

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

NAME OF COLLECTION:

Central Church (Worcester, Mass.),
Records, 1820-c. 1970

LOCATION:

Mss. boxes "C"
Octavo vols. "C"
Folio vols. "C"
Oversize mss. boxes "C"

SIZE OF COLLECTION:

4 manuscript boxes; 34 octavo volumes; 14 folio volumes; 2 oversize folders

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:

For a history of the Church, see U. Waldo Cutler, *The First Hundred Years of the Central Church in Worcester 1820-1920* (Worcester, Mass., s.n., 1920). There are also materials relating to the Central Church in the "Worcester, Mass., Collection, 1686-1941."

SOURCE OF COLLECTION:

Gift of the Central Church (Worcester, Mass.), 1981.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:

The Central Church in Worcester, Mass., was formed in 1820 as the result of the dissatisfaction of Daniel Waldo (1763-1845) and several others over the choice of a minister at the Old South Church in Worcester. The parish was organized in 1822 and legally incorporated in 1825. Its first minister, Loammi Hoadley (1790-1883), was called in 1823. The Church was officially known as the Calvinist Church and Society, but was commonly called the Central Church. The name was legally changed to Central Church in 1879.

The first meetinghouse was erected in 1823, wholly at the expense of Daniel Waldo. A new one was built in 1885. The original house, the land on which it stood and a sum of working capital were made over by Waldo to the executive body of the parish, the Board of Trustees of the Parochial Funds, in an agreement which left Waldo and his sisters special privileges of decision and veto. In 1883 the Board was dissolved and its powers merged with those of the Central Society. In 1919 the Society itself was abolished with the legal incorporation of the Church. A so-called Standing Committee assumed some of the administrative duties of the original Board of Trustees. In November 1982 the Central Church and Chestnut Street Church merged as the United Church of Christ in Worcester.

The records of the Central Church extend from 1820 to c. 1950, with some of the church historian's records dated c. 1970. The records are strongest for the ministries of Seth Sweeter (1807-1878), for the period 1838 to 1878; Daniel Merriam (1838-1912), for the period 1878 to 1892; and Shepard Knapp (1873-1946), who was installed in 1908. There is especially rich information on the church's founding, its financial history, and the work of its voluntary organizations, especially its mission groups and women's groups.

The manuscript boxes contain the warrants calling for parish meetings; the records, correspondence, and reports of the Board of Trustees, the Standing Committee and the
(cont.)

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NAME OF COLLECTION:

Central Church (Worcester, Mass.), Records, 1820-c. 1970

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION (cont.):

clerk; reports of the treasurer, assessors and various committees; legal documents; pastoral calls and acceptances; membership certificates; sermons; and various manuscript and printed programs. There are also photographs of the Church and newspaper clippings.

The octavo and folio volumes also contain the records of the Board of Trustees and the Standing Committee, as well as the minutes of the parish meetings kept by the clerk; membership registers; lists of subscribers, both to church membership and for building the new meeting house; valuations of members' property; the records of voluntary organizations; typescript and manuscript sermons; and various scrapbooks.

See Contents List.

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Manuscript Collections

Central Church (Worcester, Mass.), Records, 1820-c. 1970

Contents List

Manuscript Box

1

Folder 1 Act of incorporation, 1825
Folder 2 Warrants & petitions, 1823-1828
Folder 3 Warrants & petitions, 1829-1835
Folder 4 Warrants & petitions, 1836-1846
Folder 5 Warrants & petitions, 1847-1851
Folder 6 Warrants & petitions, 1853-1865
Folder 7 Warrants & petitions, 1866-1876
Folder 8 Warrants & petitions, 1878-1889
Folder 9 Resolutions, motions, & votes at parish meetings, 1823-1838
Folder 10 Resolutions, motions, & votes at parish meetings, 1849-1860
Folder 11 Resolutions, motions, & votes at parish meetings, 1872-1875
Folder 12 Resolutions, motions, & votes at parish meetings, 1875-1878
Folder 13 Resolutions, motions, & votes at parish meetings, 1879-1889
Folder 14 Board of trustees of the parochial funds, 1829-1835; 1879
Folder 15 Standing committee, 1917-1920
Folder 16 Standing committee, 1922-1924
Folder 17 Standing committee, 1925-1926
Folder 18 Standing committee, 1947
Folder 19 Clerk's annual reports, 1917; 1918
Folder 20 Clerk's annual reports, 1922; 1923; 1924
Folder 21 Clerk's lists of membership, 1829-1832; 1916-1917
Folder 22 Clerk's correspondence & miscellaneous records, 1871-1917
Folder 23 Clerk's correspondence & miscellaneous records, 1918-1924
Folder 24 Clerk's correspondence & miscellaneous records, 1925-1927
Folder 25 Treasurer's reports, 1827/1828-1839/1840
Folder 26 Treasurer's reports, 1840/1841-1844/1845; 1854/1855-
1859/1860
Folder 27 Treasurer's reports, 1860/1861-1869/1870
Folder 28 Treasurer's reports, 1875-1889
Folder 29 Miscellaneous financial records, 1831-1878; 1925
--includes estimates of expenses and deficits; lists of bad
bills

