

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received **MAR 8 1982**
date entered **APR 12 1982**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic **Fourth Congregational Church**

and/or common **Horace Bushnell Congregational Church**

2. Location

street & number **Albany Avenue ^{and} at Vine Street** N/A not for publication

city, town **Hartford** N/A vicinity of congressional district **1st**

state **Connecticut** code **09** county **Hartford** code **003**

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name **Horace Bushnell Congregational Church**

street & number **23 Vine Street**

city, town **Hartford** N/A vicinity of state **Connecticut**

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. **City and Town Clerk's Office, Municipal Building**

street & number **550 Main Street**

city, town **Hartford** state **Connecticut**

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title **State Register of Historic Places** has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date **1980** federal state county local

depository for survey records **Connecticut Historical Commission**

city, town **Hartford** state **Connecticut**

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Horace Bushnell Congregational Church, constructed in 1913-14 in the Georgian Revival style, is located at the intersection of Vine Street and Albany Avenue in Hartford. Built on a slight rise, the building faces Albany Avenue on a diagonal axis, resulting in a high degree of visibility from that avenue, the major thoroughfare in the area. This effect is accentuated by the height of the steeple, which dominates the lower, surrounding buildings. In plan, the church is rectangular, with an ell and a one-story addition at the rear. Built of red brick in the Flemish bond, the church rests on a concrete foundation. The gable roof and decorative trim are of wood.

The gable roof ends in a pediment supported by a monumental portico of six Corinthian columns, dominating the facade. A garland of foliate design embellishes the tympanum, and ornate modillions support the cornice throughout the structure. Steps of granite lead to three panelled doors. The central door is flanked by Corinthian pilasters supporting an entablature, in imitation of the classical order of the portico. The doors on either side are smaller in scale with a similar, though simplified, surround. Narrow rectangular windows next to these side doors have 6-over-6 double-hung sash. The five windows above the doorways have 10-over-15 double-hung sash framed in shouldered moldings. The steeple, which relates visually to the portico, consists of a square brick base supporting a frame superstructure of square section with Corinthian columns and pilasters. Above this, an octagonal base with Corinthian detail supports the conical spire. (Photograph 1).

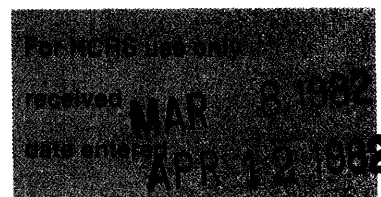
The side elevations feature the gable ends of a narthex which project slightly from the church structure. These are distinguished by an open-bed pediment with returns supported by brick pilasters. The narthex is one bay in width with a lower 12-over-12 double-hung sash, and an upper double-hung sash with rounded head and a brick arch with cement keystone. The spandrel between the two windows is occupied by an inset rectangular panel of cement. The nave, divided into five bays by brick pilasters, continues this pattern of fenestration. (Photograph 2).

To the rear of the church is a two-story ell somewhat smaller than the main church building. Entrances on either side are Georgian Revival in character. The end of the ell has an open-bed pediment with prominent returns emphasized by the projecting brick wall beneath. A balustrade on the roof has been removed. An arcaded corbel table and a large Palladian window also distinguish this end. The rear doorway, of Georgian Revival design, has been altered to provide access to a one-story parish house added in 1955. (Photograph 3).

The interior of the church is derived from Georgian models in both plan and decorative scheme. (Figure 1). The front entrances lead to a barrel-vaulted vestibule in the narthex. On either side are coat rooms and stairs leading to the balcony. From the vestibule, entry to the large auditorium is obtained. Three sections of pews divided by two central aisles face the pulpit platform at the opposite end of the building. Above these, a balcony is supported by slender columns. (Photograph 4).

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The auditorium, capable of seating 1,500, is commanded by a large Austin organ set within an elaborate wooden framework. (Photograph 5). Walls and ceilings are decorated with plasterwork of classical inspiration set within panels. Window openings are defined by moldings which also divide the wall space into panels. (Photograph 6 and 7). A large central lighting fixture, now removed, was suspended from a pierced medallion in the ceiling. (Photograph 8). Lighting fixtures of marbled porcelain are original throughout. (Photograph 7).

