

Inventory of the

Big Woods Congregational Church
Aurora, IL

Records

In the

Regional History Center

RC 311

INTRODUCTION

David Nasgowitz, former pastor, donated the Big Woods Congregational Church records to the Northern Illinois Regional History Center on May 17, 2011.

Property rights in the collection are held by the Regional History Center; literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

Linear Feet of Shelf Space: 3.75
Number of Containers: 8 boxes
Northern Illinois Regional History Center
Collection 311

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Big Woods Congregational Church (BWCC) collection represents a modest portion of the historical records pertaining to the church's establishment in 1835 and growth throughout the years. Types of records include church histories, membership and pastor lists, building renovations plans, land purchases, and Big Woods' withdrawal from the United Church of Christ (UCC) and joining the National Association of Congregational Christ Churches (NACCC) in 1975. There are numerous church histories written by members, newspapers, and historians due to the church being established in the early settler period of Illinois.

Care was taken to maintain the donor's original order of the collection. The donor's container lists can be found in the case file. Big Woods Congregational Church is a branch from the Batavia Congregational Church; reference RC 82 for additional information.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

In August of 1835, fourteen pioneers organized a "Church of Christ," with the assistance of Presbyterian Rev. R.W. Gridley and Rev. N. C. Clark. The group met in the log cabin of Thompson Paxton; it was named the Church of Big and Little Woods because of the surrounding wooded areas. In 1824, twenty members organized as a Congregational Church, but it was not until 1850 that they were able to build a sanctuary. Members pledged abstinence from hard liquor and later became part of the Underground Railroad.

Mission stipends from the Home Mission Society and the American Missionary Society allowed Big Woods Church to act as a base for establishing Congregational Churches in Aurora and West Chicago, as a regional base for the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), and as a training ground for Christian Endeavor. The Church also has an active Women's

Missionary Society that serves in Chicago, Aurora, and abroad. Pastors have included four professors, over a dozen students of Wheaton College, and student interns of North Central College and Seminary in Naperville. Big Woods also participates in local ecumenical missions in and around the surrounding community.

SUBJECT TRACINGS

Aurora (Ill.)
Big Woods Congregational Church
Church of the Big and Little Woods
Congregationalists
DuPage County (Ill.)
Frontier and pioneer life
Prohibition
Religious Institutions--Illinois--Aurora
Underground Railroad
Women--Societies and clubs

COLLECTION INVENTORY

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
1	1	“Spirit of the People,” Church History, 2006
	2	Notes of David Nasgowitz used for “Spirit of the People,” no date
	3	History: Church histories by various authors, no date
	4	Inventory, Records of the Congregational Church of Batavia, 1981
	5	“A History of the Congregational Church of Batavia,” 1985
	6	“History of the Fox River Baptist Association,” Tolman, 1859
	7	First Congregational Church booklet, Naperville, 1933
	8	History: “Big Woods Congregational Church Centennial Pageant,” HM Triplett, 1935
	9	History: 115 th Anniversary of BWCC and Centennial Dedication of Church Building, 1950
	10	History: 125 th Anniversary of BWCC, 1960
	11	History: 135 th Anniversary and Rededication, 1970
	12	History: 140 th Anniversary, 1975
	13	History: 140 th Anniversary and IL Senate Resolution, 1975
	14	History: 150 th Anniversary and Historic Marker, 1985
	15	History: 143 rd Anniversary, 1978
	16	History: Historical Marker by Daughters of American Colonists, 1975
	17	History: 160 rd Anniversary, 1995
	18	“A Chronology of God’s Care,” Pastor List, Nasgowitz, 1982
	19	Big Woods Annual Pork and Kraut Dinner, no date
	20	Big Woods Claim Society, 1836
	21	Apostolic Communion, Lenten, and Easter Articles, no date
	22	“In Commemoration...” Fiftieth Anniversary of the Organization of the General Congregational Association of Illinois, 1894
	23	History: “Narrative of Aurora Association,” Lewis, 1927
	24	Aurora Beacon News, “Then and Now,” 1928-1935
2	1	History: Various Articles on Big Woods’ Pastors and Members, no date
	2	Paxton Cabin Research, Schuster, 1985
	3	Big Woods Withdrawal from UCC and Joining NACCC, 1975
	4	Organ Dedication, 1951
	5	Hymn Book Subscriptions, 1983

