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Weston, Mass. First Parish Church records, 1709-1864. RG5342

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English

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Congregational Library & Archives

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	Field, Joseph, 1788-1869
Creator:	First Parish Church in Weston (Weston, Mass.)
Creator:	Kendal, Samuel, 1753-1814
Creator:	Sears, Edmund H. (Edmund Hamilton), 1810-1876
Creator:	Woodward, Samuel, 1727-1782
Title:	Weston, Mass. First Parish Church records, 1709-1864.
ID:	RG5342
Date [inclusive]:	1709-1864
Physical Description:	0.57 Cubic Feet (2 boxes)
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	In 1698, the area of Watertown that would later be named Weston, was set off as the "Farmers' Precinct" based around the newly established Church of Christ. The first four ministers of the church were considered progressive and by the 1830s the theology of the church was beginning to shift towards Unitarianism. In 1867 a new church covenant was adopted that established the church as a Unitarian church. The collection includes vital records, meeting minutes, a daily ministerial journal, and early manuscript writings of Edmund Hamilton Sears.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Weston, Mass. First Parish Church records, 1709-1864, RG5342. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

In 1698, the area of Watertown that would later be named Weston, was set off as the "Farmers' Precinct" based around the newly established Church of Christ. By 1700 a meeting house had been constructed and finally in 1709 Rev. Joseph Mors was ordained as the first minister of the church. In 1713 the "Farmers' Precinct" was established as the town of Weston.

The first four ministers of the church were considered progressive and by the 1830s the theology of the church was beginning to shift towards Unitarianism. Unlike many Congregational churches during the 1830s, this gradual shift did not lead to a significant rift within the church community or the creation of an opposing Evangelical Congregational church. The shift towards Unitarianism was made official with the adoption of the 1867 church covenant which also renamed the church to the First Congregational (Unitarian) Church in Weston. The name changed again in 1991 to The First Parish Church in Weston. The First Parish Church in Weston remains active today and is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains the early records of the First Parish Church in Weston and documents the administration of the church and the vital happenings of the members of the church. The collection includes baptismal records, marriage records, necrologies, meeting minutes, and a daily ministerial journal. Also included is a manuscript volume written by Edmund Hamilton Sears while attending the Harvard Divinity School which includes an autobiographical sketch, personal musings, a family genealogy, and poetry.

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Arrangement

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

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Restrictions on Access

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Restrictions on Use

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Acquisition Information

Materials were loaned to the Congregational Library & Archives, June 2017, by the First Parish Church in Weston, Massachusetts; Accession 2017-09.

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

Collection processed by Zachary Bodnar, September 2018, using DACS Second Edition.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Antislavery movements.
- Baptismal records.
- Christian poetry.
- Church records and registers.
- Hymn writers.
- Marriage records.
- Necrologies.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- Political poetry, American.
- Unitarianism.
- First Parish Church in Weston (Weston, Mass.)
- Weston (Mass. : Town) -- Church history.

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

Sears, Edmund Hamilton. "Address by Rev. E. H. Sears." In *Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Settlement of Joseph Field, D.D., over the First Parish, in Weston, Wednesday, February 1, 1865*, 15-27. Waltham: Hastings' "Sentinel" Press, 1865. 17.11.1 W53.2 FirPCW

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Church records, 1709-1744	box 1	volume 1
<p><u>Digital Copies:</u> Digital Copies</p> <p>These church records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are available to view online.</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>This volume of church records contains the original church covenant, baptismal records, membership lists, and meeting minutes.</p>		
Church records, 1744-1815	box 1	volume 2
<p><u>Digital Copies:</u> Digital Copies</p> <p>These church records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are available to view online.</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>This volume of church records includes membership lists, baptismal records, meeting minutes, records of votes, collection records, and lists of admitted members.</p>		
Record of marriages and deaths, 1751-1786	box 1	volume 3
<p><u>Digital Copies:</u> Digital Copies</p> <p>These church records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are available to view online.</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>This volume of church records contains both lists of members who were married and lists of members who died.</p>		
Doctor Kendall's death records, 1784-1856	box 1	volume 4

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 volume of church records contains the names of members of the First Parish who died along with dates of their death. Some lists contain names of family members. There are numerous pages from the volume that have been ripped out, leaving gaps in the records.

Records of marriages, 1815-1864, 1839-1899

box 2

volume 1

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 volume of records contains detailed records on the marriages of members within the church. The list of marriages contains information such as the names and dates of those involved, as well as the location of the marriage, the age of the people, the occupations of the men, and the relations of the women.

Edmund H. Sears' "Reminiscence, Auto Biography, and Self Examination" manuscript, 1836-1837

box 2

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

This volume contains the manuscript writings of Edmund Hamilton Sears from his time at the Harvard Divinity School. The volume contains an autobiographical sketch of Edmund Sears, a section on recollections and thoughts, poetry, some of which is pointedly political and/or anti-slavery, hymns, including a Christmas hymn, and a genealogy of the Sears family. There are portions of the manuscript which have been

deliberately removed from the volume resulting in significant gaps.

Tax and travel journal, 1852

box 2

volume 3

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 volume is a daily journal kept by Rev. Joseph Field. The journal contains near daily entries about the happenings in Rev. Field's life, including travel and the names of those who he visited, the topics of Sunday sermons, tax records for the church, and agricultural notes regarding Field's garden.