

WILLIAM BRADFORD DODGE PAPERS

1845-1869

Volume: 2 volumes, 11 items

Restrictions: None

Gift of Ms. Virginia Gray, October 1992

Congregational Library

14 Beacon Street

Boston, Massachusetts 02108

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Processed by Barbara Austen

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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Bradford Dodge, descendant of an old New England family, was born in Rowley, Massachusetts, on September 7, 1783. He attended Dummer Academy at Byfield, Massachusetts, and took a teaching position in Salem, Massachusetts, where he taught for nearly forty years. He actively participated in the temperance and anti-slavery movements, started a Sunday School in Salem in 1820, and served as chaplain at the Salem Almshouse from 1827.

In 1844, Dodge and his family moved to Millburn, Illinois, which was little more than a frontier town. Residents called him to be the first minister at the first Congregational Church formed in the town. He was ordained as a minister by the Fox River Association of Congregational Churches. Dodge oversaw the Millburn church's formal organization and acceptance by the local association, and took the congregation through two building campaigns. He finally resigned as pastor in 1862, at the age of 75. He died on April 1, 1869. For more information on Dodge, see the photocopied material in Folders 1 and 2 of this collection, and in the accession file.

The volumes were apparently saved by Dodge's grandson, William Bradford Dodge Gray, who then passed them on to one of his sons and then to one of Gray's granddaughters, the donor Virginia Gray.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The papers of William Bradford Dodge consist primarily to two volumes, both records of his activities at the First Congregational Church in Millburn, Illinois. The first volume consists of baptisms, marriages, and deaths he recorded between 1845 and 1869. His "Journal of life and Ministerial Labors" covers the years 1856-1862 and records the dates of his sermons, with the biblical verses from which they were developed.

In addition to the manuscript volumes, there are two folders of photocopied material. Folder one contains a copy of letter he wrote to his niece in 1862; his obituary from the Waukegan Gazette in 1869; a manuscript account of some of his activities with the underground railroad; a clipping about a letter from Dodge found in an old trunk; and copies of photographs of sites in Salem associated with Dodge. The second folder contains a typescript of William B.D. Gray's obituary in 1926; a typed "genealogy" of Gray and Dodge; a copy of an article about Gray's resignation; a handwritten note about the disposition of Dodge's anti-slavery records, donated to the Essex Institute; a copy of a letter written to the Congregational Church at Millburn by Gray recounting Dodge's life; and a color photograph of Virginia Gray holding a piece of cloth reportedly handwoven in Africa and given to Dodge in gratitude for finding a long-lost son. The cloth is in the Jackson Homestead.

## DESCRIPTION

- Volume 1. "Pastoral Record of Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths March 2d, 1845", 1845-1869. Includes funeral sermon notes on loose sheet, and a church report dated 1859.
- Volume 2. "Journal of life and Ministerial Labors Commencing Jan 1st 1856", 1856-1862.
- Folder 1. Photocopies of material related to Dodge
- Folder 2. Photocopies of material related to Gray, and a color photograph

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Range

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Dodge, William Bradford (1783-1869)

Papers, 1845-1869.

2 volumes : Mss.

Record of baptisms, marriages, and deaths at the First  
Congregational Church, Millburn Lake County, Ill., and record of  
sermons preached at same church. Both volumes kept by Rev.  
William B. Dodge.

1. Congregational Churches--Illinois. 2. Millburn Lake County,  
Ill. First Congregational Church. 3. Sermons, Manuscript Notes.