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THE OLD ROCKINGHAM MEETING HOUSE AND THE TOWN TOMB

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# The Old Rockingham Meeting House

*Erected 1787*

AND

The First Church in Rockingham, Vermont

*1773—1840*

BY

LYMAN S. HAYES

*Author of History of the Town of Rockingham, Vt.*

AND

WILLIAM D. HAYES

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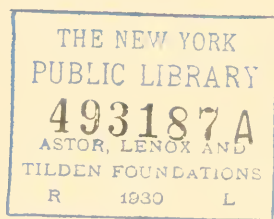
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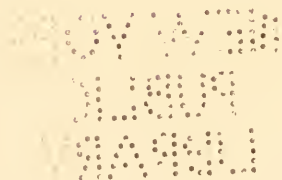
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BELLOWS FALLS, VT.

TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
REV. SAMUEL WHITING

THE FIRST SETTLED MINISTER OF THE TOWN OF ROCK-  
INGHAM, WHO BY WORD AND EXAMPLE EXERTED  
SUCH A POWERFUL INFLUENCE ON THE TOWN  
THROUGHOUT HIS PASTORATE FROM 1773  
TO 1809, DURING THE CRITICAL PE-  
RIOD OF THE WAR OF THE REVO-  
LUTION AND THE PERIOD OF  
CONSTRUCTION IMMEDI-  
ATELY FOLLOWING  
IT;

AND

PROF. FRANKLIN W. HOOPER, PH. D., LL. D.

PRESIDENT OF THE OLD ROCKINGHAM MEETING HOUSE  
ASSOCIATION FROM ITS ORGANIZATION UNTIL HIS  
DEATH IN 1914, WHO WAS SO LARGELY RESPON-  
SIBLE FOR THE PRESENT DAY KNOWLEDGE  
OF, AND INTEREST IN, THE OLD ROCK-  
INGHAM MEETING HOUSE,

THIS BOOK IS INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHORS

*Twisted 29 Nov 1924*



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## FOREWORD

*"Where two or three are gathered together in my name,  
there am I in the midst of them."*



ON a commanding eminence, in the almost geographical centre of the town of Rockingham, Vermont, overlooking the nearly deserted village bearing the same name, and surrounded by its burying ground, stands one of the finest examples of Colonial church architecture still remaining in New England. Without spire or other break in its severely plain, puritanical lines, excepting only a small "porch" or enclosed entry and stairway on each end, its high glistening white walls overlook for miles the beautiful Williams River valley, and serve as a reminder of the early thought—almost passion—of our forefathers for things religious and civil.

Erected by the town in 1787, at the close of the trying Revolutionary period, and replacing a temporary smaller structure built in 1774, it served for forty-two years—throughout the entire period of construction of this American republic—as the Meeting House for religious services of the citizens of the surrounding country; and for eighty-two years, as the town's meeting place for the decision of the weighty measures upon whose careful discussion and correct solution depended the substantial foundation and growth of one of the earliest settled and most important towns of the State of Vermont. With a local outlook, it has seen the town grow from a tiny settlement of farmers, whose interests centered around their meeting house, country store and post office, to a thriving town centered around its water powers at Bellows Falls, Saxtons River, and Cambridgeport; and it has seen the village of Rocking-

## *Foreword*

ham grow to an important place in early days in the affairs of the vicinity and the entire State, and then dwindle, through the growth of manufacturing interests in other parts of the town to a tiny hamlet without even a store or post office. With a broader outlook, it has seen the State of Vermont grow from a collection of farming settlements, whose possession was disputed by two more populous states, and the Mother Country, through the period of entire independence, to a position as a sovereign state of these mighty United States, occupying a place in area small, but far from worthy of being despised.

Around this Meeting House in early days under the leadership of the town's first minister, Rev. Samuel Whiting, was gathered and organized the eighth Congregational church in Vermont, supported entirely by public taxation. At the withdrawal of civil support, the church organization was temporarily abandoned; later reorganized as the Congregational Church of Christ in Rockingham; and this organization, after twenty-one years of struggle, was abandoned because of the gathering of the population around the water powers in other parts of the town.

The building, its interior slightly changed for temporary uses and its movable parts gradually taken away for souvenirs, has lately been put back into its original austere simplicity, and is lovingly cared for by the town, which still owns it, and its citizens, who still love it. Each summer, it is the scene of an Annual Pilgrimage, under the Old Rockingham Meeting House Association, when people gather from far and near to pay their homage to the sturdy simplicity, self-sacrificing honesty and effort, and the far-seeing policies of the forefathers who built this country for us to enjoy.



## THE CANDLE IN THE CHOIR

### I

*In Rockingham upon the hill  
The meeting-house shines lone and still:  
A bare, star-cleaving gable-peak,  
Broad roofbeamed, snow-ribbed, stark and bleak,  
As long ago their needs sufficed  
Who came from cottage fires to Christ,  
Sharing with frosty breath  
Their foot-stoves and their faith.*

### II

*In Rockingham above the hill  
The stars are few, the winds are shrill;  
And pale as little clouds, the prayers  
Pulse upward round the pulpit stairs,  
Where silent deacons upright sit  
Among the gusty shadows, that flit  
From hands upholding higher  
Faint candles in the choir.*

### III

*Seven candles make a shining dim  
To mark the psalm and find the hymn;  
Seven candles from the choir rail throw  
Their blessing on the pews below;  
Seven candles make a glimmering heaven  
Of righteousness, but one of seven  
Shines in the hand of her:  
Elvira Pulsifer.*

### IV

*High on its place of holy fire  
The towered pulpit fronts the choir,  
From whence the pastor's hand may strow  
The penfolds of his flock below,  
Or sign, from under level brows,  
Toward them—the seven of his house  
Who sing with one accord  
The service of the Lord.*



(This poem, based on a family tradition, was written by Percy MacKaye especially for the Rockingham Meeting House Association, and was read by the author at the Sixth Annual Pilgrimage, August 4, 1912. The "Elvira Pulsifer" referred to was the mother of Prof. Franklin W. Hooper, president of the Association. The poem is taken from "Uriel and Other Poems" (Houghton, Mifflin Co.) and is here published by permission of the Author.)



V

Gaunt looms the shepherd in his gown:  
"O Lord, Lord God, who lookest down  
Serene from Sinai's dazzling height  
On deeps of everlasting night—  
Deeps where Thy scorching ire hath streamed  
Like lava on the unredeemed—  
Be merciful to her,  
Elvira Pulsifer!"

VI

"Thou art our Father, Lord, Lord God!  
And they who kiss Thy shining rod  
And break Thy bread and keep Thy tryst—  
They walk this bitter world with Christ;  
All else with dire Apollyon dwell.—  
O save her tender soul from Hell,  
And with Thy Pity stir  
Elvira Pulsifer!"

VII

"Brethren, the thirty-second Psalm!  
And let your solemn voices calm  
The secret fiend from his intent,  
And make a virgin heart repent!"—  
Thin from the dark the pitch-pipe sounds  
Its note, faint stir the crisping goxens,  
While the dim shepherd there  
Creaks down the frosty stair.

VIII

A shrilling sweet of childish throats,  
With sombre bass of elders, floats  
Around him through the raftered room,  
And elvish from the outer gloom  
Seven candles on the little panes  
Sway to the choir's subdued refrains,  
As down the aisleyway floor  
He seeks the entry door.

IX

More faintly now, as if more far,  
He hears them through the door ajar,  
While from the entry, climbing soft,  
He flurries to the choir loft:  
Here to a darkling privacy  
He beckons—so her glance may see—  
God's errant worshipper:  
Elvira Pulsifer.

## X

*Candle and hymnal in her hands,  
 She comes to where the shepherd stands—  
 Her shepherd who hath labored sore,  
 With venerable neighbors more,  
 To lead her spirit to the fold  
 Where all her kinsfolk came of old:  
     All them she loved full well,  
     But not—their fear of hell.*

## XI

*Anxious they whisper in the aisle  
 (The shrilling voices swoon the while  
 And boom like cymbals in her ears):  
 "Our Lord and Father, child, He hears  
 The cry of sin's repentant heart;  
 O obdurate, walk not apart  
     With one who darkens all,  
     But come to Christ His call."*

## XII

*"Our Lord He is our Father, yes,  
 And He hath come in tenderness  
 To me, in hours both bright and dim.  
 There is no one at all but Him;  
 And so I cannot walk apart  
 Nor cry with a repentant heart,  
     Nor heed another's call,  
     For God is good to all."*

## XIII

*"His wrath it is eternal, child.  
 Who fear it not they are defiled.  
 They may not sit in choir or pew,  
 Defiant, with His chosen few.  
 The hymn is ended, now return:  
 But nevermore His light to spurn!"  
     Dark, dark, she turns about:  
     Her candle—he hath blown out.*

## XIV

*O elvish from the outer gloom  
 Six little flames they leer and loom,  
 And elvish on the frosty panes  
 Six candles mock the choir's refrains.  
 But one all dark, by inward grace  
 Shines on unseen, and lights the face  
     Of Christ His worshipper:  
     Elvira Pulsifer.*

—PERCY MACKAYE.





## CHAPTER I

### *The Meeting House*

THE history of practically every New England town shows that among the first matters to be taken up by the original proprietors or the early settlers, was the erection of a town meeting house and the establishment of public worship, or action looking to both in the early future. The records in the Town Clerk's office show that Rockingham, Vermont, was no exception in this regard.

At the first meetings of the Proprietors of the Town of Rockingham, Vermont, in 1753 and 1754, steps were taken looking toward both the hiring of a regular minister and the building of a meeting house. The first building, a small temporary structure, was erected in 1774; and the present Meeting House was started in 1787 or 1788. But these ends were not attained without great sacrifice on the part of the few settlers in the town at the time, especially when it is remembered that the War of the Revolution and the subsequent formation of a new country severely taxed both their time and finances.

Under date of December 28, 1752, King George II, through Governor Benning Wentworth of the Province of New Hampshire, issued a charter for the Town of Rockingham to fifty-nine men, known as the Grantees or Proprietors. These men held their first meeting March 28, 1753, before there was any permanent settlement in town. At this meeting, they instructed a committee to set aside six acres of land "for a Meeting house place".\* At their second meeting in May, 1754,

\*"Proprietors Records" of the Town of Rockingham, in the office of the town clerk at Bellows Falls, Vt.





they specified that the six acres should be the "North End of House Lott Number three;" and assigned house lot No. 3, 10-acre meadow lot No. 13, and 3-acre meadow lot No. 14 to the first settled town minister. This was later increased by the following: Citydale lot No. 143, one acre; lot No. 6, range 3, ninety acres; lot No. 11, range 6, ninety acres; lot No. 14, range 9, ninety acres; lot No. 30, range 9, forty-five acres.

These assignments make a total of three hundred and forty-nine acres set apart at the very first for the support of the town church when it should be established. Until a settled minister was chosen, the land was leased to various parties, and the income from it expended in public improvements, such as road building, and later directly towards the erection of a meeting house.

At a meeting of the proprietors held in 1761, lots Nos. 1 to 4 in the tenth range, and Nos. 1 to 3 in the ninth range were "Set of . . . for ye Church and the Propurgating of the Gospel in forarn parts". These lots, located north of the village of Cambridgeport, are at least in part still owned by the town and the income from them goes to the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Vermont, together with that from similar lots in nearly every town in this State. Thus, while the proprietors planned for the support of their own church, they did not forget the old-established Church of England.

In 1760, after the close of the French and Indian War, the danger of depredations from Indians was largely over, and the permanent settlement of the town was begun. The town government was organized in March, 1761, and from that date the story of the effort to build a meeting house and establish a town church is told in the records of the town in the Town Clerk's office.

In 1770, the question was considered by the voters



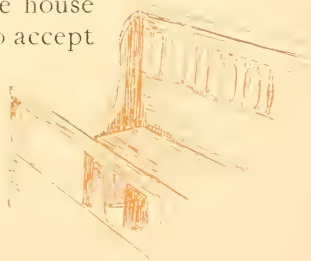
THE OLD FASHIONED PEWS AND PULPIT



of erecting a town meeting house, to serve both as a place for town meetings, and for public worship. Settlement had not progressed quite far enough at that time, however. The following year, the town voted to erect a building for this purpose and chose a committee to decide on a location. The committee's report was turned down at a town meeting in April, 1772, and the vote passed "that the meeting house be set on the hill west of David Pulsiphers house", which would be practically the location chosen in the end. In 1773, the town voted to build a "small house 35 feet long and 25 feet wide—till the town be able to build a Larger". Peter Evans, Jr., Samuel Taylor and John Lovell were chosen to build the house.

Rev. Samuel Whiting became the first settled minister, in October, 1773, and regular church services probably date from that time. Despite this fact, this committee did not build the house, and in the fall of 1774 a new committee was chosen, consisting of Oliver Lovell, Lieutenant Jonathan Burt, and Lieutenant Peter Evans, the size of the building increased by the addition of five feet in width and one foot ten inches in height, the location chosen in 1772 agreed upon again, and "voted that the trustees find four galonds of Rum to Raise and frame said house". The latter item, while in accord with old time customs, would excite some comment, at least, in the present day, especially when the building was to be used for church purposes.

This temporary structure, to be replaced in a few years by the present building, was erected in the fall of 1774, since a town meeting, December 12, was opened in the building. The combination of its unfinished condition and wind-swept location made it a trifle cool for a December day in Vermont, and after inspecting the building, the meeting was adjourned to the house of David Pulsipher nearby. They then voted to accept the building and "aLou the acompts".



For the present centres of population in the town of Rockingham, the location of the Meeting House where it was built would be decidedly inconvenient. At that time, however, the population was much more evenly scattered over the entire town; Bellows Falls and Saxtons River villages had been settled little, if any, and Rockingham village, the geographical centre of the town, was the proper location. On the other hand, it is quite probable that this village grew up around the Meeting House, rather than that the Meeting House was located at the village.

In voting to place the Meeting House on a hill, the town carried out the usual custom of early days of locating such buildings on some eminence, where they could be seen for miles around, and where, in addition, they would be strategically located for defense from hostile Indians.

The temporary building was thirty-five by thirty feet, and the arrangement of the interior was much the same as that of the first floor of the present building, since there was "a Row of wall Pews Round the meeting house and Eight pews in the middle and three seats Each side the Alley next the pulpit". The pews were drawn by lot, with the proviso that the owners should seal the floor, glaze the windows, and build the pews. Record is found of a total of forty-seven pounds (about \$234), raised by the town to build the building.

The land on which the building was erected was obtained from David Pulsipher, but the deed was not acknowledged before his death. It was purchased by William Simonds, David Pulsipher, Charles Richards and Nathaniel Davis, and presented to the town by them.

In 1786, three years after the end of the Revolution, the inhabitants of the town felt that the time had come for a more commodious meeting house, and they petitioned the General Assembly to grant a land tax

in order to raise money for this purpose. This was evidently granted,\* for at a town meeting held in the temporary building April 10, 1787, the following votes were passed providing for the new building:

“Voted that the Committee appointed by the Legislature of the state of Vermont to build a town house in Rockingham are Directed to sell pews in said house to the highest bidder for to raise money to be Laid out for the purpose of finishing sd House.

3 ly Voted that the Committee Build the town House Just as Large as Charlestown Meeting House as to the square of it.

4 ly Voted to Build two porches one at each end.

5 ly Voted to have the plan of the inside of sd House agreeable to the inside of the Meeting House in Charlestown.

6 ly Voted that Every Person that Buys a pew in sd House shall Git a Bond-man to the acceptance of the Commettee.

7 ly Voted to have the Obligations that shall be given to the Commettee for the pews shall be half due by the first of December next and the other half due by the first of December then next.

8 ly Voted to have the pews finished which are sold with the money which is given for sd pews.”

At an adjourned town meeting, held April 24, 1787, it was “Voted to reconsider the 3d vote (relating to the ‘Bigness’ of the town house). Voted to Build the town house forty-four feet wide and fifty-six feet long,” which are the dimensions of the present structure.†

Positive proof is lacking of the exact date of the erection of the Rockingham Meeting House, which has stood for so many years as an emblem of the piety and civic pride of the early inhabitants. The question of this date was discussed at length by A. N. Swain in the *Bellovs Falls Times* in 1884, and it was then definitely settled that the frame was raised June 9, 1787, largely

\*A search of the records in the Secretary of State's office fails to show any action by the legislature or the personnel of the committee chosen by them.

†Town records, Vol. I, p. 95.



on the basis of a letter from Rev. Horace Allbee of this town, then in his eighty-eighth year, printed in the *Times* of October 2, 1884:

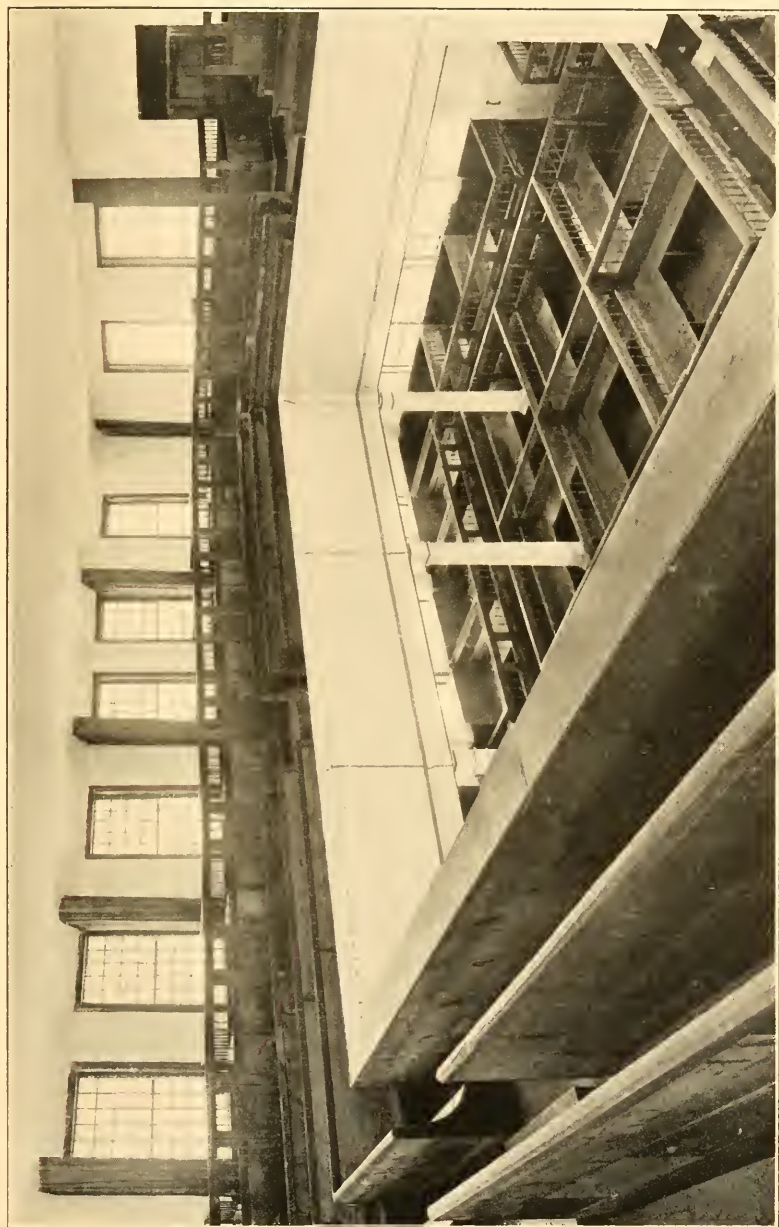
"MR. EDITOR: In corroboration of the statements which I made to you in regard to the date of the raising of the old church at Rockingham, which statement appeared in the *Times* of June 19, 1884, I offer the following evidence which I regard as indisputable: Mrs. Ezekiel Weston was the daughter of David Hazzleton, who was born in Rockingham in 1791. Mrs. Weston says that she distinctly remembers that her grandmother, Jane Hazzleton, wife of Richard Hazzleton, related to her that her eldest child, Urial (Mrs. Weston's uncle), was born on the 6th day of June, 1787, and that on the 9th day of June of the same year, before departing to the raising of the meeting house, her husband, Richard, came into the house and bade her and their baby, who was then only three days old, good-bye, expecting or fearing at least, that he might be killed at the raising, but on the contrary he returned in safety to his family after the house was raised. And further, my brother, E. W. Allbee, says he distinctly remembers hearing our father, Ebenezer Allbee, who was born on the 17th day of April, 1768, say that he was at the raising, being then nineteen years of age, and that it was in June, 1787, but does not remember the day of the month. The statement of Mrs. Weston fixes the precise date of the raising as June 9, 1787, of which there can be no doubt.

