



A SECOND BUILDING IS CONSTRUCTED

The first evidence of real action on the new church is in the records of April 8, 1828. Article III "voted to choose Francis Pickering, Emory Bemis, George Weston and Thomas Jenkins (whose surname your writer bears as his middle name) a committee to procure land for a contemplated meeting house." This committee purchased the land on which our church now stands -- about an acre and a half for \$50, from Nathan Fiske; deed dated June 14, 1828. These same men (all members from the Town of Lincoln) entered into an agreement with Whitman Peterson of Duxbury to furnish materials and build the meeting house for \$1700. Mr. Peterson started the work immediately and the church was completed in November. A picture of this church is located in the Memorial Window in the Narthex.

The dedication sermon was preached on January 8, 1829, by Reverend Martindale, from Zacharia 14:20, "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the houses, holiness unto the Lord." The dedication service of the new church was a great event. The Methodist people came from other churches in the Needham Circuit to join in the celebration. According to the records of the Trustees, the choir was held in special favor. A singing teacher had been engaged to instruct and direct them at the service. Afterwards, the singers, by vote of the Trustees, were treated to refreshments at Milton Daggett's Tavern at the



second church - 1828 - 1899

expense of the building committee. The bill was \$21. Since the building committee did not have the funds to pay the bill, plus an additional \$19 for the singing teacher, they passed it on to the Trustees.

In May 1829, the old church building was sold by the Trustees. The building was moved to Waltham by oxen and sled. The last record of it was in 1870, when it was used as a dwelling. Forty dollars of the money received was paid to Daggett to settle his bill for the dedication refreshments, and for the singing teacher whom he had paid.

The church was now completed and paid for, and the members wanted a chapel for prayer meetings and social events. A subscription paper was circulated and about \$500 subscribed, but for some reason the chapel was never built. One hundred twenty-eight years later, in 1972, a similar

structure was built on the same site that had been selected before.

The first revival enjoyed by Weston took place in 1828 and 1829 under the labors of Reverend Daniel Fillmore and Reverend Isaac Jennison. These men increased the spiritual and financial strength of the society by the addition of about 75 members on probation. A larger part of these became members in full. Reverend Joseph Whitman, Jr., a faithful and useful member of the New England Conference, was among the first fruits of this gracious and extensive work of God. E. O. Havens was converted at this revival and ordained a preacher in the Needham Circuit.

EXPANDING THE MINISTRY

The Sabbath School in Weston began April 24, 1831. At a meeting of the Methodist Episcopal Society at the church, the following were chosen as officers of the Sabbath School for the following year--Milton Daggett, President, Rufus Babcock, Vice President, and Jonas Warren, Secretary. Five men were named managers and a committee of three, Book Committee. The first Sabbath School had five male teachers and two female teachers for nine classes. (Apparently teachers were scarce even in 1831.) The Sunday classes were held from the last Sunday in April until the last Sunday in October. Average attendance the first year was 22 male scholars and 18 female scholars.

One of the first projects was the establishment of a library for the

children. One hundred fifty volumes were obtained, including 24 testaments, 36 hymn books, 15 youth instructions (probably similar to our study books today), History of Jesus Christ, A Call To The Unconverted, Life of John Wesley, Paradise Lost, and Pilgrim's Progress. These books were purchased from funds from adult members who felt it was a privilege to become either a Life Member or an Annual Member of the Sabbath School. Donation for the former was two dollars; for the latter, twenty-five cents. At the end of the first year, there was an enrollment of 54. Among them were Eliza and Abigail Pickering, daughters of Reverend Pickering, and Sarah Jenkinson, the writer's grandmother.

The year 1832 found the Weston Church prosperous, both spiritually and financially. The preachers on the Needham Circuit were A. D. Merrill and S. Coggsell (the last preachers on the Circuit) to serve Weston. At this time, Weston was having services every second Sunday and really needed one who would serve it every Sunday. The Circuit then added J. W. Merrill as assistant to A. D. Merrill and Weston was able to have its weekly service. For using his services, Weston was asked to pay his salary. (From Needham Circuit Records, 3rd Quarter, January 26, 1833, Article IV voted that Weston pay Brother J. W. Merrill by subscription for his labors of love with them.)

