

First Baptist Church (Haverhill, Mass.) Records, 1756, 1764-2004

Collection Summary

Reference Code:	MRQ, US.
Repository:	Special Collections, Haverhill Public Library, Haverhill,
	Massachusetts.
Call Number:	MSS 79
Creator:	First Baptist Church (Haverhill, Mass.)
Title:	First Baptist Church of Haverhill, Mass. Records
Dates:	1756, 1764-2004
Size:	5.5 linear feet (11 boxes, 3 volumes)
Language(s):	Collection materials are in English.
Abstract:	The First Baptist Church of Haverhill 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

Before the first Baptist Church and Society in Haverhill, Massachusetts, was formed, a young minister, Hezekiah Smith, visited the town on 27 July 1764 and preached in the West Parish. He had recently graduated from Princeton College, in New Jersey and had been ordained as a Baptist minister in Charleston, South Carolina. The church in the West Parish of Haverhill was without a pastor and Smith was persuaded to preach again in the West Parish on 15 August 1764. On 22 October, Smith started on a journey to visit his relatives in new Jersey. Several of the prominent citizens in Haverhill tried to secure his services as a permanent minister among them, and he promised to return. Early in December, Smith returned to Haverhill.

On New Year's Day, 1765, a group of citizens gathered in the home of James Duncan (1725-1817) to organize the Baptist Religious Society in Haverhill. This included members of the White family, the Ayer family, the Whittier family, the Chase family, and others. Because there was no recognized Baptist Church in the immediate vicinity at that time, the people in Haverhill were on their own; and, so, on the ninth of May, 1765, seven brethren and sixteen sisters, "after solemn fasting and prayer, mutually agreed to walk in gospel order together, having been first baptized by immersion, but not joined to any church." With one exception these people had all been baptized by Mr. Smith. On the 28th of June 1765, the Haverhill church gave Smith a call to become their pastor. This call does not appear to have been either accepted or declined until August 22nd, 1766, when Smith was received into membership with the church, by letter from the Baptist church in Charleston, South Carolina. The call was then renewed, and on the 12th of November 1766, Mr. Smith was installed as the pastor of the church and continued in that office until his death. The Baptist Religious Society in Haverhill was incorporated by the Massachusetts Legislature on 18 February 1793 with an act of incorporation signed by Governor John Hancock.

All of the other congregations in Haverhill refused to let the Baptists use any of the town's meeting houses during off-hours, so the Baptists met under Mr. Colby's roof until they could start to meet in the shell of their own meeting house. Fifty-two people contributed \$1,135, to build their own place of worship. The frame of the first meeting-house was raised on 5 and 6 June 1765. Located on Merrimack Street, between How and Pecker Streets on a steep hill, it was first built without a steeple; one was added in 1799. The second meeting house was built in 1833 on the same site and dedicated on 7 November 1833. The cost was \$5,300. The congregation outgrew this building, so a third meeting house was built in 1849 for \$17,000 and dedicated on 8 November 1849. In 1882, it was decided to purchase land on Main Street and build a bigger church. This created a debt which was finally paid off in 1913. The new building was dedicated on 22 November 1883.

The church is still active in 2021.

Succession of Ministers (partial list)

Hezekiah Smith, 1765-1805 William Batchelder, 1805-1818 George Keely, 1818-1832 Stephen P. Hill, 1832-1834 Edward N. Harris, 1835-1836 Arthur Savage Train, 1836-1860 Augustus H. Strong, 1861-1865 William Fitz, 1866-1867 George W. Bosworth, 1869-1879 Henry C. Graves, 1880-1886 William W. Evarts, 1887-1895 Charles T. Morgan, 1896-1905 Frederick B. Gruel, 1906-1913 Edmund D. Webber, 1913-1923 Clark T. Brownell, 1924-1940 Fenwick T. Fowler, 1941-1946 Arthur T. Brooks, 1946-1947 Clarence B. Fowler, 1947-1952 Clifford C. Meeden, 1953-1971 John Bartos, 1971-1981

