

Maine Historical Society

Coll. 2702
Unitarian Universalist Church of Bryant Pond
Records
Ca. 1836-2002

Accession number: 2012.172

Processed May, 2013 – August, 2013 by Dianne Manning, MHS volunteer

Access: Unrestricted

Copyright: Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the MHS Image Services Coordinator

Size: 4.5 linear feet

Administrative note: The Unitarian Universalist Church of Bryant Pond began as the Woodstock Universalist Church in 1843. The Reverend D.T. Stevens organized a group of thirteen people and held a three-day long meeting on February 9, 10 and 11th. During these meetings the members were baptized in the Universalist faith. The church members would meet in various schoolhouses until 1850 when a townhouse was built to accommodate the meetings. In 1853 the first church was erected, and various ministers lead services until 1867, when the Reverend E.W. Coffin became the first settled minister. Over the next 100 plus years the church was opened and closed and was also part of a merger with other local churches under the umbrella of the Oxford Union Association. During the 1980's and 1990's the church's association with the Union was sporadic, as it tried to maintain its own presence in the community by holding weekly programs and alternating services by what were called "supply ministers" from around the area. The church was officially closed in 2001. The following is a brief timeline of events relating to the history of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bryant Pond:

1843: Organization of the Woodstock Universalist Church, led by D.T Stevens, consisting of thirteen members. Meetings were held over three days

1850: Townhouse erected to hold meetings

1853: First church constructed and completed. E.W. Coffin became the first settled minister, minister in residence.

1890: Reverend Tabor, the last resident minister dies

1890-1948: Sporadic services held and church is often closed to worship

1948: Church re-opened as Unitarian Universalist Church of Bryant Pond

1974: Church was again closed and opened only for special services

1978: Church reopened in conjunction with the Unitarian Universalist Church of West and South Paris, and under the umbrella of the Oxford Union Association

1981: Connection with the Association ended

1981-1985: Services held once a month

1986: Weekly programs held and alternating services provided by ministers of other churches

1990: Church closes but reopens in September of that year

1990-2001: Church came back under the Oxford Union Association umbrella with the South and West Paris branches as well as the Norway branch. Again supply ministers were used. Social justice issues as well as other humanitarian causes were pursued.

Scope and content note: This collection contains meeting minutes, photographs, record books dating back to the early 1800's, hymn books and services, financial statements, minister search procedures and forms, newsletters, handbooks, directories, sheet music and sermons, insurance records and by-laws for both the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bryant Pond and the Oxford Union Association

Names of Note:

Reverend D.T. Stevens
Moses Houghton
Bessie Mann Clifford
Reverend Tabor (1880's)
Dr. Wilbur Miller
Chester Gore Miller
Reverend Gordon Newell
Addelyn Mann
Reverend Patricia Bowen, D. Mn.
Den Corrin
Bob Elliott
Evelyn T. Bean
Reverend Glenn H. Turner

Locations of note: Bryant Pond, Woodstock, West Paris, South Paris, Norway, Andover, Oxford, Lovell, Bridgton, Locke Mills, Poland, Sweden, West Bethel, and Mexico.

Series:

Series 1: About/History, Readings, Services, Music, Poems, Events, Socials, Newsletters, Women's and Youth's Group (Box 1)

Series 2: By-laws and Meeting Minutes (Box 2)

Series 3: Letters, Letterhead, Press Releases, Baptism Notices, Anniversary Services, News-clippings and Photographs (Box 3)

Series 4: Church Surveys, Handbooks, Minister Information, Financials, Operations, Annual Reports, Insurance, Meeting Minutes from 1930's and 1940's, 1908 Letter from Missionary in China (Box 4)

Series 5: Licensure, 1949 Annual Meeting, Constitutions, 1886 sermon, Retreat Photographs, 1940, 1942 Conferences, Lay Speaker's Bureau, Vintage Receipt and Record books, Volume 1 and 2 (Box 5)

Series 6: Guest Book, Volume 3, from 1996, Record Book, Volume 4, 1960's to 1990's (Box 6)

Series 7: Union Conference Books and General Records Books from early 1800's through 1900's Volumes 5-8; Record Book, Volume 9:1917 to 1956, Record Book, Volume 10, 1954 through 1980's (Boxes 7 and 8)

Series 8: New Member Information, Member Lists and Mailing Lists (Box 9)

Provenance: Oxford Union Association

Inventory:

