

Special Collections and
University Archives

UMass Amherst Libraries 

Nantucket Monthly Meeting of Friends Records

1776-1944

2 boxes (0.75 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 902 N368



[About SCUA](#)

[SCUA home](#)

[Credo digital](#)

[Scope](#)

[Inventory](#)

[Minutes](#)

[Correspondence and reports](#)

[Worship and ministry](#)

[Vital records](#)

[Finance and property](#)

[Newsletters and publications](#)

[Miscellaneous](#)

[Admin info](#)

[Download](#)

[xml version](#)

[print version \(pdf\)](#)



[Read collection overview](#)

Established in 1708, the Nantucket Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends has had a distinctive history marked by the separations that troubled Quakerism in the nineteenth century. In 1830, Nantucket became one of the few monthly meetings in

New England to divide along Hicksite and Orthodox lines, and as that separation was healing in 1845, the Wilburite and Gurneyite factions separated. Uniquely, the Wilburites split further in 1863, when the "Primitive" or "Otisite" Friends departed. Quaker worship was effectively absent on Nantucket from 1894 to about 1939.

This fraction of the records of the Nantucket Monthly Meeting of Friends documents the history of the meeting up to and through the Wilburite-Gurneyite schism. With the exception of some loose materials from the Women's Meeting from 1776-1781, the collection contains little from the first several decades of the meeting (these are housed at the Nantucket Historical Association), but there is rich content on the state of the meeting and the conflict that followed the separation of 1845, along with minutes from the decade leading up the Wilburite-Gurneyite reunion in 1944.

See similar SCUA collections:

Quakers

Religion

Masachusetts (East)

Background on Nantucket Monthly Meeting of Friends

The history of Quaker meetings on Nantucket is as varied and complex as in any other location in North America and more than idiosyncratic most. Meetings began on the island as early as 1704, with regular meetings for business beginning since 1708. Formally part of the New England Yearly Meeting, the distance from the mainland led Nantucket to operate as a "Yearly Meeting for Worship" from 1711 to 1829, and with its strong maritime and family connections to Atlantic Canada, it oversaw nascent meetings not in Massachusetts, but in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, beginning in 1752.

The Friends' presence on Nantucket grew steadily through the eighteenth century, resulting in the construction of a second meetinghouse in 1792, which became the home of the Nantucket Northern District Monthly Meeting two years later. This meeting, however, did not thrive and was laid down in 1829. This failure, perhaps, was a harbinger of things to come when Nantucket became an epicenter of the separations that plagued nineteenth century Quakerism. Although New England was little affected by the controversies that cleaved the Yearly Meetings in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York from 1827 to 1830, Nantucket was an exception. Neither the Hicksite nor Orthodox meetings that split in 1830 survived long, but the separation weakened Quakerism on the island.

The Wilburite and Gurneyite controversy in New England was far more serious, and led to a bitter separation on Nantucket. Unlike elsewhere in New England, the Gurneyite faction on Nantucket was smaller than the Wilburite, and survived only until 1869. The Wilburites experienced still another separation when the "Primitive" or Otisite Friends on Nantucket -- and in Warwick, R.I., and Lynn, Mass. -- broke away from 1863 to 1911. Quaker worship on Nantucket effectively ceased from 1894 to 1939. Today, the island is home to a worship group under the care of Sandwich Quarter.

Scope of collection

This fraction of the records of the Nantucket Monthly Meeting of Friends documents the history of the meeting up to and through the Wilburite-Gurneyite schism. With the exception of some loose materials from the Women's Meeting from 1776-1781, the collection contains little from the first several decades of the meeting (these are housed at the Nantucket Historical Association), but there is rich content for the two decades beginning at the time of great separation. Although the minutes of business meetings are absent, there are a fascinating set of answers to queries on the state of the meeting, and abundant material on discipline, contention over the meetinghouse and other property, and financial accounting during the difficult period. The collection also contains minutes of the meeting during the decade leading up the Wilburite-Gurneyite reunion in 1944.

The Archives has a small, but useful collection of notes on the various meetings of Nantucket Friends, mostly compiled by Robert Leach.



Abbie Loring in Cape Cod Quaker attire, ca.1930.

Photo by Alton H. Blackington

Inventory

Minutes

1776-1944

Nantucket Monthly: Women's minutes

1776-1781

Box 1: 1

Nantucket Monthly: Men's minutes

1848 Mar.-1859 Dec.

Bound vol.

09:B3

Nantucket Monthly: Minutes

1928-1934

Bound vol.

09:B3

Nantucket Monthly: Minutes

1939-1944

Bound vol.

