

The Totoket Historical Society, Inc

# NORTHFORD HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

by

**The Reverend A. C. Pierce**

October 1876

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The Totoket Historical Society

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"DAYS OF OLD" REMEMBERED.

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HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

PREACHED IN

*The Congregational Church,*

NORTHFORD, CONN.,

BY

A. C. PIERCE,

*A former Pastor of the Church.*

OCTOBER 8, 1876.

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NEW HAVEN:  
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## CORRESPONDENCE.

Nonrurpord, October 30th, 1876.

REV. A. C. PIERCE:

Dear Sir,—Believing that your centennial sermon, preached here on the 8th inst., would be read with pleasure by all who have the interest of this Church and Society at heart, and that the historical facts which it contains should be perpetuated, we respectfully request it for publication.

WILLIAM MAITBY,  
EDWARD SMITH,  
Geo. WALKER,  
HENRY L. HARRISON,  
E. C. MAITBY.

PABONAGE, BROOKFIELD, CONN., November 6th, 1876.

WILLIAM MAITBY, EDWARD SMITH, AND OTHERS:

Gentlemen,—Thinking with you that the facts and traditions of your local history are well worth preserving, and gratified if I have put them in such form as merits your approval, I herewith submit the sermon in manuscript to your disposal.

With sentiments of high esteem,

I am, cordially yours,

A. C. PIERCE.

### NOTE.

The preparation of this discourse having been nearly simultaneous with that of another of like historical character relative to the Church and Society constituting my present pastoral charge (happily, a few passages in each are nearly identical. This grew out of a necessity of economizing both time and labor. But as the circulation of each is to be local merely, it is not thought that the circumstance should be a bar to publication.

A. C. P.

## HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

"Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations,"  
Ps. L, xxxv. 7

Underlying all history is God's providence, and mingling in its details are lessons of wisdom for such as desire to gather instruction from the ways and doings of the Almighty.

It is so in respect to the narrower as well as the broader fields which lie under His supreme control, with respect to restricted communities as well as kingdoms and empires, and *therefore* because God is in history making manifestations of His attributes and purposes in the events which transpire, it is suitable that "the days of old" should pass under review.

To know God we must study Him in His dealings with the children of men.

It is one of the duties, moreover, which we owe to the past, and to the men of the past who have bequeathed to their posterity the legacy of a virtuous example and of christian deeds, that we cherish the memory of what has been praiseworthy in history, and hand down from generation to generation the names of those who have acted their part wisely and well, and made their lives effective for the public weal. In this way alone it is that the good influences of bygone days can be properly preserved and transmitted, its virtues emulated, and its toils and sacrifices, so far as it depends upon us, can be justly rewarded.

To be remembered in lively and grateful appreciation, is a far more enviable tribute of respect than the most laudatory epithet chiselled upon the tombstone; and is not this a part of that honorable distinction which God will have good men enjoy after death?

In cherishing such venerated and grateful recollections, do we not serve that purpose which He has declared "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance?" Do we not testify to the truth He has affirmed, "The memory of the just is

"There is an appropriateness then—a practical utility—in the service in which we are engaged this morning.

It is fitting—it is religiously obligatory—that we "remember the days of old," as they have passed over *this* community; that we "consider the years of many generations" that have lived and died, and whose sepulchres are among you even "unto this day."

The relevancy of these suggestions will be obvious to your minds in connection with what is proposed in this discourse. It undertakes to inform you of "the days of old," as related to

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND PARISH OF NORTIFORD.

The starting point of our investigations is properly

THE FIRST SETTLEMENT OF THE PARISH,

whence the first settlers—settlers of the English stock I mean—came; their previous relations, civil and religious; at about what time they began here to establish their homes and set up their affairs, and what they found here when their residence began.

With respect to the precise time of settlement,\* it is not easy now to determine it with absolute certainty; but from the earliest dates to be found upon the tombstones in your cemetery, and from some other evidences, traditional and otherwise, of which I have been able to avail myself, I have judged that this must have taken place not far from the year 1720. The tradition is, that various individuals from the Town of Branford, to which the parish then belonged (the parishes of Northford and North Branford were constituted a separate town only so far back as 1831), in the pursuit of a larger success in their industry, and with something of that roving and adventurous spirit which has ever characterized the people of our New England towns, and which has so rapidly peopled the broad West, were accustomed to leave their homes in the opening spring with their provisions and implements of husbandry for a sort of backwoods life through the summer months, occupying "clearings" at the base of your mountain ranges, from which they gathered ample crops, returning again by their woods' path with the approach of winter to enjoy the fruits of their summer absence, in the bosom of their families.

\* The land was laid out and the divisions were probably made a little before the year 1700.

As the land was laid out, it was available as to what these first settlers occupied the best part which can now be ascertained, whether it was in the date of necessity to families now resident here. I give a list of the male settlers who were first enrolled, in the order in which the settlement was constituted. Many of these men, it is to be presumed, built their cabins and kindled their home fires in the "clearings" at the beginning of the settlement.

Their names are as follows:

- Capt. Aaron Cook,
- Dea. Samuel Harrington,
- Samuel Barnes,
- John Baldwin, 2d,
- Ensign Josiah Rogers, Jr.,
- Joseph Linsley,
- Isaac Foot, Jr.,
- Stephen Todd,
- Abel Munson,
- Merriam Munson,
- Abraham Bartholomew,
- Peter Tyler,
- Timothy Rose,
- Daniel Mather,
- John Talbot,
- Samuel Goodsell,
- Joseph Elwell, and
- Enos Barnes.

The first encampments of these Branford laborers, it is said, were at the foot of the mountain, near the dwelling long occupied by Dea. Ralph Linsley—the place of these encampments determined, perhaps by the fact that there the laborers were well sheltered by the high bluff from southern and easterly winds, and that there they might avail themselves of pure and abundant supplies of water from a never-failing spring, still held in high esteem.