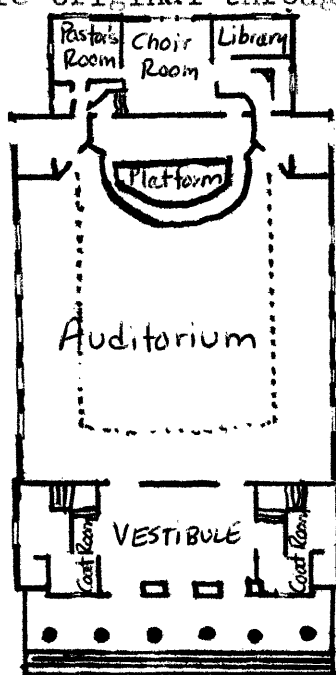


Figure 1
Floor Plan
Horace Bushnell Congregational
Church
Hartford, Ct.

The ell at the rear of the church contains the space for the organ, behind which are located the choir room, Pastor's Room, and Library. Access to these is provided through lobbies which also contain the side entrances to the ell.

The Horace Bushnell Congregational Church has undergone few changes since its original conception in 1913. Changes have been minor and of little impact on the visual appearance of the church. The most notable changes has been the placement of a one-story parish house at the rear of the building in 1955. As this addition is not visible from Albany Avenue, it does not interfere with the striking external aspect of the church.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1913-1914

Builder/Architect

Davis and Brooks

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Horace Bushnell Congregational Church, which contains significant portions of an earlier Greek Revival church, is an early manifestation of interest in historic preservation in the Hartford area. The skillful integration of these earlier elements into a Georgian Revival design has been handled sympathetically by the architectural firm of Davis and Brooks. The resultant hybrid composition compares favorably to the other Congregational churches of Hartford, of early 19th century date, and to Georgian Revival churches statewide. (Criterion C). The Fourth Congregational Church, the predecessor of the Horace Bushnell Congregational Church, was noted in the 19th- and early 20th-centuries for its advocacy of social reforms. Graham Taylor, minister from 1880-1888, rose to national prominence as one of the founders of the social work movement. Since 1954, the Horace Bushnell Congregational Church has been instrumental in providing a variety of services to the surrounding community which have been models for other community activist groups. (Criterion A).

The Fourth Congregational Church on Main Street in Hartford was constructed in 1850 using a design by the New Haven architect, Sidney Mason Stone, directed by the building committee to copy the Center Church on the Green in New Haven. In 1913, the congregation of the Fourth Church voted to sell the old building and remove to Albany Avenue. Drawings for a new church edifice were solicited from area architects by the committee responsible for the new building. Davis and Brooks, rather than submitting a new design, in the words of William F. Brooks:

"...proposed to the committee a scheme which preserved the character and best features of the old church. These architects explained the value, historic, sentimental, and real, of the easily removable porch and handsome spire for so many years one of the landmarks of Hartford, and that with these as the dominant adornment they would design a modern auditorium in keeping, agreeing thus to produce far richer and more important results than the money at hand could produce in new work." 1

The committee accepted the idea with enthusiasm and, although the old building had already been sold, the new owner permitted the removal of steeple, portico and doors to the new site, sparing him the cost of their removal, as he intended to convert the former church into a theatre. The new building, of brick, was carefully designed to integrate the older elements, which were painted white to contrast with the red brick, a feature common to most Georgian Revival architecture of the time. 2.

Two churches on Main Street in Hartford, the First Congregational Church

9. Major Bibliographical References

Brooks, W.F., "The Fourth Congregational Church of Hartford: Old Traditions Embodied in the New Building," Architecture, Vol. 42 (Aug., 1920), pages 237-238.

Five Year's Growth. A sketch of the evangelistic work centering at the Fourth

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.62 acres

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Hartford North

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

UTM NOT VERIFIED

A

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4	6	2	7	7	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

A description of the property may be found at the Office of the City and Town Clerk, Municipal Building, Hartford, Ct, in the Land Records, Vol. 935, page 61, dated March 29, 1954.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dale S. Plummer, National Register Nominations Consultant

organization Connecticut Historical Commission date 4/30/80

street & number 59 South Prospect Street telephone 566-3005


city or town Hartford state Connecticut

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification


The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

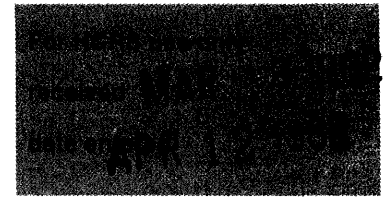
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date February 19, 1982

