

North Parish Church and North Parish Community Church (Haverhill and Plaistow, NH) Records, 1774, 1818-1963, 1974-1979

Collection Summary

Reference Code:	MRQ, US.
Repository:	Special Collections, Haverhill Public Library, Haverhill, Massachusetts.
Call Number:	MSS 56 (formerly HC4 N87 and HC4 N88)
Creator:	North Parish Church
Title:	North Parish Church and North Parish Community Church Records
Dates:	1774, 1818-1963, 1974-1979
Size:	2 linear feet (2 boxes, 9 volumes)
Language(s):	Collection materials are in English.
Abstract:	The North Parish Church and North Parish Community Church (Haverhill, Mass. and Plaistow, N.H.) records document the activities, memberships, financial transactions, pastoral activities, and social activities of the church in the 18 th , 19 th , and 20 th centuries.

Organizational History

The town of Haverhill, Massachusetts, was separated into multiple parishes during the early eighteenth century. In 1728, the town was divided into two parishes with the formation of the North Parish. In 1729, the first meeting house for the North Parish was completed. In 1731, a committee was formed to build a parsonage house and barn. Title to this property was voted to Rev. Gyles Merrill on 15 October 1770.

In 1741, the New Hampshire/Massachusetts state line was run, dividing the parsonage. The General court decided that the portion south of the line should be the North Parish of Haverhill. The North Parish was transferred to Plaistow, New Hampshire in 1741 and the Rockingham Congregational Church was formed. During the first part of the nineteenth century, doctrinal differences arose. In July 1823, the parish petitioned the General Court for power to sell the parsonage lands to form a Ministerial Fund. The sale provided the basis of the present fund.

During the ministry of Samuel H. Peckham, 1831-1838, the difficulties caused by the running of the state line ended in the permanent division of the North Parish and the Plaistow

Congregational Society. On 22 April 1871, three men were selected to choose a location for a new church building. Delays arose over the management of parish funds, resulting in litigation which delayed matters until 23 April, 1878, when another committee was given power to purchase land and erect a church. The first parish meeting in the new church was held on 15 October 1879, and the building was dedicated on 23 September 1880.

During the ministry of H. S. Hawver, 1924-1926, the Plaistow Society joined the North Parish of Haverhill. Evening services were held in the North Parish church and congregants began to want a definite joining of forces. In 1928, under the ministry of Forrest R. Brown, a federation was formed to be known as the North Parish Community Church. New parish by-laws were written by a committee and the church was thoroughly remodeled and redecorated. Services began in 1929.

In 1940, the Centre Congregational Church and North Congregational Church merged to form the First Congregational Church in Haverhill which occupied the North Church building. In 1963, the North Parish Community Church merged into the First Congregational Church; at the same time the First Congregational Church joined the United Church of Christ. In 2010 the 1860 church building was sold and the First Congregational Church was formally dissolved.

Succession of Ministers (partial list)

James Cushing, 1730-1764

Gyles Merrill, 1765-1801

[No permanent minister], 1801-1826

Moses Welch, 1824-1831

Samuel H. Peckham, 1831-1838

David Oliphant, 1838-1852

Charles Tenney, 1853-1858

Homer Barrows, 1858-1869

Calvin Terry, 1869-1875

David Bremner, 1875-1879

Joseph Kyte, 1879-1883

Benjamin F. Perkins, 1883-1885

Edwin G. Stone, 1885-1888

George E. Hill, 1888-1892

F. Philip Estabrook, 1892-1893

Charles Lawrence, 1893-1896

Leonard Dodd, 1896-1901

Joseph Kimball, 1901-1911

Christopher Hamlin, 1912-1918

John S. Buffum, 1919-1922

Howard P. Jett, 1923-1924

H. S. Hawver, 1924-1926

Forrest R. Brown, 1926-

Arrangement

- Series 1. Administrative Records, 1838-1839, 1882-1949, undated
- Series 2. Financial Records, 1818-1887, 1931-1955, undated
- Series 3. Pastoral Activities, 1774, 1881, 1924-1951, undated
- Series 4. Church Social Activities, 1826, 1875, 1929-1937, 1954-1963
- Series 5. History, 1801-1931, 1974-1979, undated
- Series 6. North Parish Community Church Records, 1932-1959, undated

Scope and Content Note

The North Parish Church and North Parish Community Church (Haverhill, Mass. and Plaistow, N.H.) records document the activities, memberships, financial transactions, pastoral activities, and social activities of the church in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. The collection has been arranged into six series. Series one contains record books and documents relating to the dispute over Rev. Samuel H. Peckham's rental of the parsonage house, arranged chronologically. Series two contains financial records such as ledgers and record books, subscriptions, receipts, donations, deeds, bequests, wills, and a pew plan. Series three contains a receipt, a program, a news clipping about one of the ministers, a list of baptisms, and a biography of one of the ministers. Series four consists of records of the societies or clubs that were part of the church, arranged chronologically. Sunday School is included in this series. Series five contains news clippings and several histories of the church. Series six contains records of the North Parish Community Church, arranged chronologically. It includes a yearbook, annual reports, correspondence, treasurer's reports, a ledger, meeting minutes, a program, two studies, and by laws.

