Finding Aid to the Martha’s Vineyard Museum

Record Unit 201

Congregational Church Records of Holmes Hole, West Tisbury and Chilmark Churches 1696-1987

By Barbara Murphy

Descriptive Summary

Repository: Martha’s Vineyard Museum
Call No.
Title: Congregational Church Records of Holmes Hole, West Tisbury and Chilmark Churches 1696-1987
Creator: various
Quantity: .5 cubic feet
Abstract: The Congregational Church collection is a compilation of published pamphlets, newspaper and magazine articles, administrative records, sermons, baptismal records, correspondence, and research notes.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information: The Congregational Church Collection was acquired by the Martha’s Vineyard Museum by many donors throughout the twentieth century.
Processing Information: Barbara Murphy
Access Restrictions: none
Use Restrictions: none
Preferred citation for publication: Martha’s Vineyard Museum, Congregational Church Records of Holmes Hole, West Tisbury and Chilmark Churches 1696-1987, Record Unit 201.

Index Terms

- Churches
- Chilmark Congregational Church
- Holmes Hole Congregational Church
- West Tisbury Congregational Church
- Nathan Mayhew
- Reverend William Homes
- Reverend Joseph Thaxter
- Sermons
Series Arrangement
Series I: Congregational Church
Series II: Diaries, Letters—West Tisbury Religious Leaders
Series III: Congregational Church, Holmes Hole
Series IV: West Tisbury Baptist Church
Series V: Sermons, Sunday exercises
Series VI: Recollections of West Tisbury

Historical Note:
The collection of records in Record Unit 1 has been “artificially” created. There is no original order to these documents. Rather, it is assumed that the organization’s librarians, interns and volunteers have brought these records together at some point. The institution’s own records do not shed any light on when and why the collection was originally formed. What is known is that the MVM was founded in 1922. And, the organization began to collect documents in 1923. Thus, the formation of this record unit can only be dated to sometime between 1923 and the present day. The processing of this collection in 2006 has largely kept this artificial collection together.

Scope and Content Note:
This record unit consists of information, sermons and records pertaining to the Congregational Churches in Chilmark, Holmes Hole and West Tisbury including: information about church members in 1717, a warrenty deed of 1871, two sermons of Rev. William Homes 1696, a Samuel Cooper sermon 1753, and some recollections of West Tisbury by individuals. On the back of the minutes of the Holmes Hole Congregational Church (folder 16), is a short genealogy of Nathan Mayhew including namesake who died aged 11 months, 15 days.

Series Description:
Series I: Congregational Church
Box 1 of 1
Folder 1: Documents of West Tisbury Congregational Church, 1717-1983, originals and photocopies
Folder 2: Photocopies of baptisms, 1783
Folder 3: Sermon by Henry Lincoln, 1801 — First Church and Society in Tisbury
Folder 4: Written copy of 1837 vote on bell tolling
Folder 5: 1871 Warrenty Deed and copy; Draft by-laws
Folder 6: Steeple/clock, 1923-1975
Folder 7: Pamphlets, 1923, 1986
Folder 8: Essay, 1942 by Marshall Shepard
Folder 9: Program, 1965; photocopies of church history
Folder 10: Articles on Elmer Athearn and town clock

Series II: Diaries, Letters—West Tisbury Religious Leaders
Folder 11: Rev. William Homes, 1780; N.E. Genealogical Register 1894-1896
Folder 12: Photocopy of Rev. Thomas Davis’s minister’s diary, 1910-1939;
Photocopy of journal page from Rev. Newton James of WT Church, Aug. 1924

Series III: Congregational Church, Holmes Hole
Folder 13: Letters granting dismissals of individuals to join new Holmes Hole
Church 1844-1848
Folder 14: 1844 letter re: establishment of new Church — Nathan Mayhew, clerk
Folder 15: Letter, July 2, 1847 from J. Clark to Nathan Mayhew
Folder 16: Minutes of meetings March-December 1851, March-May 1852.
Folder 17: By-laws Confession of Faith pamphlet 1844
Folder 18: 1848 correspondence: Church Committee and George Dunham
Folder 20: Receipt of payment of ministerial services, July 23, 1849
Folder 21: 1847 complete record of all houses Nathan Mayhew visited
Folder 22: Correspondence: Elijah Dexter to Nathan Mayhew 1842
Folder 23: Paper re sale of pews

Series IV: West Tisbury Baptist Church
Folder 24: Dedication 1837

Series V: Sermons, Sunday exercises
Folder 25: August 8, 1753: Samuel Cooper
Folder 26: May 29, 1811: Thomas Thacher
Folder 28: 1851 Ebenezer Chase: “To Young Ministers….”, original and copy
Folder 29: Rev. William Homes 1732, Chilmark: “Proposals of Some Things to be
done in Church Gov’t”; “Ecclesiastical Gov’t”
Folder 30: Rev. William Homes, 1732: Four sermons preached in Chilmark

Series VI: Recollections of West Tisbury
Folder 32: 19th Century Childhood (given 1920), fall 1987