume include calls for town and society meetings, committee reports, appointments to committees and officers, membership certificates, meeting minutes, the church by-laws, treasurer reports, and records of votes.

Trinitarian Congregational Church records, 1847-1860

Scope and Contents

The Records of the Trinitarian Congregational Church is a hardbound volume which largely describes the formation of the church society. The majority of the volume records the meetings, correspondence, and reasons for the formation of the society and also include founding documents such as the Church Covenant and the church Rules. Also included in the records are a list of the founding members, officer election results, and a list of members chosen to be delegates to councils and conventions.

Trinitarian Society formation records, 1847-1873

box NEHH-
Small 1

folder 18

Chapel Proprietor's and Trinitarian Society records, 1847-1874

Scope and Contents

The Chapel Proprietor's and Trinitarian Society records is a hardbound volume which contains the administrative documents for the Trinitarian Society in Berkley Massachusetts and documents related to the building and running of a chapel for the society. The types of materials present in the volume include an opening letter describing the reasons for splitting with the Congregational Society, meeting minutes, committee reports, the church by-laws and covenant, committee and officer appointments, a committee report documenting the history of the formation of the church society, and a list of subscribers to the church constitution.