Box 1: About/History, Readings, Services, Events, Socials, Newsletters, Groups

Folder 1: About/History/Essays/Advocacy

Folder 2: (1 of 4) Readings and Services from 1979 to 1999. Detailed programs of services include the following:

1. Order of Service: Many services were often comprised of preludes and opening hymns, followed by readings and music. (One example was a reading by a layperson of "Singing" by Joan Baez followed by an instrumental of " Morning Has Broken") These parts of the service were often followed by a sermon, an offering, an "Affirmation of Faith", benediction and postlude. Services varied in content, but the messages put forth by the church strong are first and foremost a belief in faith in God and Jesus coupled with a promotion of peace, kindness, free will, free thinking and compassion for differences in all aspects of life. Very progressive messages are dispersed throughout the different programs. Traditional Christian holidays like Easter and Christmas are celebrated as well. Many different cultures and religions and teachings are dispersed throughout, from Celtic to cartoons to the celebration of dolphins.

Folder 3: (2 of 4) Readings and Services: Not dated

Folder 4: (3 of 4) Readings and Services: Readings and Poems (A Collection of poems and readings from various services include:

- Book titled "Readings for Common Worship", speeches by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

- "The Lord's Prayer" (Aramaic), celebration of the Loon

Folder 5: (4 of 4) Readings and Services: Hymn Books and Music (Collection of music used in various Unitarian Universalist services over the years. There is a mixture of traditional hymns with more contemporary music from the book "Hymns in New Form

for Common Worship published by the Commission on Common Worship of the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1988

Folder 6: Readings and Services from other Unitarian Universalist churches connected to Bryant Pond. 1963 through 1996

Folder 7: Events, Socials and Sales: 1980's and not dated. Examples of events include:

“Youth in the Church: Where Do We Belong?”

“Partners in Building: Come Raise a Home. Come Raise Some Hope”

“Reclaiming Our Faith: A Maine Speakout Project”

Folder 8: Events, Socials and Sales: 1990's through 2000's. Examples of events include:

“Women and Religion Spring Retreat/Air, Fire, Water, Earth and Spirit:
Exploring the Elemental Archetypes”

“Creating a Jubilee World: An Anti-Racism Workshop”

“Affirming a Multicultural, Multiracial Vision”

“Women Artists Celebrate Life”

“North Atlantic Regional Conference: Celebrating Small Congregations”

Folder 9: The Parish Paper Newsletter (Contains copies of a newsletter created by the Yokefellow Institute in Indiana. It was a two-page newsletter designed to discuss issues that were facing small congregations in the 1980's. Examples of topics include how to equally share expenditures between church and missions, the expectations of members from their churches in regards to giving, “church shoppers” and knowing your congregation.)

Folder 10: Community Cares Newsletter (A newsletter published in the 1990's by a non-profit called Community Concepts that helps provide self-sufficiency services to area residents. Local church groups were often involved in building projects throughout areas in Maine.)

Folder 11: Unitarian Universalist Church of Bryant Pond Newsletters, 1970's to 2000's (These are newsletters from reverends of UU churches of Bryant Pond and West Paris to parishioners of the areas. They include essays as well as event listings.)

Folder 12: Viewpoints Newsletter (Copies of newsletters published by the District Department of Publicity and Publications for the churches of the Northeast District, Unitarian Universalist Association, 1980's through 2000's)

Folder 13: Ladies Circle of Bryant Pond Universalist Church (Contains a notice about a meeting of the Ladies Circle, 1984)

Folder 14: Youth Group of Universalist Church at Bryant Pond (Contains information regarding the activities of the youth group such as picnics, hikes, and a relief fund set up for an African Refugee fund.)

Folder 15: 1999 “Coming of Age Young Women's Retreat” (Contains information about a retreat for pre-adolescent girls that was held to celebrate girls coming of age and an emphasis was places on spirituality and women's issues)

Folder 16: “Getting to Know You” (Contains materials from a game used by children of the UU church to get to know one another. Game was comprised of cards with questions meant to open up children to discussion and meeting others.)

Box 2: By-Laws, Meeting Minutes and Directories

Folder 1: By-Laws: The By-laws of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bryant Pond and the Oxford Union Association of the United Church of Christ. According to the OUA by-laws, membership in the Association included churches “whose expression of faith is in essential agreement with that of the Association, and which, having covenanted with the Association to assume and fulfill faithfully the obligations of a member church as hereinafter set forth and has been recommended by the Church and Ministry Committee of the Association, is received into membership by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a duly called meeting of the Association.” Churches could then “vote” to associate themselves formally with the United Church of Christ. There was a general assembly of the UUA in 1983, brought on by a survey of members expressing a need for “reexamination of UU Theological positions. This may have led to the eventual amalgamation of the UU churches under the Oxford Union umbrella.