But evidently this migratory sort of life could not long continue, and arrangements for a continuous residence in the Northford "clearing" must have been shortly made. Near the fountain already alluded to, a cellar, filled in by the plowshare but a few years ago, was pointed out as the probable site of the first permanent dwelling, or rather I should say, the first erected and occupied by the *adite man*, for in this immediate vicinity and along side the pedicel stream above were numerous wigwams of the Indians, two or three of which were inhabited by their dusky owners within the memory of those who were the oldest residents of the parish when my own ministry here began. With reference to these

INDIAN PREDICATORS

It would be of interest if we could more successfully investigate the manner in which the Indians could learn whence they came, what

their tribal connection was, and whether they went when a higher style of life encroached upon their rudely-conducted civilization.

Doubtless, into the clear water of "Paug Pond," and into the streams of the neighborhood, they dexterously cast the spear and threw the hook for fish, trapped through the meadows below and pursued on the sides of "Totoket" fur-clad or savory game. Doubtless they had here their ties of love and hope, their glad-some and sorrowful hours, their times of revelry and mourning. But all this is hidden from us by a curtain that will not rise at our signal bell: they are matters which lie much in the haze of an unrecorded even an untraditional period.

But it is pleasant to be able to say, with reference to the few who were here within the memory of the generation just gone, that they were of such character as commanded the respect of their white neighbors, and that a spirit of mutual kindness prevailed between them. In evidence of this, we have the testimony of a published sermon preached long ago in Branford, that the hands of this vicinity "were bought of these Indians," as the rightful owners, and were paid for, additionally to the price paid to New Haven for the township, and that laws were passed protecting them in all their rights." And, furthermore, I am able to record the testimony of a competent witness residing here when I came to the parish, that these dusky dwellers upon the soil were strict observers of the Sabbath, their children not being allowed to stray from the cabins to which they belonged until the sun was fairly below the horizon.

Rather than take advantage of the ignorance and vices of these less favored children of nature, it would seem that your parish fathers possessed a laudable desire to cultivate towards them a feeling of amity and good neighborhood, and to serve so far as possible their moral and spiritual welfare; though in exact justice I ought perhaps to record a vote passed at a society meeting in those "days of old," which certainly has about it a little flavor of "high east," feeling not quite in harmony with the sentiment of our times.

"*Faded*, That Jenny Squaw (an Indian, I presume) shall sit in the negro pew so long as she comes to meeting at this meeting-house, and shall sit nowhere else," a vote which, to say the least, was reasonably clear and decisive.

In respect to

#### THE NAME

By which the parish was early designated, there seems not to have been a true concurrence of choice.

At the very first meeting called for the purpose of parish organization, and as the very first act of those convened subsequent to their choice of moderator and clerk, it was "agreed by a major vote that the name of the place shall be called *Sidon*."

Why this designation, so agreeable both in its signification ("peace") and in historical association, was set aside for the present somewhat incongruous name of "Northford," does not readily appear, there being certainly no considerable *feeding* place from which the appellation could have been derived. Nor is the time of such change indicated only so far as this: the first occurrence of the name "Northford" in the public records is under date of December 9th, 1751.

The first meeting of the settlers for

#### PARISH ORGANIZATION

was held on the 24th day of June, 1753, at the house of Mr. Benjamin Hamd, having been duly warned by Isaac Fooks, Jr., by means of a summons served upon the respective citizens, which meeting was moderated by Dea. Samuel Harrington, and its doings recorded by Josiah Rogers, as clerk.

For some years it would thus seem that the inhabitants of the parish were associated in church privileges with the people of the parish now known as North Branford—the whole section included in the limits of the present town of North Branford, then called the "North Farms," having been set off from the original Society of Branford as one distinct parish in 1725, although for some years prior to this date they had enjoyed the privilege of a separate meeting.

During these early years we must imagine the fathers and their households with them, for their Sabbath day solemnities, starting with the early morning upon a journey of six or seven miles to join those "who keep holy day" at the "village" on the other side of a "Totoket," and this without the facilities of travel which are now enjoyed, for an aged person, now passed away, informed me out of her own personal recollection, that the only "stage coach" and the ox-cart were the sole conveniences for going to church.

It is easy to infer that attendance at the house of

God was uncertain or irregular, for those "days of old" were times in which the ministrations of the sanctuary were held in high esteem, and from what we know of the man who was then their spiritual teacher (Rev. Jonathan Merrick), we may presume that their interest in the Sabbath service was increased by their interest in him as an able and faithful preacher of the word, a devout and beloved man of God.

But this association in worship with the people of the "village," so called, was not to be of long continuance.

In 1735, the "General Court" of Connecticut, upon petition of Peter Tyler, Samuel Harrington, Bezakel Tyler, and others of the "Northerly inhabitants of the North Parish" (North Branford),

"Resolved, That said memorialists shall be allowed liberty to have some Orthodox Minister preach the gospel to them during the months of December, January, February and March annually, and during said time they shall be free from paying church rates to said North Parish."

By comparison of dates it would thus seem that this arrangement for preaching during the winter portion of the year, while in summer time the people made their Sabbath journey to North Branford Church, continued for a period of eleven years, when, as we have seen, steps were taken to organize an Ecclesiastical society. Not even until a still later date, by some five years, was a Church formally instituted.

During these years the religious affairs of the community were in what may be termed a formative state, the time being occupied in matters somewhat preliminary to the regular order of established society and means of grace--as establishing schools, providing a place for public worship, arranging for ministerial support, hearing candidates for settlement, and the like.

These preliminaries being satisfactorily adjusted, and the people having united upon a man to be their minister, the

#### CHURCH WAS ORGANIZED

in due form on the 13th day of June, 1750, consisting at first of nineteen male members, to which number an accession of twenty-three (mostly females, and, probably, from coincidence of names, wives and daughters of those previously admitted) was made on the first Sabbath of July--all of these being dismissed and received from other churches in the vicinity.