*Yours truly,*

HORACE ALLBEE."

Volume II, page 372 of the records in the Town Clerk's office, gives the date of the birth of Urial, oldest child of "Richard and Jenny Hazeltine" as June 6, 1788. The balance of probability is felt to be that the official record of the date of birth as 1788 is correct, which would place the date of the raising of the frame as June 9, 1788. However, since this record is not indisputable, and the date 1787 has been commonly accepted for over thirty years, it will probably be best to let it so stand, unless





FROM THE GALLERY





incontrovertible evidence to the contrary should be brought forward.

Rev. Mr. Allbee is also authority for the statement that "a wash tub full of toddy, made of rum and loaf sugar, was prepared and notice was given to the men to come down from the frame and drink".\*

The master-builder under whom the building was erected, was General John Fuller, a prominent resident of Rockingham at that time, living on a farm about a mile north of Rockingham village. The following anecdote is told of the raising:†

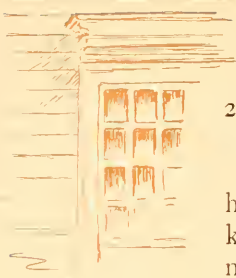
"After he got everything ready the old General (Fuller) took his bottle of rum in one hand, a tumbler in the other and stood on the plate of the bent on the south side, then gave the order to put it up in that position. He rode up on the plate, and he was a man weighing 200 pounds. When they had got it up, he stood on the plate, drank his health to the crowd below, then threw his bottle and tumbler down and called for the ladder, coming down amid loud and long cheering."

The new Meeting House was probably first used by the town for their March meeting in 1792. It is said that the interior had not been finished, and that the pews consisted only of blocks of logs on the top of which rough boards were laid. The windows had probably not been glazed, nor had the outside been clapboarded. At this meeting, it was decided that the building should be used "for public worship and town meetings", and after some discussion, the Congregationalists and Baptists were given the right to hold services there, but it was refused to the Universalists.‡

\**Bellows Falls Times*, June 19, 1884.

†Letter from Joseph Willard, an aged man of Nashua, N. H., *Bellows Falls Times*, July 17, 1884.

‡The Universalists were allowed to use the Meeting House by action of the town of May 2, 1796. The term "Congregationalists" is here used probably in reference to the first or town church.



In 1793, the town voted to sell the old meeting house, but what disposition was made of it is not known. Through the next eight years, attempts were made to complete the new Meeting House, largely without success. One entry in the town records intimates that up to 1796, a total of eighty-eight pounds (\$440) had been expended on the building.

In 1799, the selectmen were petitioned to call a special town meeting to "agree upon some mode of finishing the Meeting House". As a result of the movement started then, it is probable that the Meeting House was entirely completed by 1801, and the final accounts were audited in 1804. The records of the action of the town and its committees are given in detail in the Appendix (III: K).

This old Meeting House, whose erection by the early settlers of the town was such a labor of love—and yet a labor withal—has stood for over a century and a quarter on the hill overlooking the Williams River Valley, surrounded by its burying ground and its collection of houses built by early residents of Rockingham village. Both in architecture and construction, it is exceedingly typical of those who built it. Severe in lines, almost to austerity, hiding in its unseen parts countless massive timbers of great strength, it served both the town and church, and stood against the buffeting of the wind on the exposed hilltop for many years. Now its days of usefulness are largely passed, and it remains as an emblem of the past—its character, and what it stood for.

In plan, the only deviation from the pure rectangle are two small entry-ways on each end, containing stairs leading to the gallery. The main floor of the church contains twenty-four wall pews around its outer wall, raised slightly above the main floor, and two groups of six pews each in the centre, separated from each other and from the wall pews by "alleys". These are all of

the high back, square, "pig-pen" style, with a seat running around three sides, and entered by a "door" from the "alley". Each pew will accommodate from ten to fifteen people, though some, of necessity, must turn their backs on the minister. Between these pews and the pulpit, are six long benches, and immediately in front of and below the pulpit is a narrow, enclosed pew, for the deacons, titling men and other church officers. The pulpit, its broad rail nearly nine feet above the main church, is reached by a winding stair, and is surmounted by its old sounding board. A gallery, two-thirds the size of the first floor, contains twenty-four enclosed pews around its outer wall, in front of which are three rows of benches, all on a steeply sloping floor. The entire church will hold well towards a thousand people. Its forty-eight windows, each six feet by three feet and containing forty lights of glass, assured plenty of light. In construction, the building is typical of the early days when timbers of enormous size were everywhere available, as is graphically shown by a picture of the attic on another page.

The key of the Meeting House was bid off at each March meeting to the lowest bidder. But with the honor of keeping the key, made great by the love of the people for the building for which they had labored so hard, went certain responsibilities: the keeper "shall lock and unlock said house every Sunday morning & evening if needed, and at all times when thereto requested by the authority of the Town . . . also sweep said house four times in the year", and in event of failure to do this, he must forfeit fifty cents for not handling the lock, or a like amount for not wielding the broom. One year, the keeper had to "wash the house". The "Keepers of the Key", with the amounts which they received for their year's duties, follow:



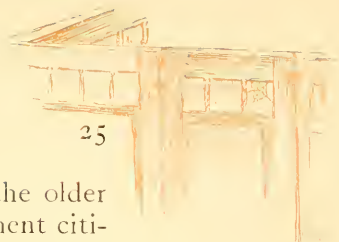
1803	James Marsh	\$ 2.50
1804	Samuel W. Pulsipher	2.75
1805	Samuel W. Pulsipher	2.25
1806	Samuel W. Pulsipher	2.50
1807	Abraham Byington	3.00
1808	Caleb Winn	1.90
1809	David Pulsipher	2.50
1810	Samuel Taylor	2.75
1811	Abner Wheelock	3.50
1812	Samuel Taylor	2.75
1813	S. W. Pulsipher	3.00
1814	Frederick Reed	3.00
1815	John Hall	3.00
1818	H. E. Day	2.00
1821	Jonas Phillips	2.00
1823	Jonas Phillips	1.99

In 1807, a union meeting house was erected at Saxtons River, and from this date, the original house at Rockingham is spoken of as the "North Meeting House".

In the record of the town meeting for March 10, 1816, occurs this brief but illuminating entry: "The weather being cold, Voted to adjourn the meeting to Levi Hoit Hall". The lack of stoves, or other heating apparatus, must have been severely felt by the small children forced to sit for several hours each Sabbath day listening to long sermons, whose import was way beyond them. The elders of course had the fire of the discourse, or the heat of the town meeting wrangle, to assist them in keeping warm. Even Minister Whiting had to confess that his health was not equal to preaching there through the winter of 1797-1798.

In accordance with the custom of the early days, the town located its first permanent burying ground, or cemetery, on the same lot as its Meeting House, on land presented to the town in 1782, by four citizens for the dual purpose.\* For nearly one hundred years, it was the town's principal burying ground and inter-





ments are still made there by a number of the older families. In it are buried many of the prominent citizens of the early days, their resting places marked by old fashioned slate stones, often embellished by quaint ornamental designs and epitaphs. Many of these stones have attracted much attention in these later years from the oddness of their inscriptions, which often give a vivid insight into the personal life and habits of the person in whose honor they were erected. Possibly the two most interesting inscriptions in the burying-ground are the following:

“In Memory of  
Miss Eunice Pain  
who died June 10, 1805  
in the sixteenth year of her age  
Behold in me a mournful fate  
Two lovers were sincere  
And one is left without a mate  
The other slumbers here.  
Since you are left to mourn  
To you these words I say,  
Though we are separated here  
Must meet another day  
And reign with God above  
Upon the blissful shore  
And reunite our love  
Where friends shall part no more.”

“In Memory of Mr. Josiah White\*  
who Died September 1, 1806,  
in the 96th year of his age.

The descendants of Josiah White at his death.  
Children 15 Grand Children 160 Grate grand  
children 211. Children Deceased 2 Grand  
children Deceased 26 grate grand children  
Deceased 35.”

\*Josiah White, the same man whose pew marker is referred to on page 55 and shown in a picture on another page.

## CHAPTER II

### *The Church Organization.*

THE organization of the First Church in Rockingham and the beginning of regular services dates from October 27, 1773, though the town had hired ministers to preach for them more or less regularly before that date. From then until 1809, under the guidance of Rev. Samuel Whiting, and supported entirely by the town's Minister Tax, the church was a power in the community. After a lapse of nine years, the church was reorganized in 1818 as the Congregational Church of Christ in Rockingham, with Rev. Elijah Wollage as minister. This organization was abandoned in 1840, owing to the growth of other portions of the town at the expense of Rockingham village.

The first action by the town looking to hiring a settled town minister, or to the establishment of a town church, was taken at a town meeting held April 17, 1769, when the article "To see if the Town will hier a Minister to preach with them the Summer Ensuing" was "passed in ye Negative".

The records of the town meetings during the next few years show that at least occasional preaching services were held in the town during that time, though how regularly or at what place cannot be determined. The following extracts from the records of town meetings intimate that Rev. Andrew Gardner served the town as preacher from 1769 until about December 16, 1771; and Rev. Elisha Harding, from that date for at least part of the time until 1773; and that they were paid for their services by the town itself:



(March, 1770) "that seventeen bushels of Indian corn be delivered to the Revd Andrew Gardner by the overseers out of the rent that Nathaniel Davis owes the Town" (for the Minister's lot).

(March 28, 1771) "Voted that Mr. Gardner have the use of ye Ministers Lot ye year Ensuing."

(September 7, 1771) "Voted that the town alou Oliver Lovell and Samll Taylers accompt for supporting ye Revd Mr. Andrew Gardner and his wife from ye first of July to this instant. . . . and voted that Messirus Oliver Lovell and Samll Tayler be ye Commettee to support Mr. Gardner and his wife ye 3 months from the Date hereof".

(Decmber 16, 1771) "Allowed Oliver Lovell. . . Samuel Taylor. . . . Stoell accompt. . . for supporting Mr. Gardner and his wife".

(March 25, 1772) "that Moses Wright be a Lowed eight shillings bay money. . . for Going after Mr. Hardin when he preacht in Rockingham".




There is no evidence that there was any church organization at this time. Rev. Mr. Gardner and Rev. Mr. Harding will be discussed further in Chapter III.

The First Church in Rockingham was organized and the first settled minister, Rev. Samuel Whiting, ordained by a council of neighboring churches, convened at Rockingham, October 27, 1773.

From this date, the story of the church is very graphically portrayed in a manuscript record book in the handwriting of the various ministers of the First Church, containing entries covering practically every meeting of the church from its organization in 1773 to its dissolution in 1840. In addition, it contains the record of all baptisms and marriages performed by the ministers, admissions to the church, and an incomplete record of deaths. Many of these are of great value as part of the vital statistics of Rockingham, and have been transcribed upon the card records of the town. The book\* is of home manufacture, bound

\*See illustration.



together with a strong rawhide cord at the back, and covered with a home-made sheepskin with a flap and string to tie. It has stood the test of the years surprisingly well, and nearly every word is perfectly legible. With other similar mementos of the old church, it was saved by one of the last deacons of the church, Joel Brown, and cared for through the years by the descendants of David Pulsipher, one of the original members of the First Church. It was recently presented to the Old Rockingham Meeting House Association\* by Mrs. W. H. H. Putnam of Springfield. It is now preserved by the librarian of that Association, in the vault in the Town Clerk's office at Bellows Falls.

In 1902, Thomas Bellows Peck of Walpole, one of the original movers in this Association, copied almost entire the contents of this valuable old book, and had printed a limited edition of two hundred copies, thus making them readily available for a large number of people.

The first entry in this old manuscript book is the account, in the handwriting of Rev. Samuel Whiting, of the council called to organize the church and ordain him as its pastor. This is copied entire in the Appendix (III), as are also many other interesting extracts from the records of both the town and the First Church, which are too lengthy for these pages.

The original settlers of the town of Rockingham came largely from Massachusetts and Connecticut, where the religious preferences at that time were largely Congregational. Accordingly, it is natural that they should conduct the affairs of their church along lines closely similar to those of the Congregational Church. This similarity is made more striking by a careful study of the records of the First Church in Rockingham, in which it is evidenced especially by calling councils of

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\*Chapter V.

7/14/84 - St Albans. I presented a Com. to  
Mr. King, and thinking I had done so  
rightly & comfort with Mr. King, I left  
him a copy of his address, & a paper on  
the necessity of reorganization, but perhaps no to  
some extent upon the subject of reorganization. That  
of the Town, ~~was~~ of the St. was given to  
me, I left to make some further trial, to be I think  
my previous visit had not been away, & a  
note of Mr. King, of Charity & for reorganizing  
St. Albans, more than 100

[illegible]

1792.  
March 24 1798 the Club met having written by a letter  
and been invited by the Ladies to have a meeting and at  
the same time, & the meeting being over, we  
the Ladies, returned the Compliments which had been  
sent to the following Members of said Society.  
Messrs. Revell, Ben. & Co. & Co.

[illegible][illegible]



neighboring churches for the settlement or dismissal of pastors, and the democratic form of government throughout the entire church. Many of the large Congregational churches throughout New England were originally organized as town churches and were supported in their early years by taxes levied on the inhabitants; only assuming the name "Congregational" and taking up a separate organization when the town support was withdrawn by changes in the laws of the State. Accordingly, while the term Congregational is not used in the records of this church until 1818, it may be considered as an early church of that denomination from its first organization in 1773.

All available evidence indicates that this was the eighth Congregational church established in what is now the State of Vermont, and that only five more were established previous to the Revolution. The list of the thirteen with dates of establishment follows:\*

Bennington.....	1762	Rockingham.....	1773
Newbury.....	1764	Thetford.....	1773
Westminster.....	1767	West Rutland...	1773
Windsor.....	1768	Newfane.....	1774
Norwich.....	1770	Putney.....	1776
Brattleboro.....	1770	Marlboro.....	1776
Guilford.....	1770		

Until 1778, Mr. Whiting's time was divided between the churches at Rockingham and Chester, but "as they had never practised much in attending at each others Communion they Considered themselves as Separate & Distinct Churches. The Chh in Rockingham however soon called upon Chester members & they by sending us a Copy of their Covenant & proceedings gave us full satisfaction that they were duly Organized & regularly separated from us as a distinct Chh."

\*History of Vermont, Natural, Civil, and Statistical, by Zadok Thompson, 1842.



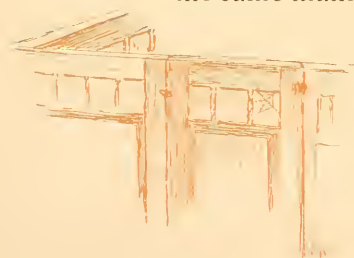
The original membership of the church numbered eighteen, and included the following:

Samuel Whiting	Anne Larrabee
David Pulsipher	Mercy Evans
William Simonds	Elias Olcott
Ebenezer Fuller	Peter Evans Junr.
Samuel Larrabee	Asher Evans
Peter Evans	Nathaniel Davis
Elizabeth Pulsipher	Sibbel Olcott
——— Simonds	Mercy Evans
Mercy Fuller	Mary Evans

An alphabetical list of all members of the church of which record has been found, is printed in Appendix I. This list is divided into two parts: Members between the original organization of the church in 1773, and the dismissal of Rev. Samuel Whiting in 1809, to which are added lists of Chester members during the first five years, and also of those subscribing to the Half Way Covenant; and members between the reorganization in 1818, and the final dissolution of the church in 1839. A few names will be found in both lists and they are so indicated.

The first deacons chosen June 12, 1774, were Peter Evans and Elias Olcott, and on May 6, 1782, Jacob Pease was chosen as a third deacon, because of the fact that Deacon Evans was becoming too aged and infirm to "provide for & serve at the Table". The names of later deacons have not been found, though all three of these men died within a few years.

The first law "regulating the support of the gospel" was passed by the General Assembly of Vermont at its session at Newbury, October 19, 1787. It provided that the town churches were to be erected and supported by direct tax upon the inhabitants of the different towns, the tax to be levied on the grand list and collected in the same manner as taxes for other purposes. This tax



is usually spoken of as the "Minister Tax." The law added the following proviso:

"Be it further enacted by the authorities aforesaid, That every person being of adult age, shall be considered as being of the opinion with the major part of the inhabitants of such town or parish where he, she, or they dwell, until he, she, or they shall bring a certificate, signed by some minister of the gospel, deacon or elder, or moderator of the church or congregation to which he, she or they, pretend to belong; which certificate shall make known the party to be of the religious sentiments of the signer thereof; and until such certificate shall be shown to the clerk of such town or parish, (who shall record the same) such party shall be subject to be rated, and pay all such charges with the major part, as by law shall be assessed on his, her or their poll or ratable estate."

This law proved the source of much contention, and was repealed in 1807. In accordance with this law the church, minister, and Meeting House in Rockingham were supported until about 1810 by a tax levied by the town on such as had not filed with the town clerk certificates of dissension. Up to that date, there is no record of any officers or committees of the church for other than purely spiritual and disciplinary purposes. The records of the town clerk contain over two hundred and fifty certificates\* of persons claiming exemption from the tax because of other religious beliefs between 1783 and 1809, when they cease because of the repeal of the law making them advantageous. The early certificates are largely that the subscriber is a member of, or supports some other, denomination; while the later ones are that he simply "disagrees". The following are fair samples of the two types of certificates found on the records:

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\*Appendix II.



Dudley October the 27th 1788

This may certify to whom it may Concern that Elisher Sabin now Living in Rockingham is a member of a Baptist Church in Dudley in full fellowship and good Standing

Signed by order and in Behalf of the Church

John Warren Church Clerk

a true Coppey of the above Certificate and was Recorded the 10th Day of December 1788

Pr me Jonth Holten T clerk

Rockingham February 22d 1803—I the Subscriber do not agree in the Religious Opinion with a Majority of the Inhabitants of sd Rockingham

Hezekiah Wood Clark

Recorded by Jona Burt Town Clerk

A careful search of the records of both the town and the First Church fails to throw any definite light on the amount expended by the town in support of the Church, or the size of Mr. Whiting's salary. A letter written by Mr. Whiting to the Town of Rockingham, January 13, 1783,\* indicates that it had been arranged by a committee previously and that it was to be paid to him annually. At Mr. Whiting's request, the town deeded absolutely to him and his heirs all the land allotted earlier by the proprietors to the Minister's Right.† This amounted to about three hundred and fifty acres, and probably formed no small part of his salary. In 1807, the tax lists show that Mr. Whiting owned four hundred ninety-two and one-half acres and was the fourth largest land owner in the town; while between 1796 and 1815, he deeded away five hundred and thirty acres of land for considerations totalling \$6,664.

In 1802, the records show that the town owed Mr. Whiting \$166.40 "arrearages", which was raised by an extra assessment, and he was paid in full soon after. In 1809, his salary was evidently again in arrears, and

\*Appendix III: B.

†Chapter I, p. 16 and Appendix III: B.

was paid. At this time, the sum of \$200 was exempted from his grand list for the balance of his life, "since for a long time he had been subjected to pay taxes, a thing no other clergyman in the state had done", and "for a long time his salary had been reduced nearly one-half".

In the records of the March, 1807, town meeting occurs the following: "By Tax called Ministers Tax & Rate Bill made on the same. . . . \$129.82"; while in the records of a similar meeting in 1808, "Tax assessed on the persons who are not dissenters on the list of 1807, being six and one-half mills on the dollar, \$67.38".

The Church Records show that the second settled minister, Rev. Elijah Wollage, in 1818, "accepted the call on a salary of \$425.00 per annum".