For HCPS use only I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register for  Keeper of the National Register	Entered in the National Register date <u>4/12/82</u>
Attest: Chief of Registration	date

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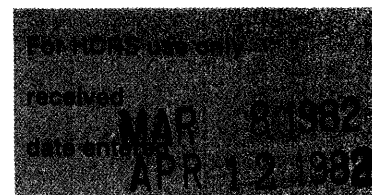
of Christ, built in 1807, and the South Congregational Church of 1825-27, may have provided Davis and Brooks with inspiration. While similar in general plan, however, the massive proportions of the Greek Revival portico on Albany Avenue creates a bolder visual impact. This is accentuated by the absence of the stepped parapet associated with the earlier churches. Rather, the monumental portico supports visually the steeple, as, to a lesser extent, do the gable ends of the narthex. (Photographs 1 and 2) The use of Greek Revival combined with the Georgian Revival style is successful because of the common derivation of both styles, and the sensitive treatment of the early material by Davis and Brooks. The result is more robust than the pure Georgian Revival churches which were built throughout Connecticut in the 20th-century.

In the context of contemporary attitudes towards preservation, the re-use of the steeple, portico and doorways of the old Main Street church is striking. Attempts to preserve buildings of architectural merit were in the early 20th-century confined primarily to structures associated with great individuals of the past, and thus only secondarily to architecture. Preservation attempts were also extended to works of superlative merit by widely-recognized architects, or buildings of extreme age dating to the 17th- or 18th-centuries, which had gained value through scarcity and a revival of interest in the colonial period of American history. The incorporation of portions of the Madison Square Presbyterian Church in the Hartford Times Building in 1920, is an excellent example of prevailing concepts of preservation. Donn Barber, architect of the Times building, sought to preserve the work of Sanford White, of the internationally known firm of McKim, Mead and White, recognizing the significance of White's contributions to architecture.³ However, the retention of portions of an attractive Greek Revival building by an obscure mid 19th-century architect was unusual, and symptomatic of growing appreciation for both design quality and the potential economy of re-use. As William F. Brooks stated, "Even on its commercial side this solution proved wise and showed forcibly the folly of discarding what was so valuable to those who could properly make use of it."⁴ Publication of this statement in a national journal could not but create more awareness of the desirability of conserving noteworthy architectural material.

As an institution, the Horace Bushnell Congregational Church is the product of a merger between the Fourth Congregational Church and the Windsor Avenue Congregational Church in 1954. The Fourth Congregational Church, which constructed the present building in 1913-14, was founded as The Free Church in 1832, based on the then radical notion of not charging for pews in order to open the church to a larger segment of the population. While financial pressures forced reversion to pew rental in 1838, an active concern for the poorer members of the community remained as a legacy. The new church subscribed to other radical ideas as well, as in the placement of advertising outside the building.⁵

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In the 1840s and 1850s, the church became identified with the anti-slavery movement through the outspoken William Weston Patton. In his farewell sermon, Patton cited those instances when he had spoken from the pulpit against slavery, and noted that his only regret was "... that I have said so little on behalf of the outraged slave, rather than that I have said so much." It was during his ministry that the Main Street church was built in 1850.⁶ The new church of 1850 was located on Main Street near the northern boundary of the present Downtown, an area now altered considerably through highway construction and urban renewal.

By 1880, the fortunes of the church had declined. Graham Taylor, arriving in Hartford in 1880 as the new pastor, observed:

"I found the Fourth Church to have more of a history than a hope. Although on Main Street at the center of the city, its spire rose above a district covering one-quarter of the city's area, into which three-quarters of its poor and delinquent people were densely crowded. Their need to be served appealed to me so much more than serving the church that I challenged it to devote itself to the people surrounding it as the only hope of saving itself." 7.

Calling on the Fourth Church's traditional sense of mission, Taylor actively sought to reach out to the community through open-air services on the streets, on baseball fields, from the steps of the church itself. He visited police station, jail, and state prison to find converts. His revivalism and evangelistic style received little support from other local clergy, accustomed to more intellectual discourse, but succeeded in reviving the flagging fortunes of the Fourth Church. 8.

