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South Kingstown Monthly Meeting (Society of Friends) Records

1740-1943

12 vols., 2 boxes (3.75 linear feet)

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The South Kingstown Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends was the home meeting of John Wilbur and as such, the epicenter

of the Wilburite separation of 1845. A part of Rhode Island Quarter, the meeting became a locus for the Wilburite separation of 1845 when the membership at South Kingstown rebuffed efforts to discipline Wilbur. After being suspended from 1842 to 1847, the Gurneyite South Kingstown Monthly Meeting was laid down in 1899.

The records of South Kingstown Monthly Meeting contain an extensive set of minutes, though sparse in the post-separation years, along with vital records, records of meeting disciplinary cases, certificates of manumission for people enslaved by members of the meeting, and miscellaneous other content.

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Background on South Kingstown Monthly Meeting

South Kingstown Monthly was the home meeting of John Wilbur and as such, the epicenter of the Wilburite separation of 1845. Meetings for worship began in Kingstown in 1701, with South Kingstown setting off from Greenwich Monthly Meeting in 1743. Sometimes called Narragansett Monthly Meeting, South Kingstown was part of Rhode Island Quarter throughout its existence. In turn, it was the parent for worship groups at Charlestown (1743-1745), Westerly, (1777-1800), Western (near Matunuck, 1750-1885), and Wood River (1825-1834), as well as Preparatory Meetings at Hopkinton (1743-1888) and Westerly (1743-1777).

A prominent minister, Wilbur grew uneasy with the evangelical direction of Quakerism spread through the influence of the English minister Joseph John Gurney, and he began to advocate vociferously for a "traditional" Quakerly worship emphasizing immediate revelation. In 1838, an attempt by the New England Yearly Meeting to discipline Wilbur for speaking critically of Gurney was rebuffed by South Kingstown, after which the Rhode Island Quarter responded by laying down the monthly in 1842 and attaching its members to Greenwich Monthly Meeting. Greenwich disowned Wilbur a year later.

In the regional split of 1845, a Wilburite meeting was established at South Kingstown, surviving continuously to the general New England reunion in 1945. The Gurneyite meeting at South Kingstown was laid down in 1899.

Scope of collection

The records of South Kingstown Monthly Meeting contain an extensive set of minutes, though sparse in the post-separation years, along with vital records, records of meeting disciplinary cases, certificates of manumission for people enslaved by members of the meeting, and miscellaneous other content.

Some minutes for Greenwich Monthly Meeting (Women) are included in the records for South Kingstown.

Inventory

South Kingstown Monthly Meeting: Minutes

1743-1888

Minutes (Men)

1743-1864

Minutes (Men)

1743-1773

Bound vol.

09:D4

Minutes (Men)

1773-1789



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

Photo by Alton H. Blackington

Bound vol.
09:D4
Minutes (Men)
1789 Sept. 28-1810 Sept. 24

Bound vol.
09:D5
Minutes (Men)
1810 Oct. 22-1828 Apr. 24

Bound vol.
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Minutes (Men)
1828 May 26-1864 Dec. 26

Bound vol.
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Minutes (Women)
1743-1888

Minutes (Women)
1743-1779

Bound vol.
09:D5
Minutes (Women)
1779 Nov. 29-1872 Mar. 25

Bound vol.
09:D5
Minutes (Women): rough
1860-1863

Box 1: 16
Minutes (Women)
1872 Apr. 22-1888 Feb. 20

Bound vol.
09:D5
Correspondence and Discipline
1743-1863
Christian and brotherly advices given forth from time to time by the Yearly Meeting in London. . . [written discipline],
transcribed by Jos. Congdon
ca.1778

Bound vol.
09:D4
Correspondence: Collins, Amos to Perez Peck (re: Wilburite separation)
1844

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Epistles: London Yearly Meeting
1747-1825

Box 2: 1
Epistles: New England Yearly Meeting (from)
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Epistles: Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting (from)
1745-1757

Box 1: 3
Epistles: Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting (to)
1758-1767

Box 2: 2
Epistles: Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting (to)
1768-1778

Box 2: 3
Epistles: Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting (to)
1779-1789

Box 2: 4

Epistles: Yearly Meetings (various)
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Wilbur, John: Greenwich Monthly Meeting [rejection of South Kingstown)
ca.1843
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Meetinghouse: Plainfield
1815
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Meetinghouse: South Kingstown
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Meetinghouse: Summary of deeds
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New England Society for the Preservation of Antiquities: Agreement to care for Friends Burying Ground
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Westerly Burying Ground
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Traveling minutes: Wilbur, John
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South Kingstown Monthly: Vital records: Births, deaths, and marriages
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Publications: Subscriptions and proposals
1789-1826

Box 1: 24

Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting

1809

Box 1: 28

Rigge, Ambrose, *A brief and serious warning to such as are concerned in commerce and trading*. London : Mary Hinde
1771

Box 1: 29

Schools

1779-1882

Box 1: 30

Testimonies: Wilbur, Thomas

1802

Box 1: 31

South Kingstown Monthly Meeting (Gurneyite)

1860-1879

South Kingstown Monthly (Gurneyite): Draft minutes

1860-1861, 1877-1879

Envelope

09:D4

Hopkinton Preparative Meeting

1860-1879

Hopkinton Preparative Meeting

1870

Box 1: 41

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

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

Bibliography

Hazard, Caroline, *The Narragansett Friends' Meeting in the XVIII Century*. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1899.

Related Material

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

Processing Information

Processed by Nora D. Charles, Feb. 2020.

Language:

English

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Cite as: South Kingstown Monthly Meeting (Society of Friends) Records (MS 902 S556). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

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Quakers--Rhode Island

Society of Friends--Rhode Island

South Kingstown (R.I.)--Religious life and customs

Contributors

South Kingstown Monthly Meeting (Society of Friends) **[main entry]**

Wilbur, John, 1774-1856

Genres and formats

Minutes (Administrative records)

Vital records (Document genre)

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