THE FIVE MEETING HOUSES AND EARLY PARSONAGES OF THE FIRST PARISH OF OLD READING NOW WAKEFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 1644-1937

WILLIAM E. EATON

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1644-1937

by

William E. Eaton

Church St. Wakefield, About 1860.

From left to right: The Third First Parish Meeting-house 1769
The Third Parsonage, 1804
The First Town House, 1830
The Old Yale Engine House
Jeremiah Bryants Old Blacksmith Shop

In the rear of the Yale Engine House was the First Burying Ground used up to 1689

The Second Burying Ground, 1689, shows beyond the Church

The Common Fence was erected in

Reading Pond (Lake Quannapowitt) shows to the rear of Bryant's Shop.

"To raising Townes and Churches new in wilderness they wander First Plymouth and then Salem next were placed far asunder, Woburn, Wenham, Redding built with little Silver Mettles, Andover, Haverhill, Berris-banks their habitations settle".

from Good News in New England

INTRODUCTION

The men and women who came first to settle the Town of Redding, (Reading) in the Massachusetts Bay Colony were Puritans by faith--Godfearing, humble people, most of them farmers. Back in England "in the environment of early life they gathered at their Churches, believed in the Congregationalism of the great Wycliffe; were Non-conformists, calling for a simpler worship and a stricter life".

The First Church in the Bay Colony, was that established in Lynn in 1632, three years following the settlement of the Town. Those Churches antedating were: Charlestown Dorchester, Boston and Roxbury.

Rev. Walter Barton, in an historical address in 1882, at the 250th anniversary of the First Church of Christ in Lynn said:

> "The churches that were organized before ours were either removed to other places, or ceased to be churches of the Puritan faith. Although our present and original name reads: 'The First Church of Christ in Lynn', we have been in spirit, faith and policy Congregational from the beginning. We began here in a humble way. Five men asked Governor Endicott of Naumkeag (Salem) where they might go and settle, and as one of the company declared, the Governor 'gave us leave to go where we would'--and these petitioners settled Lynn--early known as Saugus".

It is only the years from 1632 up to about 1644, when the Redding Church was started and followed soon by the building of a meeting-house, that is of primary interest. In the story that is to be found on succeeding pages, it is to be assumed that most of the thirty or more families, removing to Reading, prior to 1647, were members in attendance at the Lynn Meeting-house up to the time of their removal westward. At the new settlement, there was immediate need of a meeting-house. No longer was it possible to continue religious worship at Lynn; distance and conditions of travel made this practically impossible. The old Church records reveal that one of the pioneer settlers, Nicholas Brown, kept his membership in the Lynn Church for some years.

But in the few years at Lynn, some of the earlier settlers listened to the religious teachings of the Reverend Stephen Bachiler, the first preacher who came to Boston with his family, and six or seven others in 1632. He was then 71 years old. He came at once to Lynn where he had a married daughter. "Being a man of decision and energy, he immediately formed a Church of those who came over with him, and of those on the ground who desired to unite with him. This was only three days after landing in Boston. There was no connal, so far as appears, no installation, no asking anybody's

leave, no hunting up precedents, but establishing one of his own, he went to work. He formed the church, it's believed, June 8, 1632". From November 8, 1636, Reverend Samuel Whiting was minister of the Lynn Church and was "one of the noblest ministers that ever served a Church". It was during the years of his pastorate that so many Lynn families moved on to create new settlements.

"Every obstruction being now removed, separated from all constraint by the wide ocean, and with the Bible for their guide they soon formed a church on the primitive and apostolic pattern. This was the first instance in which the Puritans formed a Congregational Church."

So for ten or more years, or for even a fewer number of years, our first Redding settlers and families began a new religious life in Lynn which De Tocqueville styles "a democratic, republican religion."

The first Lynn meeting-house, it is chronicled, was "only a small, plain building, without bell or cupola, planted in a hollow to protect it from the winds, and reached by descending steps to a dirt floor". This humble building was situated near the northeast corner of Shepard and Summer Streets. It was afterwards enlarged into a dwelling house and removed to Sea Street, and years later was removed to the northerly side of Harbor Street.

It was in this first Lynn Meeting-house that the first settlers of Redding worshipped. Here they continued in faith for the few years prior to their removal, with their families, inland in 1639, to lay the foundation of the old Town of Redding (1644) and to build their own substantial meeting-house on the southwest corner of the present Main and Albion Streets, in what is now the Town of Wakefield.

Of the 32 first settlers, first named in 1647, there were only ten whom we find members of the Redding Church on September 29, 1648: William Cowdrey and wife; John Peirson and wife; George Davis; William Hooper and wife; Edward Taylor and wife; Lieut. Thomas Marshall and wife; his son, Thomas Marshall; Zach. Fitch and wife; John Batchelder and wife; William Martin and wife; and Mary Swayne, wife of Jeremiah Swayne.

The first page in the extant records of the Reading Church specifically mentions Lieut. Marshall and Zach. Fitch as "dismissed from Lynn." John Batchelder and wife came to Redding from Lynn, but were "dismissed from the Dedham Church". William Eaton and his brother, Jonas Eaton, were "dismissed from Watertown". Samuel Haugh and his wife were "dismissed, he from Boston, and she from Charlestown".

The exact year that the first Redding Meeting-house was erected is not known. In 1720 Rev. Brown, fifth minister of the First Church, entered upon the records the following:

"A Copy of Ye Covenant made at ye gathering of ye first chh in Redding in New England about ye yr 1644"--the 24th church founded in the Massachusetts Bay Colony," only a quarter century following the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth!

The first homestalls in Ancient Redding were upon or near the shores of Redding Pond (now Lake Quannapowitt, Wakefield) and spreading out to the southeast and west. This settlement, until 1644, was called "Lynn Village", when it was incorporated, by act of the Colony Court as "Redding".

It has long been held that "Lynn Village", was in fact a Parish of Lynn, and that the said act of incorporation automatically incorporated and established the First Parish, that has had continued existence for nearly 300 years, owning today the stone edifice and land that is the house of worship of the First Congregational Church of Wakefield, Massachusetts.

In 1720 appears for the first time in the Town Records, the words, "First Parish," as follows: "A division of the First Parish is talked of". The extant separate records of the First Parish begin at this period, and are to be found in book form in the Beebe Public Library.

On the designation of the Ipswich River territory as the "North Precinct" or "Second Parish" in 1713, when the Town, made up then of two Parishes, confirmed grants of common lands to the First Parish it recognized that Parish as entirely distinct from the Town.

A careful examination of the old First Parish Church records from 1648 to 1800 does not reveal a single word concerning any of the first three meeting-houses. This would indicate that all things connected with the several houses of worship were exclusively the concern of the First Parish.

I am indebted to Theodore Eaton, Esq., present and for many years clerk of the First Parish for the following interpretation of the relationship of Town and Parish:

"The matter of the distinction between the town and the parish and the church has been passed on by our Supreme Judicial Court in a number of cases 100 years ago. This was about the time of the great schism, when the Congregational Churches and Parishes were split in two and the Trinitarians and Unitarians nearly came to blows. In many cases the Unitarians were successful in controling the parishes and so held possession of the meeting-houses and other property which had been devoted to religious purposes.

"In Stebbins v. Jennings, 10 Pick. 172. (27 Mass., 172); First Parish in Sudbury v. Stearns, 21 Pick., (38 Mass. 148); Baker v. Fales, 16 Mass. 487, it will be found that these cases hold that a church has no independent existence of its own, but is indissolubly connected with a parish or religious society. Many of the

decisions are by Chief Justice Shaw who was about the best of the lawyers. He defines the Church as follows: 'The Church is composed of those persons being members of such parish or religious society who unite themselves together for the purpose of celebrating the Lord's Supper'. He says that the town acts at the same time as a town and a parish and that there were hundreds of instances of that in the Commonwealth. 'In that case one corporate organization is commonly used for both of these purposes'.

"This union of town and parish lasted until new meeting-houses were put up within the limits of the town. Those living in the new territory formed a new parish and 'gathered' a church. The old parish now immediately sprang into a distinct individual existence as a corporation and held possession of and was entitled to all the property of the town which had been used for parish purposes. A conveyance was sometimes made from town to parish but it was not necessary.

"There were two kinds of parishes, one a territorial or local parish and the other a 'poll parish'. The local or territorial parish is the original kind and it had its corporate existence coincidental with that of the town and in the same territorial limits. When new societies began to be formed inside the limits of the city or town they became poll parishes which had no definite territory but were made up of such members as joined the society.