Although the original Articles of Confession of Faith, as

previously explained, do not refer to you, nor any exhibit of a record, it is not intended in respect to church polity, yet you are not to be absent from its presence concerning the

#### FOUNTERS AND ECCLESIASTICAL PRINCIPLES

of those who thus entered into fellowship, for in subsequent records there is distinct provision that the ministrations of the pulpit shall be "Calvanistic" in their character, and in default of which certain funds lying to the benefit of the society should be alienated; and, in evidence that their views of church order were strictly Congregational, all advice sought in respect to candidates for settlement in the pastorate was from the "Rev'd Association," never from "Consecration," or other parties, and also the repeated vote in reference to the settlement of the first pastor, which was that, "if it (implying their belief in the inherent power of the local church) will ordain Mr. Warham Williams, on the 13th day of June next ensuing," which ordination was conducted, not by "Consecration," but by a "Council," selected by the Society itself, said Council being invited to *assist* in the services of the occasion.

Perhaps it should be taken into account by way of explanation of that which seems to us peculiar in this first ordination, that the founders of this church and society looked to the church at Branford as their ecclesiastical parent, and were in close sympathy with the men constituting the church and society there; and, furthermore, that a few years prior to this, that church and society, in asserting their rights in the matter of their minister, Rev. Mr. Robbins, against all outside influence, had publicly renounced the "Saybrook Platform," declared themselves strict "Congregationalists," and set their authority in matters of church order and discipline against all authority and rule, save only the will of Christ as expressed in the word of God. In respect to these principles of church polity, there appears to have been general concurrence and harmony of opinion among the people at the first, and afterward, until about the year 1763, at which time

#### THE EPISCOPAL SOCIETY WAS ORGANIZED

which a passing reference may here be made, though not exactly within the limits of history contemplated in this dis-

The original members of the society were

PAUL TYLER, DAVID ROGERS,  
 JERAMOD FOOTR, JOSAH TODD,  
 JOSEPH DABIES, PHINEAS BEACH,  
 SAMUEL MAREY, JOSEPH FINCH,  
 JOHN JOHNSON.

The record indicating that they were members of the Church of England, and connected with a society in Guilford until the society here was organized.

The deed for the land on which their first house of worship was erected, was given by James Howd, December 31st, 1763, and the edifice was at that date completed, or nearly so, standing as many of you remember, near the residence of Mr. Levi Talmadge. The house at present occupied by the society was built in 1845.

To return now to affairs pertaining to this church and society, I come to speak of

#### CHURCH EDIFICES.

At the commencement of their existence as a distinct religious community, public worship, it would seem, was held in a private dwelling at first, and probably for the entire period prior to the completion of the first meeting-house, or rather until the building was so far advanced as to allow worship within its walls, at the residence of Mr. Isaac Ingraham.

While the abiding sanctuary was being prepared, the Ark of the Lord rested in the "house of Obed Edom," and we shall not hazard much in believing that "the Lord blessed the house of Obed Edom, and all that pertained unto him, because of the Ark of God."

In June or July of 1746, one year from the establishment of public worship, application was made to the General Court for the appointment of commissioners to "locate a meeting-house;" a measure adopted, as we may suppose, on account of some diversity of views as to where the edifice should stand, or to avoid subsequent divisions, such as are so likely to grow out of locating public buildings.

In compliance with the desire of the petitioners, the General Court voted permission to build a house of worship, and appointed "Capt. John Hubbard, Capt. Jonathan Allen, and Mr. John Hitchcock, all of New Haven, to locate said house," which committee in due time made its report to the Court,

and that "they do wish, that a good house of worship be erected in the town, on the west side of the path, twenty rods north of Samuel Battison's house, the site to enclose a square stable, thereon standing, with a heap of stones around it." In the following spring a building committee was appointed, and the work was undertaken.

The edifice erected was at first without a steeple, which appendage was added in 1796—forty nine years after the body of the house was built—and a bell, the same now in use, was placed upon its deck. Even the lower part of the house was not finished until 1752, and the galleries not until 1760.

Thus completed, for just one hundred years, viz., until April 25th, 1847, when the Sabbath service was for the last time conducted within its walls, this house, which your fathers built, remained the house of the Lord to which "the tribes went up," and of goodly numbers, as we cannot doubt, "the Lord shall count when He writeth up the people that this man was born there."

A house of worship in use for one hundred years! What impressions spring from the thought! What varied scenes, joyful or sorrowful, had been witnessed within the consecrated walls, as the hundred years had been passing by; and what soul experiences had crowded there, which can have no unfolding until the disclosures of the final day.

In no one thing scarcely is the progress of society in all matters of material comfort and convenience and taste more strikingly apparent than in respect to places of public worship; and we look back with something of wonder, that in "days of old" such edifices should have been constructed; so ill adapted to their use, so distasteful in their style of architecture, and so poorly provided in the essentials of comfort and even health, as evidenced in the fact that, in the particular edifice of which I am speaking, large, open, cold, barn-like as it was, no heating appliances other than the foot-stove were introduced until the expiration of more than seventy years from the time it was built.

But must we not seriously question whether there has been a corresponding improvement in the matter of Sabbath observance and church attendance? Does not the reputation in some degree extend the men of our day, as against those of the prophet's time? "For Isaac hath forgotten his maker and buildeth tents

But to pass from this. The present more beautiful and commodious structure, the house in which we are assembled, alike creditable to the taste and liberal devising of those who built it—and, I ought to add also, those who have so largely rebuilt and preserved it—was undertaken in 1816, and by commendable sacrifices was completed ready for its dedication April 25th, 1847, Dr. Leonard Bacon, of New Haven, preaching the dedication sermon.