FIRST FULL-TIME PASTOR

From 1833-34, Weston was served by Amos Binney, the first full-time pastor. His salary the first year was \$143.04. The Conference had a time limit of two years for a pastor to the same church.

Weston, now a station with a regularly appointed pastor, had a problem of securing a home for the pastor. The membership numbered about 150 and came equally from Lincoln, Weston and Waltham. As Weston prospered, so did Methodism in Waltham and it was felt that Waltham could support a church of its own. In 1837 Waltham was detached from Weston, reducing the membership to 83 during the conference year. (The records show it was to have a larger membership again.) The First Methodist Church was thus formed in Waltham, and it is interesting to note that Immanuel Methodist Church is an offspring of that church.

The following records were taken from a legal meeting of April 10, 1838, and show the following appointments: "Chose John Jones, Moderator; John Jones, Clerk; Amos Hagar, George Rupell, Aaron Davis, Assessors; Amos Carter, Marshall Jones, John Jones, Collectors; voted to give L.B. Cheney \$10 to take care of the meeting house when necessary, make the fires and trim and fill the lamps when requested by the Stewards. Voted to have Ephraim Brown procure wood for winter, to raise \$100 by subscription to pay house rent for the preacher as well as for wood, coal, oil and other outstanding demands Voted that



Women's Society of Christian Service

Marshall Jones and John Jones make out a list of those who should bear their proportion of \$100 and request them to pay it. Voted to dissolve meeting. A true record. John Jones, Clerk."

June 18, 1838, is a very important date in the history of our church. The forerunner and basis of our Women's Society of Christian Service was formed on this date. The need for such a society was great. Until this time, no woman had held an office in the church with the exception of four female teachers in the Sabbath School. This society was the answer. Space will not permit the telling of the wonderful things they accomplished, but here is a brief summary of the beginning, from the records: "A number of females in Lincoln and Weston, being desirous of showing their faith by their works, do agree to unite together under the name of the Methodist Female Benevolent Society, for the purpose of aiding the indigent

in the church and society as God may give us ability or opportunity. We also agree to adopt as our guide and rule the following constitution:

Article I - This Society shall be called the Methodist Female Benevolent Society.

Article II - The object of this Society shall be not only to relieve the wants of the destitute in the church and society, but for the spiritual good of the members by meeting together once a month for a better acquaintance with each other and increase of love and union. "

The first officers were Mrs. Wealthy Jones, Mrs. Hannah Weston, Mrs. Lois Adams, Mrs. Maria Hagar and an executive committee of five. Sixteen members were enrolled and the dues were twenty-five cents a year.

Reverend George Pickering was the pastor in 1840-1841. As you will recall, he was also the pastor in 1796. He evidently had been connected with this church for 50 years and now, 46 years after the first time he preached here, he is pastor again. This must have been rather a relief to the committee who had been appointed to secure a home for the preacher, as Reverend Pickering had his own home. This solved the problem for a time, but the need was there, and in every Official Board and Trustees meeting it was discussed at length.

List of Articles of Crockery
presented by Mrs. E. Flint to the
Methodist Parsonage Weston, Mass.

Sept 27th 1887

- 1 Large Platter.
- 1 Small "
- 1 Quilt Plate.
- 12 Dinner Plates.
- 11 Breakfast "
- 10 Tea "
- 12 Tea Cups.
- 12 " Saucers.
- 6 Sauce Dishes.
- 1 Sugar .
- 1 Cream.
- 1 Slab Bowl.
- 1 Gravy Dish.
- 1 Vegetable Dish.