"It is true, that there was not any separation of the Town and Parish in Redding until the formation of a society in the North Precinct. Then necessarily the First Parish in Reading (a territorial parish which had existed along with the Town and performed the parochial or parish functions from 1644 on) was no longer coincident with the Town in the matter of territory. It followed in Reading as it did all over the Massachusetts Bay Colony that when a new parish was set up the old parish had different territorial limits from those of the town and began an existence as a corporation distinct from that of the Town.

"For example, the Chief Justice says in Stebbins v. Jennings, supra, page 183:

'The town settles a minister and makes other contracts of a parochial nature; it also establishes schools, engages instructors, and makes contracts in regard to other municipal objects. It also purchases and receives grants, donations, and conveyances of property, real and personal, some expressed to be for the support of a minister, and others for the support of schools, all of which are, or may be, held and managed under one corporate organization, and by one set of officers. Afterwards, a part of such town is set off into a distinct territorial or poll parish, and the remainder of the town, by law, becomes a parish. Here it is manifest, that as all those who compose the town, no longer compose the parish, the two capacities can no longer subsist together in the same body, and a distinct organization

becomes necessary. But there is no difficulty in recognizing these two distinct capacities whilst they subsisted together. For, after the separation, all those rights, duties and obligations, which belonged to the Town in its parochial character, devolve upon that portion of its inhabitants, who by operation of law become successors to the town in that capacity. whilst all those which belonged to the town in its municipal character, continue so to belong notwithstanding the erection of a new parish. And it may be remarked in passing, that this is equally the case, where the persons, who are formed into one or several new parishes, constitute a great majority of the inhabitants of the town. Those who become the successors of the town in its parochial capacity, succeed to the whole of its parochial rights, although they constitute but a small minority of its inhabitants'."

From 1644 to the present time the First Parish has built five meeting-houses, all within the present limits of the Town of Wakefield:

First	Built about 1644-45	Sold for 250 pounds
Second	Built in 1689	Torn down
Third	Built in 1769	Torn down
Fourth	Built in 1892	Burned in 1909
Fifth	Built in 1912	

This historical sketch of these five meeting-houses has for its main purpose the bringing together of stray and recorded facts, that they may be preserved and made available to the public, in this and future generations.

Wakefield, Massachusetts 1937

William E. Eaton

THE FIRST MEETING HOUSE

1644--1689

THE FIRST MEETING HOUSE 1644-1689

Pastors

Rev. Henry Green	1645-1648
Rev. Samuel Haugh	1648-1662
Rev. John Brock	1662-1688

The First Meeting House of the Parish was erected about 1644-45 and stood at or near the southwest corner of Main and Albion Streets of today, the present location of Bonney and Dutton's Drug Store. There has been published a picture or sketch of this early edifice--a one story log cabin affair. This picture is purely imaginary as the old records reveal. There is a record of galleries built on the south and the west sides; there was doubtless some kind of a tower as we have a record of the bell being rung on Holy Days, twice in the forenoon and twice in the afternoon. Very early there was a saw mill in the town and there were trees of size, ample for building. Reference is made to the two great beams in the meeting house, a building of sufficient size to accommodate the 41 members of record in 1648, and for many years after that time.

It is easy, therefore, to think of the first meeting house as a fairly commodious structure of at least two stories in height, with a bell tower, probably with two front entrances, one for men and the other for women. Shall we surmise that the building faced to the south, i. e. side-on to the then (as now) Common that extended from the present Water Street up Main Street to the Reading Pond and along the Easterly shore of said Pond.

The first trail, or roadway to Reading, was probably from Lynn over the present Nahant Street. The Indian trail to the vicinity of Reading's two lakes seems a reasonable supposition as to the entrance to this section by the first settlers, with their families, household and farm goods, cattle, tools, etc. Early records support this statement. There was doubtless a crude porch at the entrance of the meeting house and it was inside this entrance that in 1657 five young men were given permission to build a gallery, the Town vote reading:

> "that liberty be given to some young men to build a gallery between the <u>two great beams</u> on the south side of the meeting house, for <u>two seats breadth</u>, upon condition the gallery shall be their own, and to sell to any townsmen that the town shall approve of."

> "that the Selectmen have power to make a levy for the building of a gallery, to the value of six or seven pounds."

Four years later the Town "did agree with Jonathan Poole, John Brown Jr , Matthew Edwards and Nathaniel Cowdry about the Gallery, viz, that it should be taken down and set up in the west side of the now meeting house, but <u>one seat broad</u>, and the--and five young men should sit in it so long as the Town should see cause, and that the Town should give them three pound."

In 1662 the Town ordered "that no woman, maid nor boy nor gall shall sit in the south alley and east alley of the Meeting house, upon penalty of twelve pence for every day they shall sit in the alley after this present day".

Early meeting houses of Massachusetts Bay Colony are known to have been of fair size. They were just what the name implies--a meeting place to accommodate the inhabitants of the settlement, for the transactions of the business of the community, and as such, at the same time, became the home of the first church congregation. In later years, the meeting house came into exclusive use as a house of religious worship. In those first, as well as later meeting houses, there were seats at the ends and on either side and facing the pulpit--one reserved for the minister's family and the other to the deacons and the aged and the more well-to-do of the congregation.

Shall we now recall those members of the First Church who sat in that ancient Meeting House, when Parson Henry Green, the first minister, on Sundays exhorted the Holy Scriptures. Their names, 41 in number, of which 22 were women, appear on the first page of the extant records of the Church in 1648. There were five Deacons in 1645: Zachariah Fitch, John Pierson, Thomas Kendall, Thomas Parker and William Cowdrey. Parson Green died in 1648 and was succeeded by Rev. Samuel Haugh.

Francis Smith was a freeman in Watertown in 1637; came to Reading about 1647; settled at the north end of Smith's Pond (named for him). His dwelling stood east of where the Wakefield Junction Station is now. He at one time owned land extending easterly to what is now Woodville. He died in 1651. He had six sons: John, Isaac, Abraham, James, Benjamin and Elias. Before his death he divided his large estate among his sons, but in his will of 1650 he devised his house and homestead to his wife. Also, Francis Smith was the first of the first Redding settlers to die.

Mrs. Green. Frances Green, wife of Rev. Henry Green, first Redding Minister. She came to New England at the age of 16 years so that at her husband's ordination in 1645 she was 26 years of age. Parson Green came to New England at about the age of 30 years; married Frances Stone, daughter of Dr. Simon and Joanna Stone of Watertown. They had two children, Joanna and Nathaniel. Of Joanna little is known, but the records show Nathaniel as being in Watertown in 1694 and that he was a ne'er-do-well. "In 1711 Simon Taintor agreed to keep Nathaniel for four years." Parson Green died October 11, 1648, his widow remarried and had other children.

William Cowdrey, and his wife. Deacon William Cowdrey was born in 1602 at Weymouth, England; came to New England in 1630; was a farmer at Lynn; and removed to Redding about 1640 when he

came into possession of much land, three grants and divisions. He was clerk of the Writs, essentially the lawyer of the early settlement, as about all of the early records and documents were written by him. His early dwelling house was on the westerly side of the "Common" opposite the present Wakefield Town Hall and south of the first Meeting House. Later he built on Cowdrey's Hill, which took his name and is so called to this day. As Town Clerk he collected many local documents and records. His will bequeathed his writings (long since lost) to his son, Nathaniel. In 1651 the Colony Court appointed him on a committee to draw up "a confession of faith and discipline of the Church". In 1654 the Court authorized the Deacon "to sell wine of any sort, and strong liquors to the Indians--on urgent occasions". He was Deacon of the First Church during the first 40 years of the Town's existence--respected and revered. His wife was Joanna. She died in 1666; the Deacon in 1687, aged 89 years. In a deposition in 1683 William Cowdrey gave testimony indicating that the migration from Lynn to Redding was the outcome of several meetings of the first land owners in Redding; an organized plan to create a new settlement--the Redding of 1644.

