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Douglas, Massachusetts

Religious Organizations
2016.02

Processed by: Rebecca Lavalley
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Collection Information

Title : Religious Organizations

Abstract : Collection contains items pertaining to the various Religious Organizations in Douglas, Massachusetts. Items include pamphlets, newspaper clippings, histories, and published works.

Dates : Bulk 1860 – 1976

Quantity : 1 – 5” Document Box comprised of 22 Folders, 1 Digital Item

Repository : Simon Fairfield Public Library, Historical Archive.

Finding Aid : Finding Aid in print form is available in the Repository.

Preferred Citation : [Box#, Item identification], Religious Organizations, Simon Fairfield Public Library, Historical Archive.

Provenance : Most items were found in the Simon Fairfield Public Library Archival Cabinet in 2016. Some items were found in the Simon Fairfield Public Library Attic in 2017. No further accession information is available.

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MARC Access :

Historical/Biographical Notes

In 1746, the Town of Douglas was incorporated, and on November 11, 1747, organized religion began. It is important to remember that in the beginning there was no separation of Church and State. Reverend William Phipps (also spelt Phips) was ordained and installed as the first pastor of the Congregational Church of Douglas. Through taxes, the town paid for the construction of the meeting-house, which was completed in 1789. It should be noted that the townspeople were also responsible for the salary of the pastor.

However, the 1770s was a time of religious freedom and Douglas was comprised of not only Protestants, but Baptists and Quakers as well. The Baptists and Quakers did not feel that it was their responsibility to pay for the Congregational Church or their pastor's salary. It was decided that the religious tax would only be applied to those who practiced the Congregational doctrine. Very little is known about the Baptists and Quakers who resided in Douglas. There was a Quaker Church in South Douglas and it is believed that the meeting house was once at the Quaker burying-ground. However, little else is known about the formation or practices of either denomination.

As stated earlier, the Congregational Church was formed on November 11, 1747 and was once one of the largest and most influential churches in the conference. On October 26, 1833, the town voted to build a new meeting house and Samuel Dudley deeded a quarter acre of land to the Congregational Society of Douglas and a new church was built. In 1893, the members voted to incorporate the church and rename it the First Congregational Church of Douglas. As of 2016, the church built in 1834 still stands as the First Congregational Church of Douglas.

Through the growth in business and population of Douglas during the early 1800s, the village of East Douglas emerged. With the new village, members of the Congregational Church of Douglas decided to form the Second Congregational Church of Douglas and the doors opened on August 3, 1834. In the center of the village, on January 14th, 1835, the Second Congregational Church was finished and ready for the members to pray. That same church is still active today.

The Town of Douglas is also home to the Douglas Methodist Church. In 1808, the Methodist Episcopal Church was formed and a church was built in South Douglas. In 1815, Elder Pliney Brett, the first pastor, withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church and formed a new organization, the Reformed Methodists. In 1844, the first Methodist services in East Douglas were held and by 1845, a Reformed Methodist Church had been built. In 1866, the Reformed Methodist Church (East Douglas) was united with the Methodist Episcopal Church (South Douglas). After some internal friction between the factions, on November 5, 1866, it became the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1872, a new church was built on what is now considered Main Street. The building was lost to a fire in 1904 and had to be rebuilt. The new building was dedicated on June 9, 1905. Currently, the church is known as the East Douglas Methodist Church and still resides on Main Street.

On December 25, 1857, the first Catholic mass gathering was held at the Whitin Tavern Hall by Father Edward J. Sheridan, a mission priest. Following the first service, the parishioners celebrated mass from time to time at a parishioner's home. It was not until 1868 that a large barn that was part of the Hunt estate was altered into a church. The barn served as a place of worship until November 6, 1955, the dedication of St. Denis Church. In the beginning, about 80% of the parishioners were French Canadian, with the other 20% being of an Irish background. With the

second woolen mill opening at the turn of the 20th century, the population of Douglas changed to include Czech, Slovak, Polish and Italian immigrants. These immigrants primarily worshiped at St. Denis Church, changing the demographic of the church population greatly.