Though not necessary for your information, yet in order to the completeness of history, it should be here stated, that owing to culpable unfaithfulness or unskillfulness on the part of the builders, it became necessary to rebuild the tower of the edifice so early as 1863, which was done at an expense of about \$800, and in 1873 you were subjected to the outlay of \$3,500 to reconstruct other portions of the walls—a burden some expenditure I do not doubt, considering the stringency of the times and the fewness of your numbers, but I do not doubt you will find your blessing in it, even as Nehemiah and his companions did theirs in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

May the tasteful structure thus completed and preserved from falling into ruins, long stand as a befitting monument to your appreciation of the Gospel here dispensed, and by the healthful influences emanating from it compensate a thousand-fold for all your painstaking and generous outlay; and, in respect to saying influence, may an invisible Shekinah ceaselessly hang over the place, and resistless energy be felt turning souls unto God! I come next to speak of

#### THE MINISTRY,

as here established and maintained, and I cannot forbear to remark, what a clear and satisfactory argument for the value of God's method of sustaining morality and promoting the spiritual welfare of the people, even to the saving of their souls (viz., by the foolishness of preaching"), is furnished in perhaps every community where a faithful Christian ministry has been enjoyed, by its historic records for a century or more, and by the thoughts which crowd back from the past in respect to the influences thus exerted and the benefits for all time and for eternity thus achieved.

Let the man who sets a low value upon the work and influence of the ministry, withholding perhaps all contribution to its support, though God has blessed him with means in abundance,

and I respect even with the means in his hands, and perhaps in his heart, to temptations naturally produced by the prospect, shall have his eye along the faces of Episcopos, Bishop, Church, Administrators, and Christian Deacons, and say if their appointments were not wise. Let him go to the cemetery where sleeps the reverend man of God, who, for two or three scores of years perhaps, in all wisdom and faithfulness dispensed the messages of Divine authority and tenderness, and let him survey the field of sepulchres around, embracing the dust of an entire generation who fell asleep during such ministry, and calling to mind how many of this number died in the joyful confidence of an honored resurrection and a blissful eternity—let him answer, if the ministry has not been worth *all* it has cost. Let him in thought approach the bedside of the dying and see how faith and hope spring forward to scenes immortal; see how, in tranquil or exultant mood, the spirit passes to the prepared "mansions"; the visions celestial more alluring than the terrestrial and the farewells cheerfully spoken; let him, I say, contented with such a scene of Christian triumph, and think of the departing one as *his* wife, *his* son or daughter, his parent or endeared friend, and will he not henceforth confess that the Gospel which can nurture such faith and hope is above all price, and that no community can afford that the preaching of that Gospel should cease from among its Christian privileges.

But to return from this digression. For the first five years of the society's existence no regular pastorate was established, though attempts were early made to secure such a result. It was a period of pastor seeking, and somewhat formidable is the list of successive candidates whose names have been preserved as having received a "call," which for some reason was not accepted.

It is worthy of note, as indicating the habit of the times, that during this candidating period the vote was frequently taken (and was, I believe, prior to the hearing of each of the candidates) "to apply ourselves to the Reverend Association's Committee for advice in respect to a candidate."

It could not have been otherwise than discouraging to the poor people in their beginnings, to have been so often disappointed in their hopes in respect to a pastor, and to have had their "call" so frequently received, as not have had a disheartening effect, and accordingly in January of 1819, it was voted, "That we hold a

day of fasting and prayer, that February 8th be that day, and that we apply ourselves again to the Reverend Association's Committee for advice."

Thus, disappointment had produced its proper effect—it had begotten a sense of dependence and promoted a spirit of prayer, and this being accomplished the coveted blessing was not withheld, for just now it was, or very shortly after, that the labors of Rev. Warham Williams, the first, and for nearly forty years the continuous and successful pastor, began.

In December, definite overtures for a settlement were made, embracing the pecuniary condition that the pastor elect should receive, in case of his acceptance of their "call," twelve hundred pounds, "old tenor" (the value of which, at that time of depreciated currency, was far less than would be represented by such figures now), and as his regular salary, he should receive yearly £200 ounces of good silver, or an equivalent of bills of public credit (the value of which to be determined by disinterested individuals), and twenty-five cords of wood."

An ordination in these "days of old" was a much more uncommon and important event in the estimation of the people than in these days of frequent changes in the pastoral office. We may, therefore, well suppose that the 13th day of June, 1750 --the day appointed for Mr. Williams' ordination--was looked forward to with no little interest by the people of the parish.

According to the good old custom of the New England churches, a day of fasting and prayer was appointed as a suitable preparation for the event, Rev. Mr. Merrick, of North Branford, and Rev. Mr. Whittelsey being invited to preach on the occasion.

The ministers invited to assist in the ordination were Rev. Mr. Chauncy, of Durham (I give the probable place of residence, as it is not specified in the record), Rev. Samuel Whittelsey, of Wallingford, Rev. Mr. Noyes, of Lyme (grandfather of Rev. Matthew Noyes), Rev. Mr. Hall, of Gleshire (father-in-law to the candidate), and Rev. Mr. Richards, of North Guilford.

To perfect the arrangement for the ordination, I find this somewhat strange vote, to wit, "That Isaac Ingraham, Paul Tyler, and John Thompson, shall be a committee to take care of the meeting-house doors ordination day, to keep folks out."

Mr. Williams was of Puritan ancestry, his great-grandparents on both sides having come from England at the time of the Puritan exodus. He was grandson of Rev. John Williams, who

was carried captive by the Indians from Deerfield to Canada, in 1704, and was son of Rev. Stephen Williams, D.D., of Long Meadow, Mass.

He was graduated at Yale College, in which institution he was shortly after elected tutor, and in the corporation of which he served as Fellow from the time of his early ministry to the time of his death.

He was remembered by a few individuals when I first came to the parish, as a person of noble and commanding figure, with high forehead and expressive countenance, as having uniformly worn the long white wig of olden times when he appeared in the pulpit, as having spoken with a powerful voice, and was represented to me as having been a preacher of much more than ordinary ability.