Arrangement

Series 1. Administrative, 1765-1947, 1975-1982, undated Series 2. Financial, 1756, 1764-1862, 1882-1965, undated Series 3. Pastoral, 1763-1985, 2001, undated 3.1 Ministers' Papers, 1763-1953, 1971-1981, undated 3.2 Calendars, 1897-1985 3.3 Programs, 1865-1949, 1965, 2001, undated 3.4 Membership, 1806, 1835-1852, 1879, undated Series 4. Sabbath School/Bible School, 1843, 1877-1902, 1916-1917, 1937, 1940, undated Series 5. Church Social Activities, 1806-1953, undated 5.1 Female Cent Society, 1806-1836 5.2 Fragment Society, 1825-1906 5.3 Female Education Society, 1833-1843 5.4 Maternal Association, 1859-1864 5.5 Ladies Home Missionary Circle/Ladies Social Circle/Women's Missionary Society, 1850-1944 5.6 Women's Mission Circle, 1872-1882, 1899-1915 5.7 Furnishing Fund Society/Ladies Aid Society, 1881-1953 5.8 Other, 1889-1940, undated Series 6. Other, 1885, 1892, 1946, 1974, 1993-2004, undated

Scope and Content Note

The First Baptist Church of Haverhill records document the activities, memberships, financial transactions, pastoral activities, and social activities of the church in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. It has been organized into six series. Series one contains administrative material such as record books, correspondence, the act of incorporation, the articles of faith, the covenant, a handbook, a manual, legal documents, meeting minutes, a membership card, an annual report, a directory, a brochure, and specifications for the organ. Series two contains financial records including bills, receipts, accounts, subscriptions, tax collection information, a book of pew deeds, account books, reports, documents for building the three meeting houses, correspondence, a fundraising brochure, and a quote for a building. Series three contains ministers' papers, calendars, programs, and membership information. Of interest is an 1843 letter from David P. Harmon resigning his membership because he felt the church did not condemn slavery. Series four contains a list of subscribers and programs for the Sabbath School (also called Bible School). Series five contains records of the societies or clubs that were part of the church. It consists of eight subseries, arranged in the order the groups were founded. Series six contains news clippings, a handwritten Bible verse, articles, a memoir, photographs, a poem, and several hymns.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation:	[Item Identification], First Baptist Church (Haverhill, Mass.) Records, MSS 79, Special Collections, Haverhill Public Library, Haverhill, Massachusetts.
Custodial History: Acquisition Information:	Unknown. The 1833 Article of Faith and the 100 th Anniversary program were a gift of Caroline Duncan; the letter to Hezekiah Smith from his mother belonged to Mrs. Rebecca S. Fyfe of Woodstock, Ontario, Canada; a weekly bulletin from April 11, 1926 was a gift of Mrs. Hayden B. Harris; photographs of Dr. Fenwick Fowler and others on the 200 th anniversary were a gift from Priscilla Leslie in October 1987. Two notebooks filled with manuscripts from the late 1700s and 1800s were presumably donated by Donald P. Wright. Records of the church and its social groups were placed on deposit at the Haverhill Public Library by the First Baptist Church.
Processing Information:	Processed by Tamara Gaydos, 2021.
Access Rights:	Collection is open for research.
Phys. Access Restrictions:	None.
Tech. Access Restrictions:	None.
Copyright:	Copyright has not been assigned to the Haverhill Public Library. All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Board of Trustees. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the Haverhill Public Library as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained by the researcher.
Related Collections:	None.
Separated Material:	Books and other published materials were separated from the collection and cataloged separately.
Conservation Notes:	Photographs were sleeved to protect them. Newspaper clippings were photocopied onto archival quality paper. Paper clips and staples were removed.
Subjects:	Church buildings Church bulletins Church finance Church history Church membership Church records and registers Church youth groups Clergy Duncan, James, 1725-1817