Douglas is also home to the Douglas Camp Meetings. A camp meeting is a religious gathering that is often held in an open space with tents or dormitories that can last for several days. Camp meetings were popular in frontier America, due to the lack of religious communities, houses of worship and ordained ministers. As people often had to travel a distance for these gatherings, the gatherings usually lasted days and due to a lack of accommodations, the worshipers often camped out near the revival site. In the summer of 1875, the Town of Douglas was home to an interdenominational camp meeting, spearheaded by J.W. Coolidge, from the Congregational Church, and Luther Wing, from the Methodist Church. Along with members of the Protestant and Methodist churches, Baptists and Quakers also attended. The first meeting was held to promote holiness and the conversion of sinners. Based on the popularity and success of the event, it was decided to hold these meetings annually. Deacon George M. Morse, of Putnam, Connecticut, purchased lands for the meeting. A dining hall, offices and dormitories were erected for the use of the worshipers. To this day, Camp Meetings still take place at this location.

Scope and Content

This collection is comprised of items regarding the various religious organizations that are currently practicing or have practiced in the Town of Douglas. The organizations include Camp Meetings, the First and Second Congregational Churches of Douglas, the Douglas Methodist Church and Saint Denis Catholic Church. Included in this collection are histories of the organizations. There are also programs and newspaper clippings from celebrations and dedications as well as programs and pamphlets for organizational events. Finally, there are obituaries, writings, books and programs related to the reverends, priests and members of the different organizations.

Related Collections

2016.03, Town Celebrations : consists of a scrapbook that includes religious celebrations that were held during the 200th Anniversary and Welcome Home Celebration.

2016.04, Town History : consists of scrapbooks and clippings that include articles regarding the various Religious Organizations in Douglas, Massachusetts.

Series Descriptions

Series 1 : Camp Meetings

Sub-Series 1 : History of Camp Meetings

Sub-Series Description : Bound book that details the history of the Douglas Camp Meeting.

Sub-Series 2 : Annual Preaching Campaign

Sub-Series Description : Pamphlets for the Annual Preaching Campaign held at Douglas Campground and newspaper articles.

Series 2 : Congregational Churches

Series Description : History of the Congregational Churches of Worcester.

Series 3 : First Congregational Church

Sub-Series 1 : Celebrations and Dedications

Sub-Series Description : Program and newspaper clippings from Bi-Centennial Celebration.

Sub-Series 2 : Reverends and Members

Sub-Series Description : Obituary for Reverend of First Congregational Church.

Sub-Series 3 : Programs

Sub-Series Description : Program for play produced at First Congregational Church

Series 4 : Second Congregational Church

Sub-Series 1 : History of Second Congregational Church

Sub-Series Description : Church manual and pamphlet regarding the history of the Second Congregational Church in Douglas, Massachusetts.

Sub-Series 2 : Celebrations and Dedications

Sub-Series Description : Program and newspaper clipping for organ dedication.

Sub-Series 3 : Reverends and Members

Sub-Series Description : Articles written by members of the church as well as church organization pamphlets.

Sub-Series 4 : Programs

Sub-Series Description : Program for play produced at Second Congregational Church.

Sub-Series 5 : Organizations

Sub-Series Description : Recipes from Women's Federation of the Second Congregational Church

Series 5 : Douglas Methodist Church

Series Description : Program for the 100th Anniversary of the Methodist Church.

Series 6 : Saint Denis Church

Sub-Series 1 : Celebrations and Dedications

Sub-Series Description : Program and newspaper clippings from the dedication of Saint Denis Church in 1955.

Sub-Series 2 : Priests and Parishioners

Sub-Series Description : 100th Anniversary book about the priests and people at Saint Denis Church.

Sub-Series 3 : Programs

Sub-Series Description : Program for Saint Denis Parish's "Passion Play."

Religious Organizations 2016.02 Series 1: Camp Meetings Sub-Series 1: History of Camp Meetings			
<u>Box#</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Collection#</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	2016.02_01.01.01	Davies, Rev. Edward. <i>Illustrated history of Douglas camp meeting</i> . Boston, MA: McDonald, Gill & Co., 1890.
Digital		2016.02_01.01.02	Davies, Rev. Edward. <i>Illustrated history of Douglas camp meeting</i> . Boston, MA: McDonald, Gill & Co., 1890. https://archive.org/details/illustrate00davi
Religious Organizations 2016.02 Series 1: Camp Meetings Sub-Series 2: Annual Preaching Campaign			
<u>Box#</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Collection#</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	2016.02_01.02.01	Pamphlet – <i>71st Annual Preaching Campaign of Bible Holiness, Douglas Campground, Douglas, Mass., July 20-29, 1945</i>
1	1	2016.02_01.02.02	Pamphlet – <i>77th Annual Camp Meeting at Douglas Campground, July 18-28, 1952</i>
1	1	2016.02_01.02.03	Pamphlet – <i>Douglas Camp Meeting, 81st Annual Preaching Campaign of Bible Holiness, July 20 through 29 [1956] at Douglas, Mass.</i>
1	1	2016.02_01.02.04	Pamphlet – <i>Douglas Camp Meeting, 82nd Annual Preaching Campaign of Bible Holiness, July 19 through 28th, 1957, Douglas, Mass.</i>
1	1	2016.02_01.02.05	Pamphlet – <i>Douglas Camp Meeting, 88th Annual Preaching Campaign of Bible Holiness, 1963 July 19 – 28th, Douglas, Mass.</i>
1	2	2016.02_01.02.06	Chupka, Blanche. "Old Douglas Campground Scene of 73d Annual Revival." <i>The Woonsocket Call</i> . July 22, 1947.
1	3	2016.02_01.02.07	July 10 [1948] - Newspaper Article "Douglas Revival Meetings Start Friday at Camp"