His ministry continued through a period of thirty-eight years, and was one of marked success, there having been added to the church during his pastorate, including the twenty-three original members who were constituted a church on the day of his ordination, two hundred and fifty-six (256) individuals, an average of something more than six each year through his entire ministry. He fell asleep April 10th, 1788, in the sixty-third year of his life, and "his sepulchre is with you unto this day."

After the decease of Rev. Mr. Williams the pulpit was variously supplied for a period of two years.

In March, 1790, the labors of Rev. Matthew Noyes began. In May, proposals were made for his permanent establishment in the pastorate; the proposal for his support being, that he should receive £200 settlement, and £90 annually as his salary.

In the following August his ordination took place, the sermon being preached by Rev. Dr. Goodrich, of Durham. He was a native of Lyme, Conn., a descendant, as was his predecessor, of Puritan ancestry, being in the fifth generation from Rev. James Noyes, who came from England in 1634 and settled in Newbury, Mass.

Mr. Noyes' academic education he received at Yale College (of which he also was afterward a member of the corporation), and his theological studies were pursued under the instructions of Rev. Dr. Whitney, of Brooklyn, Conn.

His pastorate here continued through a period of forty-four years, and under his ministry there was an ingathering to the church of two hundred and one (201) individuals.

His labors as pastor were suspended in 1833; his pastoral relations were dissolved in 1835, and in 1837, on the 25th of September, he finished his course, departing this life in the seventy-sixth year of his age.

Some of the sermons of Rev. Mr. Noyes, in manuscript, passed under my eye during my ministry here, and they afforded me the evidence that he was a methodical and vigorous thinker, and that his mind was remarkably ready in the phraseology of the Scriptures. In respect to other characteristics and qualifications for his work it is hardly fitting for me to speak, having been without any personal acquaintance, and his memory being yet fresh with many of you, so that your knowledge of what he was, and how he filled up his ministry, is far better than mine. Enough now to say, in the quiet rest of a Christian grave he sleeps, circled by a vast majority of those to whom he preached—pastor and people alike done with earthly scenes, and gone to their award.

Barber, in his "Historical Collections," has deemed it fit to say of him, that he was "considered one of the wealthiest clergymen in the State."

We are thus brought by the narrative to the period of contemporaries and contemporaneous events, and very little need be said in respect to ministerial changes or what has transpired under successive ministrations.

On the day of Mr. Noyes' formal dismission, the Rev. William J. Boardman was installed as his successor—December 1st, 1835—during whose ministry of eleven years, eighty-eight were gathered into the church on profession or by letter. Though not formally dismissed, Mr. Boardman had ceased to discharge the duties of the pastorate some time previous to his death, and that event, which dissolves all earthly ties, occurred October 1st, 1849. Born in Dalton, Mass., he naturally chose Williams' College, in the same county, as the place of his academic studies, and his theological education was acquired at Andover Seminary.

Having received his ordination at North Haven, September 20th, 1829, almost his entire ministerial life was spent in this immediate neighborhood, and in your own place of sepulchres he sleeps with those who had gone before him in the sacred office.

Subsequent to the resignation of Mr. Boardman no installed pastor was in charge of the church until June 8th, 1853, when the person who now addresses you entered upon the office, dur-

ing the intervening six years, the pulpit having been occupied by occasional or stated supplies, of whom those longest here and most abundant in labors, were Rev. Henry Steel Clark, D.D., subsequently of Philadelphia, now deceased; Rev. Edward Root, now settled, I think, in Rhode Island, and Rev. Charles H. Ballard, now one of the district secretaries of the American Tract Society.

My own pastorate commenced, as I have said, in June, 1853, though a supply of nearly five months had preceded this date, and it continued until the 1st of July, 1869, making in all nearly fourteen years of labor and enjoyment among you—I say enjoyment, for memory fondly recalls them to-day as pleasant years wherein were nurtured flowers and fruits of sympathy and affection which will be grateful as long as recollection shall continue. During these years it fell to my lot to follow eighty-five of your number to the grave; twenty-two couples I joined in marriage; administered the ordinance of baptism to sixty-four, and had the privilege of welcoming seventy-two to the membership of the church. Any enlargement beyond these facts, in respect to my ministry among you, is forbidden by obvious proprieties of the occasion.

Very shortly subsequent to my resignation of the pulpit, Rev. A. C. Hurd, now of Montville, in this State, commenced labors as "stated supply," and continued until 1868, something more than two years, during which occurred a period of more than ordinary religious interest, and eleven were gathered into the church as its fruits.

Of the present incumbent of the pulpit, Rev. Geo. DeF. Folsom, and his labors, it becomes me to say nothing more than that his services as acting pastor began in December, 1869, and that ten have been gathered to the fellowship of the church during that period. May the words that fall from his lips prove the precious seed from which a hundred fold shall be gathered ere long.

In passing from the ministry, I should speak next of

#### THE DEACONS,

as office-bearers in the church. They have served in the following order: Deacons Josiah Rogers and Merriman Munson, chosen when the church was organized; Deacons Benjamin Maltby and Phineas Baldwin, chosen April 2d, 1778; Dea. Benjamin Maltby, Jr., chosen December 1st, 1791; Dea. Solomon

Fowler, chosen December 3d, 1801; Dea. Stephen Malby, chosen May 31st, 1804; Dea. Munson Linsley, chosen February 2d, 1809; Dea. Ralph Linsley, February 2, 1826; Dea. Thomas Smith, February 2d, 1832; Dea. Charles Fowle, October 3d, 1844; and Dea. William Malby, March 4th, 1863.