John Pierson and his wife He was another early settler in 1639 or 1640, locating first probably on Cowdrey's Hill, later in Lynn End (Lynnfield) on the old Salem Road. An old map of Lynn indicates John Pierson's first farm was in 1630 located on the road leading north from the old Reading-Salem Road toward and passing Gerry's Cider Mill. He is first mentioned in the Lynn records in 1637. He was born in 1610 at Yorkshire, England, and died in 1679, his widow, Madeline, in 1690. The first Church records state that "John Pierson and wife were dismissed from Dedham" to the Redding Church. He was on a committee to build an addition to the First Parish second Meeting-House in 1702, having been a liberal contributor to the building of the original house in 1698. He was without doubt buried in the early graveyard on Church Street, where several of the early inhabitants of Lynn End were interred. Three children, Mary, Bertha and Sarah, were born in Lynn, and two sons, John and James, in Redding. Captain John married Tabitha, daughter of Deacon Thomas Kendall; James married Hepzibeth Sweyn (Swain) granddaughter of Jeremiah Sweyn, a first settler.

Brother Dunton. Two brothers, Robert and Samuel Dunton were in Redding in 1644, probably from Lynn. They came to New England from Redding, England. Robert was a selectman from 1647 to 1649. Both drew land in the first division of 1647. The "Bro. Dunton" was probably Samuel, who, with his family, lived on the homestead on the northerly side of Water Street, then the "Road to the Mill", just east of the present Crescent Street, known early as the "Gutterside". It is said that his wife was Anna who died in 1689, six years after the death of her husband. They had several children. The sons were John, Nathaniel and Samuel. John the oldest being willed the homestead. Two daughters, Hannah and Ruth attested his will. Other daughters were Elizabeth, Sarah and Mary. Each daughter was given a cow "or the value of a cow". A grandson, Samuel, was given "my long gun".

George Davis was in Salem in 1641. Lynn records say that he removed to Redding in 1641. In 1645 he bought nine acres of land, probably on the west side of Main Street, of William Blott. Davis obtained much land in the early divisions. In 1664 he sold 11 acres of land to Henry Merrow where was erected the first house in the territory of the present Town of Reading. His wife's name was Sarah who after the death of her husband married Joseph Rist. In two deeds in 1664 and 1683 there appears only his signature, yet he had children born in 1648, 1651, 1654, 1657 1660 and 1662. The early Church Records indicate that Davis was a trouble maker and was frequently brought before the Church for admonition. There is a record of his death in 1667. If this is so the 1683 deed above mentioned may have been executed by a son, George, born in 1660. A daughter, Hannah, married John Boutwell, and another daughter, Elizabeth, married Timothy Wiley who sold his early dwelling house and land as a site for the first parsonage. A third daughter first married Matthew Grover, who died in 1657, and married second Samuel Damon, son of Deacon John Damon, first settler.

Thomas Kendall and his wife. Thomas Kendall was an original settler, removing from Lynn to Redding in 1644; was a Deacon of the First Church. He settled on what was later known as the James Emerson place on the southeast corner of the present Prospect Street and Cedar Street. He died in 1681, his widow, Rebecca died in 1703. Eaton's "History of Reading" says of Deacon Kendall "Perhaps there is no one of the first settlers that can be pointed out whose blood, through his eight daughters diverging, has come down to us through so many families and still flows in the veins of so many of the present population of the Town". He left no male survivor. These eight daughters, each christened their first born son Kendall--as, Kendall Pierson, Kendall Boutwell, Kendall Parker, Kendall Eaton, Kendall Briant, Kendall Dunton, Kendall Nichols and Kendall Goodwin. The Deacon's homestead, on his death, passed to James Boutwell, a son-in-law. Oliver Kendall, a family genealogist, states "that the common ancestors of all the New England Kendalls was undoubtedly Francis Kendall, who came to New England in 1640 and first settled in Charlestown. Deacon Kendall's brother, Francis, born 1620, was among the first settlers in Woburn. Rebecca, the widow died at the age of 85 years, was the mother of ten children and left 175 grand and great grandchildren.

Thomas Parker and his wife. Thomas Parker was one of the eight first settlers in Redding mentioned in the Lynn grant of land in 1638 "30 akers and ten", probably meaning two different parcels of land in the Redding settlement. He, too, was a Deacon of the First Church, born in 1614, came from London, England to America in the "Susan Ellen" in 1635 at the age of 30, stopped first at Lynn and was a party to the organized settlement of Lynn Village the Redding of 1644. His homestead was in the center of the Town on what is now Crescent Street, northeast of Wakefield's Town Hall. His son, Nathaniel "was the common ancestor of the West or Wood

End Parish Parkers". The Deacon died in 1680, his widow, Amy, in 1690. In the row of ancient stones in Reading's second burial ground on Church Street is a well preserved gravestone, the oldest in the cemetery, marking the reburial place of the Deacon whose remains were first interred in the first burying ground in what is now Wakefield's Park.

William Hooper came from Scotland in 1635 at the age of 18, was one of the very early settlers in Redding. There appears to be no record of his marriage in either Lynn or Redding, but he had a daughter, Mary, born 1647, who died in 1678. The First Church records mention an "Eliza Hooper", for Elizabeth, as this was his first wife's name. In 1664 Ruth, his second wife, joined her husband in a deed of housing and land (where the Hartshorne House stands on Church Street) to Mary Hodgman. After this sale Hooper relocated his home on Prospect Street, near its junction with the present Hopkins Street. On Hooper's death in 1678 his property was divided between his widow and William, the eldest son.

Mary Swain was wife of Jeremiah (Jeremy) Sweyne (Swain) who was in Charlestown in 1638. He settled on the early Reading Salem Road in the Montrose district of the present day. He was a large land owner, as were nearly all of the first settlers. Swain's Place still bears his name. He died in 1658, the second death in the Town. Of his wife little is known. A son, Major Jeremiah Sweyne, born in 1643 was a doctor and was at one time assistant to the Colonial Governor. In 1688 Major Swayne was Commissioned as Commander-in-chief of all Colonial forces in an expedition against the Kennebec and Eastern Indians and their French confederates. A daughter, Mary, married first in 1658 Thomas Clark, and second in 1665, Edward Marshall.

Joan Marshall was wife of Lieutenant Thomas Marshall. Her name was really Joanna.

Thomas Marshall, Sr., was known as Sergeant, Ensign and Captain while his son was called Lieutenant Marshall. Marshall was one of eight Lynn men who in 1638 were granted "30 akers and ten" in the Redding territory, with John Pool, Richard Sadler, Lieutenant Richard Walker, Nicholas Brown, Zackery Fitch, Thomas Parker, and William Cowdrey left their Lynn homes for reasons set forth in a petition. "The Petitioners state that between two and three hundred akers of the deserted farms is so overrun with sorrel that it is scarce quittance cost to such whose necessity as with us force them to improve the same". Father and son received land in the first general division in 1647; the former afterwards removing to Lynn, where he was for many years landlord of the famous Anchor Tavern, halfway between Boston and Salem. It was Lieutenant Thomas Marshall, a carpenter, who was the more active Marshall in the early days of ancient Redding. He came over with William Hooper in 1635 at the age of 22 years. Thomas Sr., died in 1689, his wife Rebecca in 1693. Old deeds indicate that the first home of the Lieutenant was on Cowdrey's Hill, and later near the present Wakefield Town Farm. There is a record that "he was a neighbor of William Cowdrey

and that he and Lieutenant Marshall were born in 1613 and both came to Lynn in 1635. These two men became leaders in the promotion of Lynn Village".

Thomas Hartshorne and his wife. Thomas Hartshorne was born about 1614 and died in 1683. He was a "tailer". He drew land in Redding in 1647, where he settled with his wife, Susanna and a son, Thomas, born in 1642. Susanna died March 18, 1659; his second wife, Hannah, July 10, 1673. Thomas Hartshorne was born in Redding, England. His homestead of 32 acres located on the old Redding-Woburn road (now Elm Street opposite and south of Winn Street) was willed to his son, Benjamin, born in 1654. His descendants are today active in that part of Old Reading--the Wakefield of today. A descendant in the fifth generation, Colonel James Hartshorne, owned and occupied the Old Hartshorne House on Church Street from 1803 until his death in 1870 at the age of 93.

Edward Taylor and his wife. Edward Taylor was in Lynn in 1639. He was a land owner in Redding in 1642 for that year he sold to Nicholas Brown "four score and ten akers" on the east shore of Redding Pond. He married first Christina, who died in 1673, and married later Elizabeth, widow of John Bridges of Charlestown. It has been reported that in between these marriages he led to the altar the widows of Roger Bancroft and Martin Saunders. A deed of land in 1660 closed with a warrant "to defend against all troubles, suits at law or any incumbrants". He died in 1694. Taylor's homestead was on the east shore of Redding Pond, extending eastward beyond the Vernon Street of this generation.

