

# First Church in Windsor (Windsor, Conn.) Records

## Finding Aid

Windsor Historical Society  
96 Palisado Avenue, Windsor, CT 06095

**Creator:** First Church in Windsor (Windsor, Conn.)

**Dates:** 1640-2012

**Extent:** 3 linear feet (5 manuscript boxes, 7 bound volumes)

**Accession #:** 2003.37, 2007.47, 2014.6 and other unidentified sources

### Church History

First Church in Windsor considers itself the oldest continuous Congregational Society in America. It was organized by 140 Congregationalists who split with the Church of England and formed their own church. They sailed to the new world in the *Mary and John* and landed in Dorchester, Mass. in 1630. Five years later half the congregation came to Windsor, Connecticut with the Rev. John Warham.

The log and thatch church of the First Ecclesiastical Society was built inside the stockade of the Palisado in 1639. A second meetinghouse built on the same site in 1684 was destroyed by fire. In 1754 the congregation split into two factions over the location of a new building, and both the North and South Societies constructed their own churches. Thirty years later, a bridge was built over the Farmington River as part of a compromise towards reuniting the congregations. A new church building was erected at the center of the reunited parish on the present site at 107 Palisado Avenue. The fourth and present meetinghouse was completed in 1794. It has undergone several remodelings including the addition of a Greek style portico. A new parish house and educational building was constructed in 1956 to meet post-war needs of a growing membership; the Fellowship Hall was named for Roscoe Nelson in honor of his 40 years of service to church.

First Church in Windsor joined the United Church of Christ in 1961.

### Scope and Contents

The collection of First Church in Windsor materials includes parish records, vital records, receipts, warnings and minutes, church manuals and membership directories, pew seating records, and various church histories. Of special interest is a hand-copied replica of Windsor founder Matthew Grant's *Old Church Record* produced by Jabez H. Hayden. The Women's Missionary Society, Women's Club, and Sunday School secretary and treasurer's records span much of the early 20th century. There are scattered holdings of bulletins for worship services and special anniversary programs, six manuscript sermons by Rev. David Rowland, and two short series of letters by ministers Rev. Henry Rowland and Rev. Roscoe Nelson. Stereoscopic, postcard, and photographic images complete the archival collection. In addition, there are two pulpit Bibles, a variety of hymnals, and a cookbook published in 1983 for the 350th anniversary

of the Town of Windsor. Several folders of similar materials (programs, church histories, and photos) from the Society's vertical files have been housed with this collection.

## **Arrangement**

Each series is arranged chronologically.

### Series I. Church Records

Subseries A. Photostatic copies of church records at Connecticut State Library

Subseries B. Clerk's books and parish records

Subseries C. Church manuals and membership directories

Subseries D. Receipts

Subseries E. Worship bulletins and programs, guest registers

### Series II. Historical Sketches and Anniversary Celebrations

### Series III. Women's Missionary Society and Women's Club

### Series IV. Sunday School and Young People's Society

### Series V. Sermons and Correspondence

### Series VI. Photographic Images and Views

### Series VII. Bibles and Hymnals

## **Box and Folder Lists**

### **Series I. Church Records**

#### Box 1

- 1.1 Temporary receipts for church records at Connecticut State Library, 1932-33, 1942-43 (photocopies) and complete list of the records on deposit
- 1.2 "Matthew Grant's Book" of historical church records (1639-1703) as copied from the original by Jabez H. Hayden, including also Ellington, CT deaths 1717-1740 and "The Oldest Orthodox Congregational Church [Lynn, MA] by J.H. Hayden as published in *The Puritan Recorder* Jan. 11, 1855, Boston.
- 1.3 Parish records (1892-1932). Clerk's book. 1 volume
- 1.4 Parish records (1932-1969). Clerk's book. 1 volume

#### Box 2

- 2.1 "Chronological Listing of Significant Votes, Actions, and Events at First Church 1754-1998" as compiled by Becky Hendricks. (2007.47.2)

- 2.2 Warnings (warrants) for parish meetings 1790, 1802, 1803, 1812
- 2.3 Diagram of church seating, 1824 (partial chart, replica)
- 2.4 Diagram of church seating, 1832 with minutes of Society meeting and pew rents on verso
- 2.5 Record of sale of slips in the First Congregational Church, 1856
  
- 2.6 Church manuals:
  - 1843 (3 copies)
  - 1863
  - 1880 (3 copies)
  - 1893
  - 1922 (2 copies, 1 with notations)
- 2.7 Church membership directories: 1982, 1994-1997, 2002, 2005
- 2.8 Church membership directories: 2006-2009, 2012
- 2.9 Receipts, 1845-1860. First Ecclesiastical Society. (17 documents)
- 2.10 Accounts/receipts for parsonage, 1852. (7 documents)
- 2.11 Worship bulletins and programs: 1872-1997 (scattered holdings)
- 2.12 Worship bulletins and programs: 1928-1941 (scattered holdings)
- 2.13 Tercentenary guest book, 1930. 1 volume  
Guest register, Dec. 1948-June 1964. 1 volume

## **Series II. Historical Sketches and Anniversary Celebrations**

- 2.14 "Some Church History of First Church in Windsor, Copied from One of the Old Books, March 1909." (13 p.)
- 2.15 "Notes Regarding the Union of First and Fourth Churches of Windsor ..."  
(incomplete, 2 p., typescript)
- 2.16 Tercentenary Celebration, 1930 pageant script (12 p., typescript)
- 2.17 Historical sketches and timelines, undated (c1930), 1969, 1972, 2001
- 2.18 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary historical booklet, 1980
- 2.19 Invitation to "Quarter Millennial Celebration," March 30, 1880
- 2.20 Centennial of the Meetinghouse, Dec. 1894
- 2.21 "Special Services in the Parish House," Feb. 1904 and Nov. 1905
- 2.22 Tercentenary Celebration programs, 1930
- 2.23 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Meetinghouse program, Jan. 1945