By 1884, his success convinced local clergymen in Hartford to sponsor a "Pastor's Mission," aimed at bringing the Christian gospel to the poor and destitute. The choice of leadership was clear:

"Because of its central location, the city missionary spirit which founded it and characterized its work for half a century, and because of its disposition to do much of the practical work involved, as well as to receive and care for all who preferred no other church, the Fourth Church was selected to be headquarters of the Mission, and its pastor was chosen to direct the work." 9.

The efforts of Taylor and his congregation proved so effective that the new enterprise was soon known as the "Fourth Church Mission." In the district around the church were said to find 90% of all houses of ill-repute and 83% of the bars within Hartford, comprising 10% of the land area of the city, fertile ground indeed!¹⁰.

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In 1888, Taylor's success and reputation resulted in his appointment as a faculty member to the conservative Hartford Theological Seminary. By 1892, his widening fame prompted the Chicago Theological Seminary to invite Taylor to head the new Department of Christian Sociology there. In Chicago, Taylor founded the Chicago Commons, a settlement-house which gained national attention for its work in the crowded Chicago slums. In 1903, he offered the first course for social workers in Chicago, expanded the following year to a full-time program later absorbed by the University of Chicago as the Graduate School of Social Service Administration. President of the National Conference of Charities and Correction in 1914, and of the National Federation of Settlements, Taylor was a leading figure in the development of social work as a solution to urban problems, a task for which his 12 years at the Fourth Congregational Church in Hartford had helped to prepare him. 11.

The revitalized church left by Graham Taylor continued to prosper under the leadership of Henry H. Kelsey, who had served as associate pastor under Taylor from 1888-1892, and as minister from 1898-1910. By 1913, the growing commercialization of Main Street resulted in the decision to sell the Main Street church, built in 1850, and to erect a new church on Albany and Vine in the Northwest of Hartford. The suggestion of the architectural firm of Davis and Brooks to re-use significant portions of the earlier church in the new building was received warmly by the congregation, symbolizing the continuity of the new church with the old. 12.

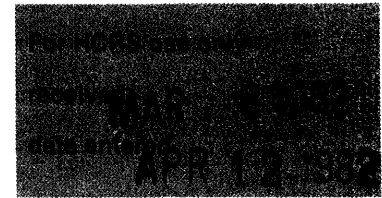
By 1953, demographic change had resulted in membership decline. Increasing numbers of church members moved to the suburban areas of West Hartford as the neighborhood of Upper Albany Avenue became more racially diverse. 13. In response to the changing situation, the Horace Bushnell Congregational Church was created through the merger of the Fourth Congregational Church and the Windsor Avenue Congregational Church. The new church body occupied the Fourth Congregational Church building at Albany and Vine. The goals of the merger were outlined by the Rev. Joseph Zezzo, pastor of the newly merged church:

"It seeks to be more than a combining of two churches. It seeks to present a unified Protestant witness which shall not only minister to the Protestants in the area but shall also evangelize among the thousands who are unchurched and neglected by the Christian churches." (Underlining author's) 14.

The newly created Horace Bushnell Congregational Church built a new parish house in 1955 and demolished the former Batterson mansion for parking. As a symbol of commitment to the area, the church building was repaired and repainted. In 1957, Church Homes, a corporation created by Horace Bushnell Congregational Church, constructed 20 units of elderly housing on Vine Court. A black Religious Education Director was hired to serve the growing black population and gained acceptance from both old

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and new members of the congregation. 15.

Rev. Zezzo resigned in 1962 to head the local Christian Activities Council (C.A.C.), but continued his association with the church and encouraged the development of community programs. Under the leadership of Rev. Phillip Ramstad, the South Vine Neighborhood Association was formed, and in 1963, together with the C.A.C., Horace Bushnell Apartments, Inc. was formed to rehabilitate 13 abandoned apartment buildings nearby, the first such project in the City of Hartford.¹⁶ Numerous community programs have been spawned by the church, including the first Headstart program in the State of Connecticut. The decision of the church membership and leaders to serve the larger community surrounding them has proved a model for other inner city churches. The analogy of the church's role to the "Social Christianity" of Rev. Taylor is evident to the present church leaders. 17.

