

The Totoket Historical Society, Inc.

# **The Bare Plain Chapel**

By

Carrie Doody

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**Edward Smith Library  
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There was a small note included in the folder with this typed document stating that "Steve bought and moved Bare Plain Chapel to Middletown Avenue and it was used as the grocery store. Now is part of Ahlberg's operation there."

Bertha Page  
June 1992

## THE BARE PLAIN CHAPEL

The Bare Plain Chapel Corporation was formed in March of 1880. The introduction says, "Be it known that we the subscribers do hereby associate ourselves as a body politic and corporate under the laws of the state of Connecticut regulating the formation, and organization of associations without capital stock, and the following are the articles of our association and agreement."

Article First listed the name of the association. Article Second listed the purpose of the Corporation "to acquire by purchase' gift, or devise such lands and real and personal estate as it may desire, situate in Bare Plains District and the erection and maintenance thereon of a suitable building or buildings to be used as a place of religious worship without regard to particular denomination, and for such other purposes as the association or its officers duly authorized may from time to time determine. To furnish said buildings with such articles of personal property, and to add to them such conveniences, and care for the same in such manner as may be desirable or sell the same, and to liquidate the liabilities incurred by this association by assessments on the members or otherwise as may be determined by the by-laws or vote of the corporation."

Article Third specified that the corporation would proceed in accordance with the statute laws of the State of Connecticut relating to corporations.

On the 26th day of July 1880, Jerome Har-r i.e on gave a warranty deed to the Bare Plain Chapel Corporation for One Dollar and other valuable considerations a parcel of land across the highway from the Bare Plain Cemetery. This piece of land had "about seventy-

five feet front, about thirty-one feet rear, and about eighty-one feet deep, having a chapel standing thereon".

Evidently little time was lost in the construction of the chapel. It followed the design in common use at that time for country chapels. It had a high pitched roof, shuttered windows on each side, and low steps to the front entrance. It was painted white, and seemed to belong to the Bare Plain Cemetery with its white picket fence across the road.

Church services were held regularly in this chapel with the Rev. Charles Page serving as preacher, and Isaac Linsley as organist. Attendance in inclement weather was not too great, but true to Article II, preachers of various denominations were welcomed here. Some of the senior citizens of North Branford still remember the fiery sermons given at some of the revival meetings.

Funerals were held in this chapel, especially when the family lived some distance away or in a small house, and the deceased was to be buried in the Bare Plain Cemetery. Funeral parlors were not established at that time.

The chapel was also used annually, at one time, for the gathering of children on Memorial Day, where they presented a special program, marched in double line with small flags flying, across to the Bare Plain Cemetery and gently placed their flowers upon the graves of the veterans of the Revolutionary, Civil, and Spanish American wars.

The Chapel was used also, on occasion, for programs by school children and other similar groups. However, with the changes in economy, transportation, and life styles, the little chapel was

no longer of great importance for community use.

On June 18, 1920, by means of a quit claim deed, the property was transferred to the Bare Plain Cemetery Association as the result of a merger of the two groups, and that association was "to carry on the work formerly transacted by both said Associations".

With no use made of the little white chapel, its appearance began to grow shabby. Finally, after due consideration, it was sold and removed to become a dwelling, and the land became a part of the Jerome Harrison School parking area.

Jerome Harrison had given land and labor for the erection of the chapel. It was good that the land could be returned to join with the adjacent property which he once had owned.

*Carrie G. Doody*