72 Pieces

list of articles of crockery
presented by Mrs. E. Flint - 1887



First Parsonage

THE FIRST PARSONAGE IS CONSTRUCTED

On May 14, 1850, a meeting was called by the pastor, Reverend H. C. Dunham, to take some action. It was voted to build a parsonage and Amos Hagar was appointed to secure a building lot. At an adjourned meeting on May 21, 1850, Amos Hagar's report was given and it was voted to accept the offer of Captain S. Fiske and take 48 rods of land for the sum of \$100. (Four rods on the road, twelve rods in the rear.) It was also voted to build an upright house, 28' by 22' with an ell 24' by 14'.

The Building Committee consisted of the following: Reverend H. C. Dunham, Joseph Whitman, Ephraim Brown, Rufus Babcock and Franklin Childs. (Ephraim Brown had been on the Church Building Committee in 1828.) This meeting was held at the home of Marshall Smith, now the

home of Mrs. Alice Wark (at this writing).

Work began at once. The men of the church dug the cellar and stoned the foundation. A contract was given to Samuel A. Willis of Sudbury to build the house for \$800. He started work the first of July and finished it about the first of October. According to the records, money must have been scarce because they had difficulty raising the \$100 for the land. A little Yankee ingenuity solved the problem. They proceeded to sell stock in the parsonage at \$25 a share, and received enough money to pay all the bills. Somewhere there was a little trouble on the title to the land, because the land was not deeded to them until October 4, 1850, after completion of the building. The interest on the stock in the parsonage totaled about \$44 a year, and the church had been paying \$55 a year to rent living quarters for the pastor, so they were satisfied with the change.

The Female Benevolent Society also helped with the new parsonage. From the Secretary's record of the Twelfth Annual Meeting, June 5, 1850, a motion was made, seconded and put to a vote that the Society would make overalls and sell them for eight cents each. Each member should make a pair or pay eight cents at each meeting. It was also voted to hold meetings once every two weeks until sufficient funds had been raised to furnish the parsonage.

In 1857 and 1858, under the pastoral care of Reverend M. P. Webster, the church was again visited by revival

influences in common with nearly all the churches in the land. Between thirty and forty were received on probation, about half of whom "are now members in regular standing in this church" (from records of O. S. Howe, Chairman of Historical Committee of Weston Church, January 1, 1863).

"I deem it proper here to remark that Brother Webster's wife was greatly blessed by God in this revival and her labors were owned of God in securing the awakening and conversion of many souls."

This revival shows on the records of December 11, 1858, that Abijah B. Jones was received in membership by M. P. Webster. He was to remain a member until his death in 1918. He served 60 years on the Board of Stewards and 50 consecutive years on the Board of Trustees. Written in the church records of his death are these lines: "A prosperous farmer, a fine church worker, a typical Yankee." It was this same gentleman who told many interesting tales of church activities when I visited him with my father in my early youth. One is very vivid in my mind. In the old church, halfway down the middle aisle, was a wood-burning stove -- the only means of keeping the church warm. Abijah Jones was the one who kept the fires burning and sat in a chair right near the stove. He loved this job, for he said, "In the cold weather, I have the best seat in the House."

THE LONG STRUGGLE

The history of our church from 1860 to 1940 records a struggle for existence. These records show little money available, but great devotion and faithfulness on the part of a few who would never admit defeat. In previous sketches I have mentioned only two laymen to any extent, but no church history would be complete without mentioning Albert Washburn, T. Colburn Richardson, George Harrington and A. B. Jones. They served faithfully and well until the turn of the century.

The following is written in the records dated January 1, 1863: "The Church and Parsonage, at this date, are valued at \$4,000. They are in good repair and are insured; and somewhat singular in these days of costly churches and embarrassing debts, they are entirely free from debt. The average membership of the church during the last 20 years has been about 100, rising as high as 114 and sinking as low as 80. The present membership is 94. Signed. O. S. Howe, Pastor, 1861-1862."

Also, this record: "June 2, 1861. Special Board Meeting held at close of afternoon services. The committee that was chosen to purchase an organ reported they had promptly and faithfully attended to their duties. After visiting all the organ and melodion manufacturers in and around Boston, they had purchased from Smiths American Organs, a reed instrument for \$300 receiving a cash discount of 25 percent, which reduced the price to \$225. A. Hagar advanced

the money. Their report was accepted and adopted. Signed: A. Gregory, Secretary." This was the first musical instrument in the history of our church.