Duncan, James, 1756-1822 First Baptist Church (Haverhill, Mass.) History--Massachusetts—Haverhill Keely, George, 1772-1865 Pews and pew rights Sermons, American--18th century Sermons, American--19th century Smith, Hezekiah, 1737-1805 Train, Arthur Savage Women--Societies and clubs Worship programs

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Administrative, 1765-1947, 1975-1982, undated

This series contains record books, correspondence, the act of incorporation, the articles of faith, the covenant, a handbook, a manual, legal documents, meeting minutes, a membership card, an annual report, a directory, a brochure, and specifications for the organ, arranged chronologically.

<u>Folder Title</u>	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
Record book, 1765-1793	10	1
Record book, 1765-1832	10	2
Correspondence, 1771, 1789, 1821, 1832-1842, 1851, 1879	11	1
Meeting notices, 1788, 1792, 1795	11	2
Letter regarding deeds, 1792	11	3
Dispute with Caleb Emery, 1792	11	4
Petitions to House of Representatives and Senate, 1792	11	5
List of members, 1788-1791	11	6
Record book, 1793-1827, 1866-1887	Volume 1	L
Loose papers from record book, 1792-1797	10	3
Act of incorporation and member register, 1793-1840	1	1
Meeting minutes, 1819	11	7
Prudential committee correspondence, 1830-1834, 1844	11	8
Record book, 1833-1857	Volume 2	2

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
Articles of Faith and Covenant with a list of members, 1833, 1847,		
1852, 1872	1	2
Documents regarding choir, 1843-1848	11	9
Hand-book of the First Baptist Church in Haverhill, Mass. , 1885	1	3
Officers and Members of the First Baptist Church in Haverhill, 1889	1	4
Manual of the First Baptist Church, 1912	1	5
Membership card of Harley R. Nelson, 1912	1	6
Annual report, 1946-1947	1	7
Correspondence to church members, 1975-1983	1	8
Correspondence from Mary Leavitt, undated [after 1838]	11	10
Specifications of the Organ in The First Baptist Church Haverhill,		
Massachusetts, undated [1921]	1	9
Directory, undated [1924-1940]	1	10
Brochure, undated [1980s-2000s]	1	11
Report on disposition of the vestry, undated	11	11

Series 2: Financial, 1756, 1764-1862, 1882-1965, undated

This series contains bills, receipts, accounts, subscriptions, tax collection information, a book of pew deeds, account books, reports, documents for building the three meeting houses, correspondence, a fundraising brochure, and a quote for a building, arranged chronologically.

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
Receipts, 1756, 1771, 1784-1802, 1821, 1840-1843	11	12
Bills and receipts for building a meeting house, 1764-1773, undated	11	13
Assignment of the pews, 1765	FFC 5	Dwr 2
Pew leases and sales, 1769-1771, 1795, 1818, 1849	11	14
Amount of taxes owed, 1781-1782	1	12
Taxes collected (including Plaistow), 1785-1795, 1803, 1818, undated	11	15
Accounts, 1790-1793, 1821, 1832-1843, undated	11	16
Account book of James Duncan, Jr., 1798-1804	11	17
Subscriptions, 1798, 1820-1828, 1837-1843	11	18
Accounts allowed and orders drawn, 1799	11	19
Treasurer's general account, 1805	FFC 5	Dwr 2
Report of committee to settle with the Treasurer, 1807-1823	11	20
Sexton contracts, 1820, 1838-1840	11	21
Correspondence, 1821-1825, 1833-1843, 1852, undated	11	22
Assessors report, 1827	11	23
Pew deeds, 1830	11	24

