

Thetford Historical Society
M71
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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF THETFORD
RECORDS, 1773 to 2004

Provenance: First Congregational Church

Processed by: Lilla Willey, November, 2006

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection consists of 24 manuscript boxes recording deaths, marriages, admissions and removals. Reports of various church officials, i.e., trustees, treasurers and clerks are filed chronologically, wherever possible.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Although the town of Thetford was created by charter in 1761, it was not until 1773 that it voted to provide for a minister, the Reverend Clement Sumner, when eleven members "laid in the foundation of the church." In 1778, Asa Burton became pastor and remained for over fifty years. The early records of the church are all in his handwriting and include a transcript of the marriages, deaths, admissions and removals. This information was not recorded elsewhere, therefore it became a primary source of town vital records.

In 1781, a log cabin was built to serve the congregation, but by 1787 a more permanent building was erected on what is now the village common. Moved in 1830 on wooden rollers to its present location, the church has been renovated over the years with the addition of a tower, clock, vestibule and pews. In 1953, a major addition included Sunday School rooms, kitchen, office and gathering room. In 2004, a further addition brought the building into compliance with federal accessibility and safety regulations. The First Congregational Church is believed to be the "oldest church in continuous use in the State of Vermont."

BOX AND FOLDER LISTING

- Box 1: Original Church Records
Asa Burton: 1791 - 1800
Members: 1831 - 1849
Marriages: 1831 - 1847
Society Book: 1834 - 1856
First Congregational Society Missives: 1830 - 1840
- Box 2: Asa Burton - important papers: 1818 - 1830
Notes from Mary B. Slade (MBS) - town historian
Early church history - MBS notes
First Congregational Society Constitution: 1817
Copies of church meetings: 1778 - 1832
Copy of church records: 1773 - 1832
- Box 3: Confessions, Complaints, Trials
Confessions: 1787 - 1899
Complaint - Smith vs. Moor: 1782
Complaint - Beriah Loomis/Abner Chamberlain: 1789, 1795
Complaints: 1800 - 1850
Deodate Newcomb: 1836 - 1841
Trial - Silas Follett: 1835 (Anti- Masonry)
Complaint - Gibbs vs. Worcester: 1869
Complaint - Turner vs. Worcester: 1879
Complaint - Turner vs. Fletcher: 1879
- Box 4: Admissions - Demissions: 1770 - 1800
Recommendations: 1801 - 1975 and undated
Withdrawals of members: 1817
- Box 5: Treasurer's Receipts: 1788 - 1865
Treasurer's Reports: 1878 - 1905
Treasurer's Journal: 1877 - 1931 (bound copy)
Treasurer's Journal: 1881 - 1931 (bound copy)
- Box 6: Treasurer's Report: 1933 - 1959
Treasurer's Records: 1943 - 1955
Treasurer's Records: 1965 - 1981
Treasurer's Notes/Correspondence: 1973

- Box 7: Trustees' Reports: 1934 - 1982
- Box 8: Trustees' Reports: 1983 - 1992
- Box 9: Deacons' Records
- Box 10: Annual Reports: 1877 - 1969
- Box 11: Annual Reports: 1970 - 2004
- Box 12: Annual Meetings: 1931 - 1965
Clerk's warnings: 1824 - 1904
Articles of Faith: 1877
- Box 13: By-laws: 1942, 1962-4, 1969-70, 1975.
New by-laws adopted 01/06/2000
Inter-church Council
Membership
Enlistment: 1935
Covenants: 1909, 1984, 2000
- Box 14: Rev. William Estabrook personal records: 1933 - 1945
Treasurer's Report
Baptismal Record: 1954 - 1982
Guest Book: 1994 - 2002
- Box 15: Church Directory: 1989 - 2004
Community Newssheet (WWII)
Congregational Crier: 1978 - 2005
Orange County Assn. Orange/Grafton: 1887 - 1909
"Fertile Furrows": 1956
- Box 16: Pastors' Resignations, Acceptances, Dismissals (Clary)
Rev. Jeffrey Evans
Letters of value
Gifts: brass candelabra, Theft of old communion service
Memorial Funds
Membership Lists
New Building: 1954

- Year Book Reports: 1941 - 1975
UCC Merger Constitution: 1960
Mens' Club: 1944
Foreign Missions Society: 1903
Junior Society: 1900
Biblical Association: 1827 - 1831
Ministerial Meetings: 1818 - 1819
- Box 17: Open To All - New addition: 2004
Janet Frye Harte Dedication: 10/10/2004
Vermont Life Article: 1987, by Noel Perrin
Capital Campaign: 2003
- Box 18: Organ/Piano Correspondence
Vesper Services, Concerts, Special Services, Dance
- Box 18, cont'd: Memorial Services
Vermont Sesquicentennial
- Box 19: Bulletins: 1945 - 1979
- Box 20: Rev. Edward Jackson Tyler letters: 1960 - 1967
- Box 21: Rev. Edward Jackson Tyler letters and sermons
- Box 22: Ladies' Benevolent Society: Account Books and by-laws, 1898 - 1940
- Box 23: Ladies' Benevolent Society: Minutes of meetings, 1952 - 1981
- Box 24: United Church of Christ, John Nutting