From the time of its organization in 1773, with eighteen original members, the church grew steadily at the rate of four to eight new members each year, until about 1786. Aside from eleven Chester members, the names of seventy persons have been found who had joined up to this time, and four who had been dismissed. From this time on, the new memberships decrease steadily, and up to 1811, a total of only ninety-six names are found.\*

In October, 1797, Mr. Whiting, evidently discouraged at the lack of support given the "preaching", and also in poor health, wrote as follows to his congregation:†

"I would mention to the Congregation that it is twenty four years since my being a Minister here the 27th of October next, next Sabbath on which I expect to exchange will be the last Sabbath of the year & whereas my health is such that I cant preach in this meeting house during the Winter season, And as a very Considerable part of those who attend upon publick Worship are Women & Children

\*Appendix I, a complete list of all members of the church.

†Records of First Church.

& such as live at a distance & cant conveniently attend, I think it is my Duty to relinquish my Salary & desist from all ministerial Services during the Winter season. I expect you will be Supply'd next Sabbath with preaching, and I would further add that I do not leave off preaching on account of any disinclination to the business or disaffection to the People, but on account of the peculiar Situation & Circumstances of the Town."

The following spring, the resumption of the services was discussed, and Mr. Whiting addressed a letter to his congregation in which he reviews very interestingly the history of the church and the causes for the present lack of support, ascribing it largely to the great drain upon the time and pocketbooks of the members of the congregation, incident to organizing the State and nation.\*

Church services were resumed that spring, but troubles for the church and minister evidently increased steadily from this time on. In September, 1794, Mr. Whiting considered resigning from the ministry, but at the meeting of the church called in regard to it, "It was generally thought best to make some further Trial, to see if unhappy prejudice might not more wear away, & a Spirit of Religion, of Charity & for Supporting Gospel Order & Worship, more take place".

In April, 1797, a letter was addressed to the selectmen by five citizens (of whom only one was a member of the church), asking them to call a meeting of the congregation to consider Mr. Whiting's "proceedings and non-performance of Duty". The meeting was called by the selectmen and a committee chosen to confer with Mr. Whiting and make report at a later meeting. The committee did their work so well that the record of the adjourned meeting simply states "after some conversation the meeting was dissolved".†

\*Appendix III: C.

†Appendix III: D.





The Meeting House, the walls of which were raised in 1787, had not yet been completed, though a lapse of twelve years had gone by, but it was finally finished in 1801.\* It is probable that this delay and the lack of support of the church during this period is not due so much to lack of interest as to the fact that the citizens were harrassed on every side by the expenses and troubles incidental to the Revolutionary War and the organization of a new civil government.

The Records of the First Church contain no entries from March, 1798, to February, 1809; nor does a careful search of the town records shed much light on what went on in this period. Under date of February 24, 1809, Mr. Whiting wrote the selectmen asking that he be dismissed from the ministry of the town church, giving as a reason his greatly impaired health which precluded his further usefulness. He urged that some formality attend his dismissal, and reviewed touchingly his long service of thirty-six years and all the changes this time had brought both in his congregation and in the country. The town, after appointing a committee to discuss the matter with Mr. Whiting, voted April 10, 1809, to unite with the church in calling a council to dismiss him; and further voted to exempt \$200 from his grand list for the balance of his life. Mr. Whiting was dismissed by a council convened at Rockingham, May 18, 1809, thus ending a long and creditable service for the people of Rockingham. So much light is thrown on the personnel of the people and the conditions under which they were laboring, by the complete records of the letters and meetings of both the church and the town, leading to the dismissal of Mr. Whiting, that they are copied entire in the Appendix (III: E).

During the next nine years, or until 1818, little definite information can be found regarding the history

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\*Chapter I.

of the church. It is probable that services were held more or less regularly, but with no settled minister.

Interest apparently was at a low ebb, and the organization of churches of the various denominations in other parts of the town, which were growing more rapidly than Rockingham village, made it increasingly difficult to keep up the town church.

Up to this time, five other church organizations had been formed in Rockingham, as follows: 1786, a Baptist Church at Rockingham, and 1790, a Universalist Church at Rockingham; (both of these organizations used the town Meeting House for their services for a number of years, and then died a natural death); 1798, the "Protestant Episcopal Society of Rockingham", which also used the old Meeting House until 1817, when it removed to Bellows Falls, and is still existent under the name "Immanuel Church of Bellows Falls"; 1812, "The Baptist Church of Christ in Westminster and Rockingham", now the First Baptist Church of Saxtons River. About 1803, regular meetings were started in this town by the Methodist denomination, later growing into the Methodist Church now existent at Bellows Falls. In addition to these, the churches organized at Chester in the early days undoubtedly drew from the support of the church at Rockingham.

In July, 1818, Rev. Elijah Wollage came to Rockingham to supply the pulpit in the Meeting House for four months. At the end of this period, a call was extended to him to become their pastor for a term of four years. Little could be found of the original church of Rev. Samuel Whiting, the old members having largely died, left town, or joined some other denomination. Accordingly a new church was organized November 5, 1818, with seven members, and under Mr. Wollage as pastor, declared by the council to be the "Congregational Church of Christ in Rockingham".\*

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\*Appendix III: F.



THE PULPIT



THE MAIN ENTRANCE



After the repeal, in 1807, of the "Law regulating the support of the gospel", it is probable that the control of the temporal affairs of the First Church were turned over by the town to the church society itself. In the record of the reorganization of the church in 1818, the phrase "the Society gave him a call to preach with them four years", marks the first evidence of such action of a temporal nature other than by the town. The adoption of the word "Congregational" at this time, as witnessed by the last phrase of the record of the reorganization, and by continual later records of similar nature, also marks a new epoch in the life of the church. Thus we may regard the church organization formed at this time as a distinct Congregational Church, not in any way connected with or supported by the town, though a natural outgrowth in a reorganized form of the original town church.

The church, as thus reorganized, grew steadily, the records showing the following as the membership on the dates given: June 1, 1820, forty-five; June, 1821, forty-eight; January, 1822, fifty.

Little account is given of the petty bickerings so constant under Mr. Whiting; but more attention was evidently paid to the exact wording of the creed and covenants.

Mr. Wollage probably remained as pastor for the full four years, or until July 1, 1822. After he left, there is no record of any settled minister until 1836, and it is not known who supplied. The church organization was evidently kept up, as there are occasional entries of new members, or old members dismissed from the church. The records of the "Consociation in Windham County" show that there were forty-four members of this church in 1824. It is also probable that church services were held more or less regularly during this interim.

On January 3, 1837, Rev. Samuel Mason was or-



dained as pastor,\* after having supplied the pulpit for some months. His pastorate was beset by many trials and dissensions, and after only about eighteen months, he was dismissed by a council convened August 22, 1838. The account of his dismissal in the Records of the First Church absolved Mr. Mason from any blame in the matter and intimated that it might be impracticable to ever settle another pastor.†

As foretold in the minutes of the council of dismissal, this marks practically the end of the church organization and the regular use of the Meeting House for church purposes. Several records appear in the book in 1838 and 1839, signed by "Broughton White, Moderator". It is inferred that he was settled, at least temporarily, over the church, though the only definite evidence of this fact in addition to his signature on the church records is the following entry:

1838 At a communion season Brother Joel Brown was received to the communion & fellowship of this chh by profession.

On the previs preparatory Lecture day was chosen Moderator.

B. White.

He was an aged man and soon after his death, which occurred in 1839, the church organization fell to pieces, and has never been revived. The last record found of any church organization is the presence of "Bro. Pulpipher and Bro. Brown" as delegates to the Consociation in Windham County on September 16, 1840. A further entry in the records of this meeting is as follows: "Memorials were presented by (aggrieved?) members of the Church in Rockingham and referred to the Standing Committee". The Consociation was abandoned soon after this and no further action regarding it is recorded.

\*Appendix III: G.

†Appendix III: H.



Many entries occur in the Records of the First Church showing that personal disputes were taken up by the church body as a whole, and often a satisfactory settlement effected by this means. If resource to this was of no avail, in a few cases the question under dispute was let out to arbitration by parties from neighboring churches, or even a council of neighboring churches called to adjust the matter. A few extracts from the Records will serve as examples:

"By the desire of Brother Asher Evans I inform'd the Chh & Congregation of his Sorrow for his foolish & Inconsiderate Conduct with Nathl Bennett. Voted Satisfactory."

"Chh tarried after Publick Worship, read Jonathan Burrs Complaint against Nathaniel Davis & Chose Peter Evans & Elias Olcott to meet with them & endeavour to reconcile the Difficulties between them."

"Chh tarried after Publick Worship When Peter Evans Junr & Elias Olcott upon Brother Davis Saying that wherein he had broke the good Rules of the Chh he was sorry for it, Said it was to the same purport to what they had Advis'd to & Brother Burr was satisfied with, and he being Satisfied withdrew his Complaint & both Parties agreed not to mention again the old Story wherein they differd & which was the foundation of the Dispute."

Nathaniel Davis apparently had continual difficulty in getting along with several members of the church, and was the subject of numerous church meetings. The records show that after a number of disputes in which he was the chief actor, on May 19, 1782, the church voted to "send this Admonition to Brother Nathaniel Davis in the Name of the Chh". September 1, they voted to leave the question to the Ministerial Association for settlement, but the ministers "declined attending to the Matter or giving their Advice". January 26, 1783, the church "Voted that the Pastor



send this Second Admonition to Mr. Davis in the Name of the Chh". This was evidently unsatisfactory in adjusting the matter, for May 21, 1783, the church voted to call a council "to hear & advise as to his Matter of grievance". A committee of six members were appointed to lay the matter before a council composed of delegates from the churches at Charlestown, Walpole, and Westminster. The matter was apparently finally settled in this manner, since under date of July 6, this entry is found:

"After Publick Worship Brother Nathaniel Davis desiring the Congregation to Stop, read to them a paper in these Words or nearly. If I have said anything that has given just Occasion of Offence to any in this Chh I am sorry for it."

This is the last record of any trouble with Brother Davis.

A careful study of the Records of the First Church yields little definite information regarding the exact covenant or platform of religious beliefs on which it was founded, previous to the reorganization in 1818. Indirect evidence shows that there was a written covenant, but unfortunately it was not copied into the Records. The principal entries bearing in any way on these questions are copied into the Appendix (III:I).

Only two questions are really mentioned, and they are more or less interlocking: Baptism and the "Half Way Covenant" so-called. In 1778, the church refused to adopt the "Half Way Covenant" which "admits persons to Priveledges & taken under the Watch & Care of the Chh without promising an Attendance on the Lord's Table". Finally, on June 15, 1784, this covenant was adopted after some weeks of discussion and it is copied entire in the appendix.\* A list of twenty-one people admitted to "Priveledges" under this covenant is given in the appendix.† It is probable

\*Appendix III: I.

†Appendix I.

that this list is not complete, since entries are only found between the years 1795 and 1803.

The church evidently did not allow the baptism of children whose parents were not members of the church previous to this time; believed strongly in infant baptism; and required as a condition of church membership that a person must promise an "Attendance on the Lord's Table".

The Confession of Faith and Covenant subscribed to by the members at the time of the reorganization, in 1818, is happily given in the Records, as are also more detailed statements agreed to November 11, 1819. These latter renounce entirely the "Half Way Covenant". Both of these will be found in the Appendix (III: J).

May 11, 1837, the church adopted the "Articles of faith and covenant, approved by the Black River association".

The church participated by its pastor and delegates in councils of ordination or organization, or to settle especial difficulties, of other churches in the surrounding country. A list of those of which records have been found may serve to throw light on the history of other early town or Congregational Churches. The dates given are those of the appointing of delegates:

June 26, 1774, Newfane, Ordination and probably organization.

June 26, 1774, Westminster, Ordination.

October 6, 1776, Putney, "To assist in gathering a Chh & Installing a Minister".

October 13, 1778, Westminster. Probably to settle some church difficulty.

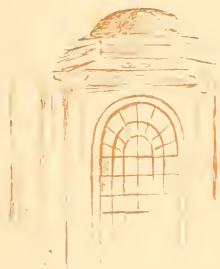
Dec. 11, 1781, Cornish, "Ecclesiastical Council".

Mar. 26, 1785, Westminster, "Council".

Nov. 11, 1787, Reading, "Ordination of Mr. Sargeants there".

Nov. 2, 1788, Thomlinson (Grafton), "Ordination of Mr. Hall".





June 6, 1789, Windsor, "Ordination of Mr. Shuttlesworth" over "Christian Catholic Society".

June 26, 1791, Woodstock, "To hear their Difficulties and Consult thereon".

Oct. 25, 1795, Wardsborough, "Ordination there Nov. 4th".

Nov. 11, 1837, Chester, "Installation of Br. S. H. Hodges" Nov. 15.

Sept. 25, 1839, Saxtons River, Dismiss Rev. Nelson Barber Sept. 26.

In March, 1819, "all necessary furniture for the Sacramental Table" was purchased by popular subscription. The list of those contributing contains forty-four names, only seventeen of which have been found on the Records of the First Church as members. The remaining twenty-seven are listed in the appendix, at the close of the list of members of the church,\* since they furnish additional evidence of the names of those interested in the church at that time. At the end of the subscription list in the Records of the First Church is the following:

"In addition to the foregoing, the Female Society advanced three Dollars and purchased the Baptismal Bason. Mrs. Eunice Richards gave the Table cloth and two small Napkins or towels. The whole furniture, in addition to the foregoing, consists of two large Tankard Pots, four Cups, two with handles, and two small Platters. . . .

Capt. Thomas Gould procured the subscriptions, collected and paid over the same to Mr. Royal Earl".

The baptismal bowl was broken at the time the last member was taken into the church, and it was considered at the time a "forerunner of trouble" for the church. The Communion service, the mended baptismal bowl, one napkin, and the table cloth were preserved with the Records of the First Church in

\*Appendix I.



COMMUNION CUPS AND LINEN USED IN THE OLD  
MEETING HOUSE



THE HIGH PULPIT AND SOUNDING BOARD



Rockingham, by the descendants of David Pulsipher 1st, and his wife, Elizabeth. They were for many years in the possession of Mrs. W. H. H. Putnam of Springfield, one of these descendants. The Communion service was destroyed in a fire there in 1898, while the linen\* and the record book have been recently presented to the Old Rockingham Meeting House Association. In addition to these, two old pewter cups without handles† were recently found in the possession of J. B. Divoll at Rockingham village. They are entirely different from the service purchased in 1819, though they were probably used at some time on the Communion Table of the First Church. They have also been acquired by the Association and with the linen are kept in the Old Meeting House.

June 24, 1820, the church became a member of the "Consociation in Windham County", an organization of the Congregational Churches formed October 3, 1797, at Brattleboro, Vt.

\*Appendix I.

†The communion cups and linen are shown in the illustration on the opposite page. The linen, yellowed with age, bears the inscriptions "Jesus is the bread of life" and "The blood of Jesus is drink indeed," written with ink and still legible despite the passage of the years.



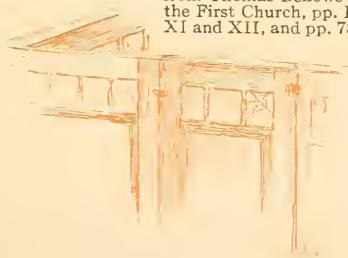
## CHAPTER III

### *The Minister*

AS told in detail in Chapter II, the Town of Rockingham had two preachers previous to the organization of the church: Rev. Andrew Gardner from 1769 to December, 1771; and Rev. Elisha Harding, for at least part of the time between 1771 and 1773; and four settled ministers over the church—Rev. Samuel Whiting, from the organization of the church, October 27, 1773, until May 18, 1809; Rev. Elijah Wollage, from the reorganization of the church, November 3, 1818, probably until July 1, 1822; Rev. Samuel Mason, from January 3, 1837, until August 22, 1838; and Rev. Broughton White during 1839. Each of these men probably left his mark on the people of the town of Rockingham, but especially must this have been true of Rev. Samuel Whiting, who for thirty-six years, through the critical time during and after the Revolution, was the town's leader in spiritual affairs, and, we may well believe, of great influence as a wise counsellor in things temporal. It is well that we should consider what kind of men these were.

Rev. Andrew Gardner\* was one of the original grantees of the town of Rockingham, coming here from Fort Dummer and other points in the lower valley; before that, in 1746, he was in Charlestown, N. H. In addition to being a minister of the gospel, he was a skilled physician and surgeon, and served the various settlements in the dual capacity. After leaving here,

\*Much of the material for these brief sketches of the ministers has been obtained from Thomas Bellows Peck's Historical Introduction to his reprint of the Records of the First Church, pp. IX to XI, and the History of the Town of Rockingham, Chaps. XI and XII, and pp. 786-788.



where he had made his home for some years, he went to Bath, N. H. Thus for many years he was intimately connected with the various settlements up and down the Connecticut Valley, and took much interest in their affairs, both spiritual and temporal.

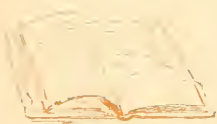
Rev. Elisha Harding probably never lived in the town of Rockingham, though he is known to have come into this vicinity as early as 1755. At the time of his serving as preacher here, he was chaplain in the large family of Col. Benjamin Bellows at Walpole, N. H., and was evidently conveyed back and forth when preaching at Rockingham.\*

Rev. Samuel Whiting, the "First Settled Minister" of the town of Rockingham, came to the town as a young man of only twenty-three years, and spent his entire mature life here, dying at the "Minister's House" in his seventieth year. Of the forty-five years he spent in town, for thirty-six he was the town's minister. This period covered the American Revolution and the period of construction and growth of the State of Vermont. It was unquestionably the most critical era in the history of the State, or of the towns of which it is composed. Throughout this period, his kindly personality and broad judgment stamped itself indelibly upon the people of the town in which he was both a respected citizen and an honored official; and through them, had its effect in the formation of the infant State.

In the ministry, he was a leader throughout the scattered settlements in this part of Vermont and New Hampshire, and often participated in councils to settle or dismiss ministers, or to adjust church difficulties. At his home, in June, 1796, was held the first meeting of the General Convention of Congregational Churches of Vermont, a work in which he took a prominent part, as he also did in its outgrowth, the Vermont Missionary



\*Chapter II, p. 27.



Society. He was one of the ministers forming the "Association of Ministers of the Gospel of the County of Cumberland (Windham), in the state of New York",\* formed in Brattleboro, October 17, 1775. It must not be overlooked that in those early days, a minister occupied an even higher position in the community than he does today, when educated men are so much more common. At the time of his resigning the ministry over the First Church, he was the oldest minister in Vermont in point of service.

Mr. Whiting was, moreover, a business man, a thing not always to be found in a minister even in these keener days. While his salary was probably very small, he obtained from the town concessions of land which enabled him to live the nine years after his resignation, in comparative peace and comfort for those days. As has been mentioned in Chapter I, he disposed of between six and seven thousand dollars worth of property in a comparatively short period of time, and still had valuable properties left.

While none of his sermons have come down to us, side lights which we have on the man indicate that he was bright and keen, and probably gave his hearers the best to be had. A legend handed down from generation to generation has it that one of his parishioners once complained to him that he was giving them "poor preaching,—very poor preaching", to which Mr. Whiting replied, "You must not forget that I receive poor pay,—very poor pay". Possibly this was during one of the many periods when his pay was a year or so in arrears.

The liberality of his religious views may be judged from the fact that at one time he is said to have chosen a young Baptist student to assist him in his church work for a while. It is also related that after resigning the ministry, he habitually attended church services

\*Thompson's Vermont, pp. 177, 178; and Records of Windham Association of Congregational Ministers.



THE MINISTER'S HOUSE



HEAVY ROOF TIMBERS IN THE ATTIC OF THE MEETING  
HOUSE



at the old church, paying no attention to what denomination they might happen to be. When asked the reason for his so doing, he replied, "They may be right and I wrong". Such liberality of religious views was very rare in those days.

Soon after coming to Rockingham, the Rev. Samuel Whiting built for himself a home, known for many years as the "Minister's House". He located it on land given to him by the town as part of the Minister's Right, probably on Lot 11 of Range 6. The house is still standing about a mile north of Rockingham village on the road to Chester. It is known as the Stowell place and is now owned by Mortimer J. Granfield.