Religious Organizations 2016.02 Series 2: Congregational Churches			
<u>Box#</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Collection#</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	2016.02_02.01	Conference, Committee of the, ed. <i>Worcester South Chronicles. A Brief History of the Congregational Churches of the Worcester South Conference of Massachusetts. 1670-1876.</i> Worcester, MA: Lucius P. Goddard, 1877.
Religious Organizations 2016.02 Series 3: First Congregational Church Sub-Series 1: Celebrations			
<u>Box#</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Collection#</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	2016.02_03.01.01	"The First Congregational Church of Douglas Massachusetts, Bi-Centennial Celebration, 1747 – 1947, October fourth and fifth nineteen hundred and forty seven" Program
1	2	2016.02_03.01.02	Newspaper & Program Clippings from the "Town of Douglas Newspaper Clippings Scrapbook#1, 1946 to 1948" ❖ Detailed Table of Contents Found in Appendix A
Religious Organizations 2016.02 Series 3: First Congregational Church Sub-Series 2: Reverends			
<u>Box#</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Collection#</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	2016.02_03.02.01	[1868] - Obituary for Reverend David Holman (1777-1868), former pastor of the First Church in Douglas. ❖ Newspaper clipping was found in a program for The Women's Federation of the Second Congregational Church. Photocopied to preserve historical data.
Religious Organizations 2016.02 Series 3: First Congregational Church Sub-Series 3: Programs & Plays			
<u>Box#</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Collection#</u>	<u>Description</u>

1	1	2016.02_03.03.01	Program - "The Old Peabody Pew", Produced at the First Congregational Church Douglas, Mass., May 25, 1939 at 8:00 P.M.
Religious Organizations 2016.02 Series 4: Second Congregational Church Sub-Series 1: History			
<u>Box#</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Collection#</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	2016.02_04.01.01	Church Manual - <i>The Confessions of Faith and Covenant of the Congregational Church in East Douglas, Mass., with a Brief History and list of Its Members, January 1, 1860.</i> Boston: Damrell & Moore, 1860. ❖ Inscribed on the inside cover "Mrs Finley, Present from your friend M. Keith" - M is believed to stand for Martha
1	2	2016.02_04.01.02	Pamphlet – <i>History of the Second Congregational Church of East Douglas, Massachusetts, 1834. 1976.</i>
Religious Organizations 2016.02 Series 4: Second Congregational Church Sub-Series 2: Celebrations and Dedications			
<u>Box#</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Collection#</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	2016.02_04.02.01	Program – November 5, 1947, "Organ Recital and Concert, East Douglas, Massachusetts, Second Congregational Church."
1	2	2016.02_04.02.02	"Recital Will Mark Organ Dedication." November 1, [1947].
Religious Organizations 2016.02 Series 4: Second Congregational Church Sub-Series 3: Reverends and Members			
<u>Box#</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Collection#</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	2016.02_04.03.01	1945-1946 Program and Officer for the The Women's Federation of the Second Congregational Church
1	2	2016.02_04.03.02	January 5, 1948 - "East Douglas First Christmas Tree" by C.H.B. Fielitz (Age 92); Includes small write up