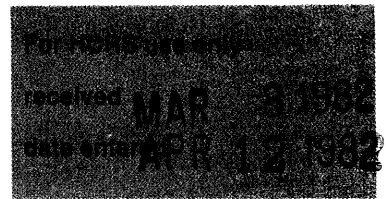
The Horace Bushnell Congregational Church possesses architectural value for the quality of its design, integrating portions of an earlier church building with the Georgian Revival style. The very fact of this re-use of significant architectural elements is of importance locally. The continuity of a tradition of service to the community, and the influence of the ideals of such pastors as Graham Taylor, have proved a positive influence within the City of Hartford and elsewhere.

Footnotes.

1. Brooks, W.F., "The Fourth Congregational Church of Hartford: Old Traditions Embodied in the New Building," Architecture, Vol. 42 (Aug. 1920), p. 238.
2. Ibid, p. 238.
3. Hartford Architecture Conservancy Survey, Hartford Architecture: Volume One: Downtown. Hartford: Hartford Architecture Conservancy, 1978, p. 70.
4. Brooks, op.cit., p. 238.
5. Memorial Manual of the Fourth Congregational Church, Hartford, Connecticut. No date or imprint (1882?), pages 11, 13.
6. Patton, William Weston. Decennial and Farewell Sermons. Hartford: Case, Tiffany & Co., 1857, pages 45-46.
7. Taylor, Graham. Pioneering on Social Frontiers. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930, pages 362-363.
8. Ibid, p. 363.
9. Five Year's Growth. A sketch of the evangelistic work centering at the Fourth Church, Hartford, Conn. Hartford: Hartford Printing Co., 1889, pages 6-7
10. Ibid, page 6.
11. Wade, Louise C. Graham Taylor: Pioneer for Social Justice, 1851-1938. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964. The only definitive biography of Taylor. for his Hartford experience, see Chapter 2, The Urban Apprenticeship, pages 21-50. Summaries of his later accomplishments may be found on pages 158-160, 166-169.
12. Taylor, op. cit., pages 366, 377, 379.
13. Interview with Rev. Joseph Zezzo 3/24/80.
14. Mimeographed letter in files of Horace Bushnell Congregational Church

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dated July, 1953.

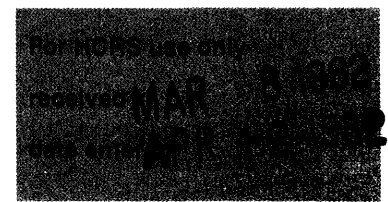
15. Interview with Rev. Zezzo 3/24/80.

16. Ramstad, Phillip J. "The Horace Bushnell Church: A Mission to the City," The Missioner, Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, April 1967, no pagination. Also, "Salvation in Modern Terms: a New England Church in God's mission," United Church Herald, Vol. 12, No. 6 (June, 1969), pages 18-20; and "Rehabilitated Apartments offer new lifestyles," Connecticut Action: News and Comments on Community Development, Vol 2, Issue 2, pages 10-11

17. Interview with Rev. Zezzo 3/24/80.

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- Hartford Architecture Conservancy Survey. Hartford Architecture: Volume One: Downtown. Hartford: Hartford Architecture Conservancy, 1978.
- "Hartford: Horace Bushnell Congregational Church Organized 1832." Mimeographed summary of church history in files of Horace Bushnell Congregational Church, 23 Vine Street, Hartford, Connecticut.
- Patton, William Weston. Decennial and Farewell Sermons. Hartford: Case, Tiffany & Co., 1857.
- "Rehabilitated Apartments offer new lifestyles," Connecticut Action: News and Comments on Community Development, Vol. 2, Issue 2, pages 10-11.
- "Salvation in Modern Terms: a New England Church in God's Mission," United Church Herald, Vol. 12, No. 6 (June, 1969), pages 18-20.
- Taylor, Graham. Pioneering on Social Frontiers. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930.
- Wade, Louise C. Graham Taylor: Pioneer for Social Justice, 1851-1938. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.
- Zeppo, Rev. Joseph. Interview 3/24/80.
- Zeppo, Rev. Joseph. Mimeographed letter of July, 1953 in files of Horace Bushnell Congregational Church, 23 Vine Street, Hartford, Ct.