Folder 2: Unitarian Universalist Church of Bryant Pond Meeting Minutes 1963-2000’s

Folder 3: Oxford Union Association: By-laws, Meeting Minutes, Events and Correspondence. Examples of items included are: notice of ordinations of ministers, resignations of churches from the Oxford Union, calendars of events, budget reports, newsletters, lists of Union church members and ministers, Social Action committee reports, and Mission Committee reports.

Folder 4: Oxford Union Association Meeting Minutes 1987 to 1995

Folder 5: Oxford Union Association Women’s Fellowship

(The Women’s Fellowship was, as stated, created to “assist all women to grow to full stature as mature Christians; to develop and to coordinate a program which will deepen their Christian witness; and to help women understand and participate in the whole task of the church through worship, study and action.”)

Included in this folder are:

- By-Laws and Constitution of the Women’s Fellowship
- Meeting Minutes of the Executive Committee
- Notes on New England Women’s Celebration Workshop
- Discussion on mission work
- Minutes from Christian Education Committee Meetings
- Member Lists including “Key Women” lists from various towns

including Lorell, Bridgeton, Locke Mills, Poland, Norway, Sweden, West Bethel, Mexico and Andover.

Folder 6: Northeast District of the Unitarian Universalist Church 2001 Annual Meeting Minutes.

Included in this folder are:

- Meeting minutes
- Treasury Reports
- Budget Proposals
- Reports from committees and trustees
- Summary of attendance reports
- Report of the Social Concerns Committee (such issues as Climate

Change, Restorative Justice, Gay Rights and Maine Conservation Voters.)

(Issues discussed at the meeting, in addition to the minutes and reports above, concerned agreements to separate from Canadian congregations, the potential of new administration in Boston, and the initiation of a long range plan to “guide the District into the future.” “Whether our District continues on its present course or charts a new one, whether it merely survives or becomes a dynamic presence for Unitarian Universalism in the area.”

Folder 7: Executive Council Meetings of 1986 and 1987
(The Executive Council is The Unitarian Universalist Church Association General Assembly of the United States that met at various New England locations.)

Folder 8: Unitarian Universalist Church Directory of the Northeast District 1993-1994
(Churches, resources and services)

Folder 9: Unitarian Universalist Church Northeast District Directory 2001-2002
(Churches, resources and services)

**Box 3: Letters, Letterhead, Press Releases, News Clippings and Photographs
(Letters mostly referred to church operations, upcoming events and thank you notes
and letters from reverends to community members and other reverends alike.
Older letters contain great historical references and sometimes humor)**

Folder 1: Letters and Correspondence (1 of 3): 1980's through 1990's

Folder 2: Letters and Correspondence (2 of 3): Older letters and correspondence, 1930-1959, approximate dates.

Folder 3: Letters and Correspondence (3 of 3): 1970's through 1990's

Folder 4: Letterhead of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bryant Pond

Folder 5: Press Releases and News clippings: Includes information about upcoming meetings, future speakers and talks, the rehabilitation of the UU Church at Bryant Pond, Celebrations of anniversaries of the Church and general information about the church and its role in the community. Also included are samples of advertisements from various publications expressing the mission of the Unitarian Universalist church, including the following examples:

“Do you want Sunday School to Scare the Hell out of Your Kids?

“The Best Thing about Church is when it's Over”

“The Unicorn is a Mythical Beast...But Unitarians are Very Real”

“You May Do Just Fine Without Us, But will They?”

Folder 6: Baptism Notices

Folder 7: 125th Anniversary Service Brochure

Folder 8: 140th Anniversary Service Brochure

Folder 9: 160th Anniversary Service Brochure

Folder 10: Photographs: Including church restoration projects, church members, newly refurbished church photographs and photographs of church functions.

Box 4: Church Surveys, Handbooks, Minister Information, Financials, Operations, Annual Reports, Insurance, 1930-1940's meeting minutes, and letter from 1908.

Folder 1: 2001 church survey: Surveyed members about whether they were in favor of continuing the Church, will they pledge money, and would they be willing to serve on a committee.

