

Xonnabel Clark Collection

Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Gift of Xonnabel Clark, 2013

Collection ID: CHC027

Dates: c. 1871 -2013

Extent: 10 folders in one letter carton

Processed by: Jacky Martin, 2/16/2018

Access: Collection is available for research under the CHC rules of use.

Collection Description:

The Xonnabel Clark Collection consists of documents, photographs, and other material collected by Xonnabel Clark relating to the church she attended for many years, Grace Vision United Methodist.

The items in this collection were donated by Xonnabel Clark after the Grace Vision United Methodist congregation moved from their longtime Cambridge home to St. Johns in Watertown. Mrs. Clark had already cultivated a relationship with the Cambridge Historical Commission during the Historical Landmark application for the church in 2013.

Provenance and Biography Note:

Xonnabel Clark was born Xonnabel Marie Green on 23 Nov 1932. She married Emory J. Clark circa 1953. Mrs. Clark received her Master's in Education from Harvard University and was a teacher and counselor at various area schools including the Hecht House in Boston and the Newton Public schools while her husband, Emory Clark (1925-present) had the first black-owned and -operated pharmacy in Cambridge. They had five children: Emery E, Xonna Marie, Ellington, Eugene, and Donatilda Debra Clark (1966-1980). Mrs. Clark was an extremely active member of the Grace Methodist congregation from 1956 to approximately 2013 and became the unofficial church historian during the 2000s.

Historical Note on the Grace Vision United Methodist Church:

The original congregation were members of the Harvard Street Church. It is unclear if the church was an outgrowth of the Sabbath School – a joint venture founded in April 1870 by Baptist, Congregational, and Methodist Churches in the Cambridge area – or if the original congregation had already begun organizing before that point. The Cottage Street Methodist Episcopal Church in Cambridge was officially founded on 5 April 1871. In the early years, the seventeen-member congregation worshipped at the small chapel built on Cottage Street, but eventually the congregation grew to such a size that a larger space was needed. A plot of land was bought at the corners of Magazine and Perry Streets, an architect (Franklin E. Kidder) was found, and construction began in 1886. It was renamed Grace Methodist Episcopal and services began at the new location on 56 Magazine Street in June of 1887.

Since then, Grace Vision United Methodist Church has gone by many names, changing names four times – from Grace Methodist Episcopal to Grace Methodist to Grace United Methodist, and finally, to Grace

Vision United Methodist – with the final change occurring due to a merging of two separate Methodist congregations, Grace UMC and Vision UMC in 2008.

Over the years, Grace Vision has been heavily involved in community support and outreach programs, including the original Sabbath School, as well as sponsoring the Fisk Jubilee Singers, various Scout troops, and providing space to other church and community groups throughout the years, including the Cambridge Welcoming Ministry (an LBGT-focused congregation) and the Grace Academy, which offered an ESL program for adults, and art and music programs for children.

Related Resources:

see CHC survey files: Grace Vision United Methodist Church

See CHC vertical files: Emory J Clark

Scope and Content:

This collection consists of church programs, newsletters, correspondence, photographs, newspaper clippings, and other ephemera relating to the Grace Vision United Methodist Church and other surrounding churches in the area.

Series I: Grace Vision United Methodist (1871-2013)

- Folder 1 of 5: History of Grace Vision United Methodist Church, Contains the *History of Grace Vision United Methodist 1871-2009: 138 Years of Christian Service*, collated and written by Xonnabel Clark; historical information on the church; and information about the pastors of the church including the obituary of Rev. Francis J. Mazzeo and an article about Rev. Wesley D. Williams, two of the more prominent pastors of the church. 1871-2009.
- Folder 2 of 5: Ephemera and Photographs, Ephemera and photographs (25) of the church, its activities and members (c.1930-2009). There are also more photograph photocopies contained within the *History of Grace Vision United Methodist* (see Series 1, Folder 1).
- Folder 3 of 5: Church Newsletters, Selected church newsletters and official letters to the congregation spanning 1903-2013 (9 total)
- Folder 4 of 5: Programs and Promotional Material, Programs and promotional material relating to special events held at the Grace Vision UMC from 1971-2012, including three special service programs celebrating Martin L. King Jr, who visited the church when he spoke at First Baptist in January of 1960.
- Folder 5 of 5: Cambridge Historical Commission, Documents and correspondence relating to the designation of the 56 Magazine Street church as a historical landmark site and the restoration work done on the church throughout the years. 2007-2013.

Series II: Inter-Church Relations (c. 1950s-1978)

- Folder 1 of 5: Inter-Church Organizations, Correspondence and meeting minutes relating to three Cambridge-based interchurch organizations: the Cambridge Council of Churches, the Central Square Minister's Association, and the Cambridge Inter-Church Fellowship. 1968-1978.
- Folder 2 of 5: Inter-Church Programs, Programs from various area churches including programs of joint services offered by area interchurch organizations. c1950s-1977.
 - Old Cambridge Baptist Church was Xonnabel Clark's old church in 1954, before moving to Grace Vision. Rev. Millar was the pastor there at that time.
- Folder 3 of 5: Christian Unity Week, Programs and correspondence relating to the 1977 and 1978 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity events.

- Folder 4 of 5: Newspaper Clippings, Newspaper clippings (6) relating to various churches in the Cambridge area. 1970-1978.
- Folder 5 of 5: Local Resources, Local resources including pastor directories and information on various social services. c1975-1977.

Added Entries:

African American churches

Cambridge (Mass.)—Buildings, Structures, Etc.

Central Square (Cambridge, Mass.)

City churches—Cambridge—Massachusetts

Martin Luther King, Jr., Day

Methodist church buildings

Methodist Church—United States —History

Methodist Church—Anniversaries, etc

Methodist Church—Membership

Women in the Methodist Church