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
Agreement to build second meeting house, 1833 Bills, receipts, subscription, agreement to build second meeting house,	FFC 5	Dwr 2
1833-1838	11	25
Agreement to paint, 1839	11	26
Report of auditing committee, 1846	11	27
Documents regarding building third meeting house, 1848-1849	11	28
Pew deeds, 1851-1862	Volume 3	
Account book of donations, 1882-1883	1	13
Trust funds account book, 1894-1948	1	14
Report to the Treasurer, 1909	1	15
Journal of trust funds, 1916-1946	1	16
Fundraising brochure, 1959	10	4
Receipt for donation to 300 th Anniversary Time Capsule, 1965	1	17
Sale of pews [transcription], undated	1	18
List of pews and owners, undated [189-]	1	19
Quote for a building, undated	1	20
Tax valuations, undated	11	29

Series 3: Pastoral, 1763-1985, 2001, undated

This series consists of four subseries: 3.1, Ministers' papers; 3.2, Calendars, and 3.3 Programs, and 3.4 Membership.

Subseries 3.1: Ministers' papers, 1763-1953, 1971-1981, undated

This subseries contains correspondence, installation programs, sermons, photographs, newspaper clippings, and other records of 18 ministers who served in the church, arranged chronologically. It includes a tribute to one of the deacons.

Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
2	1
2	2
2	3
2	4
2	5
2	6
2	7
	2 2 2 2 2

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
Tribute of respect for Rev. Smith, undated [1805]	2	8
William Batchelder, biographical article [copy], 1818	2	9
George Keely, invitation (copy), undated [1818]; letter to		
Congregational Society, 1821; news clippings, 1865-1879;		
genealogy, undated	10	5
Copy of letter to Baron Stow, 1831	11	30
Stephen P. Hill, invitation (copy), 1832; article, undated	2	10
Arthur Savage Train, news clippings, 1859, 1940, undated		
[1872]; photograph undated [1862]	2	11
"Mr. Train's Sermons," [1841]-1844	2	12
Augustus H. Strong, service program, 1861; article, undated	2	13
William Fitz, photograph, undated	2	14
Invitation to David Weston and reply, 1868	11	31
George W. Bosworth, news clippings, 1853, 1878, 1885;		
photograph, undated	2	15
Memorial Sermon on the Life and Character of Dea[con] John	า	
Keely, delivered by Rev. Geo. W. Bosworth, D. D., 1875	2	16
Henry C. Graves, news clippings, 1879-1881; photograph,		
undated	2	17
William Wallace Evarts, Jr., services program; news clipping	s <i>,</i>	
1887-1926	2	18
Charles T. Morgan, news clippings, 1896-1918; photograph,		
1901	2	19
Frederick B. Gruel, news clippings, 1912-1925; appreciation,		
1925; photograph, undated	2	20
Edmund D. Webber, news clippings, 1913-1933; photograph	۱,	
undated	2	21
Clark T. Brownell, news clippings, 1924-1955	2	22
Fenwick T. Fowler, news clippings, 1940-1946; Divine Divorc	e	
(sermon), 1941	2	23
Arthur T. Brooks, Clarence B. Gilbert, news clippings,		
1946-1956	2	24
Clifford C. Meeden , news clippings, 1952-1976; installation		
services program, 1953; photograph, undated	2	25
John Bartos, news clippings, 1971-1981	2	26
Ministers' messages, 1889-1910; blank member card,	-	
undated [1880-1886]; invitation, undated	2	27
Handwritten prayer, undated	2	28
	-	20

Subseries 3.2: Calendars, 1897-1985

This subseries contains weekly calendars of church services and activities arranged chronologically.