William Martin--Sister Martin. William Martin--named "Will" in the first Church Book. He came from Lynn with John Pool and others about 1639. He was Selectman in 1647-48 and again in 1651. "Sister" Martin was evidently his wife. Upon the death of William Lakin, after 1661, Martin married his widow, Lydia and removed to Groton where the Lakins had established their home. His homestead on the east shore of Redding Pond, some 30 acres, passed to Ralph Dix who came to Redding about 1662. This homestead was at what is now Main Street, corner of Lawrence Street on the northeast corner, on the site of the Mansion House built by the Honorable Thomas Emerson. Martin's will of 1672 left a bequest of twenty shillings to Reverend Mr. Brock, then minister of the Redding Church.

Lydia Lakin was Lydia Brown before her marriage to William Lakin (or Lankin) as it is found in some records. This was previous to 1648. Her second marriage is mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

Eliza Wiley was wife of John Wiley, Sr., one of the early settlers. They lived in the east part of the Town (Woodville) Eaton's "History of Reading" gives her name as Elizabeth and that she died in 1662. Her husband died about 1672. They had a son Timothy, who in 1681 sold his home place south of the First Meeting-house to the Town as a site for the First Parsonage, the purchase price being 102 pounds.

Eliza Hart was the wife of Isaac Harte, although her name appears as Elizabeth in an early deed. Harte came to New England in 1637 as servant to Richard Carver. This may convey a wrong impression as many an immigrant had no other means of arriving in the new colony, assuming the "servant" for the opportunity of immigration. Harte went first to Watertown, settled in Redding in 1647, his homestead being across Church Street, southwest of the present First Parish (Congregational) Meeting-house. His land extended from the present Baptist Church to Reading Pond. This property Harte sold to the Town in 1689, and on a part of it the second Meeting-house was erected. Later the second parsonage was built on the southerly portion, long known as the Caleb Prentiss mansion house. On the northwesterly portion of the Harte land was laid out the second burying ground to the west of the Meeting-house. Harte had difficulties with the Church on account of his leaning to Baptism. He later removed to the North Precinct, and finally to Wood End (Lynnfield). His wife was an eccentric person, and in the Witchcraft craze was one of four females of Reading to be arrested for Witchcraft and confined for ten month in a Boston jail. There are several long entries in the early Church records concerning Eliza Hart and her "varied sinfulness" and giving "small signs of true repentance".

Zachariah Fitch and his wife. Zach. Fitch was an outstanding early settler; a Deacon of the First Church in 1645. He was born in 1591 at St. Albans, England; was in Lynn in 1636 and in 1638 received a grant of "30 akers and ten" in the Redding settlement. His homestead was east of our Main Street, at the corner of Salem Street, but toward Pleasant Street. What is Salem Street of today was early known as "Fitch Lane" and his farm on "Fitches Hill". The early road to Andover was laid out over his farm. His wife was Mary. Deacon Fitch was a member of the Lynn "First Church" as the records show that he and his wife were "dismissed from Lynn". It is reputed that the Fitch (Fytch) Family originated in Germany; and then to England. Their son, Benjamin, became a Deacon February 15, 1690, many years after his father's decease in 1662.

William Eaton and his wife. William Eaton came to Watertown from England in 1637 with his wife, Martha, and three children, and with them was his brother, Jonas Eaton. They were from Staple-in-Kent, England. William removed to Redding about 1642, and established his farm and homestead on the east shore of Redding Pond. The Church records read: "Dismissed from Watertown". The wife, Martha, was a daughter of Edward Jenkyn of Wingham and of St. Johns in Thanet, and probably a granddaughter of Henry Jenkyn of England. In her father's will is a bequest "to my daughter, Martha, 20 pounds within one year of my decease". She was one of eight children. She was baptised at St. Johns in Thanet 23 November 1605, and died at Reading 14 November 1680. She married William Eaton of Staple, Co. Kent, husbandman 28 January 1627-28. William died in Reading in 1673 a year before his brother, Jonas.

John Batchelder and his wife. John Batchelder was another early settler on the east shore of Redding Pond. His wife was Rebecca who died in 1662. His descendants early removed to what is now the Town of Reading. Batchelder was a large land owner as the old records disclose. He died in 1676, leaving his homestead by the lake equally to his sons John and David. Passing from earthly scenes he was buried in the first buryground on the northerly side of Church Street. In 1936 there was uncovered in an excavation on the site of this old cemetery the upper part of an old gravestone, the name "John Bachellor" cut deep in the slate stone. The evidence is that this decorative tablet marked the burial spot of the first settler, as his son, John, did not die until 1705, sixteen years after the second burying ground was established. John Batchelder's daughter, Mary, born in 1635, married Nathaniel Cowdrey, eldest son of William Cowdrey, a first settler. There is a record of John Batchelder being in Lynn in 1639, but he joined Redding's First Church on "dismissal from Dedham".

Jonas Eaton and his wife. Jonas Eaton was a brother of William Eaton, above mentioned. He came from England on the ship "Hercules" in 1637; settled first in Watertown, on the old Sudbury Road. (a short distance northwest of the present Watertown Public Library) Here he bought six acres and a home of Simon Onge, which he sold in 1646 on his removal to Redding. He and his wife, Grace, joined Redding's First Church before 1648 on "dismissal from Watertown". His homestead farm of 30 acres adjoined that of his brother, William, on the east shore of Redding Pond. This he left to his second son, Jonas, who disappears from Towne records in 1702. A few years previously he had sold the old homestead to Thomas Nichols. A second farm at "Eaton's Playne", on what is now Grove Street in the Towne of Reading he bequeathed to his eldest son, John. The parentage of his wife, Grace, is not known. Jonas died in 1674, and in 1680 his widow married Henry Sillsby of Lynn.

Thomas Bancroft. Lieut. Bancroft was born in England in 1622. Reaching the Bay Colony he settled in Lynn, later building a homestall near Beaver Dam at Lynn End, and is supposed to have lived there at the time of his second marriage in 1648. His first wife was Elizabeth, daughter of Michael Bacon of Dedham. His second wife was also Elizabeth, daughter of Michael and Sarah Metcalf. The Lieutenant died in 1691. A son, Dea. Thomas Bancroft was an officer in the King Phillip Indian War. He died in 1711. Another son, John, was also a Deacon. This family can claim five Deacons in the early church organization. Thomas Sr., was the ancestor of the Reading Bancrofts and of George Bancroft, the historian.

Judith Pool. The family connection here is not known. Margaret was the wife of John Pool, the first settler. They had a son, Capt. Jonathan. His wife was Judith but when the First Church records were written in 1648, Jonathan was only fourteen years of age. Their daughter, Judith was not born until 1658. It is a fair presumption that Judith Pool, First Church member, was a sister of John Pool, the early settler who died in 1667; his wife Margaret in 1662.

Abigail Damon. Abigail Damon was wife of Dea. John Damon,

who came early to Watertown with his mother and step-father, John Eaton, in 1635. Instead of following his father to Dedham, he came early to Redding with (as the writer believes) his uncles, William and Jonas Eaton. He settled first on Cowdrey's Hill where he and his wife, Abigail, brought up a large family. Their descendants are numerous and widespread. The Deacon died in 1708, aged 87 years, and his widow only five years later.

Lieutenant Smith and his wife. John Smith was in Lynn in 1634; was granted 60 akers of land in 1638 in the Redding territory. He was a son of Francis Smith, previously mentioned, the only instance of both father and son appearing on the first page of the Church record of 1648. His farm was on the southeast corner of the present Main and Nahant Street. Lieut. John inherited, on his father's death in 1651, the Smith homestead, south and across the road from the son's farm. Lieut. John married first in 1647 Catherine, daughter of Isaac Morrill of Roxbury. She died in 1662. He married, second, Mary Bill, said to have been a passenger on the "Planter" in 1635, being then eleven years old. Several generations of the Smith family were deacons in the old and First Parish Church.

Parson Haugh. Parson Haugh "came Hither" November 3, 1648, but was not ordained pastor until March 26, 1650. He came on dismissal from Dedham and his wife, Sarah, from Charlestown.

