THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

OF SALISBURY, CONNECTICUT

1744 to 1994

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

AN HISTORICAL DISCOURSE ON OCCASION OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN SALISBURY, CONNECTICUT, NOVEMBER 23, 1894

by Reverend John Calvin Goddard

One hundred and fifty years ago today this church was formed. By a curious coincidence we celebrate the fact on the same day of the week, and thus, like the discovery of America itself, it affords one more illustration of how good a thing can come out of Friday. George the Second was then on the throne, and began, that very year of 1744, the great struggle of 19 years' duration, which was to determine whether England or France should control this continent. Washington was then a boy of twelve, just come into possession of a hatchet. Franklin was beginning his scientific researches in the intervals of editing *The Pennsylvania Gazette* and *Poor Richard's Almanack*, although it will be eight years yet before flying his famous kite. It is the era of The Great Awakening, so-called, in New England, largely fostered by Jonathan Edwards, who is still preaching at Northampton, but in a few years he will move to Stockbridge, within twenty-five miles of us, and there write the *Treatise on the Will*. The nearest church to us in 1744 was Sharon, then four years old, who, with ourselves, were living in "The Wilderness," in New Haven county, in the colony of Connecticut, commonly spelled with a double t. The town then contained but eighteen English families, though there were several Dutchmen among us, good honest fellows, who recorded their daughters' births in our town register with such pleasing

names as Areonchee, Yockamenchee, and Yacimitia. The Dutch families had come into the place as early as 1720, first settling near Mr. Robert Little's at Wetaug, which Wetaug was the Indian name of this locality, just as Sheffield was styled Staytooc, and Sharon Mashapoag. In 1737 the town had been surveyed, divided into twenty-five lots, and sold at Hartford. Some of the original purchasers of these lots have descendants here today bearing the same name, as Reed and Norton. By 1741 the town had been chartered by the General Court and named Salisbury, after the English original, doubtless, just as Cornwall, Kent, and Norfolk had their names.

The first movement toward a church may be traced as far back as the memorial addressed to the General Court in 1741, praying for "town privileges and liberty to imbody in church estate." Observe how their two desires, for politics and for religion, went together and were not deemed incongruous. Observe also that, whereas the people began by praying for the church, the church ends by praying for the people. The prayer was granted and the General Court, acting as a kind of home missionary society, directed in the charter that one of the shares of the public domain should go to the first settled minister, and one go to the perpetual support of the ministry. So the town was chartered, and joyfully proceeded to elect officers from selectmen down to "sealer of leather" and "brander," along with which last named office the legislature gave a device (+), like a Greek cross, which we may call the original seal of the town; and every four-footed inhabitant of the place had to have this "mark of the beast" branded upon him.

It is instructive to read in those early pages of the town records what things of moment weighed upon the minds of the Freemen. They resolved, among the first, that hogs should run at large upon the common; that a bounty of three pounds should be paid for each wolf killed, and one shilling per rattle for every rattlesnake done to death; and in the midst of these matters of state, while voting the hogs in and the snakes out, they voted for a minister. A committee was at length empowered by the town to look up the right man, and from time to time for the next two years an assortment of pulpit wares was brought before them. But, hungry as our fathers were to take bait, they would not bite at every worm, as several good men discovered, who, after preaching a course of sermons in Salisbury, had to go where glory waited them. The same reluctance to being pleased showed itself fifty years later and at other times; in fact this discriminating faculty has been characteristic of them ever since, and to this day the congregation feel perfectly competent to pass judgment on every preacher who trembles before them. While the matter of a minister was in abeyance, the town voted to build a parsonage. It was getting the bird-cage before getting the bird. The first parsonage stood nearly opposite the present one, and served as meeting-house, too, for five years, no doubt to the great discomfort of the parson's wife, whose grace was exercised thereby.

In 1743 a young man of Coventry, Connecticut, twenty-five years old, one year out of Yale College, during which he took his entire theological course, came here to preach. He was acceptable to the congregation and the next January they gave him a call. His name was JONATHAN LEE, and a brass tablet to his memory lies upon the wall

back of this pulpit. After the mature deliberation of seven months, he accepted the call, married, two weeks thereafter, Elizabeth Metcalf, the step-daughter of President Clapp of Yale College, and brought her up here into the wilderness to do home missionary work among us. The log-house parsonage was not finished and for several months they pioneered it, spending their honeymoon in the back-end of a blacksmith's shop. The young minister frequently trudged down to the mill at Lime Rock (then called The Hollow), with his bag of grain on his back, and on Sabbath days held a circuit of services at The Hollow, at Lakeville, and at Wetaug. Meanwhile the parsonage was building, and here, in a room 24 by 30, the council was held that gathered the church and settled the minister. Observe that the order of procedure was first to get a building, then to get a minister, lastly, to get a church.

The church thus formed consisted of eleven men, whose names are recorded; probably also of as many females, whose names are not recorded till afterward, owing to the view then prevailing that Adam was first formed. The council is described in our records as consisting of three "Reverend Elders" and three "Worthy Messengers." They followed the Cambridge platform in their procedure, instead of the Saybrook platform, which had been made that very year the law of the land, which thing became a snare unto the elders in question, and led to their suspension from the ministry. The reasons may not be enlarged upon now, but they were all connected with the council's and Mr. Lee's sympathy with Jonathan Edwards in his revival principles. For one, I honor those three martyrs to ecclesiastical persecution, and rejoice that the founding

of our church stands for evangelical fervor of the Edwardsean order.

Under the pastoral care of Jonathan Lee the church prospered. In eight years more there were eleven hundred people in the town. In 1749 the first meeting-house proper was builded, the frame of which is in the present Town Hall opposite at the hale old age of 145 years. Mr. Lee was a man of commanding figure and of pleasing address. He preached the Election Sermon in 1766 before the Governor and General Court of the colony.

This sermon contains the following sentence, "Dominion, or right to rule, is founded neither in nature or grace, but in compact and confederation." This was uttered nine years before Lexington, but it sounds revolutionary enough, and accounts for the spirt of '76 that showed itself so heartily in this congregation when the time came.

In tracing some family lines recently I came across a sale of land by Jonathan Lee to one Ketcham for twenty-six hundred pounds, say $13,000, and at first drew the conclusion that, since the first pastor of this church had so much thrift, it was a pity the secret should have died with him. But, as the transaction occurred during the Revolution, when a person went to market with his money in a basket and brought home his goods in his pocket, it may be that Brother Jonathan was after all, like the rest of his kind, the kind who are "always with you."

Mr. Lee was famous for his Latin, and the baptismal page in our register opens with this sentence, "Baptizavi hos quorum nomina subscripta sunt." Under this head is

the entry, "for Ephraim Ketcham viz Sarah, & one & one more name forgot and hannah: 65," that is 1765. Also, "for Joshua Porter's wife Joshua: 60: & abigail: 62 & Eunice & peter Buell 73 & Augustus non memor temporis Sept 23." While on the subject, it is recorded that for Elijah Owen he baptized, "Neomi, Sarah phebe & Elisha: 60: & Lois 67 patience Elijah Esther & Ann Ambros Julius Electa." No wonder the good man wrote occasionally, "nominis oblitus sum." His forgetfulness reminds us of another dominie of the same date, the Rev. Samuel Mills, whom our senior parishioner, Mr. S.S. Robbins, now 90 years old, then a boy, had occasion to drive somewhere. Mr. Mills asked the boy his name, and receiving the response, "Sam Robbins," replied with profound reflection, "Robbins? Robbins? seems to me my first wife was a Robbins."

In 1770 the town had grown to about 1,800, and the church enlarged accordingly. Perhaps the political excitement from this onward drew attention away from religion, for in five years thereafter we discover no additions to the church on profession, and in four years only one each. In the Revolutionary Wars Salisbury was afire with patriotism, and sent forward a full quota, 100 men and 25 commissioned officers. Among other companies was a troop of horse, which formed, under Colonel Sheldon of this church, *the first efficient cavalry* that joined the Continental army. Salisbury, indeed, was a military center; Washington, Jay, and other officers of Congress were here frequently, superintending the casting of cannon and shot for the army and navy. The armaments of the *Constitution* and *Constellation* and most of the American vessels were made here. Army officers en route from the eastern states to the headquarters on the Hudson

passed this way. At the close of hostilities renewed interest appeared in the church, and numbers joined on profession. In 1787 the first of the Methodist circuit riders visited the town, and were kindly received. Instead of suffering outrage, as elsewhere, they were entertained by one of the deacons, Nathaniel Buel, who offered the use of his house for the meetings. In 1788 Jonathan Lee died, after a faithful ministry of forty-four years. He had received into the church 276. His remains lie in the old burying ground in front of this church, and a rude carving of himself *in his pulpit robes* adorns the head-stone.

After the death of Mr. Lee the church spent eight unhappy years. In six of them not one united with it on profession. Several candidates were called and declined. French irreligion was rife. As Professor Fiske calls the earlier years of this term, "The critical period of American history," so we might call it the critical period of this church. In this interval occurred the birth of our neighbor in this village, the St. John's Episcopal Church. In 1793 the church adopted a constitution and confession of faith, instead of the Cambridge platform, which had been their previous guide. The presiding officer of the church meeting being a Scotchman and a Presbyterian, temporarily supplying the church, and, doubtless, having a hand in framing the articles, the name inadvertently slipped into the title as "The Presbyterian Church at Salisbury," but, on the fourth of July following, the matter was corrected, and, by vote of the church, we are to be properly called, not as one might suppose, The Congregational Church, but "The Church of Christ at Salisbury." There was no emphasis then placed upon the "The," and there is none placed now;

we claim merely to be one of several churches of Christ in Salisbury, and bear love and good-will to them all.

In 1796 a call was extended to a young man of 21 years only. He was born at Taunton, Mass., soon after the battle of Bunker Hill, and accordingly, was given the name of its hero, JOSEPH WARREN CROSSMAN. He was a graduate of Brown University, and had studied theology with the minister at Sheffield, Mass., one year. In Mr. Crossman's bishopric many notable events occurred. One of them was the rearing of the present edifice in 1800. Another was the dissolution of the relation between church and state, and the formation, in 1804, of The Ecclesiastical Society, which has ever since provided the means for maintaining worship. Another was the first systematic census of the church, when the resident membership was found to be 96. About this time occurred a strange incident, which has never been satisfactorily explained, and which grows more mysterious the more it is investigated. It was the famous case of stone throwing against the house of Mr. Sage, of Sage's Ravine. Stones and pieces of mortar were thrown through the windows, breaking over fifty panes, often many pieces in succession following through the same hole. A peculiarity of it was that the missile dropped down upon the sill as soon as it broke the glass, as though it had been pushed through a pane of paper. The mystery of it was that although hundreds of people assembled to witness the affair, which extended over several days and nights, and among them clergymen and town officers, no one was ever able to detect the source of the throwing. It remains today just as it was left then, a conundrum. In 1812 the town was visited by a scourge of typhoid pleurisy, called The Great Epidemic. The labor of

attending upon the sick and dying told severely upon the pastor, and, after delivering the Thanksgiving discourse, he was laid low with the same disease. He declined rapidly, Dr. Reid tells us, until the morning of Sabbath, Dec. 13th, when he fell asleep, his last words being, "Be faithful." During his ministry of fifteen years 88 joined the church, 57 of them by profession of faith.

After this, for nine years, we enter upon the "dark ages" of this church, dark with indifference and strife. The epidemic, which carried off a hundred and fifty people in two seasons, seemed only to stiffen the ungodly. It was the time of the second war with Great Britain, hard times in business, harder times in religion. At the lowest point, however, when the male members of the church were reduced to seventeen, came extraordinary help. Rev. Asahel Nettleton was invited here to preach. He spent one night on the field, but, distrusting the condition of things, started for another place the next morning. At the earnest solicitation of the deacon he consented to remain, and almost immediately a powerful revival broke out, one of the most famous and blessed in all his wonderful ministry. From Massachusetts to the Sharon line the mighty wave swept, and more than three hundred people were converted. One hundred and eighty-eight joined this church at that time. Incredible as it may seem, we have one member of our church living with us today, the fruit of that revival. Mrs. Mary Hutchinson, the daughter of one deacon and the wife of another, is with us yet, the oldest communicant of this church, which she joined in 1815. [While we are on the subject I venture to speak of another of our treasurers, Mrs. Olive Pratt, who did not happen to join this church as early as Mrs. Hutchinson, first joining a church elsewhere,

but who, in point of age, is most venerable of all. She is today 98 years, 8 months, and 20 days old; she has lived under every president of the United States, and her birth precedes every pastorate of this church except Mr. Lee's. Next to the virtue of honoring thy father and mother is the virtue of living in Salisbury, "that thy days may be long upon the land."]

The great revival lulled the dissensions in the church, but did not kill them. They broke out again over the matter of candidates. With a divided vote the church called the Rev. LAVIUS HYDE in 1818. He was born at Franklin, Conn., graduated at Williams, studied at Andover. His wife is the author of several hymns in *The Songs for the Sanctuary*. It is said that a minister should have a tender heart but a tough hide; the Hyde in this case was not so. His feelings were lacerated for four unhappy years, caught, as he was, in the jaws of a quarrel he did not originate and could not suppress. He was a gentle godly man, who sacrificed himself in hopes of promoting church union. Personally he was ever highly esteemed. In 1822 he resigned, but the irrepressible conflict remained. At this point the church called a council to prevent a split and in hope of restoring harmony. An entire day was spent by the church in humiliation, fasting, and earnest response to that old entreaty,

"O pray for the peace of Jerusalem,
They shall prosper that love thee."

And the prayer was answered. Mutual confession and reconciliation followed, and to this day the church has remained harmonious and united.

In 1825 the fourth pastor was called, Rev. LEONARD ELIJAH LATHROP, D.D., born at Gilead, Conn., graduated at Middlebury, Vt., then thirty years of age. He was the ablest man who had, up to this date, labored in Salisbury, and the attachment between himself and his people was unusually strong. Preeminently was he distinguished for the genial current of his soul; he could talk with the woman at her wash-tub or with the judge at the bar. He could put anyone at ease anywhere, even a boy on a bee-hive.

As illustrative of the way in which he drew people out on familiar topics, it is related of him that on making a round of parish calls, accompanied by Mrs. Lathrop, he remonstrated with her after leaving a certain house for saying so little. She replied that she could think of nothing to talk about. "Nothing to talk about! Why didn't you talk about the cook-stove? Didn't you see they had just bought a new one?" Perhaps this is a case of the well instructed scribe's bringing forth things old and new.