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
Weekly calendars, 1897-1928	3	1
Weekly calendars, 1930-1955	3	2
175 th Anniversary calendar, 1940-1941	3	3
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1960	3	4
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1961	3	5
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1962	3	6
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1963	3	7
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1964	3	8
200 th Anniversary weekly programs, 1965	3	9
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1965	3	10
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1966	4	1
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1967	4	2
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1968	4	3
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1969	4	4
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1970	4	5
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1971	4	6
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1972	4	7
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1973	5	1
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1974	5	2
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1975-1977	5	3
The Beacon weekly bulletin, 1978-1979	5	4
The Beacon monthly newsletters, 1981-1985	11	34

Subseries 3.3: Programs, 1865-1949, 1965, 2001, undated

This subseries contains programs and photographs from services and special events, arranged chronologically.

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
100 th Anniversary invitation and program, 1865	5	5
100 th Anniversary ribbon, 1865	5	6
Centennial Discourse delivered on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Organization of the Baptist Church,		
Haverhill, Mass. by Arthur Savage Train, 1865	5	7
Y. M. C. A. Quarterly Convention of Eastern Massachusetts		
program, 1880	5	8

	ontainer umber	Folder <u>Number</u>
Invitation and program to dedication of new church building, 1883	5	9
"Opening of the new organ at First Baptist Church" program, 1883	5	10
Musical and other programs, 1883-1893, 1914-1934, undated 125 th Anniversary, programs, 1890; <i>Historical Discourse</i> <i>delivered on the One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Anniversary</i> <i>of the First Baptist Church by Rev. W. W. Everts, Jr., Pastor,</i>	5	11
and the Historical Sketch of the Sunday School by John H. Davis, 1890 "Hymn for the 125 th Anniversary of the First Baptist Church, Haverhill" by Rev. Samuel F. Smith of Newton, Mass.,	5	12
undated	5	13
150 th Anniversary program, 1915 175 th Anniversary program and news clipping, 1940;	5	14
calendar, 1940-1941	5	15
175 th Anniversary historical pageant program, 1940	5	16
"The Elderbloom Singers" program and photograph, 1940	5	17
Haverhill Community Chorus programs, 1947, undated	5	18
First Baptist Youth Forum minstrel show program, 1949	5	19
200 th Anniversary brochure, photographs, 1965	5	20
Play about history of First Baptist Church, 1965	5	21
Copy of minister's letters placed in time capsule, 1965	5	22
200 th Anniversary bumper stickers, 1965	10	6
Mission Encounter series, 1980	5	23
"One Hundred Years of Ministry" invitation, 1983 Sacred Choral Artists program, 2001	5 5	24 25

Subseries 3.4: Membership, 1806, 1835-1852, 1879, undated

This subseries contains correspondence and membership documentation, arranged chronologically.

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
Membership correspondence and documents, 1806, 1835-1852, 1879, undated	11	37
1655-1652, 1679, unualeu	11	52

Series 4: Sabbath School/Bible School, 1843, 1877-1902, 1916-1917, 1937, 1940, undated This series contains a list of subscribers and programs for the Sabbath School (also called Bible School) arranged chronologically.

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
List of subscribers, 1843	6	1
Programs, 1877-1899, 1902, 1916-1917, 1937, 1940, undated	6	2
Bills and receipts, 1883	11	33
67 th Anniversary program and concert program, 1884	6	3
10 th Anniversary program, 1917	6	4

Series 5: Church Social Activities, 1806-1953, undated

This series contains records of the societies or clubs that were part of the church. It consists of eight subseries, arranged in the order the groups were founded.

Subseries 5.1: Female Cent Society, 1806-1836

This subseries contains one record book.

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
Record book, 1806-1836	6	5

Subseries 5.2: Fragment Society, 1825-1906

This subseries contains four record books, arranged chronologically.

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
Record book, 1825-1839	6	6
Record book, 1839-1857	6	7
Record and account book, 1857-1876	6	8
Record book, 1876-1906	6	9

Subseries 5.3: Female Education Society, 1833-1843 This subseries contains one record book.

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
Record book, 1833-1843	7	1

Subseries 5.4: Maternal Association, 1859-1864

This subseries contains one record book.

