

## Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.)

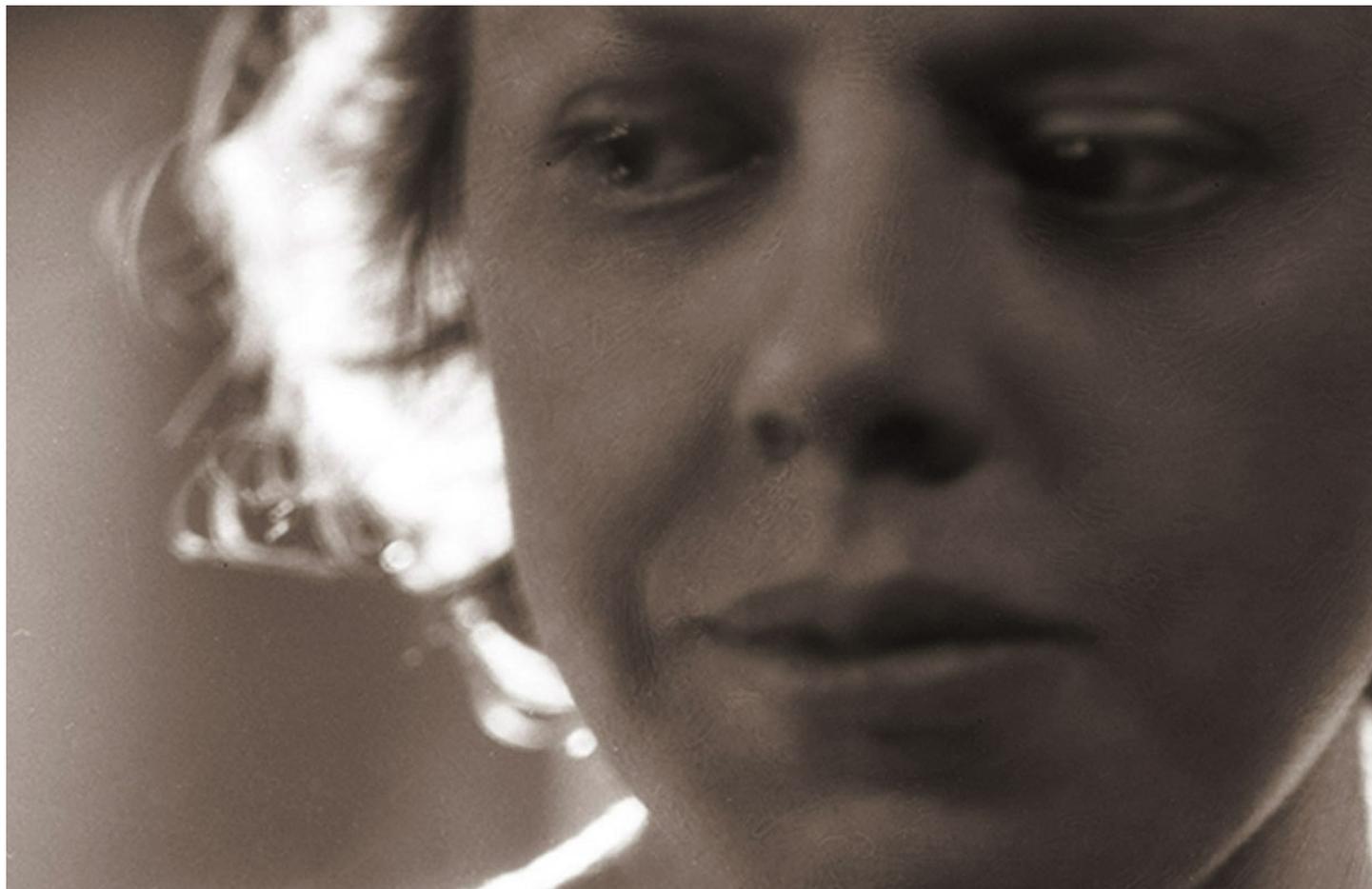
### Records

Digital

1817-1970

17 vols. (1.5 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 806



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The Congregational Church in Westhampton, Mass., was formally organized on Sept. 1, 1779, with the installation of a young graduate of Yale, Enoch Hale, brother of the patriot Nathan Hale. At the end of Hale's fifty years in the Westhampton pulpit, the church experienced a crisis that resulted in the separation of a portion of the membership as the Union Church, led by the charismatic evangelical preacher John Truair. The churches were reunited in 1850.

The records of the Westhampton Congregational Church document nearly two hundreds of religious life in a rural western Massachusetts community. Beginning with the founding of the church in 1779, the collection include a nearly unbroken record of church activities including thorough records of membership, transfers, marriages, baptisms, deaths, and church discipline, and for the latter century, a complete record of church finances. Of particular note is a volume recording the activities of the secessionist Union Church, 1829-1849.

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## Background on Westhampton

The Congregational Church in the small western Massachusetts town of Westhampton was formally organized on Sept. 1, 1779, with the assistance of ministers from two adjoining towns. Jonathan Judd of Southampton and Solomon Williams of Northampton. The first pastor chosen for the pulpit at Westhampton was the young Enoch Hale, a 1773 graduate of Yale and brother of the patriot Nathan Hale. Ordained on Sept. 29, 1779, Hale served his community for fifty years, during which time he was an active presence in the religious life of the Commonwealth, serving as Secretary of the General Association of the Congregational Churches and Ministers of Massachusetts (1804-1824) and as Secretary of the Hampshire Missionary Society for many years.