Dr. Lathrop worked in an atmosphere of warmth, believed it to be essential to spiritual success. He never baptized anybody with ice-water. As a wise master-mason, he did not attempt to build the temple with frozen mortar, nor to work in the 32°. Not but what he was a good stiff Calvinist. Woe, indeed, to the man that tried to oppose him on the doctrines! He might come out against him one way, but he would flee before him seven ways. Now, to this genial and masterful minister was given the most signal divine favor ever accorded a Salisbury pastor. Great revivals accompanied his ministry; in all, one hundred and

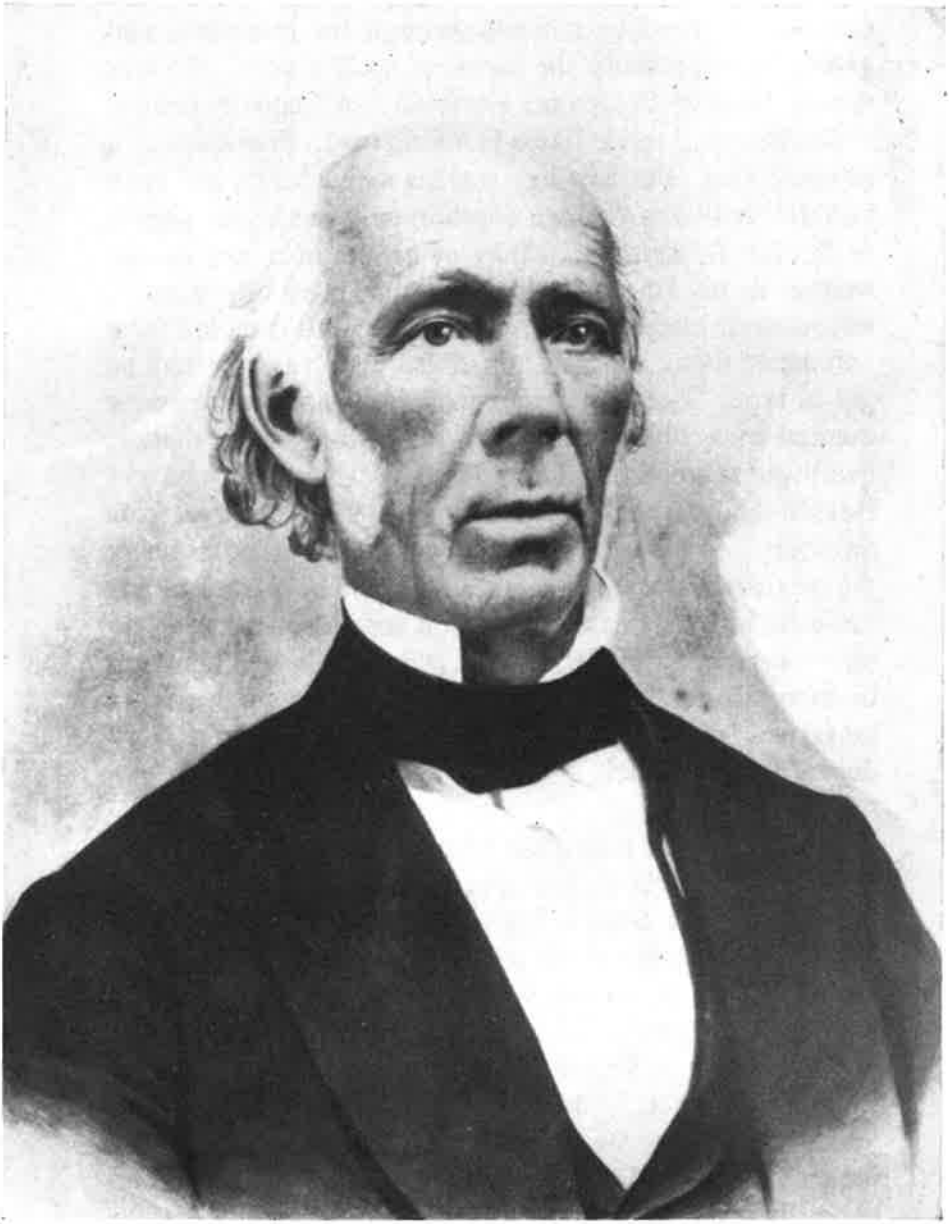
fifty-eight converts were gathered in, an average of over fourteen for each year. No other pastor ever approached this record, and the average for the entire life of the church is but six on confession per year. "The great mistake of my life," he afterward said, "was in leaving Salisbury"; and, when opportunity was afterward given him for repentance, he came as near to us as he could, and settled in Sharon.

The high opinion he had of this congregation may be gathered from a remark he once made, that he had seen standing on the church steps enough men of brains to form a presidential cabinet!

Dr. Lathrop left the church in a strong, happy, united, evangelistic condition. Almost immediately afterward they found a young man who had been preaching at Amenia, N. Y., a few months, and who before that had emigrated from the Highlands of Scotland. He brought with him "the strength of the hills" and the salt of the sea, and for one and forty years he wrought those ingredients into the lives of this people. Salisbury Church became Salisbury Cathedral, and ADAM REID was its bishop. The brass tablet before you records his name, but the memory, the heart, the character of this congregation record *the man*, and will repeat the record at the bar of the Judgment Day. It may be said of him as Hiram wrote of Solomon, "Because the Lord hath loved His people, He hath made thee king over them." Adam Reid reigned in Salisbury, and his pulpit was his throne. When he rose in this place a silence that could be felt fell upon the people. It was the hush of expectancy. The Scotch accent gave a peculiar fascination to his speech, and he had a weird way of *whispering* a sentence, penetrating to the farthest corner of

the church, sending a thrill through the audience, and giving him rightfully the name of spell-binder. He was deeply read in literature, especially in Scottish poetry, which he could recite like a Homeric bard. Few knew that he could sing. But theology was his native heath, and upon him did Williams College appropriately confer the degree of *Doctor Divinitatis*. Many of his sermons are extant, written in his fine and shapely hand, breathing dignity, seriousness, intensity. Often have his hearers called for a volume of them, and it is hoped that even yet they may be put in type. Tall as a cedar, straight as an ash, he was a marked man wherever he rose to speak. His reputation everywhere preceded him as the man whom Hartford and Boston and Brooklyn had in vain tried to lure from Salisbury. In his later years he was distinguished as being the senior pastor in the state. When he preached his farewell sermon this congregation rose as one man to do him reverence, and the veteran, whose bow still abode in his strength, passed down the empty aisle among them. As he issued from that door it seemed to them like a glory departing from Israel.

But, lest I paint him in too sombre colors, let me add that he had the lighter graces of his kind, and relished the flavor of a Scotch joke with anybody. Mr. Tom. Norton, who darkened his door many a night, by reason of sitting on its threshold with his daughter, used to get together with him in his study, and those two experts play out yarns like a Scotch reel. It was birds of a feather flocking together, -- those two good jays, jocundity and joviality. I am not aware that he was like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord, but the sun looked down upon no better fisherman than he. All these brooks he whipped with



the rod of men; and every trout in Salisbury, on his approach, felt his life tremble in his scales. To this day his people are accustomed to think of him as combining the gifts of the prophetical and apostolical offices: in the pulpit he was Elija the Tishbite, but by the brookside he was Peter the fish-bite. Dr. Henry M. Knight related an experience with him on one occasion when the canny Scotsman suggested with great artlessness, "Now suppose I go ahead and fish with a fly, while you follow on and take everything in with a worm." The physician demurred, on the ground that it was the custom for a minister to follow the doctor, but finally yielded to his pastor's persuasion, with the result that at sundown Dr. Reid had all the fish and Dr. Knight helped him carry them home. Henry Ward Beecher was very genial with Dr. Reid, and together they canvassed this whole country in the trout interest more than once. It might have been just after one of those "scrambles among our Alps" or after coming down the neck-breaking gorge called Sage's Ravine, that some one asked him what he thought of Mr. Beecher, to which the Doctor replied, "Very impulsive man! Astonishing what things he can say! *I've been fishing with him*!" Dr. Eldridge of Norfolk was perhaps his nearest friend in Connecticut, both of them men of long pastorates, and blessed with the loyalty of a devoted people.

Frequently a church has one layman who is its acknowledged representative, sitting in Moses' seat, giving character to its corporate life. Such an one was DEACON ELIPHALET WHITTLESEY in Dr. Reid's day, Dr. Knight in Mr. Kitchel's day, and in this day -- we will adopt the custom of the Encyclopaedia Britannica and mention the name of no living man! Dea. Whittlesey was a pillar in the full sense of the word, a Puritan of the old school, and

"Ironsides" redivivus, a man who ruled well his own household, "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." When it came to matters of judgment, people accorded him the place given to the city of Abel, whereof the Scripture tells us, "They were wont to speak in old time saying, 'They will surely ask counsel at Abel, and so ended the matter.'" So the council "ended the matter," when Deacon Whittlesey sat down, after speaking against Dr. Reid's removal. The council were carried by his voice alone, and Dr. Reid's remaining in Salisbury for ever after hinged upon his word. For thirty-seven years he was deacon of this church, and his descendants are still among us, with some of whom it may be said "The blood will tell."

DEACON MYRON HUTCHINSON was another familiar figure in Dr. Reid's day, -- a man greatly gifted in language, who would have made a good minister. He was descended from Deacon John Hutchinson, one of the early settlers, whose farm on Barrackmatiff has been held now in the same family for four generations. His father and grandfather wrote the bulk of our town and church records, being town clerks for sixty-nine years between them, and church and society clerks for even longer. It is Myron Hutchinson's wife, Mrs. Mary Smith H., who, now living at the advanced age of 93, holds the record for our longest church membership, a term of 79 years. In this family the communion service has been cared for, and prepared, for more than a hundred years.

Here, too, deserve mention "honorable women, not a few." MRS. WILHELMINA REID, wife of Dr. Reid, and mother of three sons and two daughters, is still remembered affectionately by many, all the more tenderly since her

youngest son stood in this place and spoke of her quiet, godly life, a life for which her children rise up and call her blessed. It was a simple but meaning line her husband had graven on her headstone, "She hath done what she could."

Echoes have come down to this age also of the unusual force and piety of MRS. MARIA HOLLEY and MRS. HARRIET HARRISON. "They rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

Under Dr. Reid the church reached its high-water mark. In 1847 the number enrolled was 292. In his term the parsonage was builded, largely through the activity of Gov. Holley; the church was remodeled; the organ erected. Several legacies were left to the society.

In 1858, following the financial panic of '57, a revival occurred in Salisbury, in common with the rest of the country. It is remarkable for the light it shed upon Dr. Reid's character. His nature was such that he distrusted occasions of this order, fearing superficial sensation, and at first he showed a marked conservatism toward the interest. But Dr. Reid never shut his eyes to *a fact*, and when he saw that the Lord and not the devil was in it, he plunged into it, too, with apostolic zeal. Every night he preached at the Academy for weeks, and as a result more than thirty were converted and gathered in, some of whom are among our staunchest church timber to-day.

Dr. Reid carried the church through the civil war, preaching with a patriotism unsurpassed, and contributing two sons to the army.

The congregations were always large, filling the galleries and encroaching upon the pulpit stairs. This overflowing congregation today must remind the older people of Sabbath mornings forty years ago. One of his hearers once said, "When Dr. Reid stops preaching, I feel as if he had dropped me from a height." On the 23rd of September, 1877, he preached his farewell sermon, containing his resignation, on the theme, "The Minister as a Steward of God." The church refused to sever relations with him, and retained him as *pastor emeritus*. But he did not long survive. Sermons he still wrote to the day of his death: "his hand clave unto the sword.' In the following year he was stricken, in the ripeness of his powers, as he had ever prayed it might be: "and Nicanor lay dead in his harness." A very large congregation followed his revered remains to the burial, and there he lies among his people, awaiting the fulfillment of that hope which was ever a favorite in his thought, - *the Resurrection.*

Before the death of Dr. Reid, the church had called a young man and settled him on the 20th of December, 1877. The Rev. CORNELIUS LADD KITCHEL was a graduate of Yale, where he took the second honor of his class. He entered at once into the hearts of all this congregation and of the fellowship surrounding. There is a natural delicacy in speaking of one who is still living, but I may be permitted to say, that to few men does the expression so fittingly apply, "a scholar, a gentleman, and a Christian." New life immediately appeared in the church, and twenty-six were added in 1878, seventeen of them on confession. Under Mr. Kitchel the benevolence of the church was placed upon a systematic basis by the adoption

of the weekly envelope plan, and thereby its gifts have been increased.

It may be proper, at this point, to speak of the benevolence of the church, which, as a whole, presents a gratifying record. The sympathy of this congregation has always been practical. As far back as 1793 we find a collection for home missions, while in December 1818 appears the first canvass for the American Board. The church has always believed in lending to the Lord, and in making its money go a great ways, even as great a ways as the Cape of Good Hope and "far Cathay." No statistics can be given for the whole century and a half, but for the past thirty-five years the aggregate has been above $50,000, and in several late years the benevolences have exceeded the home expenses.

In Mr. Kitchel's pastorate occurred the death of one of our strongest and most beloved members, DR. HENRY M. KNIGHT. He was the son of a Congregational minister, who preached among the Berkshires, at Peru, where the water falling on one side of the church ridge pole drained into the Connecticut, and that falling on the other side into the Hudson. But all that fell from Dr. Knight himself, his words, his works, his influence, settled always upon the *right* side. He was a man of force, a leader and dealer with men. He it was that suggested the nomination of Gov. Holley. He was the founder of the Institution for the Feeble Minded at Lakeville, the only one of its kind in the State, a most humane and hopeful work. He was superintendent of the Sunday-school for years, and had a rare gift with children, all of whom loved him instinctively, as well as their parents. In the spiritual interest appearing in the

Yours very Truly
H. M. Knight

church in 1876 he showed great activity, organizing meetings, marshaling teams, inviting attendance, and speaking that rare "word in season, how good it is!" He was a powerful advocate of temperance, and some think he forfeited his life in consequence of responding when ill to a call to lecture upon it. He had an exquisite tenor voice of great clearness and feeling, which he used to the glorification of God and to the up-lifting of men. He had long been importuned to take office in the church, but studiously declined. In 1878 Mr. Kitchel preached strongly on the subject of the diaconate, and when soon after the vote of the church fell unanimously upon him, he rose and said with simple dignity, "My feelings incline me to withdraw, but, after our pastor's sermon, I dare not refuse." He died comparatively young, but his was a full and purposeful life.

For

"We live in deeds, not years . . . . .
In feelings, not in figures on a dial."

In this period belongs the beginning of a work at Chapinville, fostered by the young men of the church, but headed by one master spirit. It was at that time a lawless community, without a Sabbath and without the other nine commandments. A Sunday-school was organized, which is maintained to this day. Out of it grew a revival in the winter of '83 and '84, which led to the church membership of over thirty persons in three or more churches about us. Ultimately it led to the establishment of regular preaching services in the chapel, participated in by four of the clergymen of the town, with entire harmony among themselves and hearers. It is something like the "Christian

League of Connecticut." I once wrote Dr. Washington Gladden about it, author of the tract bearing that name, and he replied characteristically that "the Connecticut which is above is slowly coming down to earth." Furthermore there grew out of this effort a renovated chapel, and at length Mr. Jonathan Scoville made provision in his will for the maintenance of the chapel, Sunday-school, and services in perpetuity, by an annuity of five hundred dollars, which meant a fund of fifteen thousand dollars in trust. Meanwhile, Chapinville is become a far different and a nobler place.

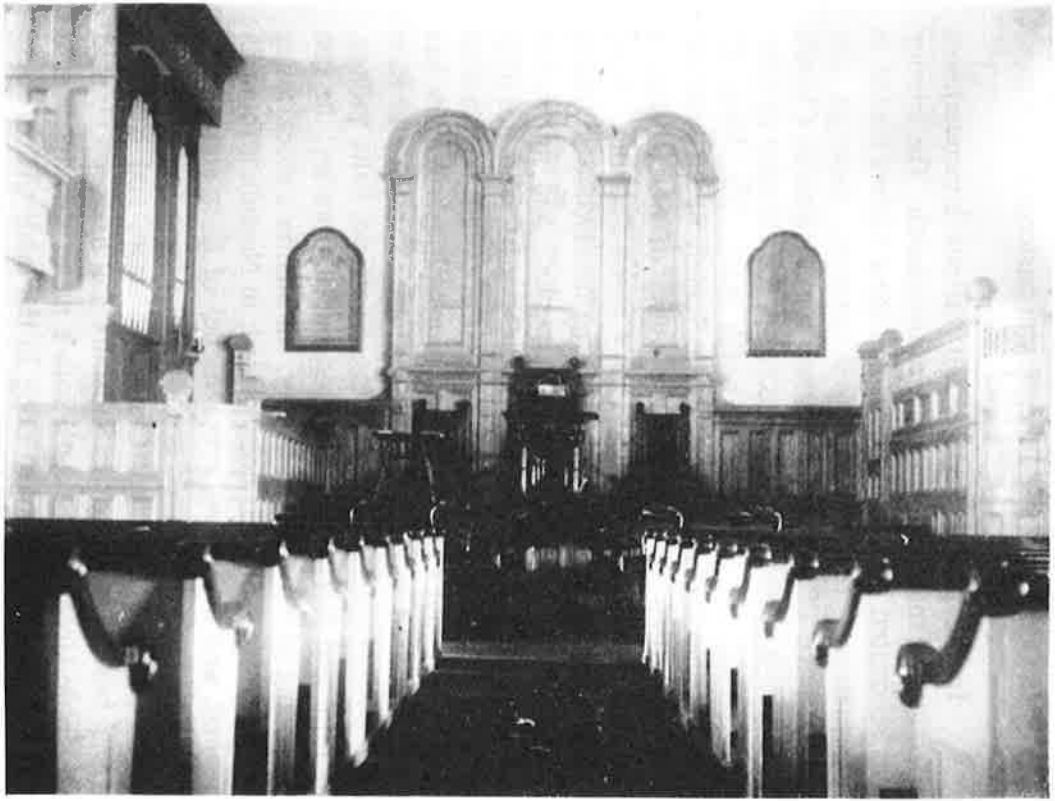
Mr. Kitchel was hampered by ill-health, and by the exhaustion that inevitably comes to one who counts not his life dear unto himself. After six years he resigned and was dismissed by council in 1883. Sorrowfully and affectionately the relations were severed, and, as the minutes of the council expressed it, "with painful reluctance." Mr. Kitchel has since been and is now professor of Greek in Yale University.