Administrative Information

- Preferred Citation:** [Item Identification], North Parish Church and North Parish Community Church Records, MSS 56, Special Collections, Haverhill Public Library, Haverhill, Massachusetts.
- Custodial History:** Unknown.
- Acquisition Information:** The copy of the North Parish Church Records (August 1728 to April 1913) was placed on deposit at the library on 12 February 1946 by Gladys E. Sleeper, Clerk. Some church records were placed on deposit by the church historian, Inamae Dickey, on 25 October 1985 and 29 May 1990. Some material was collected by the Haverhill Public Library. The following were gifts to the library from the individuals listed: Sacred Music Society record book and list of songs from James C. Merrill; pew plan and Women's Guild

	program from 1957 from Richard E. Becker; and Church council meeting minutes, 1936-1937 from Charlotte E. Ricker in 1988.
Processing Information:	Processed by Tamara Gaydos, 2021.
Access Rights:	Collection is open for research.
Phys. Access Restrictions:	None.
Tech. Access Restrictions:	None.
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Related Collections:	North Congregational Church Records, MSS 55. Centre Congregational Church Records, MSS 47. Charles N. Hoyt Papers, MSS 65.
Separated Material:	Some books and serials were separated from the collection and cataloged separately.
Conservation Notes:	Newspaper clippings were photocopied onto archival quality paper. Paper clips and staples were removed.
Subjects:	Account books Christian union Church buildings Church bulletins Church finance Church history Church membership Church records and registers Church youth groups Clergy Clippings (Books, newspapers, etc.) Congregationalism Haverhill (Mass.) -- Church history Marriage records Merrill, Gyles, 1739-1801 Necrologies North Parish Church (Haverhill, Mass.) North Parish Church (Plaistow, N.H.) North Parish Community Church (Haverhill, Mass.) Oliphant, David, 1791-1872 Peckham, Samuel H., 1793-1864 Pews and pew rights Plaistow (N.H.) Receipts (Acknowledgments)

Sunday schools – Records
 Women -- Societies and clubs
 Worship programs

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Administrative Records, 1838-1839, 1882-1949, undated

This series contains record books and documents relating to the dispute over Rev. Samuel H. Peckham's rental of the parsonage house, arranged chronologically.

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
Record book, 1728-1913 [typed in 1912 by E. H. Briggs – original is lost]	Volume 1	
Record book, 1730-1905 [typed], undated	Volume 2	
Samuel H. Peckham, summonses, 1838, 1839; defense of parsonage house rent, undated	1	1
Rufus Choate affidavit, 1839	1	2
James H. Duncan letter to Hon. Leverett Saltonstall, 1839; letter to Jesse Clement, 1839	1	3
Record book, 1882-1949	Volume 3	

Series 2: Financial Records, 1818-1887, 1931-1955, undated

This series consists of financial records such as ledgers and record books, subscriptions, receipts, donations, deeds, bequests, wills, and a pew plan.

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
Subscription for minister's house and barn, 1818	1	4
Trustees of Ministerial Funds record book, 1822-1949	Volume 4	
Trustees of Ministerial Fund demand of monies raised from the sale of parsonage property, 1825	1	5
Subscription for a meeting house, 1837	1	6
Samuel H. Peckham, discharge of contract and receipt for rent, 1838	1	7
Bequests, 1865; wills, 1886, 1931	1	8
Copies of Plaistow, NH, town records, 1872	1	9
Donation of Ann M. Pingree share in Merrimack Bank, 1882	1	10
Gyles Merrill, land deed [including certified copy], 1887; plot plans,		

undated	1	11
	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
<u>Folder Title</u>		
Cash book, 1891-1939	Volume 5	
Trustees ledger, 1899-1947	Volume 6	
Ledger, 1903-1955	Volume 7	
Pew plan, undated [before 1837]	1	12

Series 3: Pastoral Activities, 1774, 1881, 1924-1951, undated

This series contains a receipt, a program, a news clipping about one of the ministers, a list of baptisms, and a biography of one of the ministers.

	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
<u>Folder Title</u>		
Gyles Merrill, receipt, 1774	1	13
“Sesquicentennial of the Congregational Church 1880” program, 1881	1	14
H. S. Hawver, news clipping, 1924	1	15
Baptisms, 1929-1951	1	16
James Cushing, biography, undated	1	17

Series 4: Church Social Activities, 1826, 1875, 1929-1937, 1954-1963

This series contains records of the societies or clubs that were part of the church, arranged chronologically. Sunday School is included in this series.

	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
<u>Folder Title</u>		
Sacred Music Society record book and list of songs, 1826	1	18
Sunday School, catalog of books in the Sabbath School Library, 1875	1	19
Men’s Class record book, 1929-1937	1	20
Circle III, Tom Thumb wedding napkins and program, 1954-1955	1	21
Women’s Guild program, 1957	1	22
Women’s Guild record book, 1961-1963	1	23

Series 5: History, 1801-1931, 1974-1979, undated

This series contains news clippings and several histories of the church.

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
News clippings, 1801-1931, 1974-1979	2	1
Notes on the history of the church, 1645-1927, undated	2	2
Notes on the history of the church continued, undated	2	3
“Some Facts in the History of the North Parish of Haverhill...” by Rev. David Oliphant, undated	2	4
“Sketch of the Haverhill North Parish, Haverhill and Plaistow Church” [handwritten], undated	2	5

Series 6: North Parish Community Church, 1932-1959, undated

This series contains records of the North Parish Community Church, arranged chronologically. It includes a yearbook, annual reports, correspondence, treasurer’s reports, a ledger, meeting minutes, a program, two studies, and by laws.

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
Yearbook, 1932, 1955-1956	2	6
Council meeting minutes, 1936-1937	2	7
Pastoral annual reports, 1941-1957	2	8
Ledger, 1944-1953	Volume 8	
Correspondence, 1947-1955	2	9
Warrants and minutes, 1949-1950	Volume 9	
Treasurer’s reports, 1949-1950	2	10
Business meetings minutes, 1950-1955	2	11
Annual reports, 1957-1958	2	12
Court decree, 1958	2	13
Church services program for March 8, 1959	2	14
Report of church building consultant, 1960	2	15
Annual reports, 1960-1963	2	16
Church study, 1962	2	17
By-laws, undated	2	18