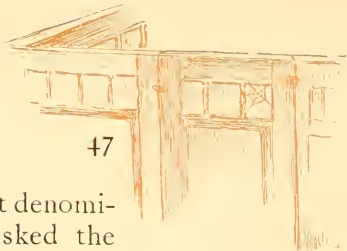
It is a beautiful example of colonial architecture, and, like the old Meeting House, has stood for much in the history of the town. In the olden days, the Minister's House was a semi-public building, used for smaller meetings of all kinds. In Mr. Whiting's office, attached to the rear of the building (see illustration of the minister's house), was held the first General Convention of Congregational Churches of the State of Vermont, in June, 1796; here also were held meetings of both the Consociation in Windham County, and the Windham Association of Ministers. Here were solemnized most of the marriage ceremonies performed by Mr. Whiting, as recorded in the Records of the First Church; and at his table in this small room was written year after year the story of the growth and later troubles of his church as they have come down to us in those Records.

Mr. Whiting continued to occupy the house after his dismissal from the ministry, and there died in 1819.

Rev. Samuel Whiting\* was born in Wrentham, Mass., January 28, 1750; the son of Joseph Whiting of Franklin, Mass., who traced his ancestry back to

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\*History of Rockingham, pp. 786-788.



Nathaniel Whiting, who was in Dedham, Mass., in 1641, and married Hannah Dwight in 1643. Mr. Whiting graduated from Harvard College in 1769; received the degree of A. M. from Yale in 1772; was ordained pastor of the First Church in Rockingham, October 27, 1773, becoming their first settled minister; dismissed from the church at his own request, May 18, 1809, after thirty-six years of strenuous labor which had left him in poor health; and resided in the old Minister's House until his death, which occurred May 16, 1819. He married, May 24, 1774, Mary Goldsbury of Warwick, Mass., who died August 7, 1799. Both are buried in the old burying ground which surrounds the meeting house for which they gave so generously of themselves. They had nine children, of whom only two survived their father: John Goldsbury, who married first Phoebe Locke of Saxtons River, and second, Crissana Bailey, also of Saxtons River, and who was the grandfather of Mrs. Henry N. Weston and Mrs. Frank Proctor, still living in the northern part of Rockingham (Mrs. Crissana Bailey Whiting died at the home of Mrs. Henry N. Weston in 1912 at the age of one hundred and two); and Joseph, who married Clarissa, daughter of Jehiel Webb of Rockingham, and removed after a few years to Springfield, Vt., where descendants are still living.

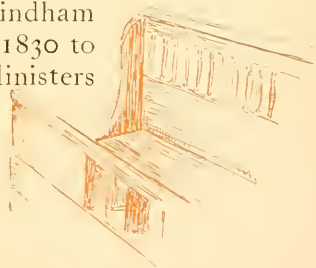
Rev. Elijah Wollage, the second minister, was born in Bernardston, Mass., April 13, 1769, the son of Elijah and Polly Wollage; graduated from Dartmouth College in 1791; was pastor of churches in Guilford and Cambridge, Vermont, previous to coming to Rockingham; removed from Rockingham to New York state and took up teaching; resumed preaching in 1835, and died at Starkey, N. Y., in 1847. He married Sally P. Babcock of Westmoreland, N. H., and had five children, one of whom, Elijah, was a Presbyterian minister in Arkansas.



Rev. Samuel Mason, the third minister, was born in Cavendish, Vt., September 9, 1797, the son of Daniel and Betsey Mason. No record is available of the college from which he graduated, or any pastorates previous to coming to Rockingham. After leaving here, he preached in Lempster, Washington, and Kingston, N. H., and in 1846, removed to Newburyport, Mass., where he died April 9, 1847. He married at Cavendish, previous to 1821, Abigail Sawyer Whitcomb of that place.

Little can be found regarding Rev. Broughton White, the fourth and last settled minister, except that he is said to have been an aged man when he came to Rockingham and that he died in 1839, while serving the church. The records of the Consociation in Windham County show that in June, 1836, Mr. White was moderator of the meeting of the Consociation at Westminster (West Parish), and was accredited there as the pastor of the church at Dover, Vt.; in 1838, he appears as a delegate from Putney, Vt.; and in 1839, as both a delegate from Putney and as pastor of the church in Rockingham. He was also for several years a member of the Association of Ministers in Windham County.

Within the past year, an old leather trunk was discovered in an attic in Brattleboro containing the original record books of various early church and ministers' associations of Windham County, which furnish additional and definite information regarding the early church history of this section. These are now in the possession of Rev. R. A. Beardslee of Springfield, Vt., the scribe of the Windham-Union Ministers' Meeting. This trunk contained the records of the Consociation in Windham County from its organization in 1797 to its dissolution in 1840; of the Association of Ministers in Windham County from 1823 to 1828; of the Windham County Bible Society from its organization in 1830 to 1840; and of the Windham Association of Ministers



(now the Windham-Union Ministers' Meeting), from its organization, in 1775, for over a hundred years; as well as the original manuscript records of ordination councils at various churches during the early years of the nineteenth century.



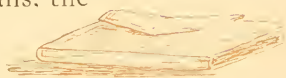
## CHAPTER IV

### *The Meeting House Restored*

THE Old Meeting House, abandoned in 1839 as a place of regular church worship, still continued to be used for town meetings until 1869, when they too followed the changed centre of population to Bellows Falls. In 1906, the interior of the building was put back into its original condition, partly by town and partly by private money, and it stands today as one of the finest examples of colonial church architecture remaining in New England, both in exterior and interior.

After the death of Rev. Broughton White, in 1839, no further effort was made to resuscitate the First Church in Rockingham, or its successor, the Congregational Church of Christ in Rockingham. Irregular church services have been held in the old Meeting House to the present day, especially in the summer. In the summer of 1914, Sunday School services were held there each week, and preaching services every alternate week under the auspices of the Bellows Falls Ministers' Association. These were well supported and it is possible they will be continued each summer.

The town continued to hold its meetings in the old building and it was possible to keep it warm by erecting a small chimney and installing two stoves. The pulpit was removed about 1851, and its place taken by a low platform for the convenience of the moderators of these meetings; and the rows of front benches removed for the sake of greater space. The exterior of the building was kept in good repair by the town, and in its original condition; but the interior fell sadly the prey to curio seekers. The spindles from the pew-rails, the



old hand-forged hinges from the pew doors, even the nails that held the pews together—likewise hand-wrought or whittled from wood—all gradually disappeared. In their place, appeared countless names and bits of choice poetry on the walls, which certainly added but little to the dignity or beauty of the building.

In 1869, the town deserted the building, holding its last meeting there March 19 of that year. Nearly ninety per cent of the legal voters lived at a distance from the building, while they were particularly centralized around the villages of Bellows Falls and Saxtons River. By a close vote on March 19, 1869, the town of Rockingham voted to hold their meetings thereafter at the village of Bellows Falls, where suitable quarters had been guaranteed to them, free of charge, by eight leading citizens. Saxtons River fought hard for the meetings, but lost out. After several meetings held in Wightman's and Engine House Halls, they settled on Union Hall, where they were usually held, until the Opera House Block, or Town Hall building, was erected by the town in 1887.

Deserted first by the church, and then even by the town, the Old Meeting House stood on its hill, ever increasingly a memento of the past.

On May 15, 1906, at a special town meeting, it was voted to appropriate five hundred dollars to repair the Old Meeting House thoroughly, and restore it to its original condition as far as possible, with the understanding that at least a similar amount should be raised by private subscription. This was done, and a total of about twelve hundred dollars obtained for the purpose, the private subscriptions coming both from local people, and from descendants of old residents now living at a distance; and ranging in amounts from fifty cents to fifty dollars. Mrs. Horace W. Thompson of Bellows Falls was largely instrumental in starting this movement and in raising the money to carry it to a





successful completion. Mrs. Thompson's maiden name was Elizabeth Billings Jackson, and she was a granddaughter of Samuel L. Billings, one of the most prominent citizens of Rockingham from 1840 to 1863, and a great-granddaughter of Susannah Billings, one of the members of the First Church after its reorganization in 1818.

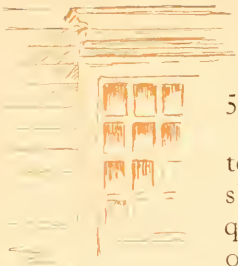
The work was done under the personal supervision of Myron H. Ray, first selectman of the town of Rockingham, to whose great interest and carefulness is due in no small degree the successful working out of the plans. The work included placing the building in thorough repair by overhauling the underpinning, putting on a new slate roof, and repainting the outside with another coat of fresh, white paint; and the complete restoration of the interior to its original condition as shown by record and family legend. In accomplishing the latter, the stoves were removed and the long benches replaced; sixty pew doors replaced, using a replica of the old hand-wrought hinges; over fourteen hundred spindles put back into the rails separating the pews;\* the pulpit rebuilt at its old height and in as near its original form as could be determined; and the walls re-dressed in their original whiteness. In all interior woodwork, California redwood in its natural state was used, as most closely duplicating the weathered pine already there.

The restoration was completed late in the fall of 1906, but the re-dedication was delayed until the following summer, in order that it might serve as an Old Home Day, at a season when many of the old time residents and their descendants could attend.

On August 17, 1907, the Old Rockingham Meeting House was re-dedicated in the presence of nearly twelve hundred people, gathered from far and near to do honor

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\*Only two old spindles were found in place, while 1,400 had been removed.



to the building and to those who erected it and worshipped there, and who decided in it the momentous questions of town and state in the most critical period of our history. The Rockingham Grange served as hosts during both the picnic dinner at noon and the afternoon services. After an address of welcome by N. L. Divoll of Rockingham Village, the address of the day was given by Hon. Kittredge Haskins of Brattleboro, who took as his theme, "Vermont and what it has done for the entire country". This was followed by short addresses by a number of Rockingham men and descendants of early citizens, including Rev. H. H. Shaw of Marlboro (a direct descendant of Rev. Samuel Whiting), Rev. L. O. Sherburne of Bellows Falls, Rev. Rodney W. Roundy of Ludlow (a "Rockingham Boy" now in Keene, N. H.), W. C. Belknap, Dr. E. R. Campbell, and C. W. Osgood of Bellows Falls, and Foster B. Locke of Saxtons River. The following resolutions,\* introduced by Dr. E. R. Campbell, were unanimously passed by the assemblage:

*Resolved*, that we, here assembled on Rockingham Old Home Day, to re-dedicate the old meeting house, hereby tender to Mrs. Elizabeth B. Thompson a vote of thanks for her most earnest and successful work in making possible the restoration of the old church and the exercises of today.

*Resolved*, that she is hereby appointed to co-operate with a committee of five to be selected by herself to arrange for an annual or biennial gathering at this place.

In this last clause was laid the foundation of the Annual Pilgrimages to the Old Church, which have grown to be an ever increasing factor in the summer life of the town of Rockingham.†

In addition to the money which made this restora-

\*A framed copy of these resolutions hangs now in the Old Meeting House beside a short history of the restoration and a list of those making it financially possible.

†Chapter VI.

tion possible, there was presented to the old church at this time the following gifts of value: A visitors' register especially designed and gotten out for the church by Frank S. Whitten of Lynn, Mass.; a pair of curtains for the circular window behind the pulpit, by Hope Lovell of Rockingham; cushions for the seat in the pulpit and the one in the deacon's pew front of the pulpit, by Mrs. Thompson and J. E. Keefe; a copy of the reprint of the Records of the First Church, by Thomas Bellows Peck of Walpole, N. H.; and a copy of the History of the Town of Rockingham by the Selectmen.

Several relics of the church were also on exhibition at this time, among them being the key of the old original lock\* on the door, now in the possession of T. R. McQuaide of Claremont, N. H.; two pewter goblets and the linen forming part of the Communion service used by the First Church, and the original record book of the First Church. All except the key are now in the possession of the Old Rockingham Meeting House Association.

Two plates marking the pews were also dedicated at this time. One bears the inscription, "In memory of Nathaniel Davis, one of the first settlers of Rockingham, who, with his family, occupied this pew for many years. Given by the children of John H. and Susan B. Davis". A second, in memory of the family of Caspar Shana Wolfe, who came to Rockingham in 1784, was placed on his pew by Mrs. Sarah Millard Rogers of Charlestown, N. H. Since this date, the pews have been similarly marked which were occupied by Joshua Webb, who came to Rockingham in 1768; Ebenezer Allbee, who settled in town in 1770 or 1771; Wm. W. Pulsipher; John Wiley 2nd; and Josiah White† who

\*The lock itself is also in the possession of the McQuaide family.

†Josiah White is shown by the town records to have taken a very active part in the affairs of the town from his removal here in 1773 to his death in 1806. He was especially active in the formation of the State of Vermont and the struggle for independence from the Mother Country that followed, being one of the men from Rockingham who "marched to Manchester" in 1777. He made his home on the farm in the north part of the town now known as the Chester B. Hadwen place. A copy of the inscription on his tombstone is given in Chapter I. p. 25.



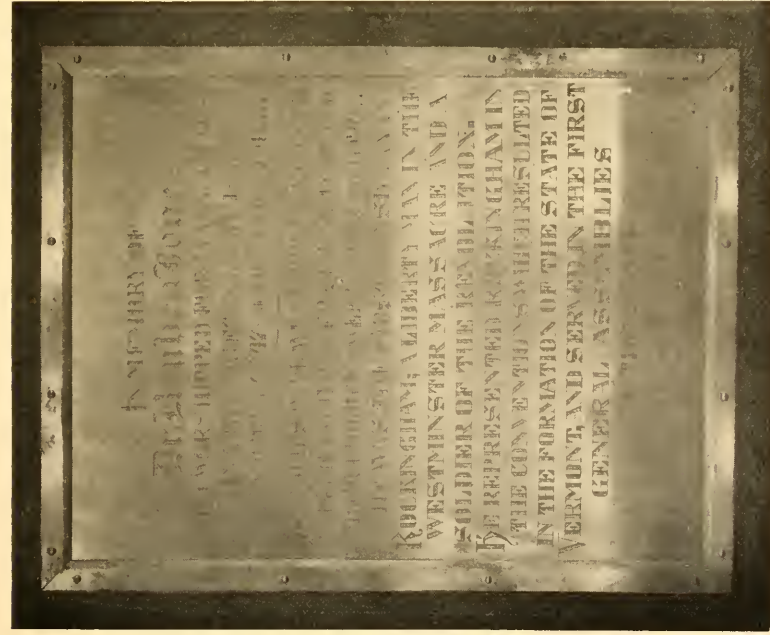
joined the settlers in 1773. At the Annual Pilgrimage, August 4, 1912, a bronze tablet in honor of Dr. Reuben Jones\* placed on the wall to the left of the pulpit, was presented by Mrs. Frederick E. Wadhams of Albany, N. Y., a great-granddaughter of Dr. Jones. The tablet bears the following inscription:

"In memory of Dr. Reuben Jones, who worshipped for many years in this Meeting House. Born, March 7, 1747; died January 7, 1833. He and his wife were received into the church on February 13, 1780, and their children were baptized here. He was the first physician in Rockingham; a Liberty Man in the Westminster Massacre and a soldier of the Revolution. He represented Rockingham in the conventions which resulted in the formation of the State of Vermont; and served in the first general assemblies of the state."

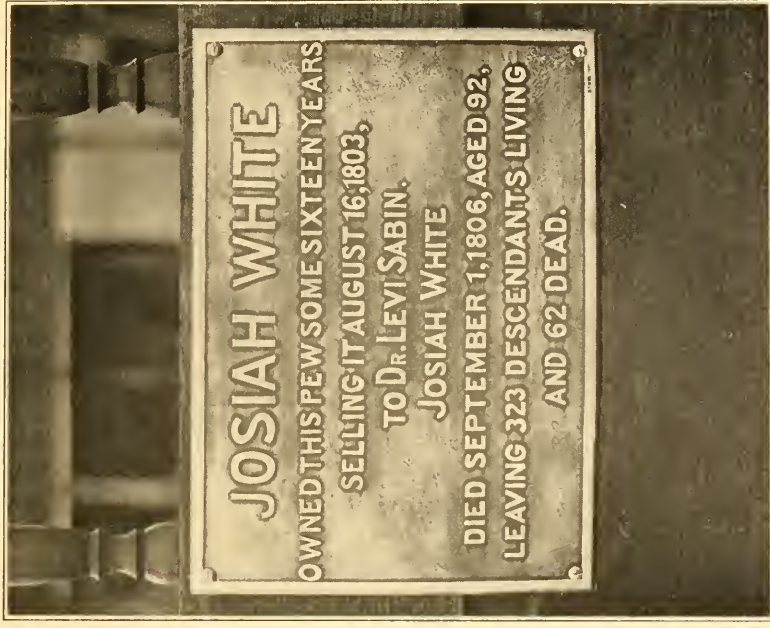
An appropriate poem was written expressly for the re-dedication of the Meeting House by Miss Mary O. Divoll, of Rockingham, and read by her at that meeting.

\*The inscription on the tablet in memory of Dr. Reuben Jones gives only a small idea of the part he took in the early affairs, not only of Rockingham, but of the entire State of Vermont. He, with Captain Azariah Wright of Westminster, were the leaders of the liberty party in Eastern Vermont throughout the entire Revolutionary period, taking much the same place in this part of that State that Ethan Allen took in the western part. Later he took a decidedly leading part in the formation of the State of Vermont and its admission into the Union. He was one of the original grantees of the town of Concord, Vt., and obtained from others a share in the previously granted islands in Lake Champlain, early known as the "Two Heroes." He moved from Rockingham to Chester, which town he also represented in the Legislature; and later removed to the state of New York, at Keesville, in which state he died in 1833. His son also, Dr. Reuben Jones, was a leading physician and judge of the state of New York, and served as surgeon in the War of 1812. Pages 687-689 of the History of the Town of Rockingham give in detail all the information available regarding this remarkable man.





THE DR. REUBEN JONES TABLET



THE JOSIAH WHITE PEW MARKER



## CHAPTER V

### *The Old Rockingham Meeting House Association*



ON the afternoon of May 1, 1911, nine interested citizens of Rockingham and vicinity met in Hotel Windham, at Bellows Falls, and formed the Old Rockingham Meeting House Association, the objects of which were stated by them as follows:

“In order to preserve the Old Rockingham Meeting House and other buildings or monuments of marked historical interest in Rockingham and the neighboring towns, and for the purpose of commemorating important historical events in the settlement and growth of Rockingham and adjacent territory; for providing an Annual Pilgrimage to the Old Rockingham Meeting House, and for further purpose of encouraging love for the civic, social and religious principles and institutions incorporated in our local, state and national government.”

Following is a list of those thus banding themselves together: Prof. Franklin W. Hooper of Brooklyn, N. Y. and Walpole, N. H.; Dr. H. D. Holton of Brattleboro, Vt.; Miss Mary O. Divoll of Rockingham Village; C. W. Osgood, Rev. A. P. Pratt, W. C. Belknap, N. G. Williams, L. S. Hayes, and H. W. Mitchell, all of Bellows Falls.

The association was incorporated June 28, 1911, by filing with the Secretary of State the Articles of Association, and the following officers were elected soon after:

Prof. FRANKLIN W. HOOPER, LL. D.,	President
Gen. NATHAN G. WILLIAMS,	1st Vice-President
Mrs. JOSIAH G. BELLOW, S,	2d Vice-President
HENRY D. HOLTON, M. D.,	3d Vice-President
CHARLES W. OSGOOD,	4th Vice-President
Rev. ARTHUR P. PRATT, Ph. D.,	Secretary
WILLIS C. BELKNAP,	Treasurer
LYMAN S. HAYES,	Librarian

*Executive Committee*

HON. HORACE A. PERRY, Walpole.  
 THOMAS BELLOW, S PECK, Walpole.  
 CHARLES N. VILAS, Alstead.  
 HON. JOHN W. PRENTISS, Alstead.  
 NATT L. DIVOLL, Rockingham.  
 HERBERT W. MITCHELL, Rockingham.  
 JUSTUS DARTT, Springfield.  
 Rev. HENRY L. BALLOU, Chester.