Some months before the dismission of Mr. Kitchel the REV. LEWIS H. REID, already living among us, with his family, was called to serve the church as acting pastor, and for above two years continued in that capacity. He and his have been so identified with the life of this church and we feel as if he belonged to us. It is a curious coincidence that Dr. Lewis Reid and Dr. Adam Reid were not at all related, though bearing the same unusual name, and having the like Scottish ancestry. He has related some of the history of his pastorate, but it is not in his province to mention the love and respect we all bear him, nor to paint

the welcome that awaits him when he comes to spend his golden age among us.

In October of 1884 the present pastoral term began.

In the past ten years fall various improvements affecting the material prosperity of the church. The interior was renovated by subscription, and these tablets placed to the memory of two honored pastors, through the munificence of Messrs. Jonathan and Nathaniel Church Scoville. A tablet was also erected to the memory of Gov. Holley and his sons on the north wall. Mr. Nath. C. Scoville also made a bequest to the Society of ten thousand dollars, which fund bears the name of his mother, a member of the church, Mrs. Lois Church Scoville. Also, through the beneficience of the same family, the adjoining library, bearing their name, with its clock and chime, has been reared. Coincident with these gifts, and possibly suggested by some of them, a spirit of public benefaction was poured out over all these communities. A park has been procured at Lakeville. Salisbury, Sharon, and Kent have erected soldiers' monuments. Sheffield, Falls Village, Sharon, and Norfolk have reared public libraries, the last two being of exceptional beauty. In Sharon a clock-tower of fine proportions has been placed; in Norfolk a fountain opened, and a gymnasium, a model of taste and utility. New or highly improved schools have been forwarded in Cornwall, Falls Village, Canaan, Sharon, and Norfolk, while, best of all to us, on Salisbury soil has been planted the noble Hotchkiss School, with a name already assured and a character second to none in the land. All of these things affecting towns right around us affect also our own, affect the church, make life itself more full of meaning and



of privilege. Every Congregational church in this Litchfield Northwest Conference has been renovated in the past ten years, some of them more than once. Pilgrim of Canaan builded, paid for, and dedicated a sanctuary in 1888, Norfolk a chapel in the same year, said to be the finest in the state. Warren was struck by lightning in '91 but rebuilded in '92. New organs have been procured by Kent, Pilgrim, and Norfolk, while minor improvements are too numerous to mention. It is easy to see where $600,000 have been expended in this corner of the state for public benefits in the past ten years. Meanwhile, the Congregational membership of the Litchfield Northwest Conference is larger today by one church, fifty-one people, sixty more in the Sunday-schools, and the benevolences aggregate $700 in advance. Here is no sign of decay in "the old hill towns."

In this period we have been called upon to part with two pillars in the church, Deacon MOSES LESTER GRAHAM and Deacon OLIVER JEWELL, both of them my honored friends and staunch supporters. They were men who gave their best to this church and loved it.

Deacon Graham was born at Canton, Conn., May 7, 1808, where (and at Simsbury) his first 21 years were spent. He came to Salisbury in 1829, and the next year presented a letter from the Canton church, so that he was for fifty-seven years a member of this church. He held many offices in it; as treasurer, clerk, superintendent of the school, teacher in the same to the day of his death, and for twenty-eight years a deacon. He was a man of gentleness, of fidelity, of industry, of varied reading, devotedly attached to his church, whose history he knew better than

any other member. His biographer said, "Probably Dr. Reid reposed more confidence in Mr. Graham than in any other member of his church, and counselled and advised with him oftener."

Deacon Jewell was born Sept. 2, 1819, in Salisbury, on land which his ancestors and himself have tilled for over a century. He united with this church in the great revival of 1839, when, in the early ministry of Dr. Reid, thirty-seven joined at one time on profession. Among them was Mary Walton, who afterward became his wife. An early tendency to consumption was checked by a journey to the West, and he lived beyond the three score and ten. He was elected deacon Sept. 3, 1852, and filled the office actively and efficiently to the day of his death, thirty-eight years. He was superintendent also many years. When asked his favorite text he took time for reflection, and at length responded, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness."

Here, too, we bade farewell as a church to our most distinguished member, ALEXANDER HAMILTON HOLLEY. He had served the State as Lieut.-Governor in 1854, and afterwards as Governor in 1857-8. He it was who founded one of the leading industries of the town, The Holley Mfg. Co. at Lakeville; also, he was the promoter of banks and railroads. He was a man of strong patriotism and of devoted love to his native town. Salisbury was to him what Jerusalem was to the Jew, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." He was the father of two honored sons, one of them holding a unique position in the ranks of American engineers. There have been men of science before this sprung from Salisbury soil; Samuel Moore,

grandfather of our venerable church-member, Mr. Silas Brewster Moore, who wrote the first treatise on surveying in America; Chester Averill, professor of chemistry in Union College; Albert E. Church, professor of mathematics at West Point; but the most eminent of all was Alexander Lyman Holley, whose name is inscribed on yonder tablet, and for whose distinguished services to this country a public statue has been erected in the city of New York. Gov. Holley died with a Christian's faith and with a Christian's honor, a "Naphtali, satisfied with favor and full with the blessing of the Lord."

We have parted, too, with other beloved and honored names in this church; with Mrs. MARIA HOLLEY WILLIAMS, remarkable for her strength of character and pronounced religious nature; with Mrs. LOIS CHURCH SCOVILLE, another convert of the famous revival under Nettleton in 1815, and mother of a large family, some of whom are still with us; with SILAS WELLS, who carried on his back and planted in our village street those two massive elms in front of drug store and Academy, the man whose face was a smile underlaid with the ten commandments; with Mrs. FANNIE WILLIAMS COFFING, in principle and in practice the staunch supporter of the truth; with Mrs. ELIZA BOSTWICK, a mother in Israel indeed, of whose eleven children ten grew to maturity, all became Christians, and eight united with this church; and with them others, not mentioned, but not forgotten here. These all died in faith, and yet are living, whose "God is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live unto Him."

When this church built its first meeting-house the General Court directed to have its sills enclose the stake driven into the exact center of the town. The design evidently was to have this church become the hub of the town. Later surveys have located the precise spot a few hundred feet farther to the north, so that the fathers' location was a trifle out of center, not to say ec-centric. But, in a certain sense, the church *has been* the most important factor in the life of the town. Identified for sixty years with the town meeting itself, it has been allied also with much of its most honored history and best associations. From its congregation have gone forth four governors, two senators, a secretary of war, six congressmen, beside chief justices of states, college presidents, and professors. Eighteen ministers have been raised up within it, at least two of them missionaries. In the Second Church of Cornwall they keep a record of their ministers' wives, who are trained for martyrdom within it. This registry has been neglected in Salisbury, but the names are remembered of several who were so canonized, and of several more who were willing to be.

We feel a just pride and satisfaction in our churchly ancestry; "The glory of children are their fathers." A review of this nature impresses us with a sense of the solidarity of the Kingdom. All of these saints and giants were a part of us, and we of them, and all of Christ. We belong to a great past, to a communion that includes Abraham and Moses and David and Paul, to a line that passes through martyrs and prophets, and that numberless company of whom the world was not worthy.

It is true we have not the same constituency to depend upon as formerly. There are today in Salisbury six churches occupying the territory originally held by one. Undoubtedly the Kingdom is better served by this division of the town. Let us concede also that there are not as many people of the same forceful character among us as formerly. Still, the present generation has no need to feel apologetic. In our day religious newspapers have greatly widened the Christian horizon; missionary operations have come to occupy a commanding place in their prayers and interest; benevolent work has been organized and every church in this conference is, so far as the Kindgom of God in general is concerned, far more of a factor than it was in our fathers' day. Thus a largeness has been given to the Christian life in our age, and a sense of responsibility outside of our own borders. There is a toleration, also among us, unknown to former generations, a true catholicity. For every Congregationalist repeats with his Nicene fathers, "I believe in the holy catholic church," the church that is catholic in spirit.

We stand here, then, at the close of the first century and a half, not with suspiration but with inspiration. There never was an age when a Christian counted for more than in our time, or could command a greater radius to his circle. George Fox declared that every Quaker ought to shake the country for ten miles around him; but every Christian in this century can do more than that, can send a thrill across a continent by his consecrated money; can lay a cable under the sea, binding some heathen heart to his. Our membership is smaller than in 1847, our place in the town life is less marked, but, nevertheless, *there are more people in Salisbury and beyond it depending upon us for Christian*

nurture and for evangelistic support than ever there were! The sixty-one square miles of Salisbury's area were once coterminous with our parish, but today our vineyard has an acreage in four continents.

Thanking God for our past, we thank Him yet more for the larger opportunities of our present; may we so live as to thank Him most of all for our future. Renewing the reverence and godly fear of our fathers; pledging ourselves to the same faithfulness as they in His service; with devout loyalty to our glorious Redeemer, we stand at this 150th milestone, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

> Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel,
> who only doeth wondrous things;
> And Blessed be His glorious name for ever;
> And let the whole earth be filled with His glory;
> Amen and amen.

HISTORY OF THE SALISBURY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH FROM 1744 TO 1944

by Catherine Goddard Aller

ED. NOTE: At the Bicentennial celebration of the Salisbury Congregational Church, Mrs. Howard Aller presented a church paper reviewing the history of the church since its gathering in 1744. Due to the importance of this chronicle not only to the "White Church" but to the entire town, we are running the entire paper in a series of articles [*The Lakeville Journal,* 1944].

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Although this is primarily a record of this church for the past fifty years, in order to make it a coherent and interesting whole it would seem best to start with a brief comment on some phases of the church history from its beginning, two hundred years ago, touching on a few of the events and personalities that make the present day church what it is in this community, and then giving in somewhat greater detail the events of the past half century.

When Judge Samuel Church gave an address celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the town he stood midway between the beginning of the history of Salisbury and our own day. He looked backward one hundred years, as we today look back toward him and his day, one hundred years ago. He recalled that it was within the memory of men then present that Indians dwelt here, and while they were friendly for the most part, the early settlers did not entirely trust them. Memories of King Philip's war,

and dire events in the upper Connecticut valley, caused them to be constantly on guard against surprise attacks. Forts, or block houses were erected here for refuge and defense, the remains of several of them being still visible in his day. "Our fathers assembled to worship God," he told his audience, "with arms in their hands."

The very earliest efforts of the settlers were directed toward securing the right to have a minister which could not legally be obtained without first being granted corporate powers as a township. These powers were granted the founding fathers in 1741, and in 1744 the Rev. Jonathan Lee, just graduated from Yale College, was called. He was "tall, big, good looking and able" we are told. He brought with him his bride, step-daughter of the president of Yale, and because the house being built for them was not quite finished, he began his ministry living in the back of a blacksmith shop, and preached there, too. He used to carry his own grist to mill on his back as did everbody else, and he carried on the work of his own farm. He was ordained pastor in 1744, and while the actual membership of the church was at first only eleven, it rapidly grew to include a large share of the population of the town. A point to be remembered is that the church was very largely the town, and the town the church, for the leading persons in both were the same men.

Five years later the first church was built, a portion of which is still standing, being a part of the Town Hall opposite this building. It had no carpets, no cushions on the benches, no tower, no bell and no heat, except for a few privately owned foot warmers, kept hot by charcoals. This last bit of history is passed along, not only as a comment on

the hardy church-going determinations of our forefathers, but as a possibly useful hint to the oil-rationing board of today.

Jonathan Lee served this church all through the period of the Revolution, until his death in 1788, forty years of able, heroic, honest service. The tablet on the north side of the church, back of this pulpit, commemorates his life.

It was during his ministry that this town produced a document that has been called The Salisbury Declaration of 1774. It is worthy of our consideration now, for it is a significant example of what the New England town meeting can accomplish when it sets its mind to it. It is on the subject of the fast approaching revolt of the Colonies. It begins with a burning denunciation of the English Parliament; calling it dangerous, partial, absurd, with "self-confuted spirit of punitive malevolence." It deliberated the perils of the Colonies with more initiative, acumen and insight than we usually find in our Washington legislature; it approved a call for a Continental Congress; pledged money and men from the town in support of war, if war came, and culminated in a resolution of independence that "reads like the ordinance of a soverign state." Edmund Burke, whose speech on the Conciliation of the American Colonies most of us read in our school days, would have enjoyed that town meeting of 1744.

On fire with patriotism, the town of Salisbury contributed of men, iron and money, and raised the first effective cavalry regiment George Washington was able to secure. Out of a population of about 1,800, one hundred

men and twenty-five commissioned officers were sent to the war.

When Judge Church delivered his address, the Revolution had been fought sixty years before. Looking back of that period he said, on the day of our first centennial celebration:

"Our ancestors, whose deeds and memories we would now recall, were free in spirit and purpose, and yet were the subjects of a master; our town was an appendage of a dependent colony. For us and our children the bonds of servitude have been broken, and we are called upon today to cherish and express our veneration for the character and example of those departed men, and to tender the offering of devoted hearts to the Being who has been our fathers' God."

And then he looked ahead into the coming century, and addressing himself to the young men of the Salisbury of that day he spoke these significant and prophetic words:

"At the close of another century, what will be the condition of our religious, literary and civil institutions, which your fathers have reared and cherished? I put this question to you, because into your hands they are soon to be committed. Shall the religion of the Bible, pure and unadulterated by this world's philosophy be taught then, or shall the advancing spirit of Pantheism and infidelity take its place? Shall sectarianism or denominational jealousies palsy the energies and chill the affections of the good men, so that the advances of the common enemy cannot be stayed? I charge you, here in the presence of your assembled fathers, be faithful to the trust about to be committed to you. The

days in which we live are portentous of evil to the civil and social institutions which our fathers have established. Will they withstand the shock of conflicting parties? Can they resist the inroads of demoralizing principles and actions? A shorter period than another century will reply. When the next centennial commemoration shall be observed, the proceedings of this day will be repeated, the examples which we and our children shall furnish will then be appealed to in praise or censure. Our responsibilities are immense!"

Since those words were spoken, this nation has passed through the great civil war, the Spanish War, the First World War, and we are now engaged in the terrible conflict of today. It is eminently fitting that we should pause and consider the growth of those early institutions of this town, so dearly bought, so long guarded; to review briefly the lives of some who have come and gone, whose character and work have made this town what it has become.

In the first one hundred and forty years of its history the church had only seven pastors. After Mr. Lee came a Mr. Crossman, during whose ministry, in 1800, the present church building was erected, at a cost of not more than six thousand dollars. Then came two others, Rev. Mr. Hyde and Rev. Mr. Lathrope. And then in 1837 the Rev. Dr. Adam Reid, whose memorial tablet is on the south side of this pulpit. (These two tablets, Mr. Lee's and Mr. Reid's were given to this church by Jonathan and Nathaniel Church Scoville.)

The Civil War also came during Dr. Reid's ministry. Thomas Lot Norton, one of our greatest men, himself a

veteran of the Grand Army of the Republic, wrote of Dr. Reid:

"It was something more than rare good fortune, it was a blessing of Divine Providence which placed in this pulpit at such a time such a man as Dr. Reid. He could not have shown a greater devotion to the great Republic had he been a descendant of a Mayflower Pilgrim. (Dr. Reid was born in Scotland.) On those rare occasions when he permitted himself to speak in the pulpit on national themes he spoke of the duties and privileges of American citizenship like one inspired. Indeed, to my boyish imagination Dr. Reid always seemed more than mortal; he was to me a veritable prophet of the Lord!"

