

Woods Hole Historical Collection
P.O. Box 185
Woods Hole, MA 02543

REGISTER
Woods Hole Congregational Church
ca. 1879-1977

5 boxes

WOODS HOLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

HISTORY

The roots of the Congregational Church in Woods Hole were in a union congregation organized in 1878. Early in that year, persons of Methodist, Congregational, and Baptist denominations raised funds to pay ministers to preach the Gospel in the community. It was intended that there be a rotation of Congregational and Methodist ministers, but the Methodists in the congregation acted to retain the first preacher, a Methodist, and a split occurred. This group continued to hold services in the school house, while the Woods Hole (Holl) Congregationalists and Baptists combined to hold worship services in Woods Hole in Liberty Hall, now Community Hall, at 68 Water Street in 1879. The first religious service held in Liberty Hall was on February 2, 1879, under the conduct of the Reverend Bernard Paine.

In 1880, a council of Congregational churches in the area met and organized the church as the First Congregational Church of Christ in Woods Holl. In 1888, a corporation was formed to be known as the First Orthodox Congregational Society of Woods Holl. In that year Jabez Davis gave land for the church on condition that the property be used and maintained as a place of divine worship. In 1890, the Congregationalists moved into a church built for them at 22 Water Street. The height of attendance was in the 1890s.

By the 1960s, the church society had long since been dissolved and the property reverted to the heirs of Mr. Davis. The church became inactive in the early 1950s and the deteriorated building, minus its steeple, which was destroyed by a lightning strike, was sold in 1966 to Gloria McLean, owner of the adjacent Woods Hole Inn.

The church bell was donated by Gloria McLean to the Woods Hole Library where it resides in the garden of the Woods Hole Historical Museum, adjacent to the library. The church building still exists as of today and houses a gift store on the ground floor and a private residence for the current owner upstairs.

For more information, see "Woods Hole Reflections," pp. 102-104

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For more information, see "Woods Hole Reflections," pp. 105-108

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SCOPE NOTE

Included in the collection are certificates of transfer to and from the church (ca. 1880-1919); deed of Jabez Davis for the church land, contract for its building, and deed of Braddock L. Gifford for the parsonage; financial records (ca.1924-1932) of Polly L. Crowell, Treasurer; files of materials relating to the legacies of Frances J. Messer and Love H. Davis; correspondence relating to the disposition of the church property and acquisition of the church bell by the Woods Hole Library; scattered notices of meetings, agendas, and minutes.

Included also are four bound volumes of church records. The first, dating ca. 1879-1922, contains the constitution, confession of faith, covenant, list of communicants, ministers, deacons, baptisms, marriages, and deaths. Also contributions, scattered minutes, and a historical sketch of the institution. The second, a minute book, dating ca.1888-1933, contains the by-laws, roll of members including charter members, minutes of meetings, and reports of annual meetings. The third is the treasurers' cash book, which dates from 1886 to 1922. The fourth is a ledger dating 1922 to 1950.

Additions to the collection—1980:

Congregational Social Aid Society records (1 volume), ca. 1886-1903, containing organizational records, treasurer's reports, and lists of members.

Orthodox Congregational Society records (1 volume), 1947-1949. Secretary's minutes.

Additions to the collection—1992:

from Olive Crowell Beverly

Additions to the collection – 2009:

Pulpit Bible and small bible from the Woods Hole Congregational Church donated by the Falmouth Historical Society (09-2).

WOODS HOLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

BOX 1

- 1-1.1880-1894 Receipts for contributions to missionary societies.
- 1-2.1880 Letter to Ladies of the Social Aid Society from P.M. Griffen (See duplicate listing below.)
- 1-3.1880-1899 Certificates of transfer to the church
- 1-4.1881-1919 Certificates of transfer to the church
- 1-5.1882 Clerk's report
- 1-6.1882-1900 Requests for contributions to the First Orthodox Congregational Church in Woods Holl
- 1-7.1888 Deed of Jabez Davis to the First Orthodox Congregational Church in Woods Holl
- 1-8.1890 Program of dedication services
- 1-9.1894, 1896 Certificates of transfer to and from the M.E. (Methodist?) Church of Woods Hole
- 1-10.1876 (?) Program from Seventeenth Convention of C.C. "Young People's Society Christian Endeavor" (See duplicate listing below with 1896 date.)
- 1-11.1898 Requests (blank form letters) for transfer from the church
- 1-12.1901-1947 Notices, agendas, and minutes of meetings.
- 1-13.1904 Report for The Congregational Year Book
- 1-14.1905 Deed from Braddock L. Gifford to premises for parsonage
- 1-15.1907 Attorney's letter relating to the legacy of Frances L. Messer
- 1-16.1911 and n.d. Treasurer's reports
- 1-17.1921 Attorney's letter relating to will of Love H. Davis
- 1-18.1924-1932 Financial records of Polly L. Crowell, Treasurer
- 1-19.1948 Letter of resignation of Rev. Rolfed J. Conrad
- 1-20.1948 File of material relating to protest of church to liquor licensing board