			regarding the passing of Fielitz (June 8, 1948)
Religious Organizations 2016.02 Series 4: Second Congregational Church Sub-Series 4: Programs and Plays			
<u>Box#</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Collection#</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	2016.02_04.04.01	Program - "Say Yes, Mr. Jones, Say Yes", A Four-Act Play By Leonard B. Gray, Presented in the Second Congregational Church Vestry, Thursday, March 19, 1953, 8:00 P.M.
Religious Organizations 2016.02 Series 4: Second Congregational Church Sub-Series 5: Organizations			
<u>Box#</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Collection#</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	2016.02_04.05.01	<i>East Douglas' Kitchen Secrets</i> . Women's Federation of the Second Congregational Church. East Douglas, MA: 1951.
Religious Organizations 2016.02 Series 5: Douglas Methodist Church			
<u>Box#</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Collection#</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	2016.02_05.01	Program "One Hundredth Anniversary 1844-1944, April 20-30, Douglas Methodist Church, Main Street, East Douglas, Massachusetts."
Religious Organizations 2016.02 Series 6: St. Denis Church Sub-Series 1: Celebrations and Dedications			
<u>Box#</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Collection#</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	2016.02_06.01.01	Program – St. Denis Church Dedication, Sunday, November 6, 1955, East Douglas, Massachusetts
1	2	2016.02_06.01.02	"Bishop Wright to Officiate Sunday at St. Denis Dedication." <i>The Woonsocket Call</i> . November 1, 1955.
1	2	2016.02_06.01.03	"St. Denis Dedication Tomorrow: Bishop to Sing

			Pontifical Mass at New Church." <i>The Woonsocket Call</i> . November 5, 1955.
1	2	2016.02_06.01.04	"Bishop at Dedication of New St. Denis Church, E. Douglas." <i>The Woonsocket Call</i> . November 7, 1955.
1	2	2016.02_06.01.05	"Bishop Wright Dedicates New East Douglas Church." <i>Worcester Telegram</i> . November 7, 1955
1	2	2016.02_06.01.06	Thomas, Phil. "Diary of Ye Towne Crier of Uxbridge." <i>The Woonsocket Call</i> . November 8, 1955.
1	2	2016.02_06.01.07	"New \$255,000 Church Under Construction at East Douglas." <i>The Evening Gazette</i> , Worcester. Tues., Oct. 12, 1954.
Religious Organizations 2016.02 Series 6: St. Denis Church Sub-Series 2: Priests and Parishioners			
<u>Box#</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Collection#</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	2016.02_06.02.01	<i>Saint Denis Parish "It's Priests and People", 1870-1970</i> . Gagne, Clarence A., Douglas, 1971.
Religious Organizations 2016.02 Series 6: St. Denis Church Sub-Series 3: Programs and Plays			
<u>Box#</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Collection#</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	2016.02_06.03.01	Program – St. Denis Parish presents "Passion Play, According to Scriptures in 8 Scenes", Mon., Tue., and Wed., of Holy Week, 1936.

Appendix A

Town of Douglas
Newspaper Clippings Scrapbook#1
1946 to 1948

Two Hundredth Anniversary of the First Congregational Church (pp. 146-165)

Chupka, Blanche. "Congregational Church in Douglas Opens 200th Milestone Celebration." 1947.	pp. 146-149
Merkel, Walter. "Douglas Common: Town Has Grown Away From Imposing Green." [1947].	pp. 150-151
"1834 Pulpit Restored." East Douglas, October 2, [1947].	pg. 152
"Planning Douglas Church Celebration." Douglas, September 25, [1947].	pg. 153
"Church Historian." Douglas, September 26, [1947].	pg. 154
"Active at Douglas." Douglas, [1947].	pg. 154
"Douglas Church to Mark Its 200th Anniversary: Congregationalists Plan Services This Weekend to Recall Long History." East Douglas, September 30, [1947].	pg. 155-156
"Douglas Cong'l Church Program Opens Today." East Douglas, [October] [4], [1947].	pg. 157
"Church to Open Bi-Centennial With Antique, Historical Exhibit." East Douglas, [October] [1947].	pg. 158
"Douglas Cong'l Church Observes 200th Year." East Douglas, [October] [5], [1947].	pg. 159
"Open 200th Anniversary of Douglas Center Church." East Douglas, September 4, [1947].	pg. 160
"Anniversary Program Completed at E. Douglas." East Douglas, [1947].	pg. 161
"E. Douglas Parish Prepares Church for Observance." East Douglas, [1947].	pg. 162
"Douglas Church Program Ready." East Douglas, [1947].	pg. 163
"Church to Mark 200th Anniversary." East Douglas, [1947]	pg. 163
October 5, 1947 – First Congregational Church “The Order of Morning Worship”	pp. 164-165