Three hundred and twenty-five men left the town of Salisbury to go to that war. Their memorial statue stands at the north end of the village street. Dr. Reid died in 1877, and the Rev. Cornelius Kitchell followed him as pastor, still beloved of those who remember his gentle kindly nature, his spiritual and scholarly sermons.

It was during his ministry that the passing of Dr. Henry M. Knight occurred, whose tablet is the second on the south side of this room. He was the founder of the Insitute of the Feeble-minded, and before it was supported by the State of Connecticut, Dr. Knight took into his own home many of these pitiful cases and taught them what they could learn. He had a rare gift with children, it is said, and he was one of the active men of the church until his death. During Mr. Kitchell's tenure of office, religious services were started in Chapinville, now known as Taconic, and at that time a somewhat lawless community, without Sabbath

observances, and, as one historian has put it, "without the other nine commandments."

These services have been continued with more or less regularity until the present day. Ministers and laymen of the neighboring villages have taken turns in conducting them, often at extraordinary self-sacrifice and effort, when the snows were deep, the roads bad, the weather at zero; sometimes when the arguments of health or comfort might have deterred them. Out of the effort grew the renovated chapel in Taconic and Mr. Jonathan Scoville made provision in his will for the upkeep and continuation of the services there.

Mr. Kitchell resigned in 1883 because of ill health and later became connected with an important work in Yale University. He left in his will a fund of a thousand dollars the proceeds from which the pastors of this church were to spend in books and periodicals to assist them in their work, and to keep them abreast of the times in culture and learning.

In 1884 Dr. John Calvin Goddard of Yale University, and of the Chicago Theological Seminary began his long ministry here, which, as active pastor and Pastor Emeritus he has conducted for sixty years.

In 1889 the church building underwent certain rather drastic changes, most of which were later reconsidered and replaced. At that time the organ was removed from its place at the back of this room, and put at the north side of this pulpit. On the south side was built in a small room used for small gatherings and Sunday School classes. New pulpit furniture was bought, which is still in use. In 1894 the

John Calvin Goddard

church held its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary, and here we come at last to a period which some of us here present remember more or less vividly, and we deal from now on with the past half century of the history of this church.

It is timely to speak of some of the outstanding individuals who were present at that celebration, who inherited directly from the past, and who handed on to us some of the ideals and institutions of the preceding century and a half. The works they accomplished, the recollections of their personalities, are too recent to be forgotten by the older members of this church; too vital to be only names or memorial tablets, to our more recent members.

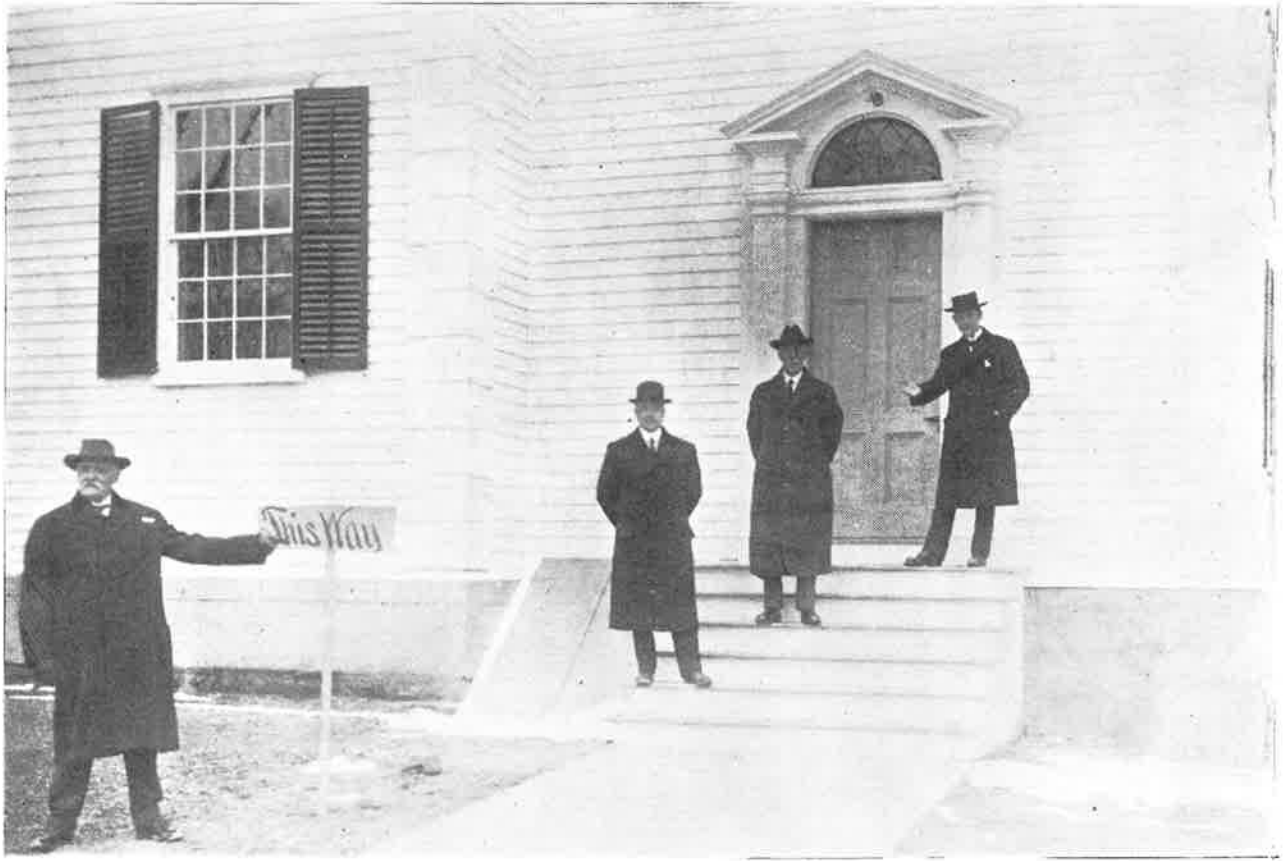
The first tablet on the south wall of the church reads: In loving memory of Thomas Lot Norton, 1842 to 1915; Christian, Patriot, Friend of Children; a tribute from the Sunday School of which he was Superintendent for over twenty-one years.

He was always "Uncle Tom" to all of us. He was a living example of what a very good man and a very beloved friend ought to be. His family was one of the first settlers here. He was a great and devout Christian. One of his favorite hymns was: "Prayer is the heart's sincere desire, Unuttered or expressed."

He (Thomas Lot Norton) told us one time in the Sunday School that his most beloved and vivid memory of his mother was of seeing the light on her face when she opened the door of her room and came out after a season of prayer.

He was one of the staunchest patriots we ever knew. Had he not, as a boy, watched the first detachment of troops that went from here to the Civil War receive the flag of their regiment from the hands of Maria Birch Coffing, a beautiful young girl, standing in her white dress on a platform erected right in front of this church? He used to tell us about that. Had he not later enlisted himself, and fought to the end of the war, seeing the courage, the hardship, the uplifting patriotism and anguish of it? Never will any child who listened to him and watched his eyes shine and his face light up when he spoke of our country, our flag, the inheritance and destiny of our United States grow thereafter lukewarm in their own devotion and patriotism. He carried on in his own life the spirit of the free men and patriots who went before him, -- and us.

Of course he was also one of the leading men of our town, treasurer of the bank, a great worker in the cause of temperance, leader in innumerable affairs of philanthropy, an ardent supporter of missions, celebrated beyond the county and state for his abilities, his humor, his great kindliness. As these days go on, we grow more and more homesick for Uncle Tom. The times have a crying need for such characters as his, and Dr. Reid's. When we are tempted today to become discouraged over the state of our national affairs, dismayed by the continual expressions of distrust over the conduct of our country's institutions, of its very purpose and place in history, it is a strengthening thing to recall Uncle Tom's faith in the democracy, the destiny and strength of the United States.


This Way

In 1894 the office of Sunday School Superintendent was resigned by Mr. George B. Burrall, after a long and devoted period. The chandelier in the center of this room was given by his wife, and his daughter, Mrs. Harriet Norton as a memorial to Mr. Burrall. The Baptismal fount, at the side of the pulpit was given by Mrs. T. L. Norton in the name of her children. Mr. Norton became Superintendent, and under his slogan "The whole congregation in the Sunday School and the whole Sunday School in the congregation" he greatly increased the attendance at both services. He began the custom, still in use in the Sunday School, of every pupil bringing a copy of the Bible with him, and at his command "Present Arms!" everyone lifted up their Bible for him to count. Once, to surprise him, every one in the entire school had their Bibles upheld in their arms.

A small monthly publication called the Chronicle made its appearance about that time, edited by Dr. Goddard and containing not only a list of every pupil who had attended for that month but a record of the main events of the church, the school and the community. This Chronicle has proved of invaluable service in collecting all-but-forgotten items of interest and real importance. The church records give the bare bones of motions made, reports submitted, and actions taken, but the Chronicle notes bring them back to life, and clothe them with their vital settings, their human backgrounds. Such an institution should not be discontinued.

In 1894 at the time of the re-organization of the Sunday School, a class called the Young Men's Class was formed, under the teaching of Mrs. Harriet Goddard. It

was, perhaps, the most important and effective of all the Sunday School groups. It reached a membership of one hundred young men. They supported for a term of years by their own collections a missionary, in India; furnished flowers for innumerable funerals, food for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners, and were a source of moral strength and help not only among their own membership but to the church and Sunday School. They easily led the whole Sunday School in singing, and when they put their hearts into their own Class Song "Quit you like men, be strong" you could not hear any one else. Mrs. Goddard conducted this class until after the war.

The church of Salisbury has been enriched in its whole social and intellectual life by the Hotchkiss School, the Taconic School for girls, now not in existence, the Salisbury School and the Indian Mountain School. Many teachers and pupils have attended services here. Some have become members.

Fifty years ago there was not one, but several Sunday Schools connected with this church. Besides the one in this building every Sunday, there was one on Mt. Riga, one in Taconic, one at Dr. Knight's Institute and an out-of-sight Sunday School called the Home Department, for those too old or infirm to attend public services. There were Christmas trees trimmed on Mt. Riga, too, and on some Sunday afternoons a service held at the Town Farm. The minister was assisted in all this work by many in the church. There was a Temperance reform, sufficiently active through the labors of Mr. Norton, Dr. Goddard, Mr. Henry Wilson, Mr. Mack Sherwood and others of the community to abolish the saloons from the township - at least as far as the New

York State line! The majority in favor of No License was 134 in 1894.

The second tablet on the south of the room has already been referred to as commemorating the life and work of Dr. Henry Knight. His son, Dr. George H. Knight, succeeded his father in the charge of the school for the Feeble-minded, and became the church organist. He used to bring some of his better patients to church, or let them walk up from Lakeville in a little procession. They sat up there in the gallery on the north side, well toward the back and they always wanted to smile and nod and wave their hands at you. It was a little difficult, at times, not to encourage them. Dr. Knight used to play the organ beautifully, and if sometimes he wove in an operatic theme, or even the stirring strains of a football song now and then, it only made him and his music all the dearer to us. He played at our weddings, and family funerals, too. He was well known far beyond the reaches of this town in Republican state circles. His favorite hymn, sung at his funeral, was "There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea."

The last tablet on the south wall is in memory of an outstanding citizen, lawyer and soldier of more than a century ago, General Elisha Sterling. His name appears in the records of his day in both town and church annals. He is connected in our minds, too, with his descendant, Elisha Sterling Chapin, whose beautiful voice so greatly enriched our choir for so many years, who came back here to live in 1889, with his hospitable family in the old family home by the brook in Lakeville, where some of his descendants still reside. With him came his daughter, Laura Chapin Allyn, now living in Brooklyn, whose singing was always a joy,

and whose faithful work in training our church choir bore results that we remember with gratitude and pleasure.

The John Churchill Coffing tablet on the north side and the Alexander Hamilton Holley tablet next to it commemorate families long prominently and nobly connected with Salisbury and this church. Captain John C. Coffing gave the plot of land on which the present parsonage stands, and in his will left three legacies to the church. His granddaughter, Maria Birch Coffing Warner, will be remembered by those who knew her as one of the most beloved and beautiful women of their childhood memories. Hubert Coffing Williams the first of our young men killed in the first World War, was another descendent of this same John Coffing. Their works, their generosities, the imprint of their lives, is written into the heritage of Salisbury. So also is the continued influence of the Holley family, whose members of that name and in the Rudd name have been associated with the "White Church" for generations.

Alexander Hamilton Holley, Gov. of Connecticut, was for years a staunch supporter and attendant at church. Of Sarah Day Holley, wife of Governor Alexander Holley, her pastor wrote, on her death in 1899 "She is remembered as one of the salt of the earth; one who greatly blessed her family, her church and her community. Seldom do we meet one more universally beloved. Her influence will long be felt by those who came in contact with her. Her life was a fragrance and a benediction." These words are not the mere platitudes of funeral obituaries. A remaining generation of those who remember Mrs. Holley know that they are the simple truth. To her great-grandson, Malcolm Day Rudd, who died in 1941, we are indebted for an invaluable

invaluable collection of historical data. Probably no one person has uncovered and preserved more of our town history than has he.

The last tablet on the north side commemorates a member of the Robbins family, connected with our church, and our local industries of a former day, and with the Lakeville bank. Mr. S. S. Robbins gave the clock at the back of the room which was made in Falls Village in 1810 and which will one day run again, when war work is no more. Mrs. Sadie Robbins Lyman, who married Moses Lyman, gave the pulpit Bible.

There are many, many more one would like to comment on by name, were time given us. Mrs. Jane Pratt Hubbard, for years the beloved teacher of the infant class, that met in the old Academy just north of this building. We can remember the soothing way she had with some frightened new-comer to the Sunday School, and we can see her now, at the queer little organ, playing and singing

"Jesus loves me, this I know
For the Bible tells me so."

That comforting little hymn was the whole plan of Salvation to her, and she made it that to us. It is something to go back to and hold on to when life becomes involved today, or one is confronted with some difficult theological thesis, or with some new brand of religion of a modern mint. "Mother" Hubbard died in 1926, and since then her work in the Sunday School infant class has been in the hands of Mrs. Howard Landon ["Auntie" Landon], who

seems to have inherited "Mother" Hubbard's way with little children.

We would speak, too, of the Rev. Lyman Warner, whose quiet, courtly and cheerful ways are well remembered. We recall the dignity and sincerity of his public words, especially of his prayers. We mention the faithful lives of both Mr. Henry Wilson and his wife; their work in the choir, and their always cheerful acceptance of church obligations. Many and many a night, especially after Uncle Tom left us, only Mr. Wilson would walk up from Lakeville to the evening prayer meetings. In reading over the Chronicle records one is impressed with how frequently such names are mentioned in connection with some faithful work performed, some none-too-easy task given. In such connection we find the names of many, living and gone from us, who have served this church untiringly: Dr. Hubert Beuhler of the Hotchkiss School, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Martin, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Harrison, the Roberts family, the Evarts family, the Miles, the Hutchinsons, the Clarks, Della Parsons Travis, so long our librarian, and Marvin Sackett, our janitor. It is a long long list of those whom we gratefully remember, too long to be continued here. But let no descendent of those whom we have not time to mention today feel that their fathers' lives have been forgotten. They are all in the life-stream of this church; part of that succession of men, to quote Judge Church again "that came and passed along in order that the purposes of God might be accomplished."

Lest the more recent members of the church feel that too long a time has already been spent with those who have

been only names to them, let us resume the record of historical events again.

In 1894 more than four hundred persons attended the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the church. A very handsome booklet was printed of this event and including the addresses of nine speakers, and other valuable items. The ancient covenant of the church was read. They, too, looked forward to a collation in the Town Hall opposite.

In 1895 the Scoville Library was completed, and the chimes rang out for the first time. They have been ringing through our services and through our lives pretty regularly ever since. In 1896 the church purchased the New Laudes Domini Hymnals, which many of you remember, which were to serve the congregation until 1915. About that time also, the Goddard family grew so large that extensive additions on the old Parsonage became necessary. Someone gave us modern, felt bottomed collection plates in 1897 but we went back to the old fashioned ones with handles in 1937.

