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Litchfield, Conn. South Farms Church disciplinary records, 1781. RG0912

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English

DACS2 - 2013

Congregational Library & Archives

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	South Farms Church (Litchfield, Conn.)
Title:	Litchfield, Conn. South Farms Church disciplinary records, 1781.
ID:	RG0912
Date:	1781
Physical Description:	1 Folders
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	In 1768 the South Farms Church was gathered in the recently designated South Farms Parish of Litchfield, Connecticut. In 1772 George Beckwith Jr. was installed as the first minister of the church. He was removed in 1781 after an ecclesiastical council found him guilty of adultery. The South Farms Church, now Morris Congregational Church, continues to serve the local community today. This collection contains the records of the ecclesiastical council which removed Beckwith from his ministerial duties at the South Farms Church.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Litchfield, Conn. South Farms Church disciplinary records, 1781, RG0912. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

In 1767 the South Farms parish of Litchfield, Connecticut, was established, allowing for the residents, nearly all farmers, to establish their own church. That year the South Farms Parish Society was formed and in 1768 the South Farms Church was officially gathered. The church remained without a minister until 1772 when George Beckwith Jr. was ordained as the first minister.

George Beckwith Jr. was the son of the congregational minister George Beckwith Sr. Beckwith Sr. was the minister at the Second Parish Church in Lyme, Connecticut, from 1730 until 1785. He was also a

trustee of Yale. Beckwith Jr. graduated from Yale in 1766 and served as the minister of the South Farms Church from 1772 until 1781. Beckwith was removed as the minister of the South Farms Church by an ecclesiastical council called by the parish society. The ecclesiastical council found him guilty of breaking the seventh commandment; in other words, Beckwith was found guilty of adultery.

In 1859 the South Farms parish was incorporated as the town of Morris, Connecticut. The name of the church was changed to Morris Congregational Church at that time. The Morris Congregational Church, now a member of the United Church of Christ, is still active in the local community today.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains records related to the dismissal of Rev. George Beckwith Jr. from the South Farms Church in Litchfield, Connecticut. The records include the initial call for an ecclesiastical council by the parish society which enumerates both specific and general complaints against Rev. Beckwith. Of particular note is a complaint that he was "lasciviously attempting female chastity". Also included in the records is an invitation to the ecclesiastical council and the results of the ecclesiastical council. While the council could not corroborate all of the complaints against Rev. Beckwith, they did find him guilty of adultery; Rev. Beckwith was required to write a confession regarding his adultery which is also included in the records. The records also include a document officially removing Rev. Beckwith as minister of the church.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Restrictions on Access

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

No acquisition information is available for this collection.

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, May 2019, using DACS Second Edition.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Church discipline.
- Church records and registers.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- Sexual misconduct by clergy.
- Litchfield (Conn.) -- Church history.
- Morris (Conn.) -- Church history.
- South Farms Church (Litchfield, Conn.)

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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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
Disciplinary records, 1781 <u>Digital Copies:</u> Digital Copies	box NEHH- folder 10 Small 1

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