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## Franklin, Mass. First Congregational Church records, 1737-1877. RG4842

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English

DACS2 - 2013

Congregational Library & Archives

14 Beacon Street

Boston, MA 02108

[info@14beacon.org](mailto:info@14beacon.org)

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

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Congregational Library & Archives
<b>Creator:</b>	First Congregational Church (Franklin, Mass.)
<b>Creator:</b>	West Parish Church (Wrentham, Mass.)
<b>Title:</b>	Franklin, Mass. First Congregational Church records, 1737-1877.
<b>ID:</b>	RG4842
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1737-1877
<b>Physical Description:</b>	0.28 Cubic Feet (1 box, 3 reels)
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	The Second Church of Wrentham, also known as the West Parish Church, was established in 1738. When the West Precinct of Wrentham separated from Wrentham and incorporated as Franklin in 1778, the West Parish Church was renamed the First Congregational Church of Franklin. Included within the collection are meeting minutes, committee reports, society records, and vital records.

### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Franklin, Mass. First Congregational Church records, 1737-1877, RG4842. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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## Historical Note

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Against the backdrop of the First Great Awakening, twenty-four members from the Second Precinct of Wrentham split from the First Church and signed the covenant which became the founding document for the Second Church of Wrentham, also known as the West Parish Church, in 1738. Not long after, the call went out to Rev. Elias Haven to become the first pastor of the new church. He accepted and was ordained on November 8, 1738. The first meeting house was constructed in the summer of 1739. It was a simple structure which included no pews except for the two which had been constructed at the expense of the pew owners. By 1772 the church's membership had outgrown the first meeting house and the search for a

new location was begun. However, disagreements within the church community, and difficulty with the town, long delayed the purchase of new land and construction.

In 1778, the West Precinct of Wrentham separated from Wrentham and was incorporated as Franklin in honor of Benjamin Franklin. It had been hoped that Benjamin Franklin would donate a bell for a church steeple, but instead he donated 116 books which became part of the Franklin Public Library's initial collection. At the same time as the town of Franklin was incorporated, the West Parish Church was renamed the First Congregational Church of Franklin. Construction on the second meeting house did not begin until 1787 and was completed in 1789. In 1806 a belfry was constructed and the first bell was installed. In 1827, a formal Sunday School was founded and attached to the church. Due to the growth of the town of Franklin after the Civil War, a third meeting house was found necessary and construction completed on it in 1872. The fourth and final church building was constructed in 1895. Throughout the nineteenth-century, the church actively participated in benevolent societies and several members of the church participated in both foreign and home mission societies.

Franklin was not spared from the Great New England Hurricane of 1938 and during the storm the church building for the First Baptist Church of Franklin, established in 1868, was destroyed. The First Congregational Church invited the Baptists to use their building for worship. In 1941, the two congregations reformed together to form the Franklin Federated Church.

The Franklin Federated Church, which is associated both with the United Church of Christ and the American Baptist Church, continues to serve the Franklin community today.

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection documents the early administrative history of the First Congregational Church in Franklin. Included within the materials are meeting minutes, committee reports, society records, baptismal records, membership records, examples of church discipline, and correspondence.

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## Arrangement

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This collection has been arranged in chronological order by start date.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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### Revision Description

Zachary Bodnar: Minor revision to the description of microfilm records, minor change to the arrangement, changed the date range in the collection title, added Haverhill to the collection title, minor adjustments made to notes. July 17, 2019

### Restrictions on Access

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

### Restrictions on Use

Items in this collection are subject to U.S. Copyright Law. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine the copyright status of collection items and to secure any permissions necessary for their reproduction and publication. Requests for permission to publish material must be discussed with the archivist or librarian.

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### Acquisition Information

No acquisition information for Ecclesiastical records; originally RG0177. Materials permanently loaned to the Congregational Library & Archives by the Franklin Federated Church in 2007.

### 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-described by Sari Mauro, September 2013, using DACS Second Edition. Additional description by Robin Duckworth. Re-processed by Zachary Bodnar, August 2018, using DACS Second Edition.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Baptismal records.
- Charities.
- Church discipline.
- Church membership.
- Church records and registers -- Massachusetts -- Franklin.
- Church records and registers -- Massachusetts -- Wrentham.
- Church societies.
- Marriage records.
- Necrologies.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- Barnum, Caleb, -1776
- First Congregational Church (Franklin, Mass.)
- Franklin (Mass.) -- Church history.
- West Parish Church (Wrentham, Mass.)
- Wrentham (Mass.) -- Church history.

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## Technical Requirements

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A microfilm reader is required in order to access microform materials. One microfilm reader is available to the public upon request.

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

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Committee of Arrangements. *Our Retrospect: A Memorial Volume, Containing the Historical Discourse, Adresses, Reminiscences, Letters, Etc., Given at the Sesqui-Centennial Celebration of the First Congregational Church, Franklin, Mass.* Allen Print: Walpole, 1888. 17.11.1 F85.47 FraFC

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## Collection Inventory

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Title/Description	Instances	
Records of the Second Church, 1737-1781  <u>Digital Copies:</u> <b>Digital Copies</b>  These church records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are <a href="#">available to view online</a> . In addition, transcriptions of this record book are available to view alongside the corresponding page image in the above link.	box 1	volume 1
<b>Scope and Contents</b>  Records included here document the church's covenant and meeting minutes. Also included are records of correspondence, baptisms, and membership.	reel Service Copy  reel Archival Master  reel Print Master	
Ecclesiastical council results, 1767  <u>Digital Copies:</u>	box 1	folder 1

## Digital Copies

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

## Scope and Contents

The ecclesiastical council recorded in this document was gathered to judge the moral character of Rev. Caleb W. Barnum and contains the recommendations of the council regarding his removal.

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Marriage records and necrologies, 1773-1827

box 1

folder 2

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 folder includes both marriage records and necrologies.

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Records of the Church in Franklin, 1781-1877

box 1

volume 2

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

These records document the minutes of church meetings, correspondence, and religious societies. The records also include lists of baptisms, membership admissions and dismissions, censures, marriages, and deaths.