In November 1900 we observed the one hundredth anniversary of the building of this church edifice. The address of welcome was given by the Rev. James H. George, Rector of St. John's church. Mr. Jesse Ackerman spoke for the Methodist church, and Malcolm Rudd again gave an address that reported many items of historical interest not before generally known. Dr. Coy of the Hotchkiss School, Mr. Thomas Norton and Dr. Goddard, the pastor, also spoke.

In 1901, on the last Sunday of the 19th Century Mr. Norton prepared a letter, which was signed by 129 pupils of the school, and addressed to the members of the Sunday School which should be assembled on the last Sabbath of the 20th century. It was placed in a strong box, with current issues of the Chronicle, the Lakeville Journal, some coins, and other items that it was thought might be of interest to the pupils of the year 2001. The whole was then put "in a safe place in the church building." Now the unfortunate confession has to be made that nobody has been found who exactly remembers just what "safe place" was selected. Rather extensive repairs and alterations have taken place on the building since then, but it has not come to light. It is to be hoped that sometime in the course of the remaining 57 years it will be discovered without the necessity of tearing down any part of the church structure. If any one in this audience remembers where it was put, we would be glad to hear from them.

In an issue of the Chronicle of 1901 appears a name since become well known to us. Dr. Goddard, speaking of the lag in church work and attendance to the loss of many young people to the colleges wrote "But to get our thoughts away from ourselves and upon others is a correction for discouragement. Our Missionary preachers and such addresses as Dr. Robert E. Speer gives are spiritually refreshing to us."

And here might be a good place to mention that this church has always been interested in home and Foreign Missions. Early in its annals we find funds voted for their support. There has always been a missionary society, and frequently the church has taken over the support of an

individual missionary. Fifty years ago it was a Mrs. Montgomery of India. There was a Mrs. Thom from Turkey, and a Dr. Sheperd, also from Turkey, and Susie Norton Sterret, and Dr. Hume of India; also a Dr. Treat of China and several others.

Nineteen hundred and two saw the use for the first time of the individual communion service. The next year, under the direction of Professor Richard P. Paine, there began the first of a long series of choral meetings. Over one hundred persons joined from this locality, the first year, and more in successive years. It had the immediate effect of improving the choral singing in all the churches of the town. Among the oratorios and hymns thus studied and produced were The Holy City, The Creation, the Hymn of Praise, the Elijah, and Hiawatha.

In 1912, on the death of Dr. Knight, John Fitch Landon became our organist, and then Miss Louise Scribner.

That same year a committee was appointed to carry out the restoration of the church. The committee consisted of Mrs. W. B. Bissell, Mrs. Howard Landon, Miss Margaret Williams, Mr.and Mrs. Walter Norton, Mr. H. J. Bissell, Mr. Charles L. Warner, Mr.and Mrs. J. R. Harrison and the minister, Dr. Goddard. The services of Mr. Bull, an architect of Bennington, Vermont, whose old church was originally modeled after our town, was secured. The organ was removed from the side of the pulpit and returned to its original place at the back of the room. The panels back of the pulpit were taken out, and the great Ionic columns with the lights above them were introduced. The proportions of

the columns were determined more than a thousand years ago by the great Greek sculptor Phidias. The Amen pews were restored, two rooms added to the back of the church, and the whole repainted and repaired generally as we see it now. It happened that while these renovations were in progress, which took several months, the Town Hall and the Library were also undergoing repairs, so that until January of 1914 the congregation accepted the hospitality of their neighboring churches and met with the Methodist church in Lakeville and St. John's in Salisbury. At the re-dedication of the renovated church, early in 1914 one of the speakers was the Hon. Donald T. Warner, who represented our neighbor, St. John's Church. In passing it should be recorded that in his death and in the death of his beloved wife this church lost two of its greatest friends in this community. They are missed from the cultural and social life of the town, as we miss their familiar figures from our village street.

As early as August of 1914, at the very beginning of the first World War, a Red Cross organization was formed, and clothing, surgical dressings and funds were sent overseas for war sufferers and Belgian Relief work. The William Bissell Fund was started in 1915, to honor the 60 years of service of a beloved physician. His son, Wm. H. Bissell was then overseas engaged in war work.

It was in April, 1915 that Uncle Tom died. Every year, on the Sunday nearest his passing, the church is filled with his favorite flowers, daffodils. In this year, also, a new Parsonage was begun, to be called The Norton Memorial Parsonage. The well worn out old one was sold, part of it taken away to another site, and part of it disposed

of piecemeal, so to speak. The new parsonage was completely paid for out of the generous contributions of the community. Mrs. Harriet Norton gave the brass lettered inscription over the fireplace, written by Uncle Tom, "Open doors, open fires, open hearts." The new parsonage was completed in 1916.

On Easter Sunday of 1915 another new Hymnal was used for the first time, The Church Hymnal, published by the Century Company, replacing the "New Laudes Domini." At Mr. Norton's death, and at his especial request, Mr. Howard Landon took over the work of Sunday School Superintendent and has nobly fulfilled his promise ever since.

War items increasingly appear in the Chronicle from now on. This beautiful flag was given to the church in 1917 by Mr.and Mrs. E. O. Wagner. In January of 1918 an anonymous donor gave a service flag, which was hung back of the pulpit, with nine stars on it, for the nine young men of the congregation then in the war. This was three months before the U. S. entered the war. They were: Hubert Coffing Williams, Marvin Atkins, Sidney Cowles, Harold Miner, Clayton Hoysradt, William Ostrander, Millard Sanford, Herbert Edleman.

Before the war was over, 25 young men of this church congregation were enlisted. Hubert Williams was our first gold star on the flag. He was killed in France in October, 1918. A memorial service was held in his honor in this church, addressed by Dr. Barse of the Hotchkiss School, Dr. Goddard, Professor Joseph Estill, Dr. Quaile and others. In the ancient academy to the north of this

church was lodged the Hubert C. Williams Post, now called Parsons-Williams Post (George Parsons, killed June, 1943, was also of this church).

In 1920, as the aftermath of war swept over the country, Salisbury was not exempt. In a significant effort, however, to stem the tide of materialism, unrest and lawlessness that characterized so much of the nineteen twenties, a mass meeting was held in this town, attended by 125 men of all the five religious denominations and those of no church affiliations. Mr. Quaile of the Salisbury School explained that the purpose of the meeting was to enlist the help of the men of the town for the churches. "In these days of materialism and Bolshevism," he said, "our country is menaced, and needs help to combat the increasing irreligion of the times. Ask yourselves, if you want a town with no church in it; if we are not better today because of the churches of the town." The meeting seems to have met with a degree of reform. "There was a common bond," wrote Dr. Quaile, "for God and His Son Jesus Christ."

On July 25, 1920 the resignation of Dr. John Calvin Goddard was accepted, after 36 years of service. Someone, other than the present speaker, must attempt the survey of Dr. Goddard's ministry. Nor can I speak to you of the life and character of my mother, Harriet Allen Goddard, who passed away in February of 1923. The memorial vase at the north side of the platform was given in her memory, to be used by anyone who wished to place flowers therein in honor of their own beloved. Dr. Goddard became the Pastor Emeritus of this church, which office he still holds.

In April 1921 Mr. Roger Eddy Treat accepted the call of this church. The next year the Upkeep Society came into being, organized at the home of Miss Bessie Coffing, for the purpose of securing the aid of a larger number of the women of the congregation in the work of the church. Their first president was Mrs. Mary Eggleston Williams; the organization has thrived, and has been responsible for some of the best work done in the church. Many of the repairs on the parsonage, many an improvement in the church building, many a box packed for some lonely frontier missionary may be laid to the credit of this little group, not to mention all kinds of sewing for local needs; church dinners and fairs; while interesting speakers have been secured for its members. At one period of low spiritual vitality it would seem to have been the one and only live organization in the church.

In 1924 it was considered necessary to purchase a new organ. A fund was raised and the organ was taken down and sent to a firm in Nyack, NY. The committee in charge of the work was advised by this firm that the original pipes, mellowed by the years, could not be improved upon by any made today. The old organ then was rebuilt, using much of its old parts, and installed once more where we see it now. In the same year, also, the church abandoned its system of renting the pews, since when they have been free to all who come.

In April 1926, after five years of faithful work here, which he spoke of in his letter of resignation as "of high joy and privilege" Mr. Treat resigned to become the pastor of a Detroit church. "It would be as unnecessary as it is impossible" he wrote, "for me to tell you how deep and

sincere is my affection for this church. You have helped me far, far more than I have helped you."

Before the end of the year 1926 the Rev. Earl O. Pearman accepted the call of this church, and for nearly fifteen years he and his wife have worked among us, with fidelity and devotion. During his ministry it was decided to use a fund of one thousand dollars left as a legacy to the church by Mrs. Eunice B. Carter in the name of her father and mother, to make a room in the basement of the church to be used for social purposes and other meetings. This room was completed in 1938.

From time to time in recent years services were held in this church for the many members of our community of Scandinavian origin. Offerings have been taken for China relief and a paper was presented to be signed by those who wished, protesting to the president of the United States the sale of metals and war material to Japan.

Mr. Pearman resigned as pastor late in 1942, to become a chaplain in the U. S. Service. At a farewell service given in his honor, and attended by many of his friends in the community, he was presented with gifts and attestations of friendship and good will.

During the interim between the resignation of Mr. Pearman and the coming of our present pastor, Mr. Theodore S. Darrah, this church gratefully accepted the aid of certain of its more recent members who had come among us, particularly several from the Presbyterian church. Both Dr. Harry Reed and Dr. Robert E. Speer conducted church services for us, and at times, as we did in 1914, we accepted

the hospitality of our neighboring churches and worshipped with them. Dr. Goddard was in Florida, the oil rationing threatened the closing of the church building, many of our regular workers were absent, and for a time a very few members carried on the church work. The committee on whom devolved the responsibility of choosing a new pastor met with earnest prayer, and a deep desire to be shown their way. We feel that these prayers have been answered, and the good will and help of our friends justified in the call given to Mr. Darrah, who became the tenth pastor of the Salisbury Congregational Church in June, 1943.

And now, we, too, stand looking forward into the oncoming century of our church life. We, too, repeat Judge Church's warning that we, and especially the youth of our community abide by the everlasting covenant of Christ's Church, receive the institutions of the past, and carry them forward into what we confidently hope and sincerely pray will be a nearer approximation of God's Kingdom come on earth. The tasks ahead of us loom even greater than they did two hundred or 150 or 50 years ago. We may have to pass through deeper waters than ever before. Four hundred and more of our young men and women are engaged in the present World War II. Already several of our homes have received the heartbreaking news of beloved sons who will not return to us. The end of the war is by no means in sight. What will be required of us in the setting up of the peace that will ultimately follow no one in the whole world yet knows. We must enter into its responsibilities with the energies and inheritances of the past to help us, and with the conviction that those responsibilities and energies must be first consecrated to the will of our fathers' God, whose hand we can trace throughout all our history. God alone can establish

and make clear His will in our wills only if we commit our ways to Him.

Let us therefore conclude with the prayer of David:

Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants
And Thy glory unto their children.
And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us;
And establish Thou the work of our hands upon us;
Yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.

HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SALISBURY 1944 - 1994

by Sue Robinson Morrill

When the Salisbury Congregational Church commemorated its 200th anniversary in 1944, the nation was fighting a global war with the outcome far from certain, fuel oil and food were rationed, fathers and sons, husbands and brothers, women too, were serving in the armed forces far from this peaceful place. In a quiet way, they took time to remember their ancestors in this congregation and to look to the future and pray for us. Reverend Theodore S. Darrah spoke of "Our Church and Our Children's Church" at a service of remembrance, Catherine Goddard Aller wrote the history and reminiscences reprinted in this volume. Only one flourish delighted the celebrants: Minister Emeritus John Calvin Goddard cut the birthday cake with a sword. The cake too must have been a flourish in those sugarless days, produced by Polly Miner whose cottage industry of cake baking earned her extra ration stamps. Then the members went back to work, to wait for war news and for peace. Now it is our turn to reflect for a moment on the character and concerns of this church over the past fifty years and to form our own prayers for the future.

In many ways the Congregational Church of Salisbury in 1944 seemed little changed from the institution that celebrated its first century in 1844. Many of its members had been life-long residents of Salisbury whose parents were also born and baptized into the church, with such names as Fitting, Landon, Miner, Parsons, Norton,

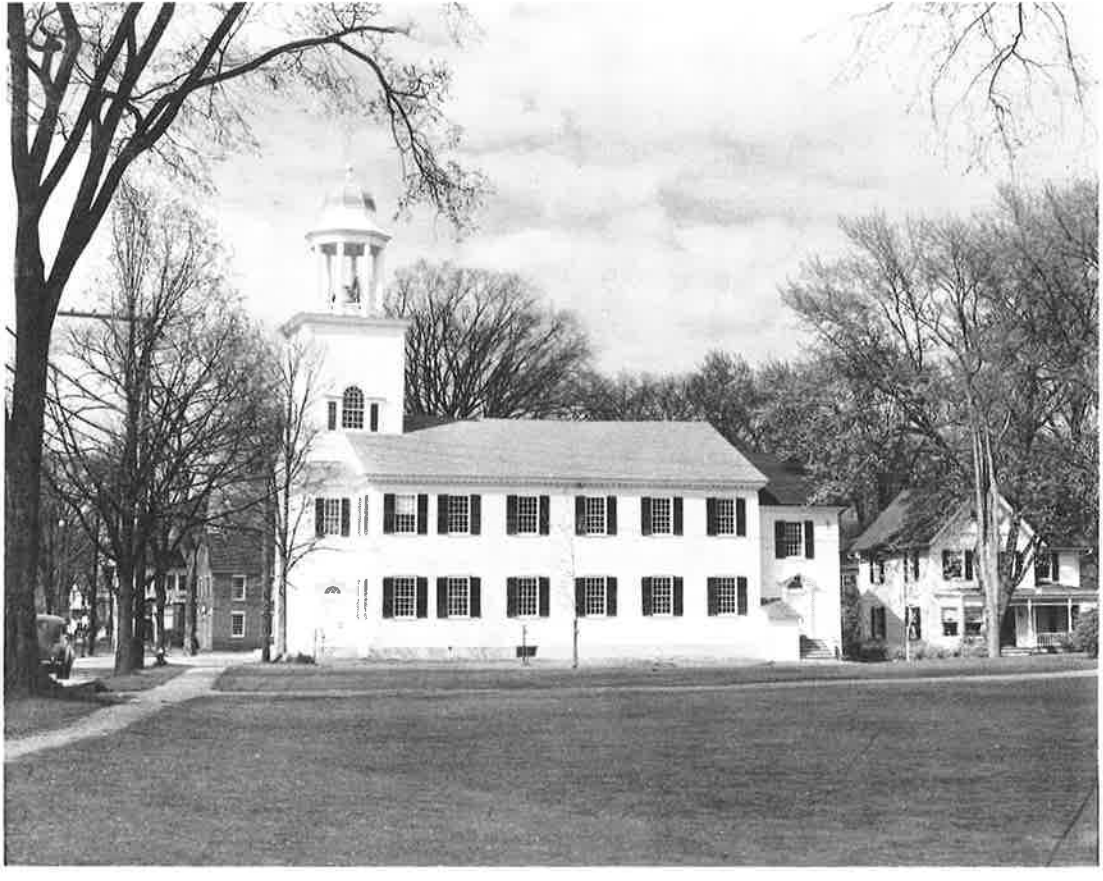
Senior, Warner. Management of the financial affairs of the institution continued in the hands of the independent Ecclesiastical Society. Annual meetings still fell in January, and new members could be accepted into the congregation only after a vote of the membership called to a special meeting. All of the officers of church and Ecclesiastical Society, all the deacons and ushers were men, with the exception of two women holding the offices of clerk. Ladies never appeared without hats and gloves when they arrived for worship services held on Sunday mornings at 11:00, preceded by Sunday School at 9:45. Rooms behind the meeting house, the present stage and above, housed lively Sunday School classes numbering 82, with more in the toddler group upstairs. When the bell tolled hurrying members to service, it was because Mr. Tim Doty stood in the balcony closet pulling on the bell rope. The Reverend Theodore Darrah, newly arrived in 1943, made 401 pastoral visits in his first seven months in Salisbury, 729 the next year. Church receipts for the year were $6,430, and expenditures surely did not exceed that mark. Only the just created gathering room and kitchen beneath the meeting house marked a change from the past and fresh opportunities for social gatherings. The 200th anniversary celebrants gathered there to watch Reverend Goddard use his sword on that cake.