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	4	
2	6	Survey - Road: Ferry, Sunrise, Meadow, Barclay, Rigi, no date		
	7	History: Abolition documents, Batavia, circa 1843		
	8	Free Church Polity Report to Congregational Christ Churches of the US, 1954		
	9	Congregational and Christian Conference of Illinois, 1957		
	10	Historical Booklet Commemorating the Centennial of the Batavia Congregational Church, 1935		
	11	"A History of Central Church," no date; and "100 th Birthday of Yorkville Church Today," 1934		
	12	"First Congregational Church of Aurora," no date; and "Oldest Church Closes Sunday," 1968		
	13	History: Underground Railroad, no date		
	14	Our Little Farm Rhymes, Bartholomew, 1883-1933		
	15	NACCC Annual Meeting, 1975		
	16	NACCC Yearbook, 1975		
	17	List of Church Members, 1835-1841		
	18	Membership Lists, 1902-1940		
	19	Church Membership by County and Denomination, 1980		
	20	"Local Church Report," 1922-1966		
	21	History: "Organization of the Church..." no date		
	22	Letters of Transfer, 1834-1852		
	3	1	BWCC Ledger, 1899-1904	
		2	Ledger - Records of Big Woods Church, 1842-1890	
		3	History of BWCC, Letters and Correspondence, 1851	
		4	Biographies: Ferry, Wayne, Marquart, McKee, Paxton, Town, Gregg; no date	
		5	Correspondence to Rev. L. Foote, 1842	
6		Church Minutes, 1887-1905		
7		Missionary Society Secretary's Reports, (1907-1930)		
8		Big Woods Temperance Union (WCTU), Secretary's Report, 1904-1909		
9		Big Woods WCTU Organization and Records, 1893-1904		
10		Big Woods WCTU Secretary's Report, 1910-1927		
11		Letter from Ronald Reagan, 1981		
12		History: "The Ideals from our Church School," no date		
13		Maps and Pictures, no date		
14		History: Ordination of David Nasgowitz, 1984; and service of Recognition, no date		
15		Constitutions of the BWCC, no date		
16		Bulletins, Various Pastors, 1984-1996		

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	5	
4	1-16	Annual Report, 1957-2011		
	17	Directory, notes and calling tree, no date		
	18	BWCC in National Register of Historic Places, 1962		
	19-21	Sunday School Attendance Records, 1878-1901		
5	1-3	Sunday School Attendance Records, 1905-1926		
	4	Minutes of Winfield Township Sunday School Association 1906-1910		
	5	Minutes: Winfield-Wayne Township Sunday School Convention; 1920-1936		
	6	Christian Education Newsletter, 1993-1996		
	7	Sunday School Friendship Class Treasurer's Report, 1935		
	8-9	Sunday School Treasurer's Report, 1890-1922		
	10	Women's Missionary Society, Treasurer's Accounts, 1895		
6	1	Sunday School Treasurer's Report, 1945-1978		
	2	Big Woods Missionary Society Treasurer's Books, 1928-1946		
	3	Memorial Fund and Building Fund Information, no date		
	4	Minutes, Board of Trustees, 1979-1980		
	5	Record of Subscription Payments. 1899-1900		
	6	Record of Contributions, 1906		
	7-9	Treasurer's Reports, 1946-1963		
	10	Book of Accounts, 1911-1918		
	11	Tidings Newsletter, 1982-2006		
	12	Marriage Records, 1979-1981		
	13	Women's Missionary Society, Secretary's Reports, 1961-1970		
	14	Yearbook, NACCC, 1982-1983		
	7	1	Articles and Clippings on BWCC, no date	
		2	Journal Entry, Unknown Author, no date	
3		Sesquicentennial and Materials of M. Mann ,no date		
4		History: "Out of the Wilderness," Mann, no date		
5		Olympia Brown, Speeches and Writing, 1983		
6		Luvisa Steck, Early Poetic Writings, no date		
7		Genealogy and Local Histories, no date		
8		NACCC Yearbook, 1980-1981		
9		Church Activities, Membership Transfers, Conway Living Trust, 1948, 1992		
10		Meeting Minutes, 1973-1979, 2001		
11		Treasurers Reports: Net Worth, 2000-2002		
12		Monthly Meeting Agenda and Pastors, 2000-2001		
13		Notebook, no date		

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	6
7	14	Edwin More: Genealogy and Family History, 1997	
	15	Eulogy and Card for Passing of Elmer Ferry, 1998	
	16	Tax Exemption Records, 1997	
	17	Directory, Address and Phone, 1986-1998	
	18	Early Records: Deeds, Constitution, Missionary's Journal, Separation from Cemetery, 1850	
	19	Petition to Warrenville for Rezoning, 1990	
	20	Container List Inventory, 1993	
	21	Newspaper Articles and Clippings, no date	
	22	Appraisal Report, 1987	
	23	List of Former Ministers of Bigwoods, 1842-1926	
	24	African American Heritage, no date	
	25	Newsletter Copies, Children's Ministry, 1995	
	26	Newspaper Articles Concerning Eola rd. Extension, 1998	
	27	Pastoral Agreement between Mr. Cate and BWCC, 2011	
	28	Petition to Aurora for Annexation, 2002	
	29	Correspondence: Caithamer to Pastor Nascowitz, 2003	
	30	Church Membership Records, 1966-1996)	
8	1	Women's Christian Temperance Union: Day Book, 1894-1906	
	2	History: Letters Rev. Gridley, 1835-1836	
	3	History: Letters Nathaniel Clark, 1833-1837	
	4	History: Letters Rev. Farnam, 1843	
	5	Pastor and Memorable Events List, 1922-1983	
	6	Bigwoods Purchase of Land, 1994	
	7	Meeting Minutes, May 16, 2010, April 10, 2011-April 13, 2014	
	8	Big Woods Cabinet Meeting Minutes, October 16, 2011- August 27, 2012	
Oversize Drawer 24	1	DuPage County Map, 1862	