Folder 2: 2001 Survey results and analysis

Folder 3: Unitarian Universalist Church Congregational Handbook

Folder 4: Minister Search, record sheets and Contracts

Folder 5: Church and Minister Evaluations

Folder 6: Register of Licensed Ministers and Pastors

Folder 7: Ministers and Speakers Lists

Folder 8: Annual Fund Fundraising Information

Folder 9: Financial Statements, General Operations and Procedures

Folder 10: Insurance Information

Folder 11: Annual Report Questionnaires/Surveys from 1956, 1958, 1959, 1961-69

Folder 12: Meeting Minutes/Report from 1930's through 1940's

Folder 13: Information about various campaigns such as:

- The Y2K World Atomic Safety Holiday (WASH) Campaign Petition
- World Peace Tax Fund
- Justice for All: A Pledge for Peace and Self Determination in Central

America

Folder 14: Other Affiliated Organizations Information

- Maine Council of Churches Criminal Justice Committee
- Chemical Abuse and Drug Education Team C.A.D.E.T
- First Parish Church of Kennebunk
- Religious Coalition against Discrimination
- Church Development Ministries
- Allen Avenue Unitarian Universalist Church

Folder 15: Newsletters from Affiliated Organizations:

- Stone Soup
- Maine Interfaith
- Northeast District

Folder 16: The Packet: newsletter sent to all ministers, presidents, clerks and all District personnel from the 1980's and 1990's.

Folder 17: Letter dated 1908 from Diongleh, China documenting missionary work in the region. The letter was to a Mrs. Johnson of the General Council of Congregational Churches in New York from one Elizabeth Perkins. Notes on the Folder from a previous researcher indicate that Elizabeth Sarah Perkins was from Alfred Maine, possibly a Bates College student. She was born in 1883 and died in 1971. She also attended Columbia University. The letter contains references to Bible-women and station classes, an outbreak of small pox and general references to women and children of the area.

Box 5: Licensure Certificates, Constitutions, Retreat Photos, Vintage record and Receipts books, Conference of Lay Speaker's Bureau 1940, 1942 and Record Books Volume One and Two.

Folder 1: Certificates of Ordination, Licensure, Licensure for Lay Preacher, approved by the Committee on Ministerial Standing of the Congregational-Christian Conference of Maine. (Blank Forms)

Folder 2: Brochure from the 114th Annual Meeting of the Union Association of Congregational-Christian Churches and Ministers, April, 1949

Folder 3: Proposed Constitution 1912

Accepted Constitutions 1912 and 1937

(This is the Constitution of the Union Association of Congregational Churches and Ministers.)

Folder 4: Union Conference Semi-Centennial Sermon, 1886, pamphlet

Folder 5: Photographs from a 1989 Work Retreat, June and August

Folder 6: Vintage Receipt books

Folder 7: Copies of first revision for Association Use of Rules of Ministerial Standing of State Conference, May, 1940, summer, 1942

Folder 8: Information regarding the Northeast District UUA Lay Speaker's Bureau.

Includes:

- Blank lay speaker information forms
- Blank feedback forms
- Information on 12 Lay speakers

Volume 1: Records of Oxford Union Association from December, 1871

Volume 2: Records of Oxford Union Association from 1885 to 1897

(These books contain meeting minutes and general information about the Union Association during that time period.)

Box 6: Unitarian Universalist Church of Bryan Pond Record books and Guest Books from 1960's to 1990's

Volume 3: Guest Book Registry from 1996

Volume 4: UUA of Bryant Pond Record Book 1960's to 1990's

(These books contain meeting minutes and general information about the UUA at Bryant Pond during that time period.)

Box 7: Unitarian Universalist Church of Bryan Pond and Union Conference Record books and guest books from 1800's to 1900's

Volume 5: Union Conference of Congregational Churches 1836-1866

Volume 6: Union Conference of Congregational Churches 1866-1897

Volume 7: Union Conference of Congregational Churches 1898-1917

Volume 8: Union Conference of Congregational Churches 1898-1903

Box 8: Unitarian Universalist Church of Bryant Pond Record Books 1917-1956, 1954-1980's

Volume 9: Union Conference of Congregational Churches 1917-1956

Volume 10: Union Conference of Congregational Churches 1954-1980's

**Box 9: Unitarian Universalist Church of Bryan Pond New Member Information,
Member Lists and Mailing Lists**

Folder 1: New Member Information and Welcome Package

Folder 2: Mailing Lists and Member Lists

The Green Book: A Canvas Manual for Unitarian Universalist Congregations