At the church annual meeting in January, 1944, Sunday School superintendent Howard Landon "paid tribute to his former Sunday School boys now in the armed forces: George L. Parsons who gave his life for his country and Harrison Lamson who was wounded on Makin Island." Still remembering, "it was voted to set up a War Service and Record Committee who would keep the records and in touch

with members of the parish and church who are in the armed forces."

V-E Day, May, 1945. V-J Day, August, 1945. Infantrymen, seamen, airmen returned to start their lives again, to marry, raise children, and strengthen the institutions they had gone to war to defend. In large measure, the history of America and of this church in the second half of the twentieth century, is the story of the young men who fought in World War II, their wives, and younger brothers, sisters, and cousins, who came back to settle down in this congregation and make a safer and better life for their own families and their community. They returned to take their places in the pews of this church, on its committees, and in the town. Church and town affairs, still managed by their parents, gradually shifted to respond to the needs of a new generation. At Christmas Eve, 1945, the collection went back to Europe "toward the relief of children in the war stricken lands" and still in 1946, Salisbury thought about those who had suffered more. But they moved into the future.

Reverend Ted Darrah, who had given strength to the congregation in wartime, moved on to an academic chaplaincy at Rollins College late in 1947, and in March, 1948, Reverend Lawrence M. Stone began his twenty-one year pastorate in Salisbury. Like Salisbury's first minister Jonathan Lee, Mr. Stone was a young man, only thirty-five, and a graduate of Yale Divinity School. After four years as pastor in Unionville, he brought his wife Helen and the first of three sons to the parsonage on Salisbury's Main Street and joined fully in the life of the church and the town.



America in the late 1940s and the 50s and early 60s was a time for families. In 1944, the Congregational Church of Salisbury numbered 82 in its Sunday School, 92 a year later. Records for 1949 make note of 80 enrolled in Sunday classes, with 25 more on the cradle roll. By 1958, 114 children were registered in Sunday School, and still 101 a decade later. Leafing through baptismal records of these years lets us tie past and present: Allers, Bauers, Burcroffs, Bushnells, Parsons, Rogers, Sills. Families of three, four and five children grew throughout the town, compelling voters to approve construction of a new central school for the burgeoning younger grades.

A musician and organist, as well as mother and minister's wife, Mrs. Stone organized a junior choir in 1949. Numbering as many as 28 in some years (1958), the "cherub choir" joined in Sunday worship and were rewarded in spring with an annual outing to the Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus in New York City.

Youth ministry remained a steady responsibility throughout these decades. For eight weeks in the summer of 1946, thirty-two youngsters took part in the Church Youth Program. In 1959, Elizabeth Haas, secretary of the board of trustees, noted in the minutes that several churches in town had joined in "hiring the headmaster of Lenox School for Boys to give a series of four lectures to the High School Groups of the four churches on sex." Mrs. Haas's minutes must have raised some eyebrows at the meeting for this last word in the typed minutes is crossed out and above is penciled a substitute topic, "Christian Ethics."

For parents, the Mr. and Mrs. Club provided informal fellowship and an evening out. Monthly gatherings in the basement hall featured suppers prepared or kept warm in the church kitchen, music, skits, and conversation. Cyrus and Lila Nash provided considerable entertainment all by themselves, but had companionship from the Ericksons, Fittings, Harriotts, Rogers, Sills, Simontons, and Van Dusens. Such fellowship produced a new senior choir too. When Ed Harriott invited other men who loved to harmonize for hymn singing in his home, Mrs. Stone saw the nucleus of an adult choir, soon to be joined by women and to replace the traditional soloist at Sunday worship.

Wedding pictures appeared on the front page of The Lakeville Journal in this quieter era, as did news of a 1955 committee chaired by Russell Ottey: "Congregationalists Join Campaign to Increase Attendance at Church," the headline proclaimed, as part of a nationwide "effort to influence men and women of this nation to attend church regularly and to pray every day." It was a young congregation, but could also count on wise guidance from such distinguished parishioners and occasional preachers as Dr. Harry Lathrop Reed, retired president of Auburn Seminary, and Reverend Henry Sloane Coffin, president of Union Theological School.

With the population growing, the church leadership soon perceived the need to enlarge facilities for Sunday School and parish fellowship. In 1954, the Clyde Davis house, located at the rear of the meeting house facing Library Street, came on the market, and the membership voted to purchase house and lot for $14,000. A building committee accepted its three part assignment to look into: legal aspects;

space and classroom needs; and fund raising. Legal aspects included securing from the Town of Salisbury in 1959 a quit claim deed for all the town land on which the meeting house had been built by the citizenry in 1800. Space needs proved more complex. Schemes to move the Davis house to another site proved too costly, and it was torn down to make way for the present parish hall. Architect S. Norton Miner drew up plans for a one-story structure designed to be both meeting room and, with transforming partitions, a series of Sunday school classrooms. Bid estimates projected a cost of $63,000 for this design, including $15,000 to purchase movable partitions. So evolved scheme two. For a bid estimate of $70,548, Nort Miner explained, a two-story building with meeting hall, kitchen, and stage at ground level and classrooms and offices above would provide for adult, youth, and community needs for decades to come.

So Miner prepared new drawings, both floor plans and the graceful image reprinted here of meeting house and parish hall together from Library Street, and, voting at a Special Meeting on July 8, 1959, the congregation agreed to contribute and borrow funds and to commence construction. Soon after, Gilligan Brothers of Sheffield came in with that low bid of $70,548. Fund raisers led by building committee chairman Albert W. Olsen, Sr. had already been working with architect and trustees and securing pledges from members and lenders. Now they set to work in earnest. Within a year construction was completed at a final cost, including kitchen equipment, cabinets, shelving, and such, of $88,000 and by 1966, the mortgage loans had been repaid in full. At a ceremony of dedication and celebration, May 22, 1960, a proud congregation sang "Surely the Lord Is In This Place."

Anyone who has moved to Salisbury or joined the church since 1960 might find it difficult to imagine either without the large, comfortable, and welcoming space in the parish hall. Towns folk have gathered here to listen to youngsters play the violin, to hear the barbershop tones of the HousaTonics, to laugh at youth group talent shows or amateur theatricals. Speakers have opened our minds to new points of view about religious and political issues, the needs and contributions of people in Africa, India, the South Seas, the responsibilities of our own congregation. Thousands of visitors have enjoyed luncheons here at Fall Festival time. Boy and girl scouts, dancing and yoga classes, youth groups, garden club, food co-ops have all benefitted from the structure this congregation raised.

Responsibility for approving each new use of the parish hall fell to the Board of Trustees. Salisbury's cub scouts won an easy "yes." Turned down on their first petition in 1960, the Red Cross blood bank soon after became a regular fixture. Meeting in October, 1966, the trustees approved gatherings of the Homemakers and a Christian Science lecture, but not the Fifth Dimension Group. A decade later, they struggled with the issue of karate lessons and decided to "ask the Christian Education Committee to determine if this usage was consistent with their objectives in the Out-Reach program."

Hardly finished with the parish hall construction, the church trustees plunged into more renovation of the meeting house itself. A new Schantz organ was to be purchased from the manufacturers in Orrville, Ohio in 1963, the gift of Ella Moore Belcher. Prerequisite to finer music, however, was a stouter choir loft and repairs to walls and roof above.

Interior pillars from balcony to ceiling, which had been part of the original 1800 meeting house design, had been removed during earlier renovations and now observors noted that the weight of the roof was causing the side walls to bow out. In 1965, simultaneously with installation of the new organ, builders restored the interior pillars and uncovered a handsome coved ceiling above a false, flat one. When all was completed, a new whale weatherwane appeared atop the steeple, igniting considerable controversy. Why a whale?, designer Nort Miner explained, because like Jonah the meeting house had experienced "rescue and reconstruction" and because Miner, just back from Hawaii, sought to pay tribute to Henry Opukahaia and all missionaries to the Pacific, "playground of the whales." In due time, the pleasing tones of the organ rose louder than any discord.

Any change might ignite brief sparks fanned by the members' love for their meeting house just the way it was. A year after the weatherwane debate came the curtain feud. It began with sabbath sunshine glancing off the bald head of a distinguished parishioner, or so the story goes. Curtains were recommended, and the trustees appointed a committee of three women, Mrs. Benjamin Belcher, Miss Louise Robinson, and Mrs. Frederick Leubuscher, to look into the matter. That was in May, 1966 and by November the committee submitted its decision. The trustees' minutes of March, 1967 take up the tale: "They had recommended separate curtains for upper and lower parts of the windows. These were completed in due course and the curtains put in place on the lower floor. On March 6, 1967 a letter addressed to the Trustees from Mrs. Lila S. Nash was received stating that she had removed all of the curtains from the lower portions of the windows on the ground floor as a

manifestation of her disapproval of this type of window covering. It was decided to have all of the curtains put in place, to advise Mrs. Nash that this is being done and that they are to remain in place until a meeting of the entire Congregation can be called early in the Spring to vote on approval or disapproval of these curtains ..." In a Special Meeting after morning service in May, congregational democracy prevailed: 51 for the curtains, 19 opposed. They are hanging still.

New technology came slowly to Salisbury and even more glacially to church and parsonage. At the annual meeting in 1952, "the budget was read by Harold Erickson with mimeographed copies for everyone." In 1954, Mr. Stone requested a power lawn mower. He remembers that he finally bought one himself, and also recalls, not long after his arrival in Salisbury, paddling in a tub across the flooded parsonage basement in search of firewood to keep his family warm during a storm. After considerable debate following a later water incident in 1967, the trustees agreed to remodel the parsonage kitchen and repair its roof. "The roof of the parsonage was leaking," the Trustees minutes noted (1967), "and causing damage to the flood [sic] below." At the same time Mr. Stone was "permitted to hire part time secretarial help and purchase a typewriter, electric if needed ..." He was lucky enough to employ Mrs. Shirley Rogers at $2.50 an hour. A tape recorder was added too, to make services available to shut-ins. For more traditional man-power, the trustees noted in 1964 that "a new custodian, George 'Mike' Ongley has been hired ... [and] comes highly recommended."

From the turmoil of the fifties and sixties, Salisbury must have felt in part, as it does today, a sanctuary. War in Korea (ending in 1953), explosion of the first hydrogen bomb (1952), the Army-McCarthy hearings (1954), the Montgomery bus boycott (1955-56), national guard troops in Little Rock (1956), Sputnik (1957), war in Vietnam, Woodstock (1969).

Just months after Woodstock when much of America's youth seemed to have shed clothing and traditional values, "a group of mothers [was] given permission to hold classes in social dancing for their 6th-8th grade children in the parish house." More than 100 Salisbury youngsters enjoyed a May dance that year in the parish hall. Salisbury could not entirely escape the turmoil of these decades, however. Families built basement fall-out shelters, including one in the parsonage, and school children practiced air raid posture curled under desks with coats pulled over their heads. In the 1969 annual report, church school superintendent Frances Wagner noted that "Church School is no exception to the restlessness pervading student life of all ages, and there is a definite problem in holding the interest and loyalty of young people past the age of twelve years." A "coffee house" for teenagers in the church basement lasted only from March to June, 1970, ending with "misuse of the room, tampering with the organ and stealing sandwiches."

As much as they may have wished to withdraw from national and world tensions, the congregation accepted traditional mission responsibilities. By 1955, Salisbury began participation in the One Great Hour of Sharing campaign. At the 1963 annual meeting, a new Missions

Committee (predecessor to the Board of Christian Action) was established by vote and staffed by Edward Harriott, Rowena Peters, Louise Robinson, and Nancy Sills. That same year -- our congregation had voted to join the new United Church of Christ in 1960 -- members approved the UCC General Synod objectives on Racial Justice Now. Youngsters spending the summer at the Hotchkiss School as part of the ABC (A Better Chance) program were invited to share Sunday afternoon and dinner with Congregational families. Under the leadership of Mr. Harriott, Salisbury's congregation made an attempt to aid urban church groups through the Inner City Exchange of Hartford (1969). At the same time that she noted the restlessness of students, Mrs. Wagner praised the "Children's Day program [which] showed the keen interest young people have in the church when its life is relevant to the needs of the world." Old and new social justice concerns were reflected in the 1972 Sunday school offering divided between "a Saigon orphanage and a committee to spread the social gospel behind the Iron Curtain."

Continuing another centuries old tradition of Christian service, several young men of the congregation were ordained in Salisbury during these decades: Alvord Miner Beardslee (1953), Robert P. Noble, Jr., (1965), and Rodney G. "Dard" Aller, Jr. (1975), great grandson of John Calvin Goddard.

After preparing weekly sermons for 21 years and visiting, comforting, baptizing and marrying a generation in Salisbury, Reverend Lawrence Stone moved on in May, 1969 to care for another congregation in Ansonia, Connecticut. Determined not to overstay his time, Mr. Stone

felt that he should serve another church for the remainder of his career. Mirroring the national mood, tensions preceded his departure. Trustees suggested that Mr. Stone take a sabbatical, a seminary course, or just a vacation; but a split seemed inevitable. Writing in his annual report in October, 1967, Reverend Stone prayed: "Certainly all ministers know (and yours in particular) that they must grow in their ability to express goodwill and love to their people. And laymen, too, especially those within the power structure of the Church, need to sit down occasionally to see how love can be practically expressed toward any Pastor who happens to be now or in the future the Pastor of this Church." The next year, he recalled fondly "the surprise reception which you good people planned for your Pastor and his wife in March for their Twentieth Anniversary as God's servants in this Church." In October, 1968, Reverend Stone wrote: "The days ahead for our country and our world are going to be most difficult, but let us continue to work as partners in our Lord's name. To be sure, we never know when such a partnership is to be dissolved. Actually it is God's doing, ... but while it lasts we must do our work together and in Christ's Spirit allow ourselves to be the channels through which His love is expressed."

Despite these words, his departure caused a rift which, for some, but not for Mr. Stone, never healed. Reverend Stone retired to Salisbury in 1981, began to preach on occasion, and was named Pastor Emeritus in 1992 in a moving ceremony which brought together many from his old Salisbury congregation and even representatives from his first Unionville church. The committee to celebrate our 250th year were thankful for his help and presence.

The decade of the 1970s marked a time of consolidation of traditional strengths and an opening to the new. To select an interim minister and then Reverend Stone's successor, a pastoral search committee needed to look no farther than Lakeville to find Reverend Charles Wesley Ranson. Dr. Ranson had retired with his wife Barbara to a house on Lake Wononscopomuc after a career as pastor, teacher, and missions administrator. Born in northern Ireland and raised and trained as a Methodist, Ranson had worked for fifteen years among churches in South India, served as General Secretary of the International Missionary Council (precursor of the World Council of Churches), and as Dean of the Theological School of Drew University, a life eloquently told in his autobiography, *A Missionary Pilgrimage*. He was a gifted preacher, admired for his erudition, and brought a world view and sophistication to the pulpit reminiscent of the Celtic tones and learning of Reverend Adam Reid a hundred years earlier. Through Dr. Ranson's eyes and words, Salisbury learned to know and care more about congregations and Christian institutions in India where he had served and elsewhere in Asia and Africa.