These officers continue the same today, except that Warren L. Hooper has taken the place of T. B. Peck on the executive committee, and Merrill L. Lawrence, that of Justus Dartt. Professor Hooper has recently died, and his place as president will be filled at the next annual meeting. The membership has increased to sixty-six, and includes people from New York, South Dakota, Connecticut, California, Massachusetts, and Illinois, in addition to those from Vermont and New Hampshire. Efforts are being made at the present time to materially increase this membership, and to raise a permanent fund of twenty-five hundred dollars, which would yield an income sufficient to cover the expense of the Annual Pilgrimages, with the help of the collections each year. So far, the expense of these has been met by circulating subscription papers. If this plan works out, it would certainly serve as a very fitting memorial for Professor Hooper.

The constitution of the Association\* provides that an annual public meeting shall be held on the last

\*Appendix V.



Monday in April in Bellows Falls; and that an Annual Pilgrimage to the Old Rockingham Meeting House shall be arranged the latter part of July or the early part of August of each year. Both these meetings and Pilgrimages\* have grown to be important factors in the life of the town and have done much to stir up public interest in things historical and civic. Speakers of prominence have been obtained for each meeting, who have taken as their subjects some phase of the historical or civic life of this vicinity.

The Association was formed to carry forward the Annual Pilgrimages to the Meeting House, which were presaged in the resolutions adopted at the re-dedication of the building in 1907, and which had become an annual feature between that date and the organization of the Association in 1911, but it has already gone farther than this.

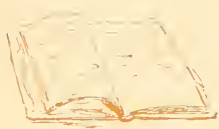
To Professor Franklin W. Hooper, more than to any other man, belongs the credit for this entire work. To his interest in the Old Meeting House and all it stands for, and his untiring devotion to the work involved, is due to a large extent the present organization and all for which it stands. In his death, which occurred August 1, 1914, the Association has lost its leader and its most faithful servant, and his place will be hard to fill. Professor Hooper was a great-great-grandson of David Pulsipher, one of the original members of the First Church of Rockingham at its organization in 1773, the keeper of the "Inn" at Rockingham Village at that time, one of the four men presenting to the town the land on which the Meeting House was built, and a noted patriot of the town of Rockingham in the War of the Revolution.

Prof. Hooper's interest in Rockingham is shown by the following extract from a letter written by him soon after the pilgrimage to the Meeting House in 1913:

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\*Chapter VI.





"I am realizing, more and more, as the years go by, that the great majority of us, who have not been in touch with the history of Rockingham do not appreciate as we otherwise would just what Rockingham has done for the State of Vermont and for the country at large."

The following extract from his obituary in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, summarizes the life of this man better than can other words:

"No man ever did so much to dignify the position of the old City of Brooklyn, in the world of science and art, as Professor Franklin William Hooper. . . . A native of New Hampshire, a graduate of Harvard, a specialist in biology and geology, he came here first as a professor in Adelphi College, where he taught natural science for nine years. In 1889, he became the director of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. For a quarter of a century his energetic activities have been given to the development of this institution which has become the pride of the city and a model for work in many other cities."

The Association has also lost another leader in the past few months, in the death of Thomas Bellows Peck, also of Walpole. Mr. Peck was one of the first men to appreciate the value to the present generation of the Rockingham Meeting House. His reprint of the Records of the First Church in Rockingham was probably largely responsible for the present interest in this subject, centering as it does around the Rockingham Meeting House Association and the Annual Pilgrimages to the Meeting House. He died at Salem, Mass., January 2, 1915.



SURROUNDED BY ITS BURYING GROUND



THE DEACONS' SEATS



## CHAPTER VI

### *Annual Pilgrimages to the Old Meeting House*

SINCE the re-dedication of the Old Meeting House in 1907, Annual Pilgrimages have been made to that shrine each summer; in fact, these pilgrimages might be said to antedate the re-dedication, since on July 28, 1907, about three weeks previous to that service, a meeting was held there under the leadership of clergymen from Walpole and participated in by about one hundred people from Walpole, Bellows Falls, Rockingham, and Springfield. This meeting largely took the form of an old time church service.

The second Annual Pilgrimage occurred July 29, 1908, when about two hundred and fifty people gathered at the Old Meeting House and listened to an able address by Rev. Edwin N. Hardy of Quincy, Mass., on "The Old New England Meeting Houses". The sermon was preached by Rev. Samuel M. Crothers of Cambridge, Mass., on the subject, "Ideal Qualities of a Christian".

The third Annual Pilgrimage on August 1, 1909, brought together about three hundred people from the surrounding towns. The address was by Professor Calvin M. Woodward, LL. D., of St. Louis, on "The Ideal of New England", while the sermon was by Dr. Thomas R. Slicer, D. D., of All Soul's Church of New York, on "The Fear of a Noble Mind".

July 31, 1910, about seven hundred people gathered at the Old Meeting House for their fourth Annual Pilgrimage, and plans were laid for the formation of a permanent organization to take charge of these pilgrimages. Addresses were made by Hon. Edwin A. Mead



of Boston, on "The New England Meeting Houses", and Pres. John M. Thomas, of Middlebury College, on "Vermont's Service to the Nation". Mr. Mead spoke of the Rockingham Meeting House as occupying a position almost unique among the meeting houses of New England, since it is almost the only one built in the eighteenth century which stands today in its original condition of both exterior and interior.

In 1911, the Old Rockingham Meeting House Association was formed not only to take charge of these pilgrimages, but to further in every way possible the interest in historical matters of the people of this vicinity.

The fifth Annual Pilgrimage to the Old Meeting House, and the first under the auspices of the permanent organization, took place July 30, 1911. Hon. John A. Mead, Governor of the State of Vermont, delivered the address of the day, speaking particularly of the State and its good work; the sermon was by Rev. A. J. Lyman, D. D., of Brooklyn, N. Y., on "The Deeper Unity of the New England Religious History", and a short address by Professor Hooper, President of the association, covered the history of the movement comprehensively. All these addresses were listened to with much attention by nearly six hundred people present.

At the sixth Annual Pilgrimage on August 4, 1912, a tablet on the wall of the old church, in memory of Dr. Reuben Jones, was presented to the town by F. E. Wadhams of Albany, N. Y., as the gift of his wife, a descendant of Dr. Jones.\* A poem, "The Candle in the Choir",† relating a legend of the Old Meeting House, was written for the occasion by Percy MacKaye and read by the author. At the time of this pilgrimage, the two old pewter tankards and the Communion linen, formerly used by the First Church of Rockingham, were first seen in their new glass case in the Meeting

\*Chapter IV p. 56.

†Page 11.



House. The sermon was by Rev. Philip S. Moxom, D. D., of Springfield, Mass., who drew many interesting lessons for us today from the characteristics of the early settlers of the country.

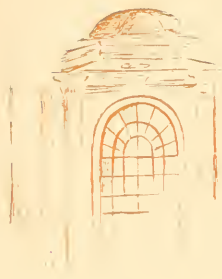
Despite severe rain, about six hundred people attended the seventh Annual Pilgrimage on August 10, 1913, when Professor Hooper, president of the Association, delivered an address on the salient points of local history. The sermon by Rev. L. Mason Clarke, D. D., of Brooklyn, was on the theme, "Religion and Patriotism", and reached very closely the hearts of his hearers.

The eighth and last Annual Pilgrimage to date held on August 2, 1914, was greatly saddened by the death the day before of Professor Hooper, who had been such a vital element in all this latter-day work centering around the Old Meeting House. The meeting served to bring together nearly one thousand people, from the surrounding towns and villages, with many coming from a distance. All enjoyed very much the sermon by Rev. Rockwell H. Potter, D. D., of Hartford, Conn., on the subject, "The Meeting House and Her Children", and the address by Senator W. P. Dillingham, on "Vermont in History". Resolutions of sorrow and sympathy upon the death of Professor Hooper were adopted by the meeting.

As has been mentioned, the annual public meetings of the Old Rockingham Meeting House Association held in April in the village of Bellows Falls, have attracted each year an increasing amount of public interest. At the first one, held April 29, 1912, Rev. A. P. Pratt, the secretary of the Association, read a very interesting summary of the gradual awakening of interest in the Old Meeting House, and Professor Hooper gave an able account of the geology of the Connecticut valley in the vicinity of Bellows Falls.

At the second annual meeting, April 28, 1913, three short addresses were given, one by L. S. Hayes, historian





of the Association and author of the *History of Rockingham*, on "Nathaniel Tucker, the Tucker Toll Bridge, and the Tucker Mansion"; a second by Principal A. E. Tuttle, on "Regard for Antiquities", and a third by Professor Hooper on the subject, "The Development of Our Natural Resources, or the Back-to-the-Land Movement". The latter was a particularly able and interesting address, and it was voted by the Association that it be preserved in printed form.

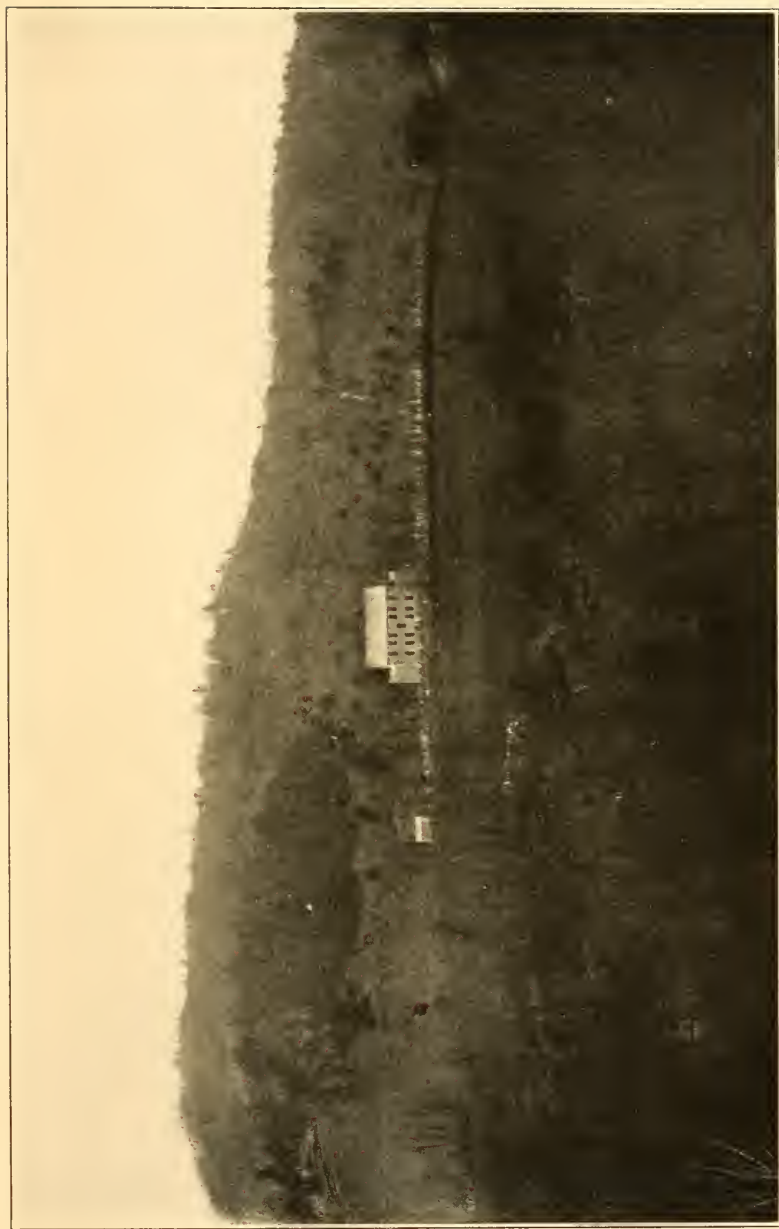
The third annual meeting was held April 27, 1914, and again three addresses were enjoyed by those present: one by State Senator F. H. Babbitt on "The Westminster Court House Massacre"; a second by Rev. H. L. Ballou of Chester, with the subject, "Historical Review—Vermont"; and a third by Professor Hooper, on "Idealism in History, or America's Conquest of Europe".

From this brief review of the organization and meetings of the Old Rockingham Meeting House Association, it will be seen that the Association is not only caring for the Old Meeting House, sacred alike to God, to our civic development, and to the men who worshipped and labored in the building, but that it is serving as a general historical society in fostering the public interest and knowledge in historical matters.

#### THE HOUSE OUR FATHERS BUILT TO GOD

We love the venerable house  
Our fathers built to God;  
In heaven are kept their grateful vows,  
Their dust endears the sod.

Here holy thoughts a light have shed  
From many a radiant face,  
And prayers of tender hope have spread  
A perfume through the place.



ACROSS THE WILLIAMS RIVER VALLEY



And anxious hearts have pondered here  
The mystery of life,  
And prayed the Eternal Spirit clear  
Their doubts and aid their strife.

From humble tenements around  
Came up the pensive train,  
And in the church a blessing found,  
Which filled their homes again.

For faith and peace, and mighty love,  
That from the Godhead flow,  
Showed from the life of heaven above  
Springs from the life below.

They live with God, their homes are dust,  
But here their children pray,  
And, in this fleeting lifetime, trust  
To find the narrow way.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.



## APPENDIX I

### MEMBERS OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN ROCKINGHAM

*(Not included in Index, except when elsewhere mentioned in reading matter.)*

#### MEMBERS BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL ORGANIZATION IN 1773 AND THE DISMISSAL OF REV. SAMUEL WHITING IN 1809, WITH DATE OF JOINING.

- Albee, Ebenezer, September 15, 1776.  
Albee, Rachel, September 15, 1776.  
Balch, Julia, February 23, 1794 (from Keene, N. H.).  
Benton, Mrs. Hannah, 1786. Recommended by Harming-  
ton Chh., Conn.  
Benton, Jacob, September 4, 1791, ditto.  
Berry, Mrs., September 10, 1786. Recommended by Jeffrey  
Chh.  
Burr, Eunice (Wife of Jonathan), March 13, 1774.  
Burr, Jonathan, March 13, 1774.  
Chamberlain, Lydia, October 4, 1801, from Hopkinton, Mass.  
Clark, Ebenezer, January 22, 1786.  
Cooper, Sarah (Wife of John), September 22, 1782.  
\*Davis, Nathaniel, October 27, 1773.  
Davis, Phillip, May 5, 1793, from Mansfield Chh.  
Dutton, Josiah, September 27, 1778.  
Dutton, Sarah (Wife of Thomas), May 4, 1777. From  
Church of Christ in Lunenburg.  
Dutton, Thomas, May 4, 1777. Ditto.  
Edson, Daniel, August 31, 1781. Recommended from  
Bridgewater Church. Dismissed to First Baptist Church  
of Christ in Richmond, June 25, 1786.  
Edson, Olive (Wife of Daniel). August 31, 1781. Recom-  
mended from Bridgewater Church.  
Edson, Olive (Wife of Isaiah), June 26, 1791.  
Ellis, Charlotte, November 23, 1806.  
Ellis, John, September 2, 1781.  
Ellis, Urana (Wife of John), July 11, 1790.  
Emery, Samuel, September 18, 1791. Recommended from  
the Chh in Jaffrey.





- Emery, ——— (Wife of Samuel), September 18, 1791, Jaffrey.
- \*Evans, Asher, October 27, 1773.
- †Evans, Eli, July 25, 1779.
- †Evans, Hannah (Wife of Eli), July 25, 1779.
- Evans, Lectah, September 2, 1781.
- \*Evans, Mary (Wife of Asher), October 27, 1773.
- \*Evans, Mercy (Wife of Peter), October 27, 1773.
- \*Evans, Mercy (Wife of Peter Junr.), October 27, 1773.
- \*Evans, Peter, October 27, 1773. Elected Deacon June 12, 1774.
- \*Evans, Peter Junr., October 27, 1773.
- \*Fuller, Ebenezer, October 27, 1773.
- Fuller, Elizabeth, December 30, 1781.
- \*Fuller, Mercy, October 27, 1773.
- Fuller, Rhoda, June 29, 1783.
- Green, Sarah (Widow), September 20, 1795.
- Harris, William, May 5, 1782. Dismissed.
- Hazletine, Jonas, July 27, 1783.
- Johnson, Dorcas, (Wife of Isaiah), February 18, 1786.
- Jones, Eunice (Wife of Reuben), February 13, 1780.
- Jones, Reuben, February 13, 1780.
- Kendall, Hannah (Wife of Eleazer), November 9, 1800.  
By recommendation.
- Kendall, Mary (Wife of Ebenezer), June 11, 1786.
- Kingsley, Naomi, January 13, 1774. Dismissed to the Christian people where she lives, June 25, 1786.
- Knight, Russell, April 24, 1785. Recommended from Lancaster.
- Knights, Mercy (Wife of Elijah), December 16, 1781.
- Lane, John, June 19, 1785. Recommended. Dismissed to Grafton March 30, 1794.
- \*Larrabee, Anne (Wife of Samuel), October 27, 1773.
- \*Larrabee, Samuel, October 27, 1773.
- Lovell, John, December 21, 1777.
- Lovell, Martha (Wife of John), December 21, 1777.
- †Muzzy, Anna (Wife of Joseph), September 8, 1811.
- †Ober, Samuel, September 18, 1791. From Jaffrey.
- Ober, ——— (Wife of Samuel), September 18, 1791. From Jaffrey.
- \*Olcott, Elias, October 27, 1773. Elected Deacon June 12, 1775.
- \*Olcott, Sibbel (Wife of Elias), October 27, 1773.
- Pease, Jacob, September 3, 1779. By Recommendation.  
Elected Deacon May 6, 1782.

- Pease, Mary (Wife of Jacob), September 3, 1779. By Recommendation.
- Perry, Daniel, May 10, 1795.
- Preston, Elenor, October 2, 1774. Dismissed to church in Rutland, May 23, 1784.
- Proctor, Lydia (Wife of Nathan), July 27, 1794.
- \*Pulsipher, David, October 27, 1773.
- \*Pulsipher, Elizabeth (Wife of David), October 27, 1773.
- Pulsipher, John, May 24, 1789.
- Pulsipher, Priscilla, May 11, 1783.
- Read, Frederic, 1784.
- Read, Louisa (Wife of Frederic), 1784.
- Roundy, Sarah, July 6, 1783. Recommended from the Chh in Ware.
- \*Simonds, William, October 27, 1773.
- \*Simonds, ——— (Wife of William), October 27, 1773.
- Stanley, David, September 10, 1786. Recommended by Jaffrey Chh.
- Stearns, Lydia (Wife of William Junr.), August 12, 1798.
- Stearns, William Junr., August 12, 1798.
- Stearns, ——— (Wife of William), May 24, 1789.
- ‡Stoell, Joanna (Wife of John), September 28, 1794.
- ‡Stoell, John, September 28, 1794.
- Stoell, Phebe, October 28, 1781.
- Taylor, Mrs., August 22, 1790.
- Trott, Vashti (Evans), November 10, 1782. Dismissed to Walpole, June 26, 1786.
- Walker (Wife of James), December 22, 1789.
- Walker, Rebecca (Wife of Timothy), December 24, 1780.
- Walker, Timothy, December 24, 1780.
- Webb, Jehiel, December 21, 1777.
- Webb, Mary (Wife of Jehiel), December 21, 1777.
- \*Whiting, Mary (Wife of Rev. Samuel), October 27, 1773 or 1774. Recommended Warwick, Mass.
- \*Whiting, Rev. Samuel, October 27, 1773. First Settled Minister.
- Whiting, Samuel Junr., November 4, 1806. On Death Bed.
- ‡Whiting, Sarah, April 10, 1808.
- Whitney, Agnis, August 25, 1776.
- Williams, Margaret.
- Wood, Mrs. Barnabas, September 18, 1791.
- Wood, George, 1784. Dismissed to Fitchburg Church, Nov. 23, 1788.

Wood, Joseph, July 31, 1774. Dismissed to any Church of our Communion, May 2, 1783.

Wood, Sarah (Wife of George), 1784. Dismissed to Fitchburg Church, Nov. 23, 1788.

CHESTER MEMBERS

*(Probably incomplete.)*

Chandler, Thomas & Wife.

Hotten, Esther (Wife of Joshua), May 11, 1777.

Hotten, Joshua, May 11, 1777.

Johnson, Isaiah & Wife, February 18, 1776.

Johnson, Phebe, March 13, 1774.

Sargeants, Jabez, November 27, 1774.

Sargeants, Persis (Wife of Jabez), November 27, 1774.

Sargent, Jabez Junr., & Wife.