Note: The absence of the names of a number of the first settlers from church records of 1648 is unaccounted for. There was John Pool, Jeremiah Swayne, Isaac Hart and others known to have been in Redding on or before 1648. There is a probability that there are undiscovered earlier church records. In the extant First Church records, under date of May 1648, there appear these new members: Sarah Haugh, wife of the new minister, Samuel Walker and his wife, Lydia, Dusten and Alice Clarke.

From the above date to 1655 these old church records are blank.

It has been estimated that 35 years was about the average age of the early male population in Redding. There were younger men and women, and older men and women, but in this standard of average we can think of them as being in the full vigor of early middle life.

It is possible also to think of that first Meeting-house as belonging to, as Mrs. Alice Morse Earle writes in her "Sabboth in Puritan New England", the days of "square log houses with their clay-filled chinks, surmounted with a steep roof thatched with long straw or grass and often with only beaten earth for a floor". Probably the "windows were of oiled paper, or lozenge-shapes panes set in lead admitting light".

It was a militant church and congregation, for those early settlers came to the house of worship armed--worshipping inside the house, unheated, unlighted and cold in winter. They worshipped as they desired in their new wilderness home. It was a house

of God for strong, courageous men and women.

And sitting on the wooden benches of that first Meeting-house we must not forget to include:

Mrs. Haugh, wife of the second minister

Samuel Walker
Lydia Dustin
Alice Clark
Timothy Cooper
Henry Felch
Joseph Hartshorn, Jr.
Capt. John Brown
Thomas Nichols
Hannaniah Parker
Goodman Sawyer
Henry Bellflower
Jeremy Fitch
John Damon
Capt. Jeremiah Swain
Timothy Wiley
Robert Burnap
Thomas Brown
Walter Fairfield
Nicholas Holt
Nicholas Brown
John Weston
William Fairfield
Ezekiel Morrill
Thomas Clark
George Lilley
Nathaniel Cutler
James Stimpson
Matthew Edwards

and many others between 1644 and 1689 when the First Church was abandoned. There was no Meeting-house near Reading and as years passed settlers in Malden, (now Melrose and Greenwood) Charlestown, (now Stoneham), Lynn End (now Lynnfield) and Wilmington, became members and remained loyal to the First Church until dismissed, when meeting houses were built in their respective communities or parishes. For 75 years "Reading's First Meeting-house was the only religious beacon from Charlestown to the Merrimac and into many a weary heart did this church shed the light of faith and hope"

Ye Church Covenant of 1644

In the old church records of 1720 is to be found the following statement over the signature of Parson Brown:

> "The Covenant of Ye Firch Chh in Reading being in a loose leaf paper wh is liable to be shattered and lost, and I thinking it might be a service to ye Chh, to have it inserted in ys book for its better security, did Janey 1, 1720 ask ye Chh leave to record it here, wh they agreed unto by a Silential Vote. and accordingly I have faithfully recorded it on ye following leaf. R. D. Brown".

THE COVENANT

"A Coppy of ye Covenant made a ye Gathering of ye First Church in Reading in New England, about ye year 1644.

"We Avouch ye Ld to be our God and give up ourselves (with our seed after us in their Generations) to be his people in ye Truth and Sincerity of or hearts.

"We give up ourselves to ye Ld Jesus Christ to be ruled and guided by him in ye matters of his worship, and in our whole conversation, Acknowledging him not only or alone Saviour but also or King to reign and rule over us, our Prophet and Teacher by his word and Spirit, forsaking all othr Teachers and Doctrines we he has not Comanded; and we wholly disclaim or own Right in point of Justification, and look at it as a monstrous Cloath; and do cleave unto him for Righteousness and life, grace, and glory.

"We do farther promise by ye help of Christ to walk with our Brethern and Sisters of ye Congregation, in ye Spirit of Brotherly love watching over them and caring for them; avoiding all jealousies, Suspitions backbiting, censurings, quarrelings, and Secret Rising of heart against them forgiving and forbareing and yet Seasonably admonishing and restoring them by a Spirit of meekness, and Sett them in Joynt again that have been thru infirmity overtaken in any fault among us.

"We will not in ye Congregation be forward to Show our gifts or parts in Speaking nor be ready to disgrace our brethern or discover ye failings, but attend an orderly call before we put forth ourselves, doing nothing to the offence of ye Church, but in all things endeavoring our own and our bretherns edification and trust in God."

The early burial ground was north of Church Street, near to and southeast of the Pagoda in Wakefield's Park. As early churches invariably located a burial place next to or near the Church it would be interesting to know the reason why Reading's first burial ground was so remote from the Meeting-house.

The second burial ground laid out in 1688 was to be in the care of the First Parish. In this instance it is to be noted that it adjoined the second Meeting-house.

1648

Parson Green, first minister died October 11, 1648. Rev. Samuel Haugh came as minister.

1650

Johnson (of Woburn) in his "Wonder Working Providence of Zions Savior in New England" wrote: "That about the year 1645 the Town of Reading had her foundation stone laid. *** They have gathered into a Church, and ordained a Pastor from among themselves at the same time: a young man of good abilities to preach the word, and of very humble behavior, named Mr. Green".

1651

For many years town and Parish meetings were held in the Meeting-house. This year the Town voted: "That the Town Meeting to be no longer than a man can see to write and read in the place of meeting".

No action was valid unless there were present a "Quorum of 9 men". In 1657 was started the two Town Meetings yearly-one in February and one in December.

1652

When the first bell was hung in the Steeple tower is not known, but that there was a bell there in 1652 for "Thos. Clark, for ringing bell on the Lord's Day, twice in the forenoon, and twice in the afternoon", was paid 5 shillings for the year. It has been intimated that perhaps this early bell was of the hand ringing variety--but early records fail us.

1653

That collections to support the minister were slow this year for "George Davis and Tho. Clarke were chosen to gather up that part of Mr. Haugh's rate that will not be freely payd without constraint".

1655

Pastor Haugh's compensation was established--"that his

yearly maintenance payd him every quarter, one-half in wheat, peas and barley and the other in rye and Indian, and to make even every half year". Every Inhabitant was obliged to pay his yearly part toward Parson Haugh's salary even if he left Town before the year was out.

1658

Three years later the minister's pay was "made 1/3 in wheat, and barley, 1/3 in peas and rye and 1/3 in butter and Indian". This year (1658) forty-six persons were assessed to pay the minister.

1659

Dea. William Cowdrey was authorized to join parties in marriage.

1662

Pastor Haugh died March 30. His successor was Rev. John Brock, ordained Nov. 13th, the day after he married Mrs. Sarah Haugh "a widow indeed". Under Parson Brock's ministry there was great activity in the Church as immediately thirty-six new persons joined, among them being "Sister Hartshorn, dismissed from Ipswich" Nick Brown and his wife from Lynn; Sister Cowdrey from Lynn; Sister Bancroft from Dedham; and Sister Nichols from Ipswich.

1678

This year the Meeting-house was declared too small for both the inhabitants of the Town,and those other persons of adjacent settlements, of Lynn End (Lynnfield) and Charlestown (now Stoneham), and so a most unique and emphatic petition for some relief was forwarded to the "Honoured Generall Corte", signed for the people of Reading by William Cowdred, Robert Burnap, Jona. Pool, Thomas Parker and Jeremy Swaine. In this ancient document we find these sentences:

"Not knowing which way to helpe ourselves ** It being soe with us that we are butt a poore place, very few above sixty families abel to pay to the Ministry, and severall of them have more need to Receive than to paye. *** and to us their is Adjasent families which be aonstant hearers of the word, which go not at all to their oune towne, *** which seems to be very hard for us to Maytayne Ministry and Meeting-house convenently for them or to force them to paye their hole Rates to their oune towne *** so we declare to your honners is that wee have not now not roume enough in our Meeting-house for ourselves, but the Adjasent farmers being one third as mutch as wee we must build anew before itt bee Longe for the house will bee too littell for them and us, etc."

This was the beginning of a movement to build a new house of worship.

1679

This year the town established "a rate of 60 or 70 pound for the building of a new Meeting-house, or repairing the old one". There was no money appropriated, rather a committee was chosen to whom was delegated "general powers to expend such sums of money as the town should raise from time to time for building, buying etc." This Committee, was Capt. Swayne, Master John Brown, and Mas. Hannaniah Parker, did subsequently expend the funds aforesaid in repairing the old Meeting house but chiefly in buying land for and in building the first Parsonage, erected two years later.