A Sunday service with Reverend Ranson's imprint was unified in theme with hymns carefully selected, familiar in repetition of set prayers of confession and creed, and challenging to the mind. Under his tutelage, the deacons reinstated the traditional, not the revised, Apostles Creed for communion services. His voice and a characteristic call to Christian action echo in a sermon Reverend Ranson entitled "By Hook or By Crook":

"We have a missionary problem on our doorstep. There are large numbers of people in our time who, for one reason or another, have lost all real contact with organized religion. This quiet apostacy has taken place gradually and for many without any conscious repudiation of Christianity and with no deliberate denial of its truth. These people live in a culture that is shot through and through with reminiscences of the Christian Faith. They are in daily contact with the decencies and verities and philanthropies which had their origin in the Church. They live in the afterglow of a faith which they have lost. In this legion of lost ones we have a mission field at our doors in the pleasant, cultivated and attractive society in which we live. What are we, as church members, doing about it? ...

"And what of the wider world ... ? The world today is a very different place from that of a century ago. But the world mission of the Church remains an abiding obligation. Amid the tumult and confusion of violent nationalism, endemic terrorism and pervading nihilism, which occupy the daily headlines, many otherwise devoted Christians are unaware of or uninterested in their world mission. On the surface it may appear to be a futile exercise. But the chaotic state of international society does not relieve us of our missionary obligation. It rather enhances it. For it is in our darkest hours that the light of the Cross is most needed."

1970 not only brought Reverend Ranson, but marked an annus mirabilus for Congregational music as well with the hiring of Albert C. Sly as organist and minister of music. Formerly head of the music department at The

Hotchkiss School, Al Sly attracted fine new voices for his choir and brought out new strengths in the old. Sly wrote original compositions for performance by his choir, a Christmas cantata, prayer responses for Christmas and Easter, and "Give Thanks" to celebrate our 250th anniversary. Dr. Ranson remembered Al Sly as a "gifted musician, with a keen sense of the meaning of worship" and praised him too for his "great efficiency" as church secretary and his "unfailing grace and competence".

Because he had been called out of retirement, Dr. Ranson placed a limit on his term of service, first to 1973, then extended to 1975. To assist him with visiting and youth work, the congregation also employed a young assistant minister, Reverend Richard Reifsnyder who served from 1971 until 1973. Reifsnyder gathered youngsters into an Ecumenical Youth Group, taught Bible study, and drew a loyal following to his Christianity and literature classes. He was one of the few residents a fellow reader might meet in the Lakeville laundromat reading Dostoevsky. When he left to take up his own pastorate, the congregation praised his "warmth, enthusiasm, sincerity and quick intelligence." William K. Stuart, who was ordained in this church in June, 1973, succeeded Reifsnyder as Dr. Ranson's assistant and continued much of his predecessor's work.

As minister emeritus, Charles Ranson continued service to this congregation as advisor and occasional preacher until the final weeks of his life. He preached his last sermon here the Sunday after Christmas in 1987 and conducted a memorial service for a church friend just weeks before his death in January, 1988.

At the time of Dr. Ranson's retirement in 1975, while awaiting selection of a new minister, the Salisbury congregation enjoyed the care and preaching of two Presbyterian ministers who had retired to the country life and allied themselves to our church. Reverend Frank Otheman Reed had visited many times when his father Harry Lathrop Reed served as occasional preacher and loyal friend of the congregation, but now he was settled across the street, preached regularly, kept watch on church buildings and library chimes, and welcomed newcomers to church with an unforgettable warmth. Anyone who walked through the parish hall doors after a Sunday service knew he was loved by Frank Reed. Another New England gentleman of great wisdom and warmth, a stimulating preacher, with a special gift for drawing children under his arm, Reverend Hamlin Tobey also assisted as interim minister. He took that duty on a second time in 1981 and the congregation recorded that he was "an unfalteringly kind, gentle, forthright and sage leader."

In response to a pastoral search committee inquiry, the congregation had identified qualities and skills it valued most highly: (1) preaching ability, (2) Biblical knowledge, (3) youth leadership. Reverend John Hay, with his wife Carol and eldest of three children, arrived in Salisbury in September, 1975 -- baby Molly was born later the same day in Sharon Hospital -- and set to work to fulfill these goals and stretch them too. John Hay had completed studies at Yale Divinity School, been ordained, earned a master's degree in drama, and served as chaplain for Yale Religious Ministries and pastor of the Church of Christ at Mount Washington, Massachusetts before accepting the call to Salisbury.

As a preacher, John Hay engaged both intellect and emotion in a pattern he described as "affirmation and proclamation." A theme of joy echoed through his sermons and work which clings to memories of his time in this church and was experienced as liberating by many accustomed to a more solemn tradition.

Family potluck suppers occurred frequently in the parish hall during Reverend Hay's ministry. Parents, children, and older members shared meals and conversation, occasionally a hymn sing or program. Musical and dramatic offerings provided fresh approaches to a spiritual message. At Epiphany one year, John Hay and Lee and Barbara Collins performed sketches from "Witnesses" by David Kossoff, and, in 1976, Hay directed an ambitious production of William Gibson's "Butterfingers Angel," with a cast of adults and youngsters, supported by the choir. "Lightshine," a musical presentation on the beatitudes, involved both the senior choir and the newly formed bell choir in a 1977 production that even went on the road as far as Pine Plains. "Our Christmas pageant was set up so that every child who wanted to could take part," superintendent Dee Bushnell noted in 1975. "We may have had a lot of angels and shepherds, but also a lot of happy children." On every Sunday, not just at Christmas, the upstairs toddler room was filled with happy children basking in the love of care-giver Eleanor Durst.

Drawing on his congregation's traditional concern for neighbors and community service, Reverend Hay stepped forward to assist Village Housing of Salisbury in its goal of establishing low and moderate income housing units

in the village center by forging a connection with the New Samaritan Corporation and helping to establish Faith House Council. In conjunction with other local churches, Hay also worked to establish Hospice in northwest Connecticut and established a close tie with the Housatonic Mental Health Center.

Youthful, energetic, and sympathetic, John Hay devoted considerable time to counseling members and others experiencing problems with family or work or health. "When people seek guidance from me," he told an interviewer in 1978, "I offer them a safe space for exploring their feelings." Many benefitted from his non-judgmental concern, but some in the church leadership felt that Mr. Hay neglected visiting because of the time demands of counseling.

Looking back we can feel winds of sixties change blowing through the meeting house doors during the ministry of John Hay, winds that animated many but sometimes chilled members settled in a more conservative tradition. Worship services rescheduled for 10:00 a.m. instead of 11:00 won approval, especially from parents of young children. Women consistently joined in service of communion. Lay readers took a more frequent role in worship, and children created glittery Chrismons to hang on a tree brought into the meeting house for Christmas. The 1975 annual report mentioned the "possibility of welcoming a South Vietnamese family into this area," noting that no other organization in town had come forward. "Mrs. Mitari of our first Laotian family" was welcomed in 1976 along with the "Salisbury Refugee Resettlement Committee," and a second Laotian family, the Rintharamys, received aid from

the congregation for several years before moving to Florida in 1980.

A whiff of eighties scandal also rocked the congregation in 1977 when a respected town dignitary and long-time church trustee misdirected a sizable bequest from the estate of Miss Harriet Harrison. Though the church ultimately recovered $13,520 of the $30,000 bequest, shock and sorrow took a long time to fade. Norton Miner's eloquent letter to his fellow trustees expresses what many felt, both love and righteous indignation. "[I]n ordinary Christian eyes," he wrote, "embezzling Church funds intended for helping the orphaned, the hungry and the stricken is abhorrent ... I found," he continued, " the only way I could square this matter in my own mind was to separate the deed and the man: to condemn the former utterly, and to regard the latter with the greatest of compassion."

Reflecting with the deacons just before his departure from Salisbury, Reverend Hay cautioned about a style of leadership he saw as a weakness in our church. "Decisions are made in an 'executive manner' i.e. by a small number of active members, in committee, and dictated for approval by the whole group, rather than in a 'seminar manner' i.e. hashed out by all ... Conflicts tend to be shelved rather than brought out for healthy discussion." His farewell sermon, like this one from 1978, expressed none of this, however, but resounded with the notes that were John Hay's lasting legacy to this congregation, a song of joy. "God said: 'Let there be light.' And there is. And you are. So let it shine. Go and take your place and speak to the people telling them of this new life and all that it means ... Lord, free us, heal

us, give us vision and teach us to sing, in the Name and in the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord."

Throughout these decades members of the Congregational Church of Salisbury continued in the tradition of Dr. Henry Knight or Thomas Lot Norton to act out their Christian commitment in the larger community. They served on local social action agency boards, including the Bissell Fund, Housatonic Mental Health Center, Lakeville Hose Company, Salisbury Family Services, Salisbury Public Health Nursing Association, Salisbury Volunteer Ambulance Service, Sharon Hospital, Meals on Wheels. Faithful to the New England tradition of local civic responsibility, they gave hours to the work of the town as selectmen, members of the Board of Finance and Board of Education. At the same time, they carried out the day to day work of the church as trustees, deacons, Sunday school teachers, choir members, directors of the Every Member Canvas, members of the Boards of Christian Action, Christian Education, the Upkeep Society, Music Committee, Ushers.

Perhaps no one exemplified this tradition of service more than Benjamin M. Belcher, a life long member of this church, grandson of a Methodist minister, businessman, and his brother's keeper. With tremendous energy and without seeking credit, Ben Belcher was the moving force behind low and moderate income housing in Salisbury, summer jobs for all the town's youth, conservation of farmland, and long term planning for this church.

John E. Rogers continues to serve in the same spirit. In 1958, we find Jack volunteering to paint the church back

steps. In 1970, the congregation honored him for his first ten years of service as treasurer. Whether as banker or Board of Finance chairman, whether singing in the choir, beating the drum on Palm Sunday, or trucking furniture for an Asian refugee family, he combined Christian warmth and American competence.

Frances Wagner served this congregation as church school superintendent and teacher, as trustee, deacon, Upkeep Society leader. She assisted with first grade instruction at Salisbury Central School every morning for more than fifteen years and was a leader in establishing housing for the elderly at Noble Horizons.

A 1994 by-law revision committee led by long-term deacon and moderator Graham Davidson noted provision for appointment of an honorary deacon for life and, at its annual meeting in this 250th year, the congregation conferred this title upon Evelyn Anderson for her "books, devotional talks, prayers," and "her many acts of Christian service and hospitality and her loving outreach to the newcomer and those in need."

By naming a few, we risk slighting many. Robb Quinby quietly served as treasurer for thirteen years. Bill Fowle taught Bible lessons to young teens and adults, visited shut-ins, served as deacon, as chairman of the trustees. Well before they became church staff, Barbara Collins and Mary Davidson drew young families into the congregation with loving and creative programs for children.

A predominant theme in church life over the last fifty years, mirroring the life of the nation, has been the growing role of women. In 1944, women served only on committees for Religious Education, Music, and Upkeep, and as clerks of the administrative and financial boards. Miss Louise Robinson who began her twenty years of service that year, first as acting clerk and then as clerk, recorded the minutes of every annual meeting from 1944 to 1966. Church administrative officers, ushers and deacons -- there were no deaconesses -- all were men.

Interestingly, it was the year 1963, the same year that saw publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique,* that also marked the formation of two new church boards opening up leadership roles for women. The new Missions Committee, first elected in October 1963, concerned itself with cares long part of the congregational mandate, but increasingly delegated to women of the Upkeep Society, concerns such as foreign missions and relief of want and suffering in the U.S. and abroad. As we have noted, Mr. Edward Harriott was the only male member of that first missions committee, the forerunner of our Board of Christian Action.

October, 1963 also marks the election of the first members of the Board of Deaconesses, Mrs. Catherine Goddard Aller and Mrs. Edward Harriott, who were joined two years later by Mrs. Benjamin M. Belcher and Mrs. Kenneth Weir to complete the four woman board. By-law revisions outlined the role seen for this board: "The Deaconesses shall visit the sick and needy, call upon new members, introduce new families into the life of the church and cooperate with the pastor and deacons in promoting the

spiritual interests of the church. They shall assist in the preparation of the Communion Service." In its first half dozen years, carrying out these assignments, the Board of Deaconesses met separately from the Deacons and concerned themselves with organizing a supper to welcome new members; "sent cards and bulletins at the Christmas season; made hospital and house calls on the sick." In 1968, they "took part in the Lenten services," but it was not until the mid 1970s that women felt comfortable to assist in serving communion. Though deacon Douglas Griffiths had been urging this role for deaconesses for several years, the women repeatedly stated as they did in 1971 that "we do not, at this time, wish to serve the actual elements at our communion services." Finally, one Sunday late in 1975, Mary Claire Aller and Ethel Mayland joined the deacons and Reverend John Hay in distributing communion, a role the deaconesses have shared since that time. By 1971, the separate committees had become one Board of Deacons, and eight years later they felt firm enough to record that "a policy was adopted to encourage the regular participation of Deaconesses in serving the Sacraments."

Winds of change did expand opportunities for service and for sharing the burdens too. When the ushers needed a replacement for a man who resigned in 1975, they asked Lorraine Cluff to join them. By the next year, two of the then ten ushers were "young ladies" and by 1979 one-third were women and one-third high school students. Deacons' meetings on occasion buzzed with concern on appropriate dress and the possibility of covering the young women in choir robes, but instead solved the problem by asking church school superintendent Barbara Collins to speak to the girls.

Sharing the burdens could pass both ways, with the work of the annual church fair and fall festival a recent example. Traditionally the women of the Upkeep Society organized and ran the fair, then allocated a third of their earnings to pay for flowers and coffee hour and church projects, and the rest for charitable work in the local community, elsewhere in the U.S. and abroad. By 1979, the annual church fair and fall festival had become such a financial success, earning over $8,000, that the church trustees began to talk of assuming control of those funds to help meet church expenses. Of course, the women, recalling earlier days when all their funds consisted of pennies saved from egg money and pin money, rejected such a takeover and reaffirmed their sense of responsibility for world missions especially, but over several years a compromise evolved. Responsibility for the work of the fair would be shared by an elected committee of women and men and the profits would be distributed as part of the church budget (1991).

In the midst of these changes in the congregation and society, Salisbury also welcomed its fourteenth pastor. Assigned in 1980 to search for a successor to Reverend Hay, the pastoral search committee kept in mind the congregation's admonition about the importance of good preaching. Pleased with the growth in the number of families with Sunday School age children during John Hay's ministry, the committee looked for someone to continue that trend. Mindful of a rift some perceived along age lines, they also looked for someone to bridge differences.

In the spring of 1981, the committee invited Reverend Richard H. Taber to preach before the Salisbury congregation and unanimously recommended his election as pastor. Mr. Taber won the congregation's approval, completed his duties as assistant minister in Wilton, Connecticut, and, in August, 1981 arrived with his wife Joanne and four children to take up life on Salisbury's Main Street.

The relationship between Richard Taber and the Congregational Church at Salisbury grew over his first years into a loving and effective partnership. An earnest, but uneven and occasionally sentimental preacher in his early years, Mr. Taber grew in his ability to craft a sermon and developed a style, confidence, and voice all his own. Over the past decade worshippers have come to Salisbury, as they have for 250 years, to hear words of assurance and challenge that may change their lives. His friends will hear his voice in these words from a 1991 sermon: "I believe we need to develop Plan B which means to live as though there will be a tomorrow, and hopefully many more tomorrows, but at the same time to live as though indeed tomorrow or even today may be the last ... Do you have a talent you have wanted to develop? Carpe Diem - seize the time. Do you have some contribution to make to the betterment of human kind? Carpe Diem ... Is there someone to whom you have been meaning to say 'thank you?' Carpe Diem ... Are there broken relationships out there which are in need of healing? You may have to make the first move -- you may have to be the one to ask forgiveness. Seize the time. How is your relationship with God? ... Are you living in this present time in such a way that if today were to be your last that God would say to you: 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' "

Richard Taber helped his congregation to become more loving, more tolerant, more inclusive. He read poetry to the elderly, carried newly baptized babies down the aisle to introduce them to the "church family." In his arms, they never cried. He visited everyone, then especially the sick and shut-ins, went to Noble Horizons, Sharon Hospital. Over the years, Dick Taber sought to bring former pastor Lawrence Stone back into service to the congregation. An ecumenical youth group gathered around Dick and Joanne Taber, and the parish hall became the place to be on Sunday evenings for young teenagers. Their parents shared suppers and thoughts on responsibilities as parents and members of the community in monthly "Sarum Fellowship" gatherings in one another's homes. Beginning in April, 1982, confirmation of young people was celebrated both at a joyful Sunday service and at a dinner for confirmands and their families given by the deacons the evening before. Progressive dinners became a biennial tradition starting in 1983 and a way for newcomers and long-time members to share fellowship in host homes.