On November 24th oil lamps were installed on the walls of the church to provide proper lighting for Saturday evening services.

In 1864, the church had legal difficulty as evidenced by these records: "Weston, October 29, 1864. To Edwin Hobbs, Esq. Justice of Peace for Middlesex Co. Whereas the Methodist Episcopal Church and Society of Weston, having for several years neglected to choose Trustees of the Society, and there being no Clerk legally qualified to call a meeting, we, the undersigned members therefore respectfully request you to issue a warrant calling a meeting of qualified voters of said Society, for the purpose of choosing a Clerk and Trustees.

On Monday, November 7, 1864, at two o'clock, a meeting was called to order by Edwin Hobbs, Esq. and a Clerk and seven Trustees were legally elected."

In April 1868, the Trustees were notified that the late George Babcock had willed the sum of \$1,000 to the church. As the heirs did not have the money in cash, they were given a mortgage on the Babcock farm. This mortgage was paid promptly--the Trustees paid \$400 of this money to build a barn at the parsonage (March 1869). The barn was deemed necessary, because the Pastor, Reverend G. Sutherland (1868-1869), needed a horse and carriage in which to make his

pastoral calls. Another \$328.81 (last payment on mortgage) was used for badly needed repairs on the church.

The only real noteworthy event between 1870 and 1890 was the organization of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society (June 21, 1883) by Mrs. Daniel Dorchester, wife of the District Superintendent. Mrs. Samuel Noon, the Pastor's wife, was elected to serve as President. Reverend Noon was the first pastor of our church to serve more than two years (1881-1884, 1894-1895).

The records show that around 1881 the church was at rather a low ebb. In this report from the Pastor's Annual Report to the Conference on March 5, 1881, we glimpse the real condition of the church:

"It is with deep sadness that I make this last report--sad that instead of being multiplied, our ranks have been decimated by death and removal. There are 54 names registered on the church book. Of these, 43 only are resident members--the other 11 being scattered from Hyde Park to Kansas. The resident members are 12 brethren and 31 sisters, 4 of the brethren and 11 of the sisters (resident) have circumstances that kept them from coming to social meetings or attending any service for two years or more, So the actual working members who are able to do duty is reduced to 28."

*My earnest prayer that out of the darkness
dearth of the present,
may come a more glorious future
for the Weston Church.*

....Pastor Adams

**HOOK AND HASTINGS
COMPANY BRINGS NEW LIFE**

In 1883, Hook and Hastings, church organ manufacturers, moved from Roxbury to Weston. A large factory was built in Kendall Green, along with a Fellowship Hall for employees. This hall becomes part of the history of our church. In the next few years about 20 new homes were constructed by the company and brought new hope for the church because many of these families attended the church. Membership and attendance boomed with prosperity returning to Weston.

The year 1892 found the church in a much better condition than in previous years. Many new families found an interest in our church. It was during the pastorate of Reverend C. Whidden (1892-1894) that extensive

alternations were made on the church building. This is the record of the work done:

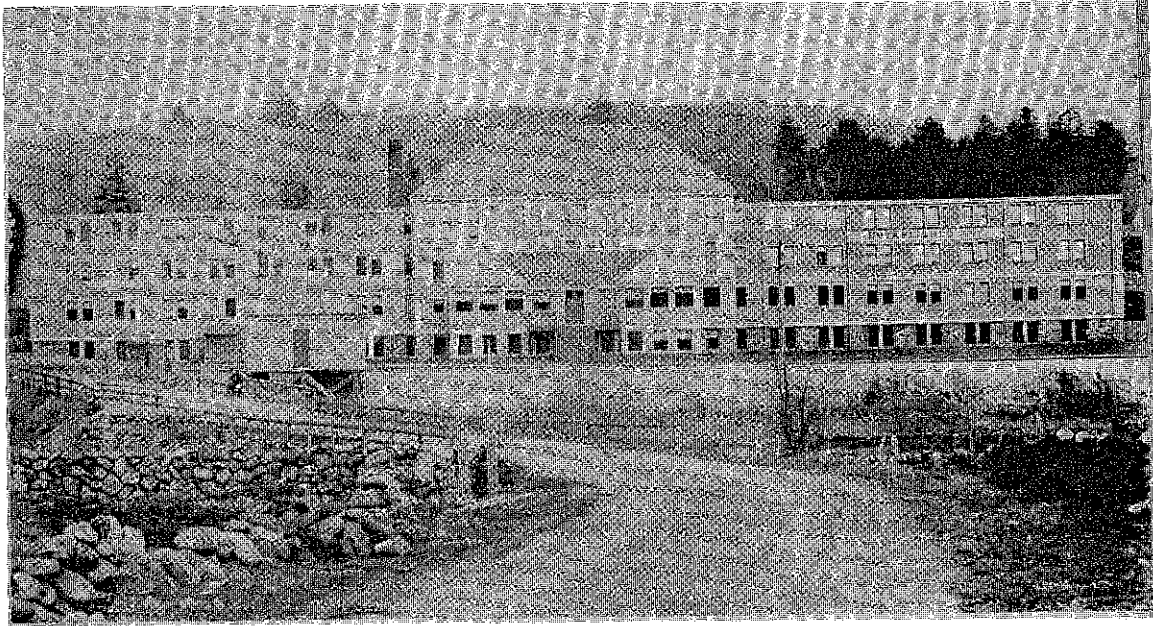
Trustees meeting, January 18, 1893:

"Voted to empower the Committee to go on and make repairs scheduled, to put in new pews, to paper walls and ceiling, to put in new windows, to paint or grain all old wood inside and to repair outside wood."

Also, April 3, 1893:

"Motion by A.G. Jones and seconded by Brother Stevens that we partition off the lower part of church even with the chimney and nine feet high when finished to make a room 16' by 38' for a vestry."

The work was done and then had to be paid for; the bill was \$650. The



Hook and Hastings Organ Factory

parsonage also was mortgaged for \$600, but as always when things seem difficult, a way out appeared. The Trustees were notified that the late Joseph Whitman had left the church a bequest of \$600. This money was used to pay the parsonage mortgage.