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Folder 1 Assessors' report, 1831-1865
Folder 2 Assessors' report, 1866-1888
Folder 3 Notification to assessors of release of pews, 1858-1859
Folder 4 Tax abatements & uncollected taxes, 1827-1834
Folder 5 Miscellaneous assessors' records, 1834-1878
--includes list of nonmembers, c. 1858
Folder 6 Claims, contracts, agreements, 1832-1888
Folder 7 Pastoral calls & acceptances, 1829-1874
Folder 8 Pastoral calls & acceptances, 1876-1888

Membership certificate & entrance/dismission requests
Folder 9 n.d.; 1824-1833
Folder 10 1834
Folder 11 1835
Folder 12 1836
Folder 13 1837-1838
Folder 14 1839
Folder 15 1840-1841
Folder 16 1842-1843
Folder 17 1844-1846

(cont.)

Manuscript Box

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		Membership certificates & entrance/dismission requests
Folder 18	1847-1848	
Folder 19	1849-1851	
Folder 20	1852-1856	
Folder 21	1857-1858	
Folder 22	1859-1860; 1866	
Folder 23	1875-1876; 1879(?); 1889; 1917	
Folder 24	1918-1922	
Folder 25	1923 January - March	
Folder 26	1923 April - November	
Folder 27	1924 January - April	
Folder 28	1924 May - July	
Folder 29	1924 August - December	
Folder 30	1925 January - April	
Folder 31	1925 May - December	
Folder 32	1926 January - April	
Folder 33	1926 May - December	
Folder 34	1927; 1928; 1944	

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Folder 1	Ad-hoc & miscellaneous committees, 1828-1850
Folder 2	Ad-hoc & miscellaneous committees, 1853-1861
Folder 3	Ad-hoc & miscellaneous committees, 1862-1876
Folder 4	Ad-hoc & miscellaneous committees, 1877
Folder 5	Ad-hoc & miscellaneous committees, 1878-1888; 1919-1924
Folder 6	Ad-hoc & miscellaneous committees, 1926-1948
Folder 7	Singing committee, 1833-1880
Folder 8	New building committee, 1883-1885
Folder 9	Committee of estimates, 1833-1838; 1868; 1871-1879
Folder 10	Local mission board, n.d.
Folder 11	Local mission board, 1893-1897
Folder 12	Local mission board, 1898?; 1898 January 4
Folder 13	Local mission board, 1898 April 5
Folder 14	Local mission board, 1899 October 2
Folder 15	Local mission board, 1900 January 3
Folder 16	Local mission board, 1901 April 2
Folder 17	"University of Life," c. 1945
Folder 18	Young People's Missionary Association, 1859-1883
Folder 19	Bills, receipts, sundry accounts, n.d.; 1823-1828
Folder 20	Bills, receipts, sundry accounts, 1829 September - December
Folder 21	Bills, receipts, sundry accounts, 1830-1831
Folder 22	Bills, receipts, sundry account, 1832-1833
Folder 23	Bills, receipts, sundry accounts, 1834
Folder 24	Bills, receipts, sundry accounts, 1835 January - May
Folder 25	Bills, receipts, sundry accounts, 1835 June - December
Folder 26	Bills, receipts, sundry accounts, 1836
Folder 27	Bills, receipts, sundry accounts, 1837; 1838; 1840; 1846; 1868; 1870; 1878; 1947; 1948

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Folder 1	Seth Sweetser, Mss. sermon, 1869 May 9
Folder 2	Seth Sweetser, Mss. sermon, 1870 December 4
Folder 3	Seth Sweetser, Mss. sermon, 1873 February 23
Folder 4	Seth Sweetser, Testimonials & tributes, 1878 March 26-28
Folder 5	Seth Sweetser, Testimonials, & tributes, 1878 March 28 --by Prof. Egbert C. Smyth and Rev. E. K. Alden
Folder 6	Seth Sweetser, Testimonials & tributes, 1878 March 28 --extracted from sermons by Rev. Daniel Merriman and Dr. Huntington

(cont.)