Recognition of a new role for women and a central place for children in the congregation, begun in the late 1970s, took new forms. Women had gone back to work, and the church responded to this change by moving at least partially to compensate Barbara Collins for the hours she devoted as Coordinator of Christian Education (1986) and Mary Davidson for her creative energy as Director of the Children's Choir and Bell Choir (1991).

Inclusiveness took varying forms. The church's commitment to programs for children attracted more

families, including weekend residents. Ours became more of a regional church with members drawn from neighboring towns. New members also included women suffering through divorce, older residents looking for a church family, worshippers who had grown up Episcopalian, Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Jewish, or without any church tradition.

Perhaps nothing in the meeting house of 1994 symbolizes the new inclusiveness of the congregation more than the cross hanging on the wall behind the pulpit. It was at the annual meeting in 1960 that "Mrs. Abbott Hamilton made some comments about the possibility of having a cross, perhaps on the wall between the pillars or in front of the pulpit." Discussing the issue with the trustees a few months later, Reverend Stone explained that such a cross was not appropriate in a church with the pulpit in the center. Fifteen years later at a deacons' meeting Mrs. Hamilton made her suggestion again, but later minutes noted that "[m]ost of the Board had the feeling that this is a delicate undertaking and requires a great deal of thought."

It was only in 1986, with the support of Reverend Taber, Reverend Tobey, and many in the congregation that the deacons again engaged in heated discussion of this fiery topic. Several born and bred congregationalists expressed dismay, joined by some fleeing a more ornate church tradition. Others expressed openness and a willingness to try. A large, plain, wooden cross was hung from Maundy Thursday to Easter Sunday in 1986, and throughout Lent in 1987. Animated discussion at the annual meeting in 1988 ended in no firm consensus, but the cross was hung again for Lent in 1989 and has remained.

The congregational tradition of community responsibility continued in the 1980s and 1990s in the work of pastor and congregation. Under Dick Taber's enthusiastic leadership, Salisbury started to raise funds for developing countries and hungry U.S. families through the CROP walk. When a deranged student at a nearby school killed and wounded several people with an automatic weapon, Mr. Taber, joined by others in the congregation, actively lobbied for stricter gun control legislation for Connecticut.

Self-examination and renewal must arise regularly in the cycle of church life. In 1990, with guidance from Reverend Taber and deacon Donald Buckley, the congregation came together for a New Horizons Day to discuss current strengths and weaknesses and to frame goals for the decade. Reaffirming commitment to community outreach, the congregation found new energy for such causes as Habitat for Humanity, the Youth Service Bureau, and most recently our relationship with the Iglesia Cristiana Adonay, an hispanic congregation from inner city Hartford.

Emerging from the materialistic vapors of the 1980s, the congregation also expressed a renewed interest in Bible study and the spiritual life. In recent years, Bible study groups have gathered on weekday mornings and evenings, before Sunday services, and at the men's Bible breakfast early every Friday morning.

Still the distant world had a way of breaking in now and then as it did in 1991 when the deacons discussed "how to deal with the fact that the nation was at war [in the Persian Gulf]. A Missions Mail Call was launched. Prayer was focused upon. Sermons were preached recognizing the

importance of tolerance and respect for individual response. Yellow ribbons were hung from the sanctuary doors."

As town and nation watched Americans depart to the Persian Gulf, Africa, and elsewhere, some of the bitterness of the Vietnam era diluted. Throughout 1994 we looked back and honored heroes of D-Day, the Bulge, war in the Pacific -- the people and events with which this half century began. Thankful for their courage and faith and for the material prosperity that has marked these decades, we turn cautiously to the future.

Still stamped by the Puritan conscience of our ancestors in this church, we cannot deny our fears. We ask what price our children may have to pay for so much prosperity, we recognize injustice and danger in deep, national divisions between rich and poor, we fear the return of promiscuous violence and devastating disease that plagued other times.

As we struggle to control such fears, our strength is renewed by listening to our predecessors reflecting in this place on other anniversaries. In a New Year's sermon in 1803, Reverend Crossman addressed the youth of the church saying, "You are coming into active life in an evil day, when every bait is presented to allure the young and unwary into paths of error, licentiousness, and death." Speaking in 1841, Judge Samuel Church saw signs "portentous of evil to the civil and social institutions." When Reverend Adam Reid surveyed the civic and spiritual state of Salisbury and the world for the church centennial in 1844, he saw coming "some great crisis in its history, ... the boilings of some terrible convulsion, a time that shall try the

staple of men's souls ..." Still this congregation endured. We read again the stories told by John Calvin Goddard and Catherine Goddard Aller and remember too Professor Arnold Whitridge's message to this congregation at the 225th anniversary in 1969:

> God gives all men all earth to love,
> And since our hearts are small,
> Ordains for each one spot shall prove
> Beloved over all.

"For most of us that spot is Salisbury," Whitridge said, "and this church more than any one building stands as a symbol of the people and the place we love."

Strengthened by so much history, remembering the faithful who called this congregation into being in 1744, who raised this meeting house in 1800, and all who have gathered here for 250 years, we go forward with joy, taking strength as they did from the life and words of Jesus Christ and from the great congregational commitment to one another expressed so powerfully by John Winthrop of Plymouth in 1630:

"We must delight in each other, make others conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes ... our community as members of the same body."

THE UPKEEP SOCIETY

by Isabella Hart Baldwin

Chronicle, October, 1922: Under the gracious interest and hospitality of Miss Coffing, the church Upkeep Society came into being Thursday, September 21st. The aim of the new organization is to offer the women of our parish an opportunity to share in the material, social and religious upkeep of the church. The Society's name is auspicious in that it signifies that the organization will keep up. The question for us, who are not privileged to become members is this! Shall we keep up with the Society?

Chronicle, November, 1922: The activity of the youngest of the church organizations, the Upkeep Society, is by no means abated. Two regular meetings were held at the homes of members. A food sale was conducted at Robert's Store, the proceeds of which amounted to about $59.

Chronicle, May, 1923: Two meetings were held for sewing robes for the Junior Choir which was also organized last fall.

Chronicle, August, 1923: The Society's vision and activity is proving a material and spiritual blessing to the Church. As a current result of the labor the much-needed painting of the parsonage is already underway.

Chronicle, February, 1924: The Society has undertaken some sewing for one of our Congregational Home Missionary families. Two meetings were held during the month.

Chronicle, August, 1925: A meeting was held at Mrs. Holden's near Amenia. Three autos full arrived with picnic lunches to plan for the upcoming cafeteria supper and fancy article sale.

Chronicle, September, 1925: Proceeds from the cafeteria supper and sale of fancy articles were $262. We now have $1,000.00 in the Treasury!

Chronicle, February, 1926: Meetings are to be held from 11:00-3:30 twice monthly. It was voted to change the name of the organization to Women's Auxiliary of the Congregational Church.

Bulletin, March 30, 1940: The Upkeep Society is sponsoring a cooking school at the Town Hall, held in cooperation with the Christian Herald Magazine. Tickets are fifteen cents for a full evening of instruction and fun and refreshments.

Bulletin, February 1, 1942: The Upkeep Society will be caterers at the supper to be given by the Chamber of Commerce.

Annual Report, 1944: The ladies hemmed communion cloths which were sent to chaplains in the services. The material used was originally one large banquet cloth belonging to Napoleon, and was given for this new use by Mrs. Speer.

Bulletin, June 6, 1948: The Upkeep Society will hold a food and apron sale in the Scoville Memorial Library. Mrs.

John Erickson and Miss Harriet Roberts will be in charge of aprons, and Mrs. Charles Warner, Mrs. E.R. Ottey and Mrs. John Calvin Goddard comprise the committee in charge of the food.

Bulletin, December 12, 1948: The Upkeep Society realized the sum of $372.00 from its recent Christmas sale. The Society is deeply grateful to all who contributed in any way to the success of the fair.

Bulletin, April 24, 1949: The Upkeep Society benefit bridge at the Wake Robin Inn is being donated by Mrs. Mac Chamberlain, the proceeds to go toward the much-needed projector, sound equipment and slides for the Sunday School and Young People's group.

Bulletin, December 14, 1949: To the annual meeting of the Upkeep Society, members are requested to bring canned goods or packaged foods which will be used for the Displaced Persons due to arrive in February.

Bulletin, April 24, 1950: The Upkeep Society will hold its fall fair in the Scoville Memorial Library. Many interesting items will be on sale in addition to pony rides and fishing privileges for the young people!

Bulletin, January 7, 1951: At the regular monthly program hour Mrs. Henry Sloan Coffin will tell the story of the Constituting Convention of the National Council of Churches which took place last November.

Bulletin, August 19, 1951: The Upkeep Society will hold an evening meeting in the church. Francis W. Robinson,

Curator of Ancient and Medieval Art at the Detroit Institute of Arts, will give an illustrated lecture on early Christian catacombs and churches of Rome.

Bulletin, August 5, 1959: The Upkeep Society will hold its regular monthly program meeting at which Mrs. Thomas Wagner, President of the Society, will speak on her experiences at the General Synod held in July at Oberlin College, especially concerning "The Significance of the United Church of Christ."

These few notices from "The Chronicle" and the weekly Sunday church bulletins indicated that the Upkeep Society did what it was founded for, and in its first forty years it became an indispensible part of the life of the church.

Fund raising for its various activities was very largely accomplished by fairs and sales. While the trustees were responsible for the maintenance of the meeting house, the Society concerned itself with the upkeep of the parsonage and the church kitchen.

In the early 1960s, Upkeep concentrated on one fair in the fall and joined with Trinity Church in Lime Rock and St. John's in Salisbury in becoming part of the former's Antiques Fair held at leaf-looking time. Our church welcomed St. Mary's and the Methodist Church to join us in our spacious parish hall. The three days have now been reduced to two, but the financial success has not diminished. Usually the weather has blessed our efforts, and even damage by vandals to both our tents in 1969 we took in stride. The Fall Festival in our church has now become a

congregation-wide effort, and we are grateful for the help provided by the men and young people. The Society cares deeply about the funds realized for distribution to a number of worthwhile causes in addition to its commitments to the church.

In 1974 Upkeep hosted Church Women United's World Day of Prayer in March and welcomed the Litchfield District of the Women's Fellowship of the Connecticut Conference in May. Among its other responsibilities, Upkeep provides whatever is needed in the way of refreshments after memorial services. When the hour of Sunday worship was moved to 10:00 am. in the 1970s, Upkeep began the coffee hour tradition, a welcome time of fellowship after the weekly service.

Early in December Upkeep celebrates the coming of Christmas with a special service, followed by tea, to which the women of the other churches in the area are invited and welcomed.

Upkeep has continued with interesting programs for its members over the years and has conducted serious study groups during the winter months. In the late 70s and early 80s, we were fortunate in having our own Bill Fowle talk to us on the Old Testament. The Reverend Harry Almond was another star, and Reverend Alvord Beardslee. Al Sly presented a fine series on church music. To lead us in our studies of meditation and prayer and of Islam, Judaism and other faiths, we have also called on our own members -- Betsy Barberi, Yvette Bredbenner, Sue Morrill, Doris Stoecker, and Kay Tobey, to name a few. This past winter

the series took up different aspects of the history of our church.

The Upkeep Society has prospered through the contributions of a number of dedicated women from its first president, Mary Eggleston Williams on down, including: "Ma" and Signe Erickson, Sophie Perkins, Hattie Roberts, Louise Robinson, and Jane Johnson, Julie Aller, Evelyn Anderson, Nancy Belcher, Betty Perkins Haas, Polly Miner, Holley Palmer, Heather Schaufele, Nancy Sills, Nancy Smith, Jeanne van Rosenbergh, and Frances Wagner.

So the Upkeep Society has just had its 72nd birthday, which is not such a long life when viewed from that of the church of which it is a part. But Upkeep can be proud of what it has accomplished and the Society looks forward to the future and to the opportunity to further serve!

THE CONTRIBUTORS

JOHN CALVIN GODDARD was born in 1852 in Brooklyn, New York, graduated from high school in New London, Connecticut and from Yale University in 1873. In May, 1874 he went to Texas where, as a founder of the town of Lawrence, he spent four years working in the real estate and grain business, as editor of the Lawrence Times, and as a Sunday School teacher.

In later years he told the story of his call to the ministry, recalled for us by his grandson, Rodney G. Aller, in these words: "An opportunity to survey and acquire land located west of Fort Griffin, Texas lead Goddard and two companions to travel by prairie schooner to this distant outpost. Here they were advised to turn back since a sizable band of Comanche Indians had been ruthlessly killing whites in the area. The three men chose to disregard the warning. In the course of making their survey, the party was stunned one afternoon to discover four Indians silhouetted along a ridge. These Comanches were soon joined by a dozen more. The surveyors scrambled into their wagon, whipped up their mules, and headed for lower land."

"As the wagon jounced along Goddard sought solace in his Bible which opened to the following passage from Psalms 71 - 4: 'Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.' The passage had a strangely calming effect on the men. Since it seemed likely that this could be his last day alive, the strong realization came to Goddard that he would be happier going to his death if he had chosen the work that the Lord wanted him to do. The night passed without the expected attack. The survey party escaped, abandoning their project. Goddard, however, did not abandon his resolution, but returned to the East, then entered Chicago Theological Seminary from which he graduated in 1881."

In 1883, Goddard married Harriet Warren Allen of Rutland, Vermont, the mother of his eight children. On October 14, 1884 he was installed as pastor of the Congregational Church of Salisbury, Connecticut, the ninth minister of this church, and served as pastor until 1920 and pastor emeritus until his death in 1945.

Besides the Historical Discourse on the Congregational Church at Salisbury reprinted here, he was author of several books, a weekly column in the Hartford newspapers, and served as secretary of the board of the Hotchkiss School for twenty-five years and of the Litchfield North Association of Ministers for forty years.

CATHERINE GODDARD ALLER arrived in Salisbury in July of 1894, the first of eight children of Harriet Warren Allen of Rutland and John Calvin Goddard, the recently called pastor of the Salisbury Congregational Church.

Cassie's consuming love of nature in every form was nourished during her school years by daily walks from Salisbury to the Taconic School, located where the Wake Robin Inn now stands. College at Mount Holyoke, as well as her time spent as librarian in Salisbury, deepened her life-long love of literature -- poetry in particular. This together with her strong religious background and conviction guided the next twenty-four years of her life spent joyously in Colorado and Arizona.

On returning with their three children to her beloved Salisbury in 1932, Cassie and Howard Aller built a home on the western shore of Lake Wononscopomuc. There she devoted herself to her garden, her writing, and her ever-broadening interests. This home, which she named "Lane's End," became the title of one of her books of poetry which closes with "Content":

If I'd a world to choose from
I know that I would take
This corner of Connecticut,
This lane along the lake.
And if, for occupation,
I could have my favorite one,
I'd tend a garden full of bees
And herbs and flowers and grass and trees,
In rain and dew and sun,
Or else, on winter afternoon,
By all the world forsook,
I'd choose this house, this little room,
This fire, this chair,
This book.

SUE ROBINSON MORRILL, a graduate of Wellesley College and New York University, moved to Salisbury in the closing weeks of 1970 and in 1979 joined the Congregational Church which she served as deacon and usher. In addition to church responsibilities, she raised two children in Salisbury and served on the Salisbury Board of Education and the boards of the Scoville Memorial Library and Salisbury Family Services.

ISABELLA HART BALDWIN moved with her family to Sharon, Connecticut in her 13th year, graduated from the Masters School in Dobbs Ferry, New York, and travelled widely as the wife of a foreign service officer. LaVerne and Isabella Baldwin served in Spain, Turkey, Germany, Canada, and Japan, as well as in Washington, D.C. Upon retirement, they settled in Taconic. Mrs. Baldwin has served the Congregational Church of Salisbury as a deacon and trustee, as well as president of the Upkeep Society.

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