- 1-21.1963 Minutes of annual meeting of Massachusetts Congregational Church Conference
- 1-22.1963-1964 Correspondence of Polly L. Crowell relating to disposition of church property
- 1-23.1964 Newspaper clipping (*Falmouth Enterprise*) of notice of land court summons
- 1-24.1964 Newspaper clipping (*Falmouth Enterprise*) of article on church history and plans for disposition of church property
- 1-25.1964 Letter from Robert J. Tilden to Rev. Edgar Lockwood relating to disposition of church property
- 1-26.1964 Letter from Rev. Edgar Lockwood to Prince S. Crowell relating to disposition of church property
- 1-27.1966 Letter from Norman T. Allen to Mrs. Frank McLean suggesting purchase of church bell for Woods Hole Library
- 1-28.1966 Newspaper clipping (*Falmouth Enterprise*) reporting gift of bell to Woods Hole Library by Mrs. Frank McLean
- 1-29.1977 Statement by Sears Crowell relating to closing of the church
- 1-30. Historical sketch of the church, n.d.
- 1-31. Miscellaneous folder containing:
 - a. request for letter of dismissal for Ella Edwards and signed by several people, March 28, 1932.
 - b. postal service return receipt, January 29, 1883.
 - c. two empty envelopes

Additions from Olive Crowell Beverly, 1992:

- 1880-1894, 3 receipts for contributions to missionary society
 - 1883, 1 receipt for contribution to American Congregational Union
 - 1896, 1 program from 17th convention of C.C. "Young People's Society Christian Endeavor"
 - 1880, 1 letter to Ladies of the Social Aid Society from P.M. Griffin
- The above items were added in pencil to the previous typed Register. They are not anywhere in Box ,. whereabouts unknown.*

BOX 2

Four bound manuscript volumes of records, ca. 1879-1933:

- 2-1. Records of the First Congregational Church of Woods Holl, MA, ca. 1879-1922
- 2-2. Ledger of the First Congregational Church of Woods Hole, MA, 1922-1950 (1951)
- 2-3. Records of the First Congregational Church of Woods Holl, MA, 1888-1933
- 2-4. Treasurer's Cash Book of the First Congregational Church of Woods Hole, MA, 1886-1922.

BOX 3

Two bound manuscript volumes of church aid society records: ca. 1886-1903 and 1947-1949

BOX 4

1888 Damaged documents from church cornerstone

Documents were stored in boxes in vault, McLean Laboratory (WHOI), accession No. 82-23.

Material given to Mr. Norman T. Allen (WHOI Archivist) by Paul Ferris Smith who received the material from Mrs. Frank McLean in 1965. All items are in very poor condition, damaged by water and rust stains.

- 4-1. *Falmouth Local* (newspaper), Thursday, Vol. 3, No. 32, Nov. 1, 1888
- 4-2. *The Congregationalist* (newsletter), Boston, Thursday, Nov. 8, 1888, pp. 375- 384
- 4-3. Presidential Campaign of 1888, Songs, Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, Levi P. Morton, N.Y.
- 4-4. *Boston Morning Journal* (newspaper), Wednesday, Nov. 7, 1888, Vol. LV, No. 18, p. 206
- 4-5. Photographs.
- 4-6. *Pilgrim Quarterly*, July-August-September, Third Quarter 1888, No. 3
- 4-7. History of the First Orthodox Congregational Church of Woods Hole
- 4-8. *Christian Herald and Signs of our times*, Thursday, Nov. 1, 1888, Vol. XI, No. 44, p.p. 689-704
- 4-9. *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. LXXXIV, No. 11, Nov. 1888
- 4-10. Church Covenant

One envelope with scraps of materials.

BOX 5

- 5-1. Large Pulpit Bible, 1874. Inscription as a gift, no other notations.
Donated by Falmouth Historical Society, 2009 (09-2) along with materials taken from the Quissett Harbor House or Carey estate.
- 5-2. Small bible, 1901. *Holy Bible, American Standard Edition*. Thomas Nelson & Sons, New York. Stamped in gold on front cover: Woods Hole Congregational Church.

Donated by Falmouth Historical Society, 2009 (09-2). Card inside notes: received by N.T. Allen for the Falmouth Historical Society from Arnold Dyer on March 17, 1966.