09:B3

Correspondence and reports

1845-1870

Nantucket Monthly: Answers to queries

1846-1850

Box 1: 2

Nantucket Monthly: Answers to queries

1851-1855

Box 1: 3

Nantucket Monthly: Answers to queries

1856-1866

Box 1: 4

Nantucket Monthly: Committees

1849-1859

Box 1: 5

Nantucket Monthly: Complaints

1845-1863

Box 1: 6

Nantucket Monthly: Correspondence

1852-1858

Box 1: 7

Nantucket Monthly: Disownments (William Foster Mitchell)

1847

Box 1: 8

Nantucket Monthly: Laying down

1862-1866

Box 1: 9

Nantucket Monthly: Laying down: accounts

1867-1870

Box 1: 10

Nantucket Monthly: Overseers of the Poor

1859-1866

Box 1: 11

Nantucket Monthly: School (support of students)

1853

Box 1: 12

Nantucket Monthly: Separation of 1845

1845

Box 1: 13

Worship and ministry

1859-1944

Nantucket Preparative: Ministers and Elders: Minutes

1845 Oct.-1853 Sept.
Box 2: 10
Nantucket Monthly: Ministers and Elders
1859-1860
Box 1: 14
Nantucket Preparative: Ministers and Elders
1927-1944
Bound vol.
09:B3
Vital records
1845-1865
Nantucket Monthly: Births and deaths
1849-1858
Box 1: 15
Nantucket Monthly: Marriages
1846-1856
Box 1: 16
Nantucket Monthly: Membership
1845-1853
Box 1: 17
Nantucket Monthly: Memorials
1861
Box 1: 18
Nantucket Monthly: Removals
1846-1865
Box 1: 19
Finance and property
1845-1893
Nantucket Monthly: Bills and receipts
1845-1850
Box 1: 20
Nantucket Monthly: Bills and receipts
1851-1855
Box 1: 21
Nantucket Monthly: Bills and receipts
1856-1859
Box 1: 22
Nantucket Monthly: Bills and receipts
1860-1865
Box 1: 23
Nantucket Monthly: Treasurer
1845-1860
Box 1: 24
Nantucket Monthly: Treasurer
1861-1893
Box 1: 25
Nantucket Monthly: Treasurer (post-separation accounts)
1854
Box 2: 1
Nantucket Monthly: Meetinghouse
1847-1849
Box 2: 2
Nantucket Monthly: Property dispute over separation
1855-1858
Box 2: 3
Newsletters and publications
1845-1865
Free Produce Meeting of Friends [circular letter]
1850

Box 2: 4

London Yearly Meeting: printed material

1861, 1865

Box 2: 5

New England Yearly Meeting of Friends. Boarding School Committee reports

1845-1854

Box 2: 6

New England Yearly Meeting of Friends. Boarding School Committee reports

1855-1863

Box 2: 7

New England Yearly Meeting of Friends. Printed material

1845-1854

Box 2: 8

Miscellaneous

1903-1943

Mitchell, Maria: biographical

1903, 1943

Box 2: 9

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends Records, March 2016.

Related Material

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

SCUA holds separate collections for the records of the **Wilburite (and Otisite)** and **Gurneyite Monthly Meetings** on Nantucket.

The records of the Nantucket Northern District Monthly Meeting, the Hicksite Meeting, and most of the records of the Nantucket Monthly Meeting are housed at the Nantucket Historical Association, including. The latter includes:

Men's and joint minutes, 1845-1873 (Half vol.)

Women's minutes, 1845-1868 (Half vol.)

Women's minutes (rough), 1848-1859 (1 vol.)

Joint minutes, 1873-1900 (1 vol.)

Joint minutes, 1900-1944 (2 vol.)

Membership, 1845-1912 (Half vol.)

Marriages, 1845-1940 (Half vol.)

Removals and denials, 1845-1898 (Half vol.)

Ministers and elders, 1845-1911 (Half vol.)

Treasurer's book, 1845-1857 (Half vol.)

Treasurer's book 1856-1944 (1 vol.)

Library books, 1845-1869 (Half vol.)

Miscellaneous loose papers, 1845-1889 (0.5 ft.)

Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, October 2018.

Language:

English

Copyright and Use (More information)

Cite as: Nantucket Monthly Meeting of Friends Records (MS 902 N368). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

Nantucket (Mass.)--Religious life and customs

New England Yearly Meeting of Friends

Quakers--Massachusetts
Society of Friends--Massachusetts

Contributors

Nantucket Monthly Meeting of Friends [\[main entry\]](#)

Genres and formats

Minutes (Administrative records)

Link to similar SCUA collections

Quakers

Religion

Massachusetts (East)



Special Collections & University Archives
University Libraries : UMass Amherst
154 Hicks Way : Amherst, Mass. 01003-9275
Ph. 413-545-7282 (545-SCUA)