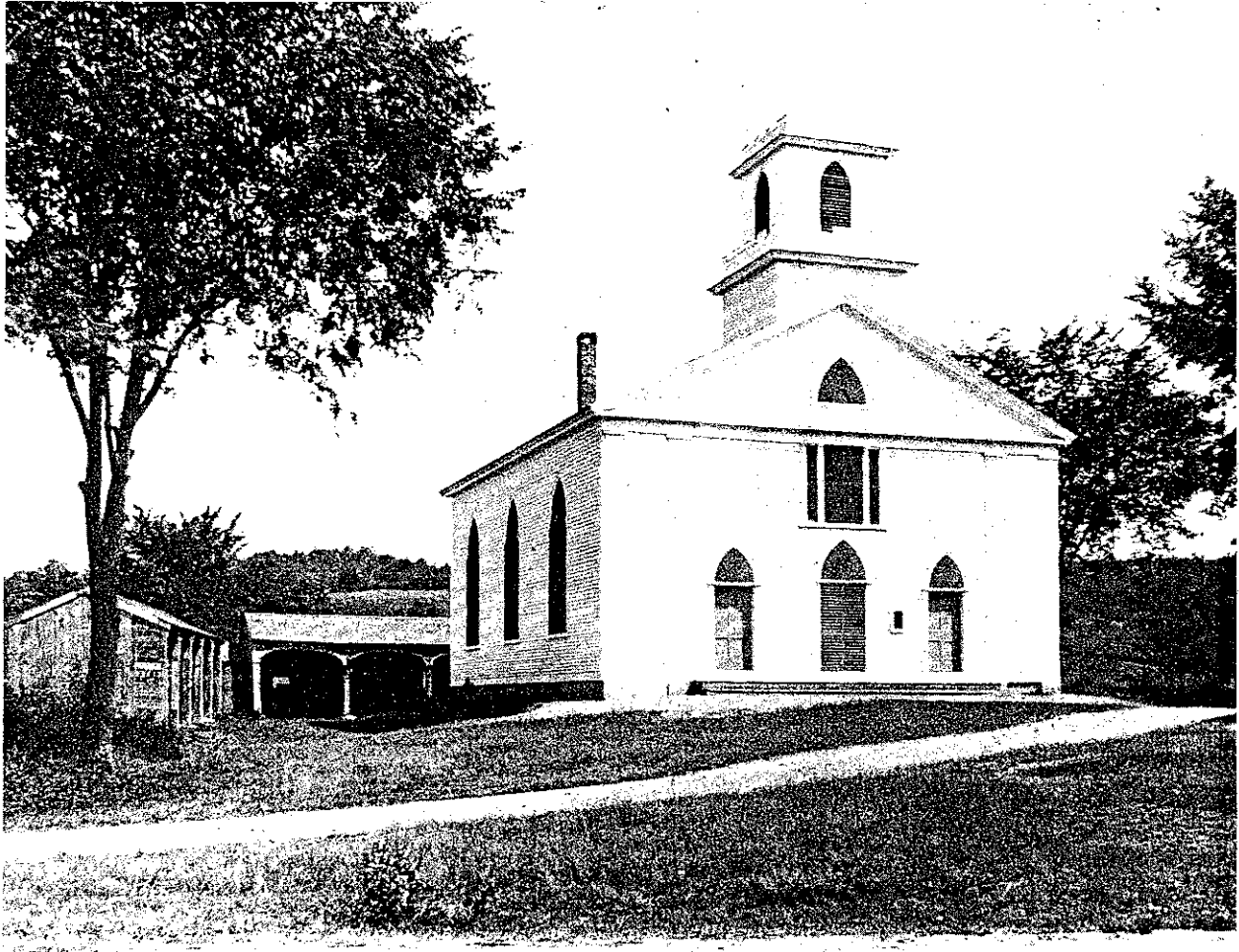
During this time, a furnace had been installed to heat the church properly, and a new altar built. Since an organ factory was then in the neighborhood and the church had an opportunity to purchase a pipe organ at a low price, it was decided to take out a subscription paper to see if the money could be raised. This was abandoned because Mrs. George Harrington made a gift of the pipe organ to the church in memory of her mother, Experience Jenkins, a long-time worthy member of the church.

After all these additions and improvements had been made, it was then

considered adequate to serve the expanding community. At a Trustees Meeting April 21, 1897, they discovered they needed more insurance on the church, so they increased the amount from \$1,000 to \$2,000. They failed to insure the new pipe organ, worth \$1,000 at that time.

A list of the pastors who served during this period: A. A. Loomis, 1891-1892; C. C. Whidden, 1892-1894; Samuel H. Noon, 1895-1896; E. H. Tuncliffe, 1896-1897; E. E. Abercrombie, 1898-1899; R. B. Miller, 1900-1901.

We now approach the end of the 19th century and all is going well at the Weston Methodist Church. Attendance and membership showed improvement each year and the Sunday School was at the highest point since its founding.



Renovated Church - 1893 to 1899

THE CHURCH BURNS

Now it is Sunday, December 31, 1899-- a very cold day, I have been told, and services were held as usual--morning worship at 10:30 AM, Sabbath School at 1:00 PM and evening prayer service at 7:00 PM.

Disaster struck! During the night, the church was destroyed by fire, and as the dawn came on January 1, 1900, nothing was left of the building except smoldering ashes.

Everything was destroyed, including the uninsured organ. The only visible evidences of the years of toil were the parsonage and the \$2,000 worth of insurance. It was believed that the fire started from the new overheated furnace. This is without doubt the darkest period of the history of our church. The building was gone, the organ was completely destroyed, and there was only \$2,000 of insurance. The existence of the church was in danger for a number of days.