## **Series III. Women's Missionary Society and Women's Club**

### **Box 3**

#### **Women's Missionary Society**

- 3.1 Records, 1876-1882. 1 volume  
Records, 1882-1902. 1 volume  
Records, 1908-1933, with Treasurer's Records, 1908-1922. 1 volume
- 3.2 Loose papers removed from back of 1882-1902 Treasurer's volume
- 3.3 Women's Missionary Society (5th Missionary Circle) Annual Report, 1881 Women's Club
- 3.4 Records, 1932-1943. 1 volume
- 3.5 Records, 1943-1951. 1 volume  
Treasurer's Records, 1932-1940. 1 volume (on shelf, not in box)
- 3.6 Loose papers removed from back of 1932-1940 volume

#### Box 4

- 4.1 Women's Club Yearbooks: 1960-1979 (lacking 1961, 1962, 1967, 1968)
- 4.2 *First Church Fare* cookbook issued for 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary, 1983
- 4.3 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, April 2011

#### **Series IV. Sunday School and Young People's Society**

- 4.4 *The Shorter Catechism* ... belonging to Edith Allen, 1856
- 4.5 Sunday School Library. Catalogues, 1887 and 1893.  
Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor. Constitution and By-laws.
- 4.6 Sunday School. Secretary's and Treasurer's Records, 1897-1933. 1 vol.

#### **Series V. Sermons and Correspondence**

- 4.7 Sermons by Rev. David S. Rowland. Bound volume of six handwritten sermons preached 1769-1801.
- 4.8 Correspondence. Rev. Henry Rowland to First Ecclesiastical Society, 1800-1803. (3 documents)
- 4.9 Correspondence. Rev. Roscoe Nelson to Evelyn Smith, 1955-1961. (Includes a reminiscence of Dwight L. Moody). (5 documents)

#### **Series VI. Photographic Images and Views**

##### Box 5

- 5.1 Stereographs by E.P. & Wm. Kellogg (Hartford), 1880, showing church interior decorated for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Church. (Gallery and Organ, Center aisle and chancel, Pulpit)
- 5.2 Cabinet Card (photographer unidentified), c1895. Composite of vignette views of Church exterior, interior, parsonage, and portrait of Roscoe Nelson.
- 5.3 Colored postcard view of Church (Albertype Co., Brooklyn, N.Y.), c1910. View signed in print: W.H.H. Mason.  
Same, with wrought iron nail attached, and with ms. legend around left, top, and right borders: "This nail, made by convicts in Newgate Prison, Granby, Conn. was used in building this Church 1794." (2 specimens)
- 5.4 Sepia-toned postcard view of Church exterior by W.H.H. Mason, printed by Taylor & Greenough (Hartford), with nail attached and printed legend reading as above.
- 5.5 Sepia-toned postcard view of Church exterior, by Rotograph Co., N.Y., N.Y., c1923. (lower right corner of view broken off, but present in folder)
- 5.6 Photographs and some negatives of Church interior, ground breaking ceremony for parish house (1955), former parish house at 153 Broad St. (1902), and Rev. Roscoe Nelson (1951)
- 5.7 Photographs of Church exterior, interior, former parish house, and John Warner Barber woodcut image transferred from library subject files

#### **Custodial history**

In 1932, 1933, and 1942, pursuant to initiatives from the Connecticut State Library, seventeen volumes of the historical records of the First Church in Windsor, Conn. were placed on

permanent deposit at the Connecticut State Library. The records, spanning 1632-1932, consisted of minutes of parish meetings, vital records, and church history. In return, photostatic copies of some of the records, in six physical volumes, were prepared by the State Library and returned to the church. In the summer of 2003, the archives of First Church were inventoried, and these six volumes of photostats, together with additional original records were given as a collection to the Windsor Historical Society.

### **Related Materials**

Rev. Roscoe Nelson Collection (1988.37, 1990.15)  
Harriet Cooke Nelson Papers (2006.40)  
Hayden Collection (1984.60)  
Subject files: Churches – First Church  
                  Churches – First Church – Tercentenary  
Photographic files: Churches – First Church

### **Subject Terms**

Barber, John Warner, 1798-1885  
Church anniversaries  
E.P. & Wm. Kellogg (Hartford, Conn.)  
Ellington (Conn.) – Register of births, etc.  
First Church in Windsor (Windsor, Conn.) – Centennial celebrations, etc.  
First Church in Windsor (Windsor, Conn.) – History  
First Church in Windsor (Windsor, Conn.) – Views  
First Church of Christ (Windsor, Conn.) – History  
First Congregational Church (Windsor, Conn.)  
First Ecclesiastical Society of Windsor, Conn.  
Hayden, Jabez Haskell, 1811-1902  
Missions – Societies, etc.  
Moody, Dwight Lyman, 1837-1899  
Nelson, Roscoe, 1861-1961  
Rowland, David S. (David Sherman), 1719-1794  
Rowland, Henry A. (Henry Augustus), 1764-1835  
Sunday schools – Connecticut – Windsor  
Windsor (Conn.) – Register of births, etc.  
Women – Societies and clubs– Connecticut – Windsor

### **Administrative history**

The collection was processed and a finding aid compiled by volunteer Gary Wait in 2004 with revisions by librarian Barbara Goodwin in March 2005. In February 2014 some additional materials were transferred from the Society's library files to be integrated and housed with this collection. These included church membership directories, more Women's Club records, and a recently acquired volume of sermons by Rev. David Rowland (2014.6.1). The finding aid was revised by Barbara Goodwin to reflect the new arrangement.