Perhaps here, as conveniently as elsewhere, I may refer to the so-called

"EXTINGUISHED CHURCH,"

which was organized in 1801. Unfortunate differences of views and feelings having at this time arisen, a portion of the membership and congregation withdrew from their former connection and organized anew under the designation I have named, and the church so formed continued its separate existence until 1833, when by counsel and assistance of ministerial brethren from abroad, a reunion was effected. A new house of worship was erected, in which, for a part of the time, services were held; the Rev. Mr. Barrows, afterwards professor at the Andover Theological Seminary, having served longest of those who officiated. No pastor was ever installed over the church. Fortunately, even the causes of the separation have now nearly died out of the public knowledge, and certainly the preacher of this historical discourse will not search the ashes to find a single coal which may be blown into a momentary flame.

It would be an ungrateful omission were not some mention made in this review of those friends of the church and society who, from time to time, have contributed by legacy or otherwise to the

PERMANENT FUNDS

of the church, or rather to create a fund designed to be permanent for the support of the Christian Ministry in the service of the church and congregation—considerate and generous-minded men who have loved the cause and community so well, and prized the Gospel so highly, that they desire to be continually assisting even after their names should pass out of memory, in the laudable enterprise of holding up here the torch of truth, and making all men know the way of life everlasting. In order to my purpose of embalming anew as it were the names of such in your recollection, it is not necessary that I should speak of certain parsonage lands possessed by the society at the commencement of its separate existence, and probably derived as a sort of *donor* from the parent parish at the time this was organized,

and the renting of which was generally preceded by the vote in parish meeting (I mention it as evidence that, in some things, we certainly have improved upon the customs of the fathers), the vote, I say, "that the committee shall get two quarts of rum to let out the society's land with," the object being, I suppose, to make the bidding *spirited*.

I speak rather of those gifts and bequests which originated in individual friendship for the society and church, and which have about them the idea of an interest cherished at the very close of life. Among such benefactors mention should be made of Dea. Samuel Harrington, who, in 1751, gave twenty pounds to the society for their permanent use in the maintenance of a dissenting minister; of John Taintor, who bequeathed a farm, valued at about \$2,500, for a like purpose; of Ebenezer H. Fowler, who left for the society real estate and personal property to the value of some \$4,000; also, of Dr. Jared Linsley, of New York city, who, on more than one occasion, particularly when the parsonage was purchased, manifested his love for his native parish and his generosity of spirit in methods more expressive than mere kind words and good wishes; of Mrs. Ruth Malby, who bequeathed, at her decease, the sum of \$100; and, singly \$2,000. Let their names be held in grateful respect, and though the funds they bequeathed have in some portion been lost to the society, in the fluctuations of fortune\* and in the failing of monied institutions, let it not pass out of mind that these persons were your devoted friends, some of them, even when their lives were ebbing out, and that they paid largely of their substance to make constant and perpetual your religious prosperity.

A very important part of a church's history ordinarily is its PERIODS OF REVIVAL,

and to this branch of the subject I here advert. The general religious movement which characterized the close of the last century and the beginning of this, especially in Connecticut and Massachusetts, and which seems to have been a sort of return wave of spiritual influence after the sad effects of the long war, and a breakwater against the spread of French infidelity which

\*The bequest of John Taintor was lost in the failure of the Eagle Bank, of New Haven, in 1814; that of Ebenezer H. Fowler, deposited in the New Haven County Bank in 1827; and that of Julia Malby, in Townsend's Bank, in 1828.

so through the entire house, each seat having its *relative* grade, and occupied by persons of corresponding rank in the congregation, an arrangement not very flattering we should judge to those who should be assigned to "the lowest seats in the synagogue."

How the system "worked" in those days we have no definite means of determining, but in these times, we think to *serve* on the *seating committee* would not be particularly enviable, and that the effect of the seating would be much like that produced by certain Jews, of whom we have the record, that they "set all the city in an uproar."

It is simply amazing, that a method so invidious and unjust, so undemocratic and counter to the equality of the Gospel, should have had a place in the outward ordering of God's house! It will interest the same class of my audience, if I should also refer to the

#### SABBATH DAY HOUSES.

now entirely out of use, which, in the "days of old," used to stand in immediate proximity to the sanctuary, and which must have been highly serviceable, when, in the severity of winter, the people congregated in their places of worship, with the certainty that they must sit shivering through the protracted service without means of warming afterward, except as they should seek for such comfort outside of the place of meeting.

These "sabbath-houses," as they were called, were generally rudely constructed cabins, built contiguous to the church, or but a little way from it—sometimes for a single family, sometimes for a whole circle of relations—where, during recess of worship, the party owning the premises would repair, and, by a comfortable fire, kindled before service in the morning, spend their nooning partaking of refreshments brought from home, and engaging in such conversations as might be most agreeable to their minds.

It is easy to conceive that these resorts might have been of no special advantage—religiously considered, places of mere idle gossip and hilarity—and, upon the other hand, it is not difficult to suppose that, in many cases, they were like the prepared places by the river sides in the Apostles' days, "where prayer was wont to be made"—"sacred oratories," in which godly men and women found some of their most exalted experiences. Several of these cabins stood but a little distance from the old meeting-house which disappeared, as I have said, in 1847.

that period had introduced, seems not to have reached the community dwelling here, and that remarkable visitation of the spirit which preceded this by something more than half a century, associated with the names of Edwards, and Davis, and Whitfield, was just passing by as the church and society here were merging into life.

Nothing like a general attention to the subject of religion seems to have occurred until 1815, in which year the public mind was widely moved upon the subject, and large numbers were hopefully "born again."

That year of precious memory to so many of the churches throughout the land, 1831, brought also its saving influences to this community, and Rev. Mr. Noyes was permitted, after forty-one years of labor, to gather at a single communion season, forty-one members into the church as the fruits of the awakening. Still another harvest year was 1840. At the successive communion seasons of that year numbers aggregating forty-eight were admitted to membership by Rev. Mr. Boardman.

Something more than usual interest was manifested also in 1848 and in 1856, and in yet more decided power in 1858, seventeen being added to the church at the August sacramental season of that year, and some others afterward.