1681

Early in 1681, land for a parsonage, a ministerial house for Parson John Brock, was purchased of Timothy Wiley--some ten acres extending south and west of the Meeting-house with the house thereon, the price paid being 102 pounds. The Town paid 14s "for pulling down the old house". The edifice was then erected and occupied by Parson Brock until his death in 1688. In this connection the Town agreed:

"that the house now a-building, and land bought for the minister, shall be for the inhabitants of Redding and their heirs forever, and for the use of the ministry, and so to be forever". In 1683 the building committee made its report:

An accoumpt given by the Committee of land sold, and of the two Rates past into their hands, and parte of greate rate, the 9th of ye 11th mo. of 1683, which (Committee) weare Mas. Browne, Capt. Swayne, And Ensigne Parker, as followeth:

		£	s	d
Item,	To Timothy Wilele for the purches of land for the ministeriall house	102	0	0
"	For meanding the Meatting House Yhard.	2	1	9
"	For brickes and pauving tile bought	11	7	6
"	" nails bought for the house	4	0	3
"	" limestoone 2 tunn	1	10	0
"	" by order of Selectmen, payd	5	15	11
"	" payed by Mas. Browne, 600 of boards	1	10	0
"	" Payed to John Eaton for apple trees	1	17	0
"	" Payed by bro. Barker and bro. Joseph (Browne?)	1	6	6
"	" frameing the leanto and 700 of boards delivered at at the house and for making and laying of Troues (Troughs?) in the Greene and spreading of gravel	3	17	0
"	" work done in making of bricks and carting of them homr and for carting a tunn of limestoone	1	14	6

			L	s	d
Item	For	time spent as a Committeeman (N. B. the foregoing payments were by Mas. Browne.)	0	6	0
		payd by Capt. Swayne for carting			
"	"	of clay and boards to the house	3	9	0
"	"	carting and loodeing of stones.	1	2	0
"	"	carting of a 1000 of brickes	1	0	0
"	"	a bill from the Selectmen	0	17	0
"	"	one days digeing of clay and day carting	0	11	6
"	"	seting up the orchard fence	0	15	0
"	"	one day and ½ seting of apple trees.	0	3	9
"	"	4 load of brickes and carting	0	12	0
"	"	535 feete of boards and carting	1	8	0
"	"	writeing of a bond and coppie	0	2	0
"	"	pulling down the ould house	0	14	0
"	"	900 of shingles	0	9	0
"	"	diegeing and carting of clay to make bricks.	0	18	0
"	"	carting of half a tunn of limestoone	0	5	0
"	"	frameing of the porch.	2	0	0
"	"	binding and carting of shingles	0	3	0
"	"	time spent as Committee man.(J.Swayne)	1	12	0
		Payd by Ensigne Parker:			
"	"	carting and hewing of timber	14	0	0
"	"	carting of 4200 of brickes	4	4	0
"	"	1469 foote of board	4	0	0
"	"	laying 8000 shingles	1	12	0
"	"	covering the house	1	0	0
"	"	work done at Seabred Taylor's house	2	0	0
"	"	carting of half a tunn of limestoone	0	5	0
"	"	carting and binding of shingles	0	3	6
"	"	time spent as a Committee man, (Ens. Parker)	2	10	0

There yet reste in the Committees hands, in money, and as money, in nails and in ----------goods: 9 0 6

Viz:

In Ensigne Parkers hands, in goods and nails, but parte of them spent.	6	5	0		
In Capt. Swayne's hands in goods as money	0	13	0		
In Mas. Browne's hands, in money and goods as money.	2	2	6		
				9	0	6

N. B. More payd to Josiah Browne 0 14 0

	L	s	d
The totall of these sums is	197	17	5
A further account of expenses, for the Parsonage, showed that an additional sum was paid of	135	18	9
The former account was	197	17	5
	333	16	2

The Parsonage cost exceeded the original cost by £135, 18s, 9d, bringing the total cost up to £333-16-2.

In spite of the "forever" vote previously made, and after the settlement of Rev. Pierpont in 1689, the Town voted to "give one-half of the land that the Town bought of Timothy Wiley, with the building thereon; namely the North side of said land to Mr. Jona. Pierpont, his heirs and assigns forever".

The condition under which the above gift was made, was that the Town, following the death of their minister, and on payment of £100 in money, might take back the land and building; also paying "for what the building is better at his decease than it is".

It was only a year later that Parson Pierpont bought the 10 acres and the Parsonage outright for £50. The estate, after his death, became in 1762 the property of John Vinton, conveyed by the Parson's heirs.

There was a barn on the ministerial property for in 1685 the Town ordered "that the old ministeriall barn be pulled down and a new one built, 20 x 20 feet in size". The old barn was, in all probability, on the Wiley land when it was acquired.

That the parsonage was a substantial building is evident from the material used in its construction. It had a porch and a leanto. The Town set out an orchard for the Parson for John Eaton furnished the trees from his orchard on the East shore of Reading Pond. It took 1½ days to "set the orchard and setting the orchard fence".

The builders were to take stock that is "shingles at 10s per hundred; clapboard and boards at 5s per hundred; cider at 10s per bbl; corn, hogs, and tobacco at 6s per pound-- and one third discount for cash".

The second parish minister, Parson Haugh, evidently did not occupy the old first parsonage for the records show that he acquired and lived in the house that early stood at or near the present Wakefield Town Hall. This house and land remained in possession of his descendants until it was sold about 1772, by Thomas Nichols, a grandson of Rev. Mr. Haugh, to Capt. David Smith. This was later the home of his son, Noah Smith, and the old house was removed in 1869 to a spot farther east (on Lincoln Street, rear of Taylor's Block,) to give room for our present Wakefield Town Hall.

This is the simple story of the First Meeting House, Church members and Parsonage up to 1689 when the Second Meeting-house was built; and the old house sold in 1692 "for 25 shillings and the building for the Watch House frame". The money was given "to Capt. Browne in part pay for the school".

THE SECOND MEETING-HOUSE

1689--1768

THE SECOND MEETING HOUSE 1689-1768

Ministers

Jonathan Pierpont	1688-1709
Richard Brown	1711-1732
William Hobby	1733-1765

We now come to the Second Meeting-house in Old Reading, erected at "Harts Corner", a location nearly identical with the site of the present First Parish stone edifice, and built at a cost of £365, contributed by 109 subscribers. This spot takes its name from Isaac Hart (Heart) who settled in Reading in 1647; drew 16 acres of land in 1652 on the Woburn line; was the owner of 91 acres in 1658 and in 1688 when the new meeting was planned lived at or near this "Hart's Corner".

No record has been found of the conveyance of any land to the Parish. We know that Hart owned land on both sides of what is now Church Street, extending from the Pond south to the present location of the Baptist Church and bounded on east sides by the Common. The Town Book, under date of February 3, 1689 reads: "It was agreed and voted that the Town will buy the land that was formerly Isaac Hart's, now in the improvement of Thomas Hodgman, and give £80 in money for it". In the land bought was about two acres north of Church Street, a part set aside for a site for the new Meeting-house, and a larger part set aside for the second burial ground; south of Church Street was a larger tract of land, 14 acres, and it was on this land, at the corner of what is now Lafayette, and Common Streets that the second Parsonage was built.

It is probable that the owner of these two parcels in 1689 was John Winbourne, who in 1667 married Elizabeth Hart, daughter of Isaac Hart. An unrecorded deed of Hart to Winbourne, in 1689 is of sufficient interest to be here recited, as more accurately describing the land above mentioned.