During the summer 1829, with the aging Hale nearing retirement, Westhampton called Horace B. Chapin to settle as colleague pastor. His installation in July initiated a period of sharp crisis. Several members of the church petitioned to form themselves into a Union Society and after being denied, forty-six seceded and called a charismatic evangelical preacher, John Truair, as their pastor. Ordained in Cambridge, Vt., in 1810, Truair had served as pastor in the Oneida, N.Y., on the eastern edge of the Burned Over District, and as corresponding secretary for the American Seamen's Friend Society, before arriving in Westhampton. Truair's role in the controversy precipitated the Hampshire Central Association to withdraw him from fellowship, and the Presbytery of New York deposed him from the ministry two years later, but his evangelical zeal held the secessionists together. After Truair returned to New York State in 1837, however, the "meteoric light began to wane," as Josiah Holland noted, and most of the Union Church membership voted to return into the fold in September 1841, with the remnant formally disbanding in August 1850.

## Scope of collection

The records of the Congregational Church in Westhampton document nearly two hundreds of religious life in a rural western Massachusetts community. Beginning with the founding of the church in 1779, the collection include a nearly unbroken record of church activities, including thorough records of membership, transfers, marriages, baptisms, deaths, and discipline, and for the latter century, a complete record of church finances. Of particular note is a volume recording the secessionist Union Church, 1829-1849, an evangelical offshoot led by John Truair.

Most of the earliest records of the church were destroyed in a fire at the home of Rev. Hale in 1817, however two volumes in this collection include a painstaking effort to reconstruct the early records of church activity.

## Inventory

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): Church records

1817-1961

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Westhampton church records, book 1**

1817-1831

184p.

Vol. 1

Includes notes on the church extending back to its founding in 1779, including deaths in Westhampton; journal of the church and its history; marriages solemnized in Westhampton and y the pastor in other towns; members of the church; officers of the church; donations received and thanks; and baptisms.

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Church Record, book no. 2**

1831-1870

364p.

Vol. 2

Union Church of Westhampton (Westhampton, Mass.): **Records of Church of Westhampton**

1829-1849

52p.

Vol. 3

Records of Union Church, which seceded under Rev. John Truair from the Congregational Church in Westhampton. The end of the volume includes lists of deaths and baptisms.

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Record of the First Congregational Parish in Westhampton, vol. II**  
1849 Apr.-1872 Apr.

Vol. 4

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Record of the Congregational Parish in Westhampton, vol. III**  
1873 Apr.-1934 Jan.

Vol. 5

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Record of the Congregational Church in West Hampton continued from Book No. 3**

1874-1939 (*bulk*1874-1899)

Vol. 6

Includes Rules of practice (1875); confessions of faith; covenant; list of members; journal (1874-1939); deaths of members (-1939); removals; baptisms; pastors and deacons. Includes records extending back to founding in 1779

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Account of the Westhampton Library Committee**  
1883-1912

Vol. 7

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Pilgrim church register and record, book 3a**  
1900-1927

Vol. 8

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Pilgrim Church Register, book IV**  
1929-1956

Vol. 9

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Church records, vol. IV**  
1935-1956

Vol. 10

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Church register and membership list**  
1957-1961

Vol. 11

Includes lists of officers, members (1882-1961), church attendance, baptisms, marriages, deaths, and meetings.

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Church accounts**  
1817-1831

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Treasurer's book**  
1895-1970

Vol. 12

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Accounts**  
1913-1944

Vol. 13

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Accounts**  
1945-1963

Vol. 14

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Accounts**  
1947-1965

Vol. 15

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Accounts**  
1958-1959

Vol. 16

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.): **Accounts**  
1966-1970

Vol. 17

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## **Administrative information**

### **Access**

The collection is open for research.

### **Provenance**

Gift of the Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.) and the Westhampton Historical Society, 2014.

## Related Material

See also the following collections:

Westhampton (Mass. : Town) Records, SCUA, UMass Amherst (MS 799).

Enoch Hale Papers, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library (RG 66).

## Bibliography

Hale, Enoch, *Asking amiss and not receiving*. Northampton, Mass. : Thomas C. Pomroy, 1804. **SCUA Call no.** BV4270 .H36 1804.

Holland, Josiah Gilbert, *History of Western Massachusetts*, vol. 2. Springfield, Mass. : Samuel Bowles, 1855.

*Memorial of the reunion of the natives of Westhampton, Mass., September 5, 1866*. Waltham, Mass. : Free Press, 1866.

Truair, John, *An appeal to the churches of Christ and to the public on a document from the Hampshire Central Association, withdrawing ministerial fellowship from the author*. Northampton, Mass. : T.W. Shepard, 1829.

Truair, John, *Salvation he gift of God to a lost world*. Northampton, Mass. : John Matecalf, 1833. **SCUA Call no.** BV4305 .T78 1833.

## Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, Jan, 2014.

## Digitized content

Digitized versions of the images in this collection have been added to SCUA's online repository, [Credo](#).

## Language:

English

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## Search terms

### Subjects

Congregational churches--Massachusetts--Westhampton

Hale, Enoch, 1753-1837

Revivals--Massachusetts--Westhampton

Second Great Awakening

Truair, John, 1780-1845

Westhampton (Mass.)--Religious life and customs

### Contributors

Westhampton Congregational Church (Westhampton, Mass.) **[main entry]**

Union Church (Westhampton, Mass.)

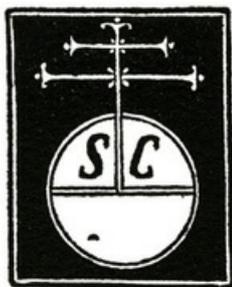
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Account books

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Massachusetts (West)

Religion



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