SUBSCRIBERS TO THE "HALF WAY COVENANT"

Berry, Asa, November 24, 1803.

Berry, Hannah (Wife of Joel), November 24, 1803.

Berry, Joel, November 24, 1803.

Berry, Nancy (Wife of John), December 15, 1802.

Berry, Samuel & Wife, September 26, 1802.

Berry, Sarah (Wife of Asa), November 24, 1803.

Darby, Lovill, October 5, 1800.

Gowin, Mary (Wife of Benjamin), September 21, 1794.

Leech, Mr. & Mrs., May 14, 1797.

Millar, Matthew & Wife, October 5, 1800.

McAfee, James & Wife, November 10, 1793.

Simonds, Lynde & Wife, July 26, 1795.

Wiley, Jonathan & Wife, July 31, 1805.

Wiley, Robert & Wife, November 15, 1795.

MEMBERS BETWEEN THE REORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH  
IN 1818 AND ITS FINAL DISSOLUTION IN 1840

Barron, Nancy M. (Single), July 18, 1819. Removed by letter.

Barry, Nancy.

Billings, Susan (Widow), October 31, 1819.

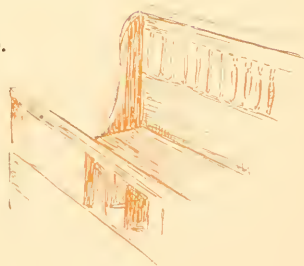
Boynton, Lydia (Widow), July 1, 1821. By letter from Springfield.



- Brown, Joel M., June, 1838.  
 Butterfield, Almira.  
 Clark, Marcy (Wife of Nathaniel), July 18, 1819.  
 †Clark, Nathaniel, November 5, 1818.  
 Davis, Hiram, July 1, 1821.  
 Davis, Laura,  
 Davis, Melinda (Wife of Hiram).  
 Davis, Melinda Ann.  
 Day, Hannah (Wife of Henry C.), June 6, 1819.  
 Day, Henry C., June 6, 1819.  
 Doan, Roaland.  
 Doan, ————— (Wife of Roaland).  
 Drury, Josiah, June 6, 1819.  
 Emery, Betsey (Wife of Zacheus), November 5, 1820.  
 Evans, Augusta.  
 ‡Evans, Eli, 1818.  
 Evans, Eli J., December 26, 1819. "Cut of from this Church" December 4, 1825.  
 ‡Evans, Hannah (Wife of Eli), 1818. Died.  
 Evans, Olive.  
 Evans, Sarah (Wife of Eli Jr.), June 6, 1819.  
 Evans, Warren F.  
 Felt, Eluthera, November 29, 1818. Died April 5, 1819.  
 Felt, Lone (Wife of Eliphalet), June 6, 1819. (Possibly Lona Jane.)  
 Gilson, Eunice (Wife of Zacheriah), May, 1837. By letter from Chester.  
 Gilson, Zacheriah, May, 1837. By letter from Chester.  
 Gould, Caroline (Wife of Thomas), June 6, 1819. Dismissed Sept. 25, 1839.  
 Gould, Thomas, June 6, 1819. "Cut of from this Church" Dec. 4, 1825.  
 Gowing, Elizabeth (Wife of Samuel), June 6, 1819. By letter.  
 Gowing, Polly.  
 Gowing, Samuel, June 6, 1819. By letter.  
 Hill, Lydia (Wife of Moses), June 6, 1819.  
 Hill, Moses, June 6, 1819.  
 Hoit, Eunice.  
 Keith, Eunice (Wife of Grindal), June 20, 1819. Died.  
 Lake, Abigail (Wife of Henry), September 12, 1819. By letter. Dismissed by letter.  
 Locke, Asa.  
 Locke, Catharine R.



Locke, Eliza.  
Locke, Fanny.  
Locke, Hannah (Wife of John).  
Locke, John.  
Locke, Laura.  
Locke, Mary Jane.  
Locke, Nancy S., October, 1836.  
Lovell, Harriet (Wife of Ovid), October 31, 1819. Died.  
Mason, Abigail, May, 1837. By letter from Cavendish.  
Dismissed by letter, Aug. 13, 1838.  
Mason, Abigail M., October, 1836. Dismissed by letter,  
Aug. 13, 1838.  
Muzzy, Anna (Wife of Joseph), June 6, 1819.  
Muzzy, Joseph, May 6, 1821.  
Nourse, Annis (Wife of Philip), June 6, 1819.  
Nourse, Lucy (Wife of David), December 26, 1819.  
Nourse, Lydia (Wife of Peter), September 12, 1819. By  
letter.  
Nourse, Peter, September 12, 1819. By letter.  
Nourse, Philip, May 6, 1821.  
Ober, Hezekiah.  
††Ober, Samuel, November 5, 1818. 1st Deacon, chosen  
April 3, 1820.  
Phillips, Nabby (Widow), June 6, 1819.  
Pierce, Bridget (Single), July 1, 1821.  
Pulsipher, David Jr., June 6, 1819.  
Pulsipher, Joanna.  
Pulsipher, Lucy (Single), June 6, 1819.  
Pulsipher, Philena (Single), June 6, 1819.  
Pulsipher, Rebecca (Wife of David).  
Pulsipher, Sally (Widow), June 6, 1819. Removed by join-  
ing the Baptist.  
†Rice, Elizabeth (Wife of Hezekiah), November 5, 1818.  
†Rice, Hezekiah, November 5, 1818.  
Richards, Eunice (Wife of Edward), 1818.  
Richards, John Lock, July 1, 1821.  
Richards, Nabby (Wife of John L.), July 1, 1821.  
Richards, Urana B., June 6, 1819.  
Ripley, Anna (Wife of Epapheas), 1818.  
Ripley, Epapheas, 1818. Removed by letter.  
Severence, Adeline, May, 1837. By letter from Alstead.  
Dismissed by letter.  
Shepherd, Jane (Wife of Major), September 3, 1820.  
Smith, Huldey (Widow), December 4, 1825.



Stearns, Jonathan.

Stearns, Selima, July 9, 1837.

†Sterns, Lydia (Wife of William), November 5, 1818.

†Sterns, William, November 5, 1818.

Stodard, Sally (Widow), June 6, 1819.

Stoel, Betsey.

‡Stoel, Joanna (Wife of John), June 6, 1819.

‡†Stoel, John, November 5, 1818. 2nd Deacon, chosen April 3, 1820.

Stoel, Lucy (Wife of Asa), July 18, 1819. By letter.

†Upham, Elizabeth (Rice), November 5, 1818. Dismissed to Sextons River, Nov. 11, 1837.

Weston, Hannah (Wife of Nathan), June 6, 1819.

Weston, Nathan, June 6, 1819.

‡Whiting, Sarah (Widow), July 18, 1819. Dismissed to Sextons River, Feb., 1837.

Wise, Daniel.

†Wollage, Rev. Elijah, November 5, 1818.

Wollage, Sarah B. (Single), July 18, 1819.

Wollage, Sophia (Single), July 18, 1819. Removed by letter.

\*Original members of church as organized October 27, 1773.

†Original members of church, as reorganized November 5, 1818.

‡Names contained in lists of original church, 1773-1809, and reorganized church, 1818-1840.

#### CONTRIBUTORS TOWARDS PURCHASE OF A COMMUNION SERVICE MARCH 22, 1819

*(Exclusive of seventeen included in the above list of members.)*

Black, Asa	Miller, Math.
Campbell, Alexander	Nourse, Daniel
Campbell, Alexander S.	Nourse, Sam'l
Campbell, J. H.	Pulsipher, D.
Earl, Mary	Rollins, Wm.
Earl, Royal	Shepherd, Isaac
Earl, Xeno'n	Stearns, Eber
Easterbrooks, Abr'm	Stoel, Asa
Felt, Warren	Wadsworth, R.
Goodridge, Samuel W.	Webb, Calvin
Kendall, Eleaz'r	Webb, Luther
Lock, Eben'r	Whiting, J.
Lock, Oren	Wiley, John 2nd.
Lovell, Ovid	

## APPENDIX II

### LIST OF THOSE FILING CERTIFICATES WITH ROCKINGHAM TOWN CLERK OF RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE, TO AVOID ASSISTING IN SUPPORT OF THE TOWN CHURCH

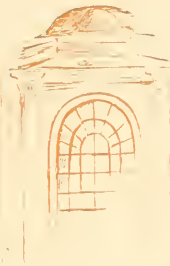
*(Not included in the Index, except when elsewhere mentioned  
in this book.)*

B—Baptist; C E—Church of England; E—Episcopal;  
PE—Protestant Episcopal; U—Universalist.

D—Certificate that they "Disagree with the majority of  
the inhabitants of the town," without stating any preference.

Abner, Jonathan,	U	Berry, Joel,	D
Adams, Eli,	B	Berry, John,	U
Adams, Josiah,	B	Bickford, Samuel,	D
Adams, Luther,	U	Bingham, Ruben,	CE
Adams, Philip,	D	Bixby, Daniel,	U
Adams, Samuel M.,	B	Bixford, Sam'll,	U
Albee, Ebenezer,	U	Blanchard, Jonathan,	PE
Albee, Ebenezer, Jr.,	U	Blanchard, Seth,	D
Allbee, John,	D	Bolles, John,	D
Aldrich, Simeon,	D	Bolles, Jonathan,	U
Archer, Benjamin,	D	Bolles, Lemuel,	D
Atkinson, Alexander,	D	Bolles, Nicholas,	D
Atkinson, Thomas,	D	Boynton, John,	D
Atkinson, Thomas Jr.,	D	Boynton, Richard Jr.,	D
Ayer, Elisha,	B	Bradshaw, George,	D
Ayers, David,	U	Burk, Eastman,	D
Bancroft, James,	PE	Burk, Henry,	D
Barney, Frederick,	CE	Burt, Jonathan,	U
Barrett, Joel,	B	Burt, Roswell,	D
Barron, Jonathan,	D	Byington, Abraham,	D
Barry, Jonathan,	D	Campbell, David,	U
Barry, Samuel,	D	Campbell, James,	U
Bellows, Abijah,	U	Chaffa, Otis,	D
Bellows, Roswell,	D	Chamberlain, Joel,	D
Bellows, Solomon,	D	Clark, Hezekiah Wood,	D
Bennett, John,	D	Clark, Jedidiah,	D
Bennett, Nathaniel Jr.,	D	Clark, Nathaniel,	D
Berry, Asa,	U	Clark, Robert G.,	D





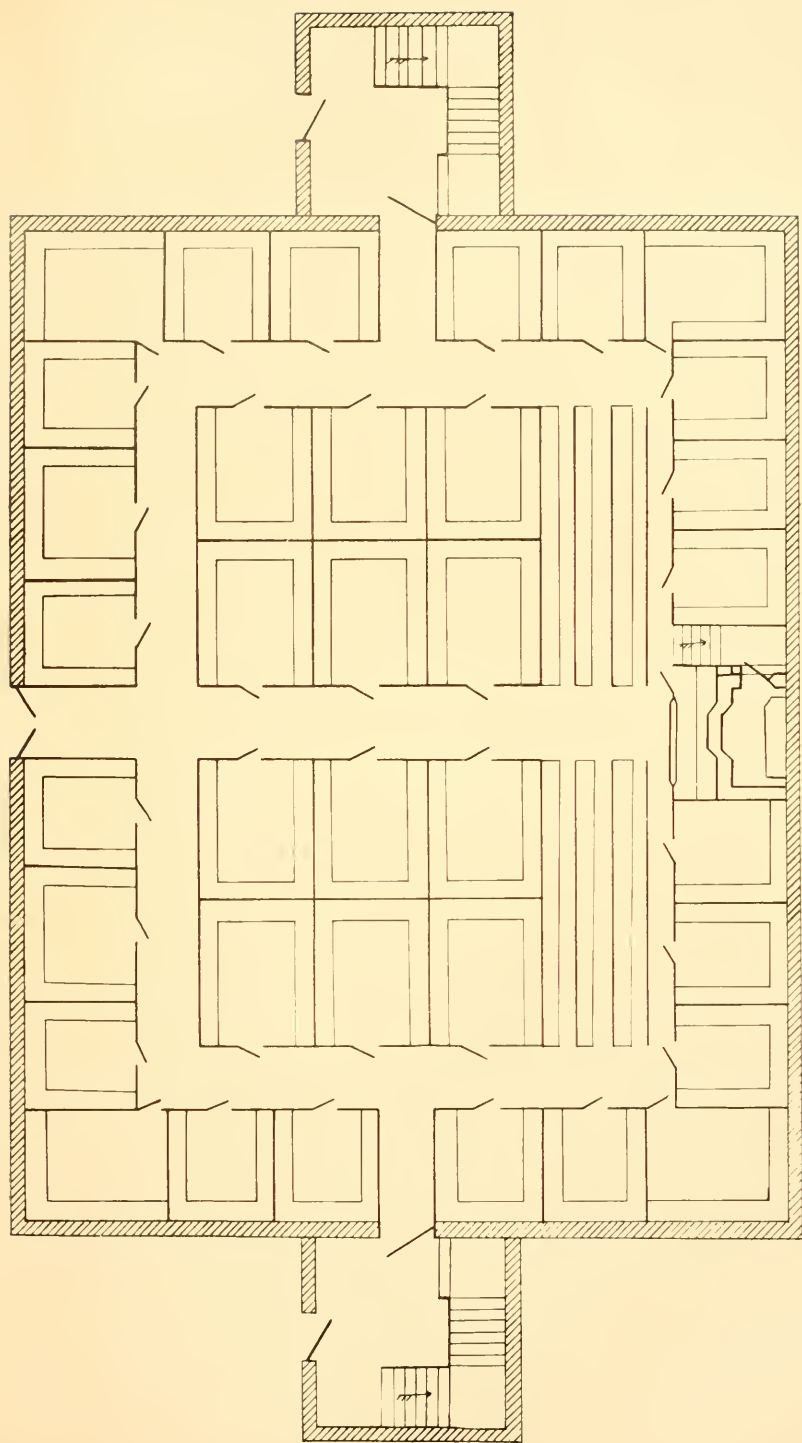
Clark, Timothy Jr.,	D	Gilmore, Robert,	D
Claton, John,	B	Gilson, Joseph,	U
Coburn, Amezah,	B	Gilson, Zachariah,	D
Cooper, John,	U	Glasur, Tabitha,	B
Cooper, John,	D	Gloson, Timothy,	B
Cooper, Zebede,	U	Gloson, Wilber,	B
Cutler, Samuel,	D	Glosson, Ichabod,	B
Cutler, William B.,	D	Goodale, Elijah,	B
Darby, Edward Jr.,	D	Goodell, Elijah, Jr.,	D
Darling, Timothy,	B	Gould, Thomas,	D
Davis, Benjamin,	D	Gowan, Benjamin,	D
Davis, Cyrus,	CE	Graves, Daniel Jr.,	D
Davis, Henry,	U	Gurnsey, Eldad,	B
Davis, James,	D	Guston, Thomas,	B
Davis, Nathaniel,	U	Hall, James,	B
Dickinson, Silas,	D	Hapgood, Solomon,	D
Dill, James,	PE	Haseltine, Jonas,	U
Dorlen, Timothy,	B	Haseltine, Richard,	U
Down, Thomas,	D	Haseltine, William,	U
Drury, Isaiah,	D	Hazelton, William,	CE
Dunfree, Cornelius,	CE	Hiamas, Stephen,	B
Eastman, Ichabod,	D	Holden, Isaac,	D
Eastman, Samuel,	U	Hooker, Riceris,	U
Eddy, Benjamin,	D	House, James,	D
Edson, Daniel,	B	House, Sarah,	D
Edson, Josiah,	U	Howes, Bethial Partridge,	D
Ellis, John,	D	Jenney, (?), Eldah,	B
Emery, Samuel Jr.,	D	Johnson, Benjamin,	U
Emory, Samuel,	D	Johnson, Joshua,	B
Evans, Ely,	D	Johnson, Joshua Jr.,	D
Evans, Ely Jr.,	D	Jonson, Robert,	B
Evans, Dea. Peter,	PE	Kendall, Isaac,	B
Evans, Peter Jr.,	D	Kidder, Thos.,	U
Evans, Randall,	D	Kindel, Eleazer Jr.,	B
Farley, Jesse,	D	King, John,	U
Fay, John,	D	Knapp, Ephraim,	D
Fish, John,	U	Knight, Joel,	U
Fish, Solomon,	D	Lake, Henry,	U
Fisher, Enoch,	D	Lane, Gresham,	B
Fletcher, Luke,	U	Larcum, Amos,	B
Garfield, Enoch,	U	Leach, John,	D
Gibson, Abel,	B	Lock, Abraham,	U
Gibson, John W.,	D	Lock, Daniel,	D
Gilmore, John,	D	Locke, Ebenezer,	B

Locke, John,	D	Powars, Joel,	B
Lovell, Elijah,	CE	Powers, Abel,	D
Lovell, Frink,	D	Powers, Timothy,	U
Lovell, John,	D	Prestton, James,	B
Lovell, John W.,	D	Prince, Levi,	D
Lovell, Capt. Timothy,	CE	Proctor, Nathan,	D
Marsh, John,	U	Pulsipher, Ebenezer,	D
Marsh, Joseph,	U	Pulsipher, John,	B
Marsh, Moses,	D	Purkins, Ruphus,	B
Marsh, Moses Jr.,	U	Randall, James,	D
Marsh, Samuel,	D	Raymenton, Samuel H. Jr.,	D
Mason, Isaac,	B	Read, Isaac,	B
Mather, John,	E	Reade, Elijah,	U
Mathers, Asaph,	B	Richardson, Daniel,	D
McIlwain, Ebenezer,	D	Ripley, Benj.,	B
McNeel, William,	D	Ripley, John,	U
Mears, Oliver,	D	Roundy, John,	B
Meed, Edward,	U	Roundy, John Jr.,	B
Miller, Matthew Jr.,	D	Roundy, Ralph,	U
Miller, Samuel,	D	Roundy, Uriah,	U
Minard, Ichabod,	D	Royce, Silas,	D
Minard, William,		Saben, Levi,	D
Morrison, Jonathan,	D	Sabin, Elisher,	B
Morton, Nathan,	D	Safford, Alven,	B
Muzzey, Joseph,	D	Safford, Philip,	B
Nurse, Peter,	D	Sargents, Pelatiah,	D
Nurton, Stephen,	D	Searles, Abijah,	U
Ober, Kendall,	D	Severence, Ebenezer,	D
Olcott, Elias,	D	Smalley, Jonathan,	D
Orr, John,	D	Smith, Jedidiah,	B
Packard, (?), Simeon,	D	Stanley, Elijah,	D
Page, William,	D	Stearns, Stephen,	B
Parker, (?), David,	D	Stevens, James,	D
Parker, John,	U	Stocker, Elijah,	U
Parker, Leonard,	U	Stowell, Asa,	D
Parks, Elijah,	B	Tarbell, Jonathan,	B
Parks, Phineas,	B	Thair, Eleazar,	B
Partridge, David,	D	Thayer, Simeon Jr.,	B
Perry, Joseph,	D	Thayer, Wm.,	E
Perry, Gates,	D	Thompson, Ebenezer,	D
Petty, Solomon,	U	Townes, (?), Samuel,	D
Pike, David, (?),	U	Tozer, Peter,	D
Pike, Luther,	D	Turner, Royal,	D
Porter, Chandler,	U	Wait, John,	CE



Walker, James,	U	Willard, Isaac,	D
Walker, Leonard,	D	Willard, Oliver,	B
Walker, Samuel,	D	Willson, George,	D
Weaver, Daniel,	B	Wing, Thomas,	B
Webb, Joshua,	B	Wing, Thomas,	D
Weed, Joseph,	D	Woley, Samuel,	D
Weston, Joseph,	D	Wolf, John C.,	D
Wheelock, Salmon,	U	Wood, David Jr.,	D
Whitcomb, Lucy,	B	Woolf, John,	D
White, Abel,	U	Wright, Capt. Moses,	CE
White, Abijah,	U	Wright, Moses Jr.,	U
White, Phineas,	U	Wright, Nathan,	U
Whitney, Ezra,	U	Wright, Solomon,	U
Wilcox, Obidiah,	D	Wright, Solomon, Jr.,	D
Wiley, Jonathan,	D	Wyman, John,	D
Wiley, Robt.,	D	Wyman, Asa Miller,	D





FIRST FLOOR DIAGRAM



## APPENDIX III

### EXTRACTS FROM THE RECORDS

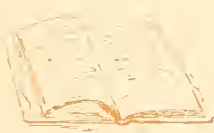
#### A. Organization of the First Church in Rockingham, October 27, 1773.