Of later times of merciful visitation I will not speak, as they were not so general in their influence and the results have been already referred to. It would be a serious error to suppose that all the earlier years of the church, when no "revivals," technically so called, prevailed, were years of spiritual barrenness. If not in copious showers, nevertheless, as the dew upon Hermon, gracious influences descended.

It is a remarkable circumstance, that not a single year passed during the ministry of Rev. Mr. Williams in which there were no accessions to the church.

It may interest the younger portion of the congregation to know, that in the "days of old" a custom prevailed of

#### DESIGNATING THE MEETING HOUSE.

by which was meant that the people had their seats assigned to them in the house of worship according to their official standing, military grade, seniority of years, or other special claims, they might be supposed to have to privileged and "dignified" consideration; as here arranged, the "fore seat" being the first in dignity, the two pews next the pulpit being second in rank, and

#### In the matters of

##### EDUCATION AND EDUCATED MEN,

it is believed that the past of Northford will compare favorably with most communities around—with most throughout New England indeed—notwithstanding there has been here no academy or other institution of learning of high order, to which the sons and daughters might resort.

At first, and until 1757, the entire parish was comprised in a single school district. A division was then effected, creating one district north and one south of the meeting-house. Three years after, in 1755, a third district was organized, and still a fourth in 1769, these arrangements all being made, and common school education supervised—not by the town, as now, but by the Ecclesiastical Society. But it is in respect to education in the higher departments of it, and as acquired in our colleges and professional schools, that I wish mainly to speak.

Few parishes in the State, and perhaps none of equal population, have given to the world so large a number of liberally educated men—so goodly a number of emigrant sons, who have served their generation in the varied fields of professional labor—as Northford, and of these it is she speaks with something of the honest exultation of the noble Roman mother, who pointed to her sons as they returned from the public schools, saying, "These are my jewels." Of these sons, thirty-one, so far as I am informed, have been graduated at Yale College.

The legal profession has been represented by four Northford men, as follows: Noah Linsley, Douglas Fowler, George Headley, and Gustavus B. Elliot.

Nineteen (19) at least have borne, and for the most part honored, the diplomas of the medical schools. I give their names without any attention to their arrangement in chronological order: Dr. Malachi Foote, Dr. William Foote, Dr. Salmon Frisbie, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ Auger, Dr. Stephen Todd, Dr. Jehiel Headley, Dr. Augustus Williams, Dr. Joseph Foote, Dr. Lyman Cook, Dr. Harvey Elliot, Dr. William Baldwin, Dr. Channucey Foote, Dr. Jared Linsley, Dr. Benjamin F. Harrison, Dr. D. A. Tyler, Dr. Benjamin Fowler, Dr. Anson Foote, Dr. Elizur Beach, and Dr. John Linsley.

And fourteen (14) have entered the ministerial profession. Their names are as follows: Rev. Medad Rogers, Rev. Lemuel Tyler, Rev. Jonathan Maltby, Rev. Mr. Ross, Rev. L. Ives Head-

ley, Rev. Isaac Maltby, Rev. Oliver D. Cook, Rev. Eli Smith, Rev. Samuel Whitney, Rev. James H. Linsley, Rev. John Maltby, Rev. Erasmus Maltby, Rev. Benjamin S. J. Page, and Rev. Harvey Linsley.

Thus, thirty-seven have represented the parish in the three leading professions. In this connection mention should be made of the Rev. Albert Barnes, author of "Barnes' Notes," &c., who, though not born here, was of Northford parentage; his father, Rufus Barnes, and mother, Anne Frisbie were natives, and lived here until their marriage, when they removed to New York State. And also of the two female missionaries whose early homes were here—Mrs. Epaphras Chapman, missionary among the Indians, and Mrs. Dwight Baldwin, at the Sandwich Islands.

Rev. Samuel Whitney and Rev. Eli Smith, already mentioned, were also prominently engaged in missionary labor; the one at the Sandwich Islands, the other in Syria.

It is a pleasant statement to make, that so many have here qualified themselves for such positions, and may I not hope that the recital of these names—some of them known and honored around the world—will awaken in some youthful minds the determination that they too will bravely strive for a capacity and opportunity to serve the age on fields broader than their native parish.

In this centennial year some reference should be made assuredly to the patriotism and service of Northford in the

##### WAR PERIOD.

in the Nation's history—the surrenders and sacrifices made for the support of liberty against tyranny, and the defense of a united Republic against the spirit of rebellion. At a society's meeting in 1775, it was voted, "to take the oath of fidelity to the American States;" also, "that the law made to prevent extravagant prices on provisions, clothing, &c., shall be duly observed and attended to in this parish." When the courier brought tidings from New Haven, that the enemy had entered the town, a goodly number of the citizens seized their weapons and repaired to the scene of invasion, and of these John Baldwin was shot by the enemy, and left dead upon the field.

Colonel William Douglas, I believe a native, at least a resident of the parish, served during the first part of the war as colonel of one of the Connecticut regiments. He contracted consump-

tion, as a consequence of exposure, and died before the war was concluded. In 1812 also, representatives of the parish were mustered into service, and for some time held positions upon the seaboard, but I believe their perils were more dreadful in anticipation than in the reality, and that their war exploits were not such as covered either themselves or their country with imperishable glory! The enemy did not appear, and in a little time they were disbanded and sent home.

The war of the Rebellion was to the parish a far more serious affair. In response to their country's call for defenders of its unity, thirty-one men came forward with the offer of their services, and, if need be, of their lives.