Deed of Heart and Wife to John Wonborne--1689

"Know All men by these presents that I Isaac Heart of Lin in the County of Essex yeoman & Elizabeth my wife for divers goode and valuable Causes & Considerations moving us thereto unto & especially for & in Consideration of that farme of upland & medow, which I the said Isaac Heart gave unto my Sone & Daughter Wonborne at their marriage where with we doo asknowledge our Selves fully Satisfied & Contented and there of & of every part thereof do exonorate Acquit and discharge my Sone Wonborne his heirs exsecutor and Assiners & every of them for ever & do by these presence give grant bargaine sell & confirme unto him the said my Sone Wonborne all that land that Thomas Hodgman hath lease of bearing date the first and seventeenth day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and eighty-five lying in town of Reding to wit fourteen agres more or less of upland being butted and bounded as followeth

on the northwest with the highway on ye northeast with the Common on the southeast with the lands of Robbart Burnap and on the southwest with the Lands of Thomas Hodgman & two acres more or less lying on the northwest side of the aforesaid highway & bounded on the northwest with the pond & on the other two sides with the Common, the land being in all sixten acres more or less to have and to holdeth Said land & every part of it & parsoll of it as it is butted and bounded unto my son Wonborne aforesaid & to his heirs exsecutors and assigns forever & furthermore I the said Isaac Heart so give grant & Enfeose & Confirm all the right title claims interest & demands that I the Said Isaac Heart have or ever had in any of the aforesaid premises to the aforesaid my Sone Wonborne & to his heirs exsecutors & assigns and furthermore I the Said Isaac Heart do firmly by these presents bind myself my heirs exsecutors and assigns to defend and protect the Said Wonborne his heirs exsecutors and assigns from all trouble suits-at-law molestation or Incumbrants which any way Arise from me the Said Isaac Heart or Elizabeth my wife or from our heirs, exsecutors or assigns or from any other person or persons whatsoever Laying Claims or title thereunto from or by or under me the Said Isaac Heart or Elizabeth my wife & that the aforesaid Wonborne my Sone his heires & assigns shall quietly & peaceable Injoy the Same forever provided the abovementioned Thomas Hodgman shall not be hindered from injoying his lease of the fore mentioned premises,

In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and Seales this eighth day of October in year of our Lord one thousand six hundred eighty nine.

Signed Sealed & delivered in the presence of us.	the marks of	
Thomas Heart	Isaac M. Heart	SEAL
Adam Heart	Elizabeth Heart	SEAL

"Isaac Hart personally appeared before me this 8th October 1689 and firmly acknowledged ye above Instrument to be his free act and deed.

Jonathan Curwin."

So it appears that on the first or seventeenth day of March 1685, Hodgman leased the whole or some portion of these premises, but again the records fail to disclose when and how Hodgman surrendered his lease.

So we have the story of the spot in Old Reading, where for a period of 248 years worship of the Lord has been continuous to the religious and social welfare of the Community and of the men and women of the Parish and Church organization.

We find no construction account of the Second Meeting-house. We know that the building faced west. The accompanying picture, taken or drawn at a later time is believed as good as it is today possible to present it. When built it had a sloping side construction on one side only, as the remodeling contract in 1701-2 provided for an addition on the north side to balance that on the east side.

The bell tower or "Turret" was not added until 1728. It was built by Capt. Jos. Burnet and Mr. John Batchelder. Landlord Wesson was allowed £2-11-6 "for expenses at his house for raising ye turret on ye Meeting-house". The Meeting-house had no weather vane until later. We do know that the new house was to be kept clean, for in 1690 the Town paid "Goodwif Lilley, for sweeping the Meeting-house for the year 1690, three bushels of Indyun Corne".

List of Subscribers to the Second Meeting-house.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Rev. John Brock	5	15	0	Robert Burnap	5	0	0
Joseph Hartshorn	2	0	0	Joseph Burnap	2	0	0
John Woodward	2	0	0	Sergt. Tho. Hodgman	5	0	0
Capt. John Browne	10	0	0	James Boutwell	8	0	0
Joseph Browne	5	0	0	Wid. Rebecca Kendall	1	10	0
Edwd Taylor	3	0	0	Seabred Taylor	2	0	0
John Batchelder	8	0	0	Sergt. John Parker	9	0	0
John Eaton Sen.	8	0	0	Jonathan Eaton	3	0	0
Tho. Nichols	6	10	0	Joshua Eaton	7	0	6
John Dix	5	0	0	Dea. John Damon	2	0	0
Left.Hannaniah Parker	10	0	0	Thos. Damon	5	0	0
David Bachelder	0	15	0	Matthew Edwards	6	0	0
Maj. Jereh Swayne	10	0	0	Wm. Hooper	2	10	0
Josiah Browne	4	0	0	John Weston Jr.	2	0	0
Cornelis Browne Sen.	3	10	0	Timothy Wiley	4	0	0
Tho. Burnap Jr.	2	10	0	James Stimpson	2	0	0
Dea. Benj. Fitch	8	0	0	Geo. Walker Jr.	1	10	0
Joseph Fitch Jr.&Sen	4	12	0	Sergt. Henry Felch	2	0	0
John Weston Senr.	1	0	0	Daniel Merrow	2	0	0
John Boutwell	3	0	0	Capt. Tho. Bancroft	7	0	0
Jeremiah Pike	2	7	0	Richard Harnden	3	5	0
James Pike Senr.	2	15	0	John Eaton(of the plain)	7	0	0
Nath'l Cutler	6	0	0	Samuel Lamson	4	0	0
John Tomson	0	13	2	John Upton	6	0	0
John Burnap	0	18	0	John Upton, Jr.	2	10	6
Sergt Nath'l Parker	5	0	0	Philip McIntier	3	0	0
Samuel Damon	5	0	0	Tho. Burt.	2	0	9
James Nichols	4	7	0	Geo. Flint.	3	10	0
John Felch.	0	11	0	Francis Hutchinson	3	0	0
Joseph Dutton	2	0	0	Wid. Phelps.	0	6	0
Sergt Abrm Bryant	7	0	0	Stephen Fisk	1	0	0
John Nichols	7	0	0	Sam'l Dix	2	0	0
Benja Hartshorne	5	0	0	*Jonas Eaton			
Samuel Weston	1	10	0	*John Browne of the hill			
Nathl. Goodwin	8	0	0	*Joseph Felch			
				*James Pike Jr.			
				*Tho. Taylor Jr.			

*The figures against these names are illegible.

The following subscriptions were received from persons living at Lynn End, then a part of Lynn, and now Lynnfield:

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
John Pearson.	6	12	0	John Bancroft	3	0	0
Maudlin Pearson	1	10	0	Hananiah Hutchinson	1	10	0
Peter Haies	1	15	0	Benj. Hutchinson	1	0	0
Abram Roberts	1	10	0	Edward Hutchinson	2	10	0
Wm. Robbins	1	0	0	Isaac Hart	10	1	0
Daniel Gowing	1	10	0	Shubael Stearns	0	10	0
John Gowing	2	0	0	Timo. Hartshorne	3	0	0
Capt. Tho. Bancroft	5	0	0	Robert Gowing	3	1	0
Daniel Eaton	2	9	0	Nath'l Gowing	1	19	0
Abrm. Wellman	0	13	6	Edw'd Marshall	2	10	6
Isaac Wellman	0	19	0	John Townsend	2	0	0
Robert Baots	1	5	0	George Lewy orLewis	2	0	0
John Poole	7	1	6	Tho. Aelwell. Figures illegible			

The following subscriptions were received from persons living at Charlestown End, then a part of Charlestown, and now Stoneham.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
John Gould	4	18	4	Michael Smith	0	10	0
Daniel Gould	3	0	0	Tho. Cutler	1	0	0
Tho. Gerry	3	0	0	Samuel Cowdrey	1	0	0
Matthew Smith Senr.	0	10	0	Andrew Phillips	1	0	0
Matthew Smith Jr.	2	10	0				
Joseph Richardson of Woburn paid					0	1	0

From and old document, still in a state of good preservation we can obtain a clearer idea of how the subscribers pledges were paid:

"from John Pierson from Wood End"

18½ bush. of Indian	2-15-6	
21 bush. 1/8 Ry.	4-4- 6	
½ bush Wheat	0- 2-6	
2½ bush. Ry	0-10-0	
1 bush. Wheat	0- 5-0	
1 bush ½ Ry.	0- 6-0	
		8- 3-6

"from Lin vilage"

Ed. Hutchinson	Ind Corn	0- 4-6
John Gowen		0- 4-6
Abr. Welman		0- 9-0
Jno. Townsend		0- 4-6
Patr. Hayes		0- 8-0
Ben. Hutchinson		0- 3-0
Robt. Bates		0- 9-0
Jno. Bancroft		0- 6-0

Jno. Bancroft (more)	0- 3-0	
Isaack Heart	1-17-0	
Jno. Pool	0- 6-0	
Tim Hartshorne	0- 8-0	
Willm. Robins	0- 5-0	
Robt. Gowen	0- 4-0	
Capt. Bancroft	0- 9-0	
Jno. Pierson	0-12-0	
" " (more)	0- 8-0	
Abraham Roberts	0- 4-0	
Isaack Welman	0- 8-0	
Nathl. Gowen	0- 4-0	
		7-16-6