Pursuant to Letters Missive from the People in Rockingham & Chester in the Province of New York the Chhs of Brattleborough Warwick, Winchester, Swanzy, Charlestown, Westmoreland, Walpole Lebanon & Wrentham by their Elders & Messengers & the Messengers of Hinsdale & Cornish were conven'd at Rockingham October 27th 1773.

When antecedent to their embodying into a Council an Enquiry was propos'd to be made in the Standing of the Chh in Brattleboro' upon Which the Revd Mr. Reeves & the Messengers from Brattleboro' being previously instructed & empower'd by that Chh gave us full Satisfaction with regard to the Credentials of Mr Reeves & the Agreement of the Covenant of sd Chh with ours. We therefore Unanimously agreed upon their desire in Consideration of their peculiar Situation to receive & own them of our fellowship. Nevertheless we take this method and Opportunity to bear due Testimony against any Chh's forming itself & putting itself under the Care of a Minister without the Concurrence of Sister Chhs (where it may be had) to establish a Communion of Churches.

The Chhs proceeded to embody into a Council and made Choice of the Revd Mr Reeves Moderator & Mr Fessenden Scribe, the Council being form'd Voted their Acceptance of Mr Reeves & Brattleboro' Chh to our Communion, & our readiness to treat him & them as such, expecting like Returns from them & that the Vote be made Publick at this Time & to our Chhs. In the next Place the Council proceeded to examine Mr Samuel Whiting the Pastor elect, as to his Licence to preach, his regular Standing as a Christian, his Doctrinal Sentiments, & his Views of Undertaking the Work of the Gospel Ministry & he gave full Satisfaction as they expressed by Vote. Voted to proceed to Ordination & that Mr Olcott begin with Prayer, Mr Reeves pray before the





Charge Mr Hedge give the Charge, Mr Lawrence the right hand of Fellowship & Mr Fessenden conclude with Prayer.

And agreeable hereto the Revd Samuel Whiting was ordained a Gospel Bishop of Chh in Rockingham & Chester Rockingham Octobr 27th 1773. Attest Thomas Fessenden Scribe True Copy attst Saml Whiting.—*Records of the First Church.*

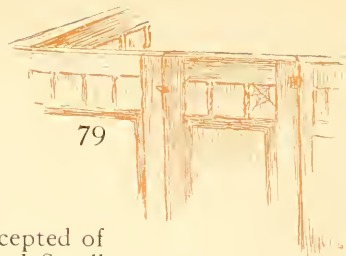
B. A letter from Mr. Whiting to the Town regarding his salary, and asking that the Town deed to him absolutely the Minister's Right. January 13, 1783.

At the Request a Committee Chosen to Treat with me in behalf of the Town to Know how I would Chuse to be Supported, I would hereby Declare my Concurrence with the Vote of the Town at a meeting on January 1781 as to the manner of my Supportt and Do Consider the sd Vote of the town to accept of me as their Settled minister and to Give me an Annual Salarey agreeable to the former Covenant from a Number of the Inhabitants of this Town as a Satisfactory Security for my futer Supportt and am Ready and willing to Give up the Obligation I Now have from the Subscribers as soon as I am paid or Secured as to what Remains Due on the Same. And I thank you Gent'n of this Town for the Regard you have shoon me in accepting me as your minister and Rejoyce with you in the more Equitable moad that this state has provided for the supportt of the Gospell and it would be agreeable to me if the Town would pass a particular vote to be Recorded that you Quit all Claime and title to that Right of Land which I am now in possession of an that You do Consider it to be secured to me and my Heirs by the Charter of this Town and that you will afford Your Endeavors and assistance that I may peacable possess and hold the same. More than which I have nothing to ask at present but your prayers for me and United Endeavors with me for Our Peace Good Regulation well fair and Happeness as a Town and Society.

(sgd)

*Samuel Whiting*

To the Gentlemen of the Town of Rockingham  
January 13th, 1783



The town then passed the following vote:

“Voted that this town Haveing Chosen and accepted of the Revd Samll Whiting as their minister and the sd Samll Whiting haveing Concurd with us herein and accepted of the Anavel Supportt offered Do consider the Right of Land Granted in the Charter of the Town by the Province of Newhampshir to the first settled minister to be the sd Samll Whiting’s and that the Town do Quitt all supposed Right or Title to the same being Knoon and Lotted out upon the plan by the name of the Minister’s Right and will afford their Endeavors and assistance that the sd Samll Whiting Peaceably and Quietly possess hold Injoy the same.—*Town Records, Vol. 1, p. 82.*

c. Letter of Rev. Samuel Whiting to his Congregation March, 1798, reviewing the history of the church.

The Chh in this Town was gathered & Organized on the Day of my Ordination October 27, 1773. It was Composed of the Pastor Elect & eleven other Male Members. . . . two of these eleven were residents of Chester. . . . during the first five years two of the first nine who subscribed the Covenant were removed by Death. Since the first gathering of the Chh, about 70 have been received, some of whom have been removed by Death, others have removed from us to other places. Some have so left us in principle as to have left our Communion, & there remains now about 50, little more than 12 are Males. a Considerable part of the male members are aged, & the active part of the Chh are about as small as when I was ordained.

It pleased Providence to remove from the Chh some years past & soon after each other three Deacons who as it were began with us, & were great supporters & helpers to further Religion among us.

The unhappy disputes in Politics which at several times have run so high among us, have evidently been unfavourable to the flourishing of Religion, the Disputes & divisions in respect to Religious principles which have had a great run among us, tho they may have not lessened the Quantity of Religion, have been unfavourable to the Communion & Numbers of the Chh. The increase of Wealth in this Town & the Introduction of Luxuries, the Changes in Civil Govern-

ment, the endeavours & attempts which have been made for Obtaining some Publick funds for providing a decent house & supporting Publick Worship therein, & the disappointments which attended these attempts, & the common Disputes which have arisen in Civil matters, all have evidently appeared unfavourable to the flourishing state of outward Religion among us. the mention of these general things readily reminds us of the great Share of Calamity's which we have suffered & been carried thro'. Our present weakness & the frowns of Heaven which are upon us need not be dissembled every private View may well be swallow'd up in a regard for Religion & Community. At the present populous State of the Town. & its great increase in Wealth no decent provision can be made for publick Worship after repeated trials; Without any addition to the Minister's Salary under all the depreciation that attends it It had become more & more burdensome no decent provisions are made for the Administration of Ordinances but not to enlarge upon the peculiar Circumstances of the Town as might easily be done, the Pastor wishes to be encouraged & strengthened, if it can be done consistent with truth & honesty, otherwise not.

The record of the meeting continues:

after some Conference upon the above,—no Votes were past, but the Chh meeting was adjourned to the Meeting House on the first Monday in April at One O Clock in the Afternoon.

Met according to adjournment when it was concluded that Mr Whiting make his proposals of beginning preaching again to the people in Town Meeting & thus begin & his Salary be paid by those who have not Certificated, in proportion to their doing their part towards Supplying the Pulpit the whole time.

*Records of the First Church.*

d. Investigation by the Town of Charges against Rev. Samuel Whiting in 1799.

To the Gentlemen Selectmen of the Town of Rockingham As their appears to be great uneasiness in the minds of the Church & Congregation of the Rev. Mr. Whiting in regard to his proceedings and nonperformances of Duty in the line of the Ministry &c these are to request you to call a Meeting



of said Congregation to see what method can be taken in order to calm the minds and give reasonable Satisfaction to every one so that we may meet and worship together as becomes a Christian people. Samuel Taylor Ely Evans Benjamin Williams John Gilmore and Calvin Webb.

Rockingham April 27, 1799.

Agreeable to the above request these are to warn all those who are members of the Revd Samuel Whittings Congregation to meet at the Meeting House in Rockingham on Monday the 13th Day of Instant May at 12 oclock at noon to first choose a moderator to govern said Meeting

2ly To act on the substance of the Petition. Levi Sabin

Rockingham first of May 1799 Jona Barron

Eliphalet Felt

Selectmen.

Rockingham 13th May 1799.

Then met the Members of the Revd Samuel Whittings Congregation agreeable to the above request & warning and firstly made choice of Jehiel Webb Esqr as Moderator to govern said Meeting.

2ly it was motioned and seconded to see if the Society will choose a Committee to converse with the Revd Mr. Whiting as to his Ministerial performances and is past in the Affirmative, sd committee to make report at the adjournment of this meeting.

3ly Voted and chose Mess. Samuel Taylor Jehiel Webb Samuel Emory James McAfee Levi Sabin Benjamin Williams and John Gilmore for the committee last above mentioned.

4ly voted to adjourn the present Meeting untill the last Monday of Instant May to meet at the Meeting House in sd Rockingham at one oclock afternoon.

Jehiel Webb, Moderator.

Attest Jona. Burt Town Clerk.

May 27th, 1799.

The Meeting opened according to adjournment and after some conversation the meeting was dissolved.

Jehiel Webb, Moderator

Attest Jona Burt T. Clerk.

*Volume 2, Town Records.*



## E. Dismissal of Rev. Samuel Whiting. 1809.

To the Selectmen of the Town of Rockingham Gentlemen  
I would request you to insert an artical in your warrant for  
your annual Town Meeting in March.—To See the Town  
will dismiss me from ministerial Services hear.—And if so to  
choose committee to confer and agree with me as to measures  
which may be thought proper and honourable for dissolving  
the pastoral relation between me and the Church and people  
in this place.—

Gentlemen

I am led to make the above request of the Town for  
reasons very different and distant from any neglect of the  
people to incourage in My Services among them altho I  
confess it is hard on many accounts to use my indevoures to  
keep up any Ministerial dignity and Stated worship of God  
on the Sabbath When their are so few to attend upon my  
public ministry.—

But it appears to me that with the utmost exertions my  
usefullness must be nearly closed and my health and Spirits  
are considerably impaired.— And I have some wishes to  
try to repair them by some jorneyes and relaxation from  
business; Perhaps some may suppos their is no need of any  
formality in my dismission under present Surcumstances  
and while the civil Law makes no provision (as it is generally  
understood) for the Support of Settled Ministers, however  
I allways had and still have some Scruples as to the propriety  
and duty of a Ministers leaving his people without some  
formallity and agreemint of parties. When the relation &  
connection had been formed with so much Seriousness and  
Solemnity as in our usual ordinations.— And tho their are  
few among us to remember the great Solemnity affection &  
Religion which took place in my ordination in this place  
Since Most of those who were principal actors & Spectators  
in that early and infant State of the town are dead & I who  
have Survived, have attended their remains to the Silent  
Grave: their are some however that survive with me and I  
trust it will be most agreeable to their feelings that their  
Should be some friendly & formal dissolution of the Con-  
nection between us as paster & people, & that their should  
be no appearance of Strife or contention between us.— And  
I think this would be most honourable to the Town, and  
most conducive to an honorable and Speedy reestablish-  
ment of the Ministry of this Town which is now become





numerous and wealthy and I think this at least but a Small degree of honour which the Town will be ready to grant to me when they consider what ferments & Collisions, both in Religion & politicks have taken place and I have been called to pass through them in the course of my Ministry.— And when they consider also that I alone remain in Standing in the Ministry in this State of those who were ordained before me.—the Above are the principle Reasons of My request, to which request I would beg the town to give their friendly and serious attention. Samuel Whiting. Rockingham. Feb. 24, 1809. *Town Records, Vol. 4, p. 185.*


In accordance with the above, an article was inserted in the warning for the town meeting held March 13, 1809, on which the following action was taken.

Voted that William Hall Alexander Campbell & Elijah Knight Esqrs be a Committee to wait on the Revd Samuel Whiting & make report at the adjournment of this present Meeting of their doings with Said Mr. Whiting.

*Town Records, Vol. 4, p. 180.*

The committee made the following report,—

To the Town of Rockingham in town meeting assembled your Committee appointed to unite with the Committee of the Church to confir with the Reverend Samuel Whiting relative to dissolving the pastoral union between him & the Church & the people in this place.— Report that they have meet with the Church Committee and confired with Mr. Whiting on the Subject and find that he wishes to have the dissolution Carried into effect in a formal and honorable manner as regards himself and the town. he informed your committee that he did not ask of the town any compensation by which his estate would be increased; but requests that a certain portion of his property might be exempt from taxation during the remainder of his natural life. the following were the reasons assigned for the above request that he had been in the Ministerial Services thirty six years: and in the infant State of society in the town had passed through the Strougles of a revolutional war. and Shared many hardships in common with his fellow citisons.— and in late times had Suffered by Religious dessintions. that for several years his sallery had been reduced nearly one half.—that



for a long time he had been Subjected to pay taxes a thing no other clejyman in the State has don. that if the town should exempt on the grand list annually two hundred dollars of his property during his life it would be placing him in no better Situation than his brethering of the Clargy Whose property had never been taxed. He also is of opinion that a Council would not readily consint to dismiss a minister in regular Standing. and without any accusations being alleged against him. when a request of this kind had been made and refused. your Committee beg leave to Suggest to the town. that if the Reverind Samuel Whittings request Should be granted and Council be called to dismiss him. that it will be necessary to choose another Committee or enlarge the powers of the present. committee for the purpose of uniting with the Church Committee in writting to some of the neighbouring Churches requesting their assistance by their pastor & delegate. in dissolving the relation between Mr. Whiting & the Church & the people in this place your Committee consider the settling or dismissing the minister a matter of importance to Society.— as good order and a well regulated community tends to the promtion of morallity and religion. while its opisite is often Subversive of order distructive to morals and weakens the Social Compact.— your Committee are impressed with the importance of treating the Subject with all possible delicacy and order.—much in their opinion depends as it regards the future interest and happiness of the town. on the Manner in which the present relation is dissolved. if it is effected in harmony and the town should ever think of Settling another minister they would be more likely to obtain a man of talants who will support the dignity of his Station. than by an opposite proceedure your Committee are fully aware of the difference of opinion in religious sentiments in this place but still they cannot but hope that all party dissentions will Subside. and that the good sence of the town predominate and buisness be taken up coolly debated upon— Candidly.—and measures adopted for the dismissal Mr. Whiting honourably.—  
All of which is humbly Submitted by.—

WILLIAM HALL JR  
ELIJAH KNIGHT      Committee  
ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

Rockingham April 10th 1809. *Town Records, Vol. 4, p. 183.*

At the adjourned town meeting held April 10, 1809, the above report was acted upon in the following manner:

Voted that the report of the Committee appointed on the 13th of March last to confer with the reverend Samuell Whiting relative to dissolving the pastoral union between him & Church & people be recorded—and also that said Committee be empowered to unite with the Committee of the Church in calling a council for the purpose of dismissing the said Mr. Whiting.—

Voted that two hundred dollars be exempted on the grand list annually of the Reverend Samuel Whittings property during his natural life from all taxes in case he should be dismissed from being the towns minister by council to be called for that purpose.—*Town Records, Vol. 4, p. 183.*

The last entry in Mr. Whiting's handwriting in the Records of the First Church, and the only entry after that quoted above as of March 5, 1798, is the following, rather pathetic in its abrupt termination:

March, 1809

the Chh met at the house of the Revd Mr Whiting agreeable to appointment, when the Pastor made request that he might be dismissed from his Ministerial Labours & after Conversing on the Subject the Chh Voted to comply with the Pastor's Request that a Dissolution of the Pastoral Relation between pastor and Chh & should take place & Chose brother Jehiel Webb and brother John Ellis a Committee to unite with the Committee of the Town to invite an ecclesiastical Council to advise & assist in this important transaction. 2dly Voted to send to the Chhs in Walpole, Grafton and Springfield as a Council.

Letters Missive were accordingly sent to those Chhs, who all of them met at the house of William Hall in Rockingham on the 18th of May 1809 & having formed into Ecclesiastical Council, they united in the following result Viz.

F. Reorganization as the Congregational Church of Christ in Rockingham, November 5, 1818.



Rockingham, A. D. 1818.

Be it remembered that Elijah Wollage on the first Saturday of July A. D. 1818, came first to this town, at the request of Judge Knight, one of the Comt for hiring preaching to supply the pulpit in the north meeting house in sd Rockingham. . . That the said Wollage contracted for four months. that, on the expiration of that term, the Society gave him a call to preach with them four years, beginning the first of July af'd. that he accepted the call on a salary of \$425.00 per annum. that as the church of the Revd Mr. Whiting was no longer to be found; but most of the members either dead or removed away or had joined to some other denomination it was thought expedient to look up what few there might be found and in some way organize for the enjoyment of Gospel privileges.

It was, therefore, thought advisable to invite some of the neighboring ministers of the Congregational order to come and assist in reestablishing a church in this place. Accordingly, on Thursday, the fifth day of November A. D. 1818, the Rev. Sylvester Sage of Westminster, East Parish, the Revd Mr. Field, of Westminster, West Parish, the Rev. Mr. Smiley of Springfield and the Rev. Mr. Goodale of Grafton, convened at the dwelling house of the Revd Elijah Wollage, in said Rockingham. and, after due examination of Mr. Whittings' records. and that no visible church of Christ could possibly be found: they submitted to the few, who had been professors in the old church, under Mr. Whiting. and some others. who had been members of other churches, the following confession of faith and covenant, viz.—\*

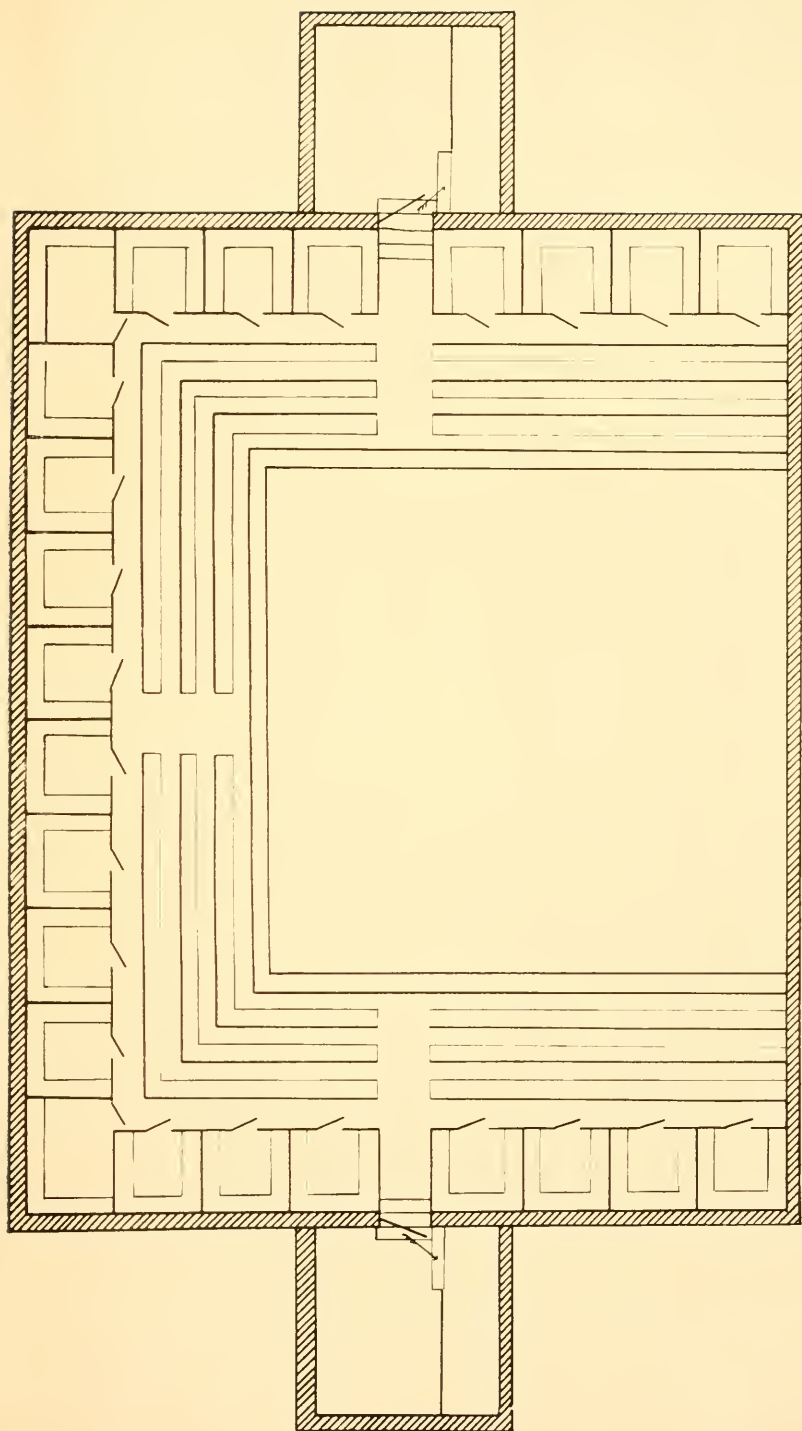
The foregoing Confession of faith and Covenant, having been read by the Rev. Mr. Sage in the presence of the other ministers and many witnesses, they were both unanimously adopted and subscribed to, by Samuel Ober, Hezekiah Rice, John Stoel, William Sterns, and Nathan'l Clark, and also by Lydia Sterns and Elizabeth Rice.