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
Record book, 1859-1864	7	2

Subseries 5.5: Ladies Home Missionary Circle/Ladies Social Circle/Women's Missionary Society, 1850-1944

This subseries contains nine record books, arranged chronologically.

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
Ladies Home Missionary Circle record book, 1850-1871;		
Ladies Social Circle record book, 1871-1874	7	3
Ladies Social Circle/Woman's Home Mission Society record		
book, 1871-1885	7	4
Ladies Social Circle record book, 1871-1880;		
Woman's Home Mission Society record book, 1880-1918	7	5
Woman's Foreign Missionary Society record book, 1881-189	47	6
Woman's Foreign Missionary Society record book, 1894-191	17	7
Woman's Foreign Missionary Society annual meeting progra	m,	
1905	7	8
Woman's Foreign Missionary Society record book, 1912-191	67	9
Woman's Foreign Missionary Society record book, 1927-193	48	1
Woman's Foreign Missionary Society record book, 1934-194	4 8	2

Subseries 5.6: Women's Mission Circle, 1872-1882, 1899-1915

This subseries contains two record books, arranged chronologically.

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
Women's Mission Circle, 1872-1882	8	3
Woman's Home Mission Circle record book, 1899-1915	8	4

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
Ladies Furnishing Fund Society record book, 1881-1883	8	5
Ladies Furnishing Fund Society record book, 1885-1890	8	6
Ladies Aid Society record book, 1891-1896	8	7
Ladies Aid Society record book, 1897-1900	8	8
Ladies Aid Society record book, 1901-1904	9	1
Ladies Aid Society record book, 1904-1911	9	2
Ladies Aid Society record book, 1911-1914	9	3
Ladies Aid Society record book, 1914-1921	9	4
Ladies Aid Society record book, 1921-1927	9	5
Ladies Aid Society program, 1924-1925	9	6
Ladies Aid Society record book, 1927-1939	9	7
Ladies Aid Society record book, 1939-1953	9	8

Subseries 5.7: Ladies Furnishing Fund Society/Ladies Aid Society, 1881-1953 This subseries contains 12 record books, arranged chronologically.

Subseries 5.8: Other, 1889-1940, undated

This subseries contains record books, constitutions and by-laws, calendars, the script of a skit, and a publication about the church, arranged chronologically.

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
Here and There Mission record book, 1889-1896;		
Farther Light Society record book, 1896-1898	10	6a
Baptist Young People's Union of the Merrimac River Baptist		
Association, constitution and bylaws, 1892	10	7
First Baptist Men's Club calendar, 1912-1913	10	8
"Know Your Church" by the Mondenyters [2 copies],		
1939-1940	10	9
"Historical Skit of Women's Societies of First Baptist Church,	,	
1806-1950" by Mildred L. Evans, undated	10	10
Young People's Union, constitution, undated	10	11

Series 6: Other, 1885, 1892, 1946, 1974, 1993-2004, undated

This series contains news clippings, a handwritten Bible verse, articles, a memoir, photographs, a poem, and several hymns, arranged chronologically.

Folder Title	Container <u>Number</u>	Folder <u>Number</u>
News clippings, 1885, 1974, 2002-2004	10	12
Bible verse from Sarah S. Hunking, 1892	10	13
The First Baptist Church of Haverhill: Looking Back One Hundred and		
Seventy-Five Years by Harry R. Davis [2 copies], 1946	10	14
Article and photographs of stained glass windows, 1993, undated	10	15
Memoirs of Mrs. Cheney, undated [copied 1949]	10	16
Article on the meeting houses, undated; lists of members in 1767-1836	,	
undated	10	17
Photographs of Perley Leslie [2], undated [early 20 th century]	10	18
Photograph of Warren Emerson, undated	10	19
Poem written on the death of the Rev. Dr. Smith of Haverhill, undated	10	20
Rev. Samuel F. Smith hymn [2 copies], undated	10	21