We remember well the Sabbath when, in their uniforms, they gathered with us here by the altar of the sanctuary, receiving the parting counsel of the pastor, and joined in the parting prayers of the church, received each one a pocket testament, and took their leave, some of them never to return, and others to enter the sanctuary only as borne in for funeral solemnities. The names of the enlisted were as follows: Captain James H. Linsley, Lieut. DeGrasse Fowler, Jesse Butler, Benjamin R. Dowd, Philo Foote, Henry W. Seranton, Lorenzo E. Harrison, Sylvanus Harrison, Elizar H. Harrison, Minor Byington, Malthy Linsley, Josiah Smith, Thomas Phelan, George W. Tadmadge, Jacob A. Smith, Henry N. Pardee, Edwin A. Buel, Charles D. Matthey, Lezelle Foote, Ambrose Dayton, George H. Barnes, Kirland Blakeslee, Christian Rief, Lorenzo Rief, Casper Bamberg, Martin Bamberg, John Bartholomew, Charles P. Blakeslee, Isaac Foote, John Linsley, and Daniel Sanford. Of this number, Malthy Linsley and Jesse Butler were killed in battle; Benjamin R. Dowd, Jacob A. Smith, and Philo Foote died of disease contracted in camp, and John Bartholomew died in prison.

Let the record be preserved as a roll of enduring honor, and to-day let us cast fresh flowers as it were upon the graves of the dead, for they surrendered their lives in *our* cause. But here I must reach my

CLOSING WORDS.

There are three thoughts which press upon my mind as I close this retrospect. First, you have had a *past*, my hearers—a history not altogether unworthy of its actors. Will you have a *future* not unworthy of yourselves? For what that future shall be, is a problem for you and your children to solve.

Every generation is sorely bound to see to it that there is no deterioration, but instead progress—*progress* in virtue, and all worthy achievements, and thus the world will be continually getting better.

Second, I am impressed too, as I review what I have recorded, with the idea, how much of *unwritten*, never to be written, history, in connection with the generations of which I have been speaking—the fathers and the mothers, the sires and the grand-sires, and the great-grand-sires who have here rounded out their lives and been gathered to their rest.

Life, in every view of it, is a conflict requiring courage, patience, and energy to face its difficulties and meet its responsibilities, and, doubtless, those who have gone before you in these paths, and on these fields of endeavor, struggled hard and endured much for whatever of life-victory they achieved. It is for you to honor their memories for all that they were, and for what you have attained to better than what they enjoyed, for they were the instruments of your advantage. They "labored," and you have "entered into their labors."

And, third, I am impressed yet again with the thought, *we*, like our fathers, are the makers of history, *we*, even as they did, are giving character and tone to that which shall be when we are sleeping in the dust, and let us ask ourselves, in some of our thoughtful hours, whether some, to us unknown, chronicler, who, a hundred years from now, may take the retrospect of the century, shall find that century bright and aglow with honored names and with honorable incident, as related to ourselves.

God give us, each one, lofty aim and determination, and strength and wisdom, so to act that we shall leave after us at our departure, clearly defined and convincing memorials of our having lived.

## APPENDIX.

The following sketch of the history of Branford, previous to its division, is from the historical papers of Rev. E. C. Baldwin:

December 21st, 1638, the New Haven Colony made an additional purchase of territory of the Indians, comprising among other that of Branford, for which they gave thirteen coats; it was then called Tobaket, from a range of hills in the northern part of the town. The deeds were signed by Montowese and Sawsemeck, a chief and his friend; the signature of Montowese was a bow and arrow, and that of Sawsemeck a rube hatchet. The Indians continued to reside here, and were, according to the terms of the deed, allowed to *hunt, fish, and cut basket timber.*

On September 3d, 1649, the "General Court" at New Haven made a grant of "Tobaket" to Mr. Samuel Eaton, upon condition of his procuring a number of his friends from England to settle there. Mr. Eaton failed to fulfill his contract and remained in England. Three years later, in 1652, "Tobaket" was granted to Mr. William Swain and others, of Wethersfield, upon condition of their assuming the expenses already incurred, amounting to about seventy dollars, and uniting with New Haven in the fundamental articles of government.

Their removal from Wethersfield was occasioned by divisions in the church, which had continued for some time. Counsel had been sought of Rev. John Davenport, of New Haven, and others, who advised a separation. Some went to Stamford, and others came with Mr. Swain to Branford, among whom were the following, whose descendants afterwards settled in Northford:

FRANCIS LANSLEY,  
JOHN LANSLEY,

RICHARD HARRISON,  
EDWARD FETTERE.

Their first minister was Rev. John Sherman, the great-grandfather of Roger Sherman. He was succeeded in 1645 by Rev. Abraham Pierson, father of the first President of Yale College, who remained until 1657 when a new charter was granted by King Charles the Second, uniting the colonies of Connecticut and New Haven and taking the management of civil affairs out of the hands of the members of the church, which was so obnoxious to Mr. Pierson and a large portion of his people that they removed to Newark, N. J. Other settlers were then invited in by those who remained,

and among those who signed the plantation covenant at this time, and whose descendants afterwards settled in Northford, were:

MICHAEL TAINSTON,	WILLIAM MALLERY,
ROBERT POOTE,	FRANCIS LINSLEY,
PETER TYLER,	EDWARD PERDUE,
JOHN BOGERS,	THOMAS HARRISON,
JOHN LINSLEY,	WILLIAM HOADLEY,
JOHN FRISBIE,	JOHN TAINSTON,

and a little later we find the name of Wm. Bartholomew, as a committee to go to the "Pay" to procure a minister.

Rev. John Bowers succeeded Mr. Pierson and remained until 1677, after which, for a period of ten years, the church was without a stated supply, when, in 1687, a call was given to Rev. Samuel Rossell, which invitation he accepted, and remained until his death—a period of more than forty three years.

In 1685 it was "agreed to have a school, to perfect the children in writing and reading."

In 1709 a new church was built, and in 1717 Liberty was granted to the people at "Sabbies Hill" (North Braford) to have a minister four months in the year. May 1716, 1721, it was "Voted, to have another meeting-house and minister, and care for them jointly," and in June it was "Voted, to go ahead with the building."