After the foregoing had been subscribed to, they were again read by the Rev. Mr. Sage, to the subscribing members, in the Second person. You and each of you &c &c &c and the subscribers having made choice of the Rev. Elijah Wollage for their Moderator. were then declared to be the Congregational Church of Christ in Rockingham.

Attest. Elijah Wollage, Moderator  
*Records of First Church.* of said Church.

\*Pages 41 and 92.





SECOND FLOOR DIAGRAM



G. Ordination of Rev. Samuel Mason, January 3, 1837.

Rockingham Jan. 1837.

About the first of last August a contract was entered into by which I was to Preach in this place three-fourth of the time. After having supplied them two Sabbath I removed to town, and continued to labor accordingly. Application was made to the Vermont Domestic Missionary for assistance about the first of Sept. toward my support, which was granted. The monthly concert and church meeting was held on the first Monday of each month; in Oct. an exchange was effected with Br. Bradford of Grafton and the Church enjoyed a season of communion when two were added to their number.

On the first Monday in December at the regular Church meeting it was agreed that we would have an Ordination the first Wednesday in Jan. following, and that a committee of the Church consisting of Dea John Stoel, Br Asa Lock Br David Pulciphir and Br Hiram Davis unite with the pastor Elect in calling an Ecclesiastical council to meet on Tuesday Jan. 4 at the house of Dea Stoel at 6 o'clock P. M. Letters missive were sent to the Churches in Springfield Chester Grafton Sextons River Westminster east Westminster West, and the Rev. Ira Ingraham Cor Sec V M. D. M. S. Agreeable to the foregoing The result was as follows

At an Ecclesiastical council convened by letters missive from the Congregational church in Rockingham, at the house of Dea Stoel at 6 o'clock P. M. Jan. 3, 1837 were present

From the church in West, Rev. Timothy Field acting  
Pas Br Atherton Hall Delegate

From the Church in Chester Rev U. C. Burnap Pas.

Sextons River Rev Nelson Barber Pastor

Br Isaac Ober Delegate

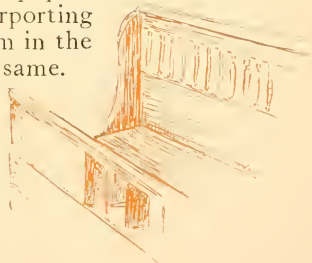
Springfield Rev H B Holmes Pastor

Br George Johnson Del.

Grafton Br Daniel Wright Del.

The council was organized by choosing Rev. Timothy Field Moderator H. B. Holmes Scribe.

Council opened with prayer by the moderator papers were presented by the committee of the church purporting to be a call to Mr Samuel Mason to settle with them in the work of the Gospel ministry—and his answer to the same.



Credentials of church membership and certificate of licensure were presented by Mr Mason.

Mr Mason was then examined relative to his personal piety his doctrinal views and motives for entering the ministry.

Voted—to sustain the examination and proceed to the services of ordination tomorrow at 11 o'clock.

Timothy Field Moderator

H. B. Holmes Scribe

Samuel Mason Pastor

*Records of First Church.*

H. Dismissal of Rev. Samuel Mason, August 22, 1838.

The Pastor and a committee of the church came before the council and made their respective Statements. It appeared from them there existed difficulties and Dissensions in the church which greatly impaired Br. Mason's prospects of usefulness and his ministerial influence; which diminished the subscription for his salary, and would probably deprive him of the aid of the Dom. Miss. Society thus rendering his support both inadequate and precarious. In view of these circumstances the council voted unanimously, that the pastoral relation between Rev. Samuel Mason and the Cong Church in Rockingham ought to be and is hereby Dissolved.

The council exculpate Bro Mason entirely from any part in the difficulties and Dissensions mentioned, which appear to have existed before his labors commenced, and they cheerfully recommend him as a faithful Brother in the ministry to whatever field God in his Providence may lead him.

It is with deep regret that the council find themselves constrained to adopt their conclusion: a conclusion which seems not merely to deprive the church of a pastor for the time being, but to put an end to its prospect of enjoying the ordinances of the Gospel. And they entreat the brethren of the church as they regard the welfare of the surrounding community, the eternal interests of their neighbors their kindred and their families; for the sake of Zion and her King, to put away every root of bitterness from among them, to quench the flame of Discord, and to exhibit such an united and lovely aspect that they may hope to obtain and uphold another Pastor to labour more successfully among them.

Adjourned with prayer by the scribe. Moses B. Bradford, Mod. Silas H. Hodges scribe.

A true copy of the original minutes.

*Records of First Church.*

1. Entries in Church Records bearing on the Articles of Faith and Covenant of the Church, 1773-1818.

Aug. 30, 1778. Chh tarried & appointed a Chh Meeting to be on Friday following to Consider whether the Chh will receive any to priveledges without Receiving to full Communion or in other words whether they will adopt the half way Covenant. Commonly so call'd.

September 4, 1778. Chh Met according to appointment & Voted 1. that the Chh Covenant Stand without any Alterations & no Adult Persons be admitted to Priveledges & taken under the Watch & Care of the Chh without promising an Attendance on the Lord's Table.

2. that persons having ownd the Covenant elsewhere Residing among us, may receive Priveledges in this Chh even while they do not come to the Table of the Lord so Long as in the Judgement of Charity, the Chh can suppose they are endeavoring to remove their Scruples as to coming to the Table of the Lord, & in other Respects live answerable to a Christian Profession.


3. Voted that the Pastor desire of Brother Joseph Wood the Reasons of his Still absenting from the Lord's Table.

Nov. 14, 1779. Chh Tarried when the Chh were inform'd of the Desire of Doctr Reuben Jones & his Wife to be propounded to the Chh & join in full communion, but that Doctr Reuben Jones would not give an Assent to the Covenant, which was Customary to be assented to by Persons before they are receiv'd into full Communion if the Chh insisted upon it as a term of Communion, but if it was only desir'd of him by the Chh as a favour, he was ready to do it, he being present further explain'd himself & gave his Reasons before the Chh, & the Chh Voted that the Matter rest for Consideration. (After several discussions on this subject, Dr. Jones and his wife were admitted to the church Feb. 13, 1780.)

July 6, 1783 Chh Tarried after Publick Worship

1 The Question was put, whether the Pastor be directed to Examine particularly all that offer themselves to be pro-





pounded to the Chh as to their Sentiments respecting Infant Baptism & if they do not hold to Infant Baptism as it is generally held to in the Congregational Chhs, & do not think it their Duty to bring their Children to Baptism in Infancy, that it be mention'd to the Chh when they are propounded, & if they are receiv'd into the Chh be matter of Record. pass'd in the affirmative.

May 6, 1784. Chh Met according to Appointment, when Some of the Congregation being present, they made request to the Chh, that there might be a door Open for the Baptism of the Children of Such as had Scruples upon their minds about Coming to the Table of the Lord & yet were willing to enter into Covenant & put themselves under the Watch & Care of the Chh, & offer'd further that they Consider'd this as a Priveledge which they had a right to Demand, as they understood that the Cambridge Platform was to be the Rule by which this Chh was to govern themselves by. After Considerable Conference, it was agreed upon that for the purpose of Coming to some mutual Agreement three members of the Chh should be Chosen to Join with three persons of the Congregation, as a Committee with the Pastor to devise & form some Rule of proceeding to be laid before the Chh, in order for their acceptance, & voting it as a Rule of Proceeding in the Chh. The Chh made Choice of Deacn Peas, Peter Evans Junr & Jehiel Webb, to join with John Herod, Charles Richards & Caleb Church, who were Chosen on the part of the Congregation. . . .

(After considerable discussion of the matter, and several votes, some of them later reconsidered, the following was adopted June 15 "as a Rule of Proceeding in the Chh so long as the Chh perceiv'd any good effects of the same")—

This Chh taking into Consideration the Uneasiness of Numbers of the Congregation & their request that they might enjoy a Supposed Priveledge of having the Ordinance of Baptism administred to their Children, tho they do not Come up to the Table of the Lord & join in full Communion with the Chh—a liberty which is granted in many Chhs of our Communion tho not so generally as formerly

Voted 1. That the Chh cannot Consider it to be a profession of Faith in Christ & Obedience to him. while a Reserve is made as to Coming up to the Sacrament of the Supper, & while there is no profession of Obedience to this Dying Command of the Saviour.

2 That the Chh would Charitably Suppose that such

Adult persons as had been Baptiz'd & thereby bro't into the Chh in their Infancy & of good Moral Behaviour, did not mean to renounce their Baptism, reject the Authority watch & Discipline of the Chh or Disclaim all Priveledges from it; by their neglect in not answering the Design of their early Baptism, even to profess faith in Christ & Obedience to Him & thereby make it Their own Act & Deed in a professed & publick manner

3 That the Chh are willing that Baptism be administered to the Children of all Such of whom they can have this Charitable Thot as mention'd in the preceding Vote & would desire their Pastor thus to practice.

4 Voted that such as have been guilty of Moral Scandal do make Christian Satisfaction therefor in order to their receiving any Priveledges in the Way above mentioned.

5 That the Applying for any Priveledge in the Chh shall be understood as an acknowledgement of the Authority of the Chh over such as Apply & that it be Consider'd as an actual putting themselves under the Watch & Care of the Chh & that they receive Priveledges no longer than they submit to the Authority & Discipline of the Chh.

6 That such as do receive Baptism for their Children or any Priveledges in the Way above mentioned do make a Publick Profession of their beleif of the Christian Religion do acknowledge the Validity of their own Baptism in Infancy, & their Beleif of the Spiritual Right of Administering Baptism to the Infants of such as are members of the Visible Chh, & the propriety of the Mode as practic'd in our Chh's, that they promise to bring up their Children in the Nurture & Admonition of the Lord & will submit to the Discipline of the Chh exercis'd in a Reasonable & Gospel method.

7. That the Pastor propound such as apply for receiving Priveledges at least one Week before they are received to Priveledges & he is desir'd & directed to enquire of all applying whether they have for some Reasonable term of time Statedly read Gods Word & pray'd in their Families Carefully attended on the Worship of God with their Families on the Lords Day & unless they can Answer in the Affirmative in these Points, not to propound them to Priveledges as without the Practice of these things the Chh cannot Consider that there is any kind of Security for the good Education of the Baptiz'd Children or any reasonable Expectation of it.—*Records of First Church.*



J. Confession of Faith, Covenant and rules of the Church after its Reorganization in 1818.

You and each of you believe that there is only one living and true GOD. that there is One Mediator between God and man, even Jesus Christ, and that there is no salvation in any other: that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son and is the Renewer, Sanctifier, Comforter and perfecter of his Saints; and that these three, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, are the one GOD.

You and each of you believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of GOD, and the only sure guide to direct the tempers, desires and dependance of the soul and the actions of life: that sin is a most deadly evil and unrepented of, will issue in endless death, its just wages: while true holiness is exceeding lovely in itself and will produce unspeakable happiness to its possessors, and end in eternal life and blessedness in the kingdom of glory.

You and each of you do now endeavor, in the sincerity of your hearts, to take the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, whose being and perfections you have professed to believe, to be your GOD, and engage to be his willing subjects forever. You take the holy scriptures for the only rule of your life and accordingly covenant to live agreeably to them, a life of repentance, faith, and new obedience; and to renounce every evil & false way. You give up yourselves to Christ in this his church and engage to attend on all the ordinances of GOD's house and the Gospel discipline here administered, so long as it shall please God to continue you here among us.

Thus you and each of you promise and engage, depending on divine grace to enable you rightly to perform these your Covenant Vows.—*Records of First Church.*

November 11, 1819, the church passed the following rules among others, for its guidance:

Fourthly. That all private labor, for private offences shall be according to the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel.

Sixthly. That no candidate shall be admitted into the church without giving satisfactory evidence of a change of heart. This evidence to be given to the Pastor, who, for the present, is appointed by the church as their committee for such examination.

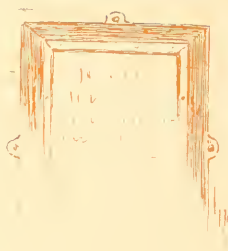


Eightly. That no candidate shall be required to make any public confession for any former sins, crimes or misdemeanors, when his or her repentance and reformation shall evidence a new heart and life: and such, as in the charity of the church, God accepts.

Ninth. That all after offences shall be confessed, if brought before the church or becomes a matter of public notoriety, before the whole congregation.

Tenth. The ordinance of baptism shall be administered to the children of none, but such as are in full communion in this or some Sister church.

Twelfth. That no member of any Sister Congregational church, residing in this town, shall have any Church privileges, after one year's residence, except such members unite this Church in covenant relation.—*Records of First Church.*



κ. The Meeting House completed.

Rockingham August 23rd 1799

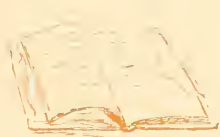
We the Subscribers request the Honorable Selectmen of Rockingham to call a meeting of the inhabitants of said Town for the purpose of consulting and agreeing upon some mode of finishing the Meeting House in said Town.

Samuel Emery Samuel Cutler Jehiel Webb David Pulsipher Ely Evens John Lovel

The meeting was called and held on Sept. 3, 1799. A large majority were in favor of finishing the Meeting House, and a committee composed of William Page, Samuel Cutler and John Lovel, Esq., was appointed to investigate the proceedings of a former committee who built the Meeting House, to propose some method of finishing it, and to report at an adjourned meeting.

The adjourned meeting was held on Sept. 24th, 1799, and the following report of this special committee was "excepted"—

Your committee appointed to examin into the Several accounts for building the Meeting house and what method the Town had Best to adopt to finish the same report—viz— That the amt due on Sundry obligations for pews sold is £106:10:7; that there are 5 pews on the lower floor not sold Estimated at £40:0:0 that there are 9 do on the 2nd floor not sold Estimated at £36:0:0 That there is due from Isaiah



Smith £3:0:0 That there is due from Benjamin Williams in finishing the outside of the Meeting House £3:10:0. Sum total, £189:0:7 that there is in the hands of the Committee who built the said house a contract from John Savage & James Walker to compleat out side of said meeting house—and that they are of the opinion that a Committee be appointed to open a Subscription to obtain a Sum in addition to the sum above Stated (or what can be collected) which may be sufficient in their opinion to finish or compleat Said Meeting house—and then call a meeting of the Subscribers who when meet may enter into some arrangement as they Shall think proper to finish the same as soon as may be. William Page, Samll Cutter, John Lovell.—*Town Records, Vol. 2.*

John Lovell, Samuel Cutler, Daniel Weaver, James Walker, & Philip D Davis were chosen as this committe. The subscribers met March 7, 1800 and passed the following votes:—  
firstly Made choice of William Page Esq Moderator for sd Meeting.

2ly voted that the finishing of the Meeting house above mentioned shall be set up at public vendue and that the lowest bidder shall have the jobb.

3ly voted that the Meeting house be compleated by the first Day of August which will be in the year 1801.

4ly voted that said house be painted & glazed by the first of August Next.

5ly voted that a Committe of three be chosen to superintend the finishing of said Meeting House.

6ly voted that Samuel Cutler John Lovell & Jonathan Barron shall be the Committe last mentioned.—*Town Records, Vol. 2.*

At the regular March Meeting in 1804, Elijah Knight, James Walker, and Levi Sabin were appointed a committee to examine “and settle account of committee last appointed to finish meeting house in said Town and to number the pews in said house as the Original Plan in which the bidders names are insirt & request the Committee who sold said pews to certify to Accuracy of the same and to transmit the said plan to the Town Clerk for record’”.—*Town Records, Vol. 2.*

It is greatly to be regretted that this original plan is not to be found among the records of the Town Clerk’s office.

## APPENDIX IV

### BIBLIOGRAPHY REGARDING THE MEETING HOUSE AND CHURCH



HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF ROCKINGHAM, VERMONT, Lyman S. Hayes, 1907. Pp. 123 to 150. With illustrations.

RECORDS OF THE FIRST CHURCH OF ROCKINGHAM, VERMONT. Copied by Thomas Bellows Peck, with an Historical Introduction. 1902.

VITAL RECORDS OF ROCKINGHAM, VERMONT, from the Beginning of the Records to January 1, 1845. Compiled from the Town Records by Thomas Bellows Peck, 1908.

SOME OLD TIME MEETING HOUSES OF THE CONNECTICUT VALLEY, by Charles Albert Wight, B. A., 1911. Pp. 141-144, with illustrations.

RESTORATION OF AN HISTORIC MEETING HOUSE, by C. W. Osgood, in The Vermonter for August, 1907. Illustrated.

A FORGOTTEN COLONIAL CHURCH, by H. W. Desmond, in Architectural Record for August, 1903. Illustrated.

BELLOWS FALLS AND VICINITY, ILLUSTRATED. P. H. Gobie and L. S. Hayes, 1908. With illustrations.

## APPENDIX V

### CONSTITUTION OF THE OLD ROCKINGHAM MEETING HOUSE ASSOCIATION

*(Organized May 1, 1911.)*

I. The membership of the Society shall comprise those, or the descendants of those, who have resided for a period of one year or more in any one of the following towns:—Rockingham, Walpole, Westminster, Grafton, Chester, Springfield, Charlestown and Alstead; who are duly elected members of the Society and who pay into the treasury a sum of not less than \$1.00.

II. The Officers of the Society shall consist of a President, two or more Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary and a Librarian, who shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Society in April and shall hold office for one year, or until their successors are elected.

III. The general administration of the affairs of the Society in carrying out its purposes shall be entrusted to an Executive Committee, to consist of the officers of the Society and two members from each of the several towns represented in the Society. Five shall constitute a quorum of the Executive Committee, and ten a quorum of the Society.

IV. The annual meeting of the Executive Committee shall be held on the last Monday in January, and the annual meeting of the Society shall be on the last Monday in April, in Bellows Falls, and special meetings of the Society shall be held upon the call of the President, or at the request of ten or more members.

V. Provision shall be made for an annual pilgrimage to the old Rockingham Meeting House in the latter part of July or the early part of August in each year.

VI. The library of the Society shall be deposited in a fireproof building, or in fireproof vaults in Bellows Falls, and shall contain publications, records, relics and documents of historic interest, and shall be for consultation by members of the Society and others, under the direction of the librarian.



VII. The Society shall accumulate from year to year a permanent fund through gifts, devices and bequests, the interest of which shall be used in carrying out the purposes of the Society. The expenses of the annual pilgrimage to the old Rockingham Meeting House shall be met by subscriptions received from among the members and friends of the Society. If any contributor to the Pilgrimage Fund desires to qualify as a Member under Article I, \$1.00 from his contribution shall be paid into the treasury of the Society for the Permanent Fund.

VIII. This form of organization may be amended by a two-thirds vote of any regular meeting of the Society, provided that notice of the amendment is mailed to each member of the Society at least one week in advance of the date of meeting, at which action on the amendment is proposed.





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