

**Sturgis Library Archives
Town and Local History Collection**

**Records of the Unitarian Church of Barnstable
MS. 110**

Extent: 4 clamshell boxes

Scope and Content Note: The collection consists of the records of what was known as the East Parish Congregational Church of Barnstable, which became the Barnstable Unitarian Church in the mid-19th century. Included are records dating from 1717 through the mid-20th century consisting of birth, death, and marriage records, meeting minutes, articles, historical accounts, ministers' notes and records, statistical records, parish lists, clerk's records, treasurer's records, and more.

Historical and Biographical Information from the Unitarian Church website: Early in the 17th century, the Rev. John Lothrop and his followers left England for America seeking religious independence. They settled first in Scituate and a few years later came to Barnstable, arriving in 1639. They met in several locations, including a residence and meetinghouse constructed for Rev. Lothrop and his family in 1644 in the building that is now the Sturgis Library. They constructed their first true meetinghouse in 1646 on Coggins Pond, about a mile west of the present church.

By the early 1700's the town had grown sufficiently large to support two parishes. Members in the East Precinct erected a building on on Cobb's Hill, and another building was constructed in the west end of Barnstable. In 1717, the original church became two churches – the East Parish Church of Barnstable Village and the West Parish Church of West Barnstable.

In the early 19th century there was considerable theological debate in the “churches of the standing order” in New England. Many churches actually split over this debate, the traditionalists becoming Congregationalists and the liberals becoming Unitarians. Already recently divided along geographic lines, the church in Barnstable did not undergo this split. The church in the West Parish followed the line of tradition and is today a Congregational church. Our church, then known as the East Parish, leaned toward the liberal side of the debate and later became identified as a Unitarian church.

In 1836 the original Cobb's Hill meeting house was removed and a new, larger one was constructed in its place. It was destroyed by fire in 1905. The present edifice was dedicated in 1907. It was designed by Guy Lowell, an architect who also designed the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The Parish Hall was constructed in 1960. It is now named Warren Hall in honor of the Rev. Kenneth R. Warren, who served the church from 1953 to 1991. A further addition to the west end of the building was built in 1979.

The church is affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association, formed in 1961 by the merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America.

The historic records of the Unitarian Church of Barnstable were placed on storage loan in the archival vault at Sturgis Library in 1977. The records were not considered a part of the Library's archives, and there was no public access to the record. In 2010 the Library worked with the Parish Board to facilitate the donation of the records to the Library in order to have them properly cataloged and made accessible to researchers and the public. In November 2011 the records were officially donated as a permanent part of the Sturgis Library archives.

Access: Unrestricted. Credit Sturgis Library Archives for publication.

Acquisition: Donated by the Unitarian Church of Barnstable, November, 2011.

Processed by: Lucy Loomis, December 2013.

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BOX 1	Fldr 1	Collection history <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Articles on donation of collection to Sturgis Library, 2011• Deed of gift• Board meeting minutes• Forms• Correspondence• Unitarian Church Inventory• Inventory and list of microfilm copies
	Fldr 2	Church history <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Account of early background & inheritance of our church previous to settlement here in Barnstable in 1639"• Notes on early church history 1653 – (3 sheets)• <i>Our Heritage of Faith : the Unitarian Church, Barnstable</i>
	Fldr 3	Diary of Rev. John Lothrop 1634-1769 – copy transcribed by Gustavus Hinckley, 1905.
	Fldr 4	Records of the First Church in the East Parish... 1667-1717 during the ministries of Thomas Walley, Jonathan Russell Sr. and Jr., & Joseph Green (handwritten copy)

BOX 1	Fldr 5	Membership. East Parish Congregational Society, 1717-1835 (typescript copy)
	Fldr 6	Covenant 1725 (typescript copy)
	Fldr 7	John Mellen documents (2) 1783
	Fldr 8	Henry Hersey's records as minister 1823-1835: Births, deaths, marriages, and baptisms
	Fldr 9	Harmonium Society Request 1827
	Fldr 10	Parsonage 1875 – 1940
	Fldr 11	Organ 1882 (2 sheets)
	Fldr 12	Church building anniversaries 1905 – 1982
	Fldr 13	Church anniversaries 1914, 1916, 1925
	Fldr 14	Statistical records of the ministry 1914 – 1929 by Ernest Chase
	Fldr 15	Yearbook questionnaire 1931-32
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	Fldr 20	Rev. Truman installation 1940
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	Fldr 22	Unity Club 1950

- BOX 2 Fldr 1 The first book of records for the East Precinct of the Town of Barnstable, NE, March 1717/8 p July 27, 1801.
Also includes thumb drive with digitized images of this volume. These images can be seen online @ the Congregational Library's digital archive of pre-1800 Ceongregational Church records at <http://www.congregationallibrary.org/nehh/series1/BarnstableMAEast5158>
- Fldr 2 The second book of records for the East Precinct, Sept 1801 – March 1847.
- Fldr 3 Records of the meetings of the Parish Committee
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- Fldr 4 Records of the meetings of the Parish Committee
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- BOX 3 Fldr 1 Records of the East Parish Congregational Church, Barnstable, Mass. March 1725 – May 1816
Also includes thumb drive with digitized images of this volume. These images can be seen online @ the Congregational Library's digital archive of pre-1800 Ceongregational Church records at <http://www.congregationallibrary.org/nehh/series1/BarnstableMAEast5158>
- Fldr 2 Records of the Church in the East Precinct of Barnstable, Mass. Leather volume 1820 – 1915.
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- Fldr 3 Clerk's Records August 1847 – 1831
- BOX 4 Fldr 1 Treasurer's Records 1820 – 1831
Fldr 2 Treasurer's Records 1865 – 1913
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Fldr 4 Receipts and deposits of the chairman of the Parish Committee 1917 – 1922.

Fldr Book(s) for East Parish 1831 – 1840

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Fldr Subscribers, Ministry of the Unitarian Society, 1889 – 1910

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