Located in South Dartmouth, Mass., the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting is one of the oldest Friends meetings in the United States, having been founded by Quakers seeking a haven from religious persecution in nearby Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth Colonies. Private worship may have begun in area homes as early as the 1660s, with the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting formally established in 1699. Today, the Meeting has two distinct meetings: the pastoral Smith Neck Meetinghouse and the Apponegansett Meetinghouse.
The records of Dartmouth Monthly Meeting are divided into two centers of gravity. First, the collection contains nineteenth century copies of the meeting's early minutes (1698-1792) and vital records covering most of that period. Secondly, the collection contains to the meeting since the late 1960s, including minutes (1968-1989) and newsletter (1999-2005). The remaining records of the meeting -- the bulk of them -- were maintained by the Old Dartmouth Historical Society into at least the 1990s, although their present location is unknown.

See similar SCUA collections:

Quakers
Religion
Massachusetts

Background on Dartmouth Monthly Meeting

Located in South Dartmouth, Mass., the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting is one of the oldest Friends meetings in the United States, having been founded by Quakers seeking a haven from religious persecution in nearby Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth Colonies. Private worship may have begun in area homes as early as the 1660s, with the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting formally established in 1699.

Dartmouth has been associated with only two quarterly meetings throughout its long existence, Rhode Island Quarterly (1699-1788) and Sandwich Quarterly (1788-present). As an early and important center for Friends, however, it served as a starting point for other monthlies in the region. During the eighteenth century, two monthly meetings were set off from Dartmouth: Acoaxet (later known as Westport) in 1766 and New Bedford in 1792. Allen's Neck Monthly Meeting was set off in 1956, since which time, the Dartmouth Monthly has generally been referred to as Smith Neck (or Smith's Neck) Friends Meeting. The Wilburite separation in 1845 resulted in the formation of a parallel Wilburite Dartmouth Monthly Meeting in North Dartmouth, which retained its separate identity after the split was healed in 1945, taking the name of North Dartmouth Monthly Meeting.

Even more notably, Dartmouth has been the parent of a long list of worship groups and preparative meetings, including:

Worship groups
Acoaxet (1699-1745)
Acushnet (1699-1745)
Allen's Neck (1798-1950): also known as Slocum's Neck
Apponegansett (1784-1960), 1975-present (independent 1961-1974)
Centre (1721-1766)
New Bedford (1772-1792): also called Bedford
New Swansey (1764-1765)
Newtown (1745-1882)
Nosequchuck (1758-1759)
Rochester (1707-1740): also known as Sippican
Smith Neck (1784-1901): also called Apponegansett

Preparative meetings
Acoaxet (1745-1766)
Allen's Neck (1950-1956)
Apponegansett (1708-1784): also called Dartmouth of South Preparative
North (1784-1872): also known as Newtown and Bedford
Rochester (1707-1740): also known as Sippican
West (1813-1829): also called Allen's Neck

The first meetings for worship at Smith Neck were held in members' homes in 1768 under the care of the Monthly Meeting at Apponegansett. In 1822, Caleb Anthony donated land for a meetinghouse, which has served as home for the Smith Neck Friends Meeting since. Although Smith Neck began as a traditional unprogrammed meeting, in 1890, an Elder, Eldridge Faunce, stood up to read a chapter of the Bible, offering commentary, and he was followed by a similar talk by Elizabeth Smith. Their actions fed into the evangelical currents already operating on the meeting, thanks in part to the influence of Joseph John Gurney, leading Smith Neck to seek a regular minister and establish themselves as a programmed or pastoral meeting.

Dartmouth Monthly Meeting currently has two distinct meetings and two meetinghouses: Smith Neck (594 Smith Neck Rd) and
Scope of collection

The records of Dartmouth Monthly Meeting are divided into two centers of gravity. First, the collection contains nineteenth century copies of the meeting's early minutes (1698-1792) and vital records covering most of that period. Secondly, the collection contains records of the meeting since the late 1960s, including minutes (1968-1989) and newsletter (1999-2005). The remaining records of the meeting -- the bulk of them -- were maintained by the Old Dartmouth Historical Society into at least the 1990s, although their present location is unknown.

Note that some content for the meeting prior to the Gurneyite-Wilburite separation is included in volumes filed with the Wilburite Dartmouth Monthly Meeting.

Inventory

Minutes
1698-1989
Dartmouth Monthly: Minutes: copied
1698 Nov.-1770 June
Bound vol.
09:A3
Dartmouth Monthly: Minutes: copied
1770 July-1792
Bound vol.
09:A3
Dartmouth Monthly at Smith Neck: Minutes
1968-1989
Box: 0.25
Box 1

(11:B4)
Dartmouth Monthly at Smith Neck: Minutes
Box 1: 3
Dartmouth Monthly at Smith Neck: Minutes
1971 Feb.-1973
Box 1: 4
Dartmouth Monthly at Smith Neck: Minutes
1974-1978 Mar.
Box 1: 5
Dartmouth Monthly at Smith Neck: Minutes
Box 1: 6
Dartmouth Monthly at Smith Neck: Minutes
1981-1983
Box 1: 7
Dartmouth Monthly at Smith Neck: Minutes
1984-1986
Box 1: 8
Dartmouth Monthly at Smith Neck: Minutes
1987
Box 1: 9
Dartmouth Monthly at Smith Neck: Minutes
1988
Box 1: 10
Dartmouth Monthly at Smith Neck: Minutes
1989
Box 1: 11
Correspondence and reports
1765-1994
Smith Neck Friends Meeting: State of the Meeting
Administrative information

Access
The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Related Material
This collection is part of the New England Yearly Meeting Records.

Additional records for the Dartmouth Monthly Meeting were reported by Rick Statler in 1997 as being in the possession of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society and housed at the New Bedford Whaling Museum. These records have not currently been located.

Men's minutes (1699-1727): 1 vol.
Men's minutes (1727-1830): 3 vols.
Men's minutes (1803-1891): 3 vols.
Women's minutes (1812-1892): 2 vols.
Joint minutes (1891-1955): 1 vol.
Joint minutes (1968-1989): 0.25 linear feet
Births, deaths, marriages (1699-1880): 1 vol.
Membership (1766-1841): 1 vol.
Ministers and elders, with New Bedford (1796-1901): 4 vols.
Ministry and oversight (1901-1922): 1 vol.
Discipline (1762): 1 vol.

Current contact for the meeting
Smith Neck Friends Meeting website

Processing Information
Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, October 2018.

Language:
English

Copyright and Use (More information )

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Search terms

Subjects
Dartmouth (Mass.)--Religious life and customs
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Quakers--Massachusetts
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Contributors
Dartmouth Monthly Meeting of Friends [main entry]

Genres and formats
Minutes (Administrative records)
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