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## **Newbury, Mass. First Church ecclesiastical council meeting minutes, 1670. RG0937**

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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 Church of Newbury (Newbury, Mass.)
<b>Creator:</b>	Woodbridge, John, 1613-1695
<b>Source - trc:</b>	Coffin, Joshua, 1792-1864
<b>Title:</b>	Newbury, Mass. First Church ecclesiastical council meeting minutes, 1670.
<b>ID:</b>	RG0937
<b>Date:</b>	1670.
<b>Date:</b>	1853
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1 Folder
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	<p>The town of Newbury, Massachusetts, was first settled in 1635. The First Church was gathered in 1635 and construction on the first meeting house was completed the same year. In 1743 a group of parishioners left to form the First Episcopal Church. Between 1635 and 1806 five meeting houses were constructed. The fifth was destroyed in fire in 1868. The sixth, and final, meeting house was constructed in 1869. The First Church joined the United Church of Christ in 1961 and in 1967 the church was renamed to the First Parish Church in Newbury; this church continues to serve the Newbury community today. This collection contains a manuscript reproduction, created by Joshua Coffin in 1853, of an ecclesiastical council determination called in 1669 and 1670 to advise the parish church on questions of governance.</p>

### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Newbury, Mass. First Church ecclesiastical council meeting minutes, 1670, RG0937. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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## Historical Note

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The town of Newbury, Massachusetts, was first settled in 1635. The early European colonists settled along the Wessacūcon River, also transcribed as Quascacunquen; the river is now known as the Parker River. The First Church in Newbury was formally gathered in 1635 and was the twelfth church to be established in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The first meeting house was also constructed in 1635. As the Newbury settlement began to expand north towards the Merrimac River the Parish decided to build a more central church. This second meeting house was constructed in 1647. In 1661 the third meeting house was constructed across from the second to accommodate a larger parish. The fourth meeting house was erected in 1699.

Three distinct population centers formed in Newbury during the late seventeenth-century. In 1694 the western portion of Newbury was partitioned into the West Parish and the Second Church in Newbury was formed. Another partition took place in 1722 with the creation of the Newburyport Parish and gathering of the Third Church in Newbury. Both parishes were eventually incorporated as the towns of West Newbury and Newburyport.

In 1743 a group of parishioners, unhappy with Rev. Christopher Toppan and eager to more closely follow the teachings of George Whitefield, withdrew from the First Church. They later formed the First Episcopal Church along with a group of parishioners who had also withdrawn from the Third Church to better follow George Whitefield's teachings.

The fifth meeting house was constructed in 1806 and dedicated on September 17, 1806. During the nineteenth-century the parish community participated in numerous reform movements. In 1818 a Sunday school was opened. The following year the Female Reading Society was formed. The fifth meeting house was destroyed in a fire on January 26, 1868. Construction on the sixth, and final, meeting house was completed in 1869.

In 1961 the church voted to join the United Church of Christ. In 1967 the parish and church organizations were merged and the name of the church was changed to First Parish Church of Newbury. The First Parish Church continues to serve the Newbury community today.

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection contains a manuscript reproduction of an ecclesiastical council declaration called in 1669 and 1670. The original was made in the hand of Rev. John Woodbridge and the copy was produced by Joshua Coffin in 1853. The council was called to advise the Newbury church on a proposal to change their church governance from a Council of Elders to a more democratic system. The response of the

council was overwhelmingly negative; they claimed that such a process was against the Congregational way and promoted popery. Despite this, by 1683, Newbury First had no ruling elders.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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### Restrictions on Access

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### Acquisition Information

Presented to the Congregational Library & Archives, August 1853, by Joshua Coffin; no accession number.

### 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

Originally described by Anderson Boone, September 2014, using DACS Second Edition. Reprocessed and redescribed by Zachary Bodnar, May 2019, using DACS Second Edition.

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## Related Materials

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### Related Materials

The records of the First Parish Church in Newbury, Massachusetts, are housed at the The Phillips Library at the Peabody Essex Museum and are open and available for research use. In addition, some of these records have been digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project and digital reproductions are [available to view online](#).

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Church controversies.
- Church records and registers.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- Coffin, Joshua, 1792-1864
- First Church of Newbury (Newbury, Mass.)
- Newbury (Mass.) -- Church history.

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## Technical Requirements

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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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The 350th Committee. *First Parish Church: 350th Anniversary All-Church Banquet, June 23, 1985*. Newbury: 1985. 17.11.1 N45.2 FirCN

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## Collection Inventory

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Title/Description	Instances
Council minutes, 1670, 1853 <u>Digital Copies:</u> <b>Digital Copies</b>	box NEHH- folder 11 Small 1

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