Manuscript Box

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- Folder 7 Seth Sweetser, Testimonials & tributes, 1878 March 28
--Rev. William A. Houghton; extracted from Rev. C. M. Lawson's sermon
- Folder 8 Seth Sweetser, Testimonials & tributes, 1878 April
- Folder 9 Seth Sweetser, Testimonials & tributes, 1878 April 3
--by Charles A. Stevens
- Folder 10 Seth Sweetser, Testimonials & tributes, 1878 April 3
--by George E. Gladcoin and unidentified
- Folder 11 Seth Sweetser, Testimonials & tributes, 1878 April 3
--by Dr. Thomas E. Gage
- Folder 12 Seth Sweetser, Testimonials & tributes, 1878 April 3
--by E. P. Smith
- Folder 13 Seth Sweetser, Testimonials & tributes, c. 1878 April 3
--by Judge P. Emory Aldrich and T. W. Thompson
- Folder 14 Seth Sweetser, Testimonials & tributes, 1878 May 7; 1888
December 18; 1918 December 29
- Folder 15 Services and programs, 1885-1952
- Folder 16 Passion Play programs, 1930-1940
- Folder 17 Christmas pageant, 1946
- Folder 18 Rev. Shepherd Knapp, "Down the Chimney,"
--a Christmas play for children
- Folder 19 "Our Town" (acting edition)
- Folder 20 Press releases, 1940s
--concerning church services and programs
- Folder 21 Photographs, c. 1920-c. 1940
- Folder 22 Newsclippings, c. 1940 (originals)
- Folder 23 Newsclippings, c. 1940 (photocopies)
- Folder 24 Newsclippings of Dr. Seth Sweetser, 1878 (originals)
- Folder 25 Newsclippings of Dr. Seth Sweetser, 1878 (photocopies)
- Folder 26 Miscellaneous & unidentified materials, including
correspondence, n.d.
- Folder 27 Miscellaneous & unidentified materials, including
correspondence, c. 1858?-1918
- Folder 28 Miscellaneous & unidentified materials, including
correspondence, 1919-1947
- Folder 29 Miscellaneous & unidentified materials, including
correspondence, 1948-1958
- Folder 30 Materials relating to this collection, n.d.; 1919-1981
- Folder 31 Materials gathered & compiled by the church historian, c.
1960-1970
- Folder 32 Index cards

Oversize Folder

- 1 Treasurer's reports, 1846-1877 (15 items); Assessors' reports, 1871-1879
(3 items); Plan of pews, 1859 March 30 (1 item); H. W. Miller, Bill, 1838 August 7 (1 item)
- 2 Warrants and petitions, 1836-1888 (28 items)

Octavo Volume

- 1 Board of Trustees of the Parochial Funds, 1827-1879
- 2 Standing Committee, 1878-1890
- 3 Standing Committee, 1890-1902
- 4 Standing Committee, 1902-1911
- 5 Clerk's records, 1820-1827
--includes minutes of parish meetings
- 6 Clerk's records, 1852-1874
- 7 Clerk's records, 1874-1884
- 8 Transcriptions of clerk's records, 1820-1851
- 9 Cash book, 1827-1865

(cont.)

Octavo Volume (cont.)

- 10 Subscribers' list, 1836-1854
--includes records of withdrawal of members, 1838-1859, and by-laws
- 11 Subscribers' list, 1858-1859
- 12 Subscribers' list, 1860-1870
--includes list of named voted in as members, 1889 December 23
- 13 Valuation and tax on members' personal and real property, 1835
- 14 Valuation and taxes, 1837-1838
- 15 Valuation and taxes, 1838
- 16 Subscription lists for (1) building new church, 1881, (2) building new
parsonage, 1888
- 17 Registers of marriages and funerals, 1839-1862
--kept mainly by Seth Sweetser
- 18 Registers of marriages and funerals, 1863-1873
--kept mainly by Seth Sweetser
- 19 Register of deacons, communicants, baptisms, marriages, deaths, and
members of the Finnish Branch, 1885-1911
- 20 Register of members, c. 1886
- 21 Register of members, c. 1890
- 22 Register of marriages, 1896-1907
--kept by Albert Hitchcock (1861-1907)
- 23 Centre Missionary Sewing Circle, 1839-1848
- 24 Centre Missionary Sewing Circle, 1849-1856
- 25 Centre Missionary Sewing Circle, 1864
--as Ladies' Social Benevolent Missionary Society, 1865-1880
- 26 Ladies' Social Benevolent Society, 1880-1896
- 27 Woman's Home Missionary Society, 1886-1892
--as Woman's Benevolent and Missionary Society, 1892-1897
- 28 Ladies' Benevolent and Missionary Society, 1893-1896
--consisting of fifteen small receipt books of contributions received
- 29 Woman's Association, 1896-1905
- 30 Woman's Association, 1905-1912
- 31 Board of Management of Local Mission, 1897-1901
- 32 Guild of Central Church, 1881-1885
--a young people's organization
- 33 Bible Society Library, 1831-1836
- 34 Manuscript volume "On Heaven" by Seth Sweetser, n.d. (ca. 575 p.)

Folio Volume

- 1 Clerk's records, 1822-1836
--includes list of subscribers and minutes of parish meetings
- 2 Clerk's records, 1832-1860
--with subscribers' names through 1835
- 3 Clerk's records, 1884-1900
- 4 Valuations of members' personal and real property, 1827-1846
- 5 Valuations of members' personal and real property, 1843-1846
- 6 Sermons by Daniel Merriman, 1878-1910
- 7 Typescript sermons by Daniel Merriman, Albert Hitchcock, Shepherd Knapp,
1890-1908
- 8 Centennial Celebration, 1920
--programs and speeches; with other programs, 1905-1920
- 9 Miscellaneous printed manuscript and typescript materials, 1845-1941
- 10 Scrapbook, 1820-1887
- 11 Scrapbook, 1888-1894
- 12 Scrapbook, 1895-1903
- 13 Scrapbook, 1894-1919
- 14 Scrapbook, 1874-1950