"More paid by Lynn Inhabitants toward Building the Meeting hous"	03-19-06	
More by Capt. Brown	10- 0- 0	
"Paid more to Ensign Flint by Lynn Inhabitants		
By Los. Bancroft	00-18-00	
By Jon. Bancroft	00-09-00	
William Roberts	00-04-06	
Isak Welman	00-03-00	
Jon. Gowing	00-04-06	
Robert Bates	00-12-00	
Timothy Hartshorne	00-09-00	
Jon. Person	00-13-06	
Jon. Townsend	00-06-00	
		03-19-06

"from Ensign Thos. Flynt for corn from Deacon Flynt"		
Nic.	0- 6-0	
Jos. Fitch Jnr.	00- 9-	
Thos. Nicols	0-12-	
Saml. Lamson	2-17-0	
Natl. Cowdrey Senr.	0- 8-0	
Benj. Fitch	0-16-0	
" "	0-14-0	
James Bowtell	0- 1-6	
		6- 3- 6

"Thomas Flynt Dr. to come from Jno. Pierson received from the Town"		
Jno. Nicols	13-6	
Jno. Woodward	4-6	
Jno. Batcheldor	6-0	
" " (more)	9-0	
Jno. Eaton Snr.	10-0	
Josih Brown	12-6	
David Batcheldor	6-0	
Jno. Eaton Senr.	8-0	
Jos. Brown	19-6	
Wood End.		
Jno. Eaton of plain	1-11-0	
grn---Ind.	4-19-0	
Ry.	1-00-6	
		11-19-6

"from Ensign Goodwin"	1- 0-0	
from ? ? ?	6- 4-6	
from Ephrm. Savage		
paid George Flynt		
from David Hartshorne	-18	
mony 20.		
from Wm. Arnol	1- 0-0	
from James Bowtel	1- 0-0	
Wid. Kendal	0-13-0	
Deac. Jno. Damon	0- 6	
Jos. Dutton	6	
Jno. Nicols	13-6	
Benj. Hartshorne	9-9	
Jno. Parker Senr	18-0	
Jos. Hartshorne	4-0	4-10-3
		2-15-0

What appears to be a recapitulation reads:

	6-03-6
more	18
1- 0-0	11-19-6
1-00-0	4-10-3
2-15-0	8-03-6
3-19-6	7-11-3
0-10-0	39-11-3
3-09-0	
12-13-6	

Payment by instalments was nothing new in 1688-9.

CONTRACT AND PLAN REMODELING THE SECOND MEETING HOUSE
(copied from the original document 1701-1702)

The Town voted "to enlarge the meeting house". This is the simple record

---

THE CONTRACT

"Know all men By these Prence that we Thos. Nichols, Joseph Burnap, and Jno Goodwin of Reding in the County of Midsx in the Province of the Masatuset Bay in New England (Carpenters) doe Ingage Bind and oblige ourselves to the Committee viz Majr Jerr Sweyne, Capt. Brown, Leut. Parker, Deacn Fitch of Reding, Jno Gold of Charlestown Lieut Person, & Jno Poole of Lynn for to Build an adististion to the Meeting house in Reding abovesaid on the north side of said house 20 foot wide and the length of the north side of said house so high in the walls as the other is already done, and to make to sd new part two doors of about three foot and three inches wid and to finish the same within and without well and hansomonly as ye other is done, excepting the Seats on the Lower floure.

Memorandum:

That the new part is to have three dormans and a flat roofe to com just up so high as the Eaves of the old flat roof of said hous and said adistion is to be finished acording to the above Riten agreement by the last of Ocktober. Dat 23 March 1701/2 and said Building to be Raisd By the middle of June next ensuing.

Witnesses.

Jno Horbord
Jono Dickerman

Thomas Nickols
Joseph Burnap
John Goodwin

CONTRACT AND PLAN REMODELING THE SECOND MEETING HOUSE

"Know all men By that we the abovesaid Comitee viz, Jeremiah Sweyne Capt. Brown Lieut Parker Decon Fitch of Reding Jno Gold of Charlestowne and Jno. Person & Jno. Poole of Lynn doe Bind and oblige our Selves to Pay to the above said Carpenders the summ of one hundred Pounds in manner as followeth: Acording to Subscripson for building said house and one half of said summ to be Paid at the Raising of said adition and the other at the finishing of said part of the meeting house:

memorandum: that all the mony that is Paid insteed of any sort of graine is to be alowed by said Carpenters eighteen shillings in full of or for twenty; and what Work any Person doth the said Person shall agree with the said Carpenters for the Price of the same and all Lumbor that is to be Paid toward the work by any Person shall be at Prises folowing: good clabords well shaved at 5 shillings per 100; good match shingles 8s. per 1000; white Pine boards 4s. per 100; Pich Pine Bords 3s 6d; good laths 6s per 1000; Pich Pine Plank 6 shillings per 100; Indian corne 3s per Bushel; Ry. at 4 shillings per bushell; oats 18d; Barley 2s 8d; Peas 4s; all sorts of nails as cheap as they can be bought for money; and this is to be excepted By said Carpenters.

Witnesses
Jno. Horbord
Jno. Dickerman

Jerem Sweyne
Jno. Browne
Benjamin Fitch
John Parson
John Poole
John Gould
Hannaniah Parker

PLAN OF THE ADDITION TO THE SECOND MEETING-HOUSE AS SHOWN ON THE CARPENTERS CONTRACT---1701-1702

"An account of the Stuf for the adistion to the meeting hous March the 6th 1701-2

	L	s	d.
To Ranging timbor--940 foot 2d pr foot	7	16	8
To 1490 foot of work 4s 6d pr hundred	3	07	0
To oak Plank 3 inches thick seat ends 100: 8s pr hundred	0	08	0
To pine Plank 1000: 300 whit Pine & 700 Pich Pine 6 per C.	3	00	0
To 4500 Bords 2000 Pich pine: 2500 whit Pine 3s 6d & 4s	8	10	0
To 7000 shingles 8s per thousand	2	16	0
To 1440 clabord 5s per 100	3	10	0
To 3000 Lath at 8s per 1000	0	18	0
To 40 Bushols Lime and 6 of hair	2	16	0
To 4 window frames and glasing to them	5	00	0
To 5 hundred	0	08	4
To 4000 Bord Nails	2	00	0
To 7000 Shingle Nails	1	04	6
To 4000 Clabord Nails	1	00	0
To 9000 lath nails	1	07	0
To spoaks for the Plank 400	0	10	0
To under Pining and finding stons			
To 5 Pillers fit to frame 100 per pl.	2	10	0
To framing	7	00	0
To work on claboring Shingling & wether bords	7	10	0
To two dors and hing & to Stairs	3	00	0
To framing the galoris and laying sd floors	3	00	0
To laying the and inside flors	2	00	0
To making the seats in the galoris) with the front of the galory)	6	00	0
To makin the seats Below in the) body of the hous)	4	00	0
To lathing Plastering and under Pining	3	15	0
	83-	06	6

The domensions of the hous that was east 46 footlong and 16 wid: 2 dors: 4 seats in the galory: 2 pr of stairs: 3 seats Behind the pulpit: 4 of the west and 3 on the east and no dor--east or we t because they can be buit small."

SUBSCRIBERS TO THE REMODELING OF THE SECOND MEETING HOUSE 1701-2
The following is copied from the original document

"Reading March the 5th 1701-2

The names of the persons the inhabitants of Readding together with the agasant neighbours of Lin Charlestown Wooburn and Malden with their Sums promised toward the ground inlargement of the Meting house.

Promised Town		Payd
----------	Captn Jno. Brown	0- 01- 04
----------	Dacon Fish	1- 10- 00
----------	Captn Thomas Bancroft	1- 15- 00
----------	Leftn John Person	1- 10- 00
----------	Leftn Hananiah Parker	1- 11- 00
-------- -- --	Maj. Jerimiah Swayne	1- 10- 00
----------	Captn Thomas Nickols	2- 00- 00
----------	Ensn Nathaniel Parker	2- 00- 00
-- 10- 00	Lt. Beniman Swayn	1- 10- 00
-- 10- 00	Lt. John Poole	2- 03- 00
-- 00- 00	Timothy Wiley	2- 00- 00
-- 00- 00	William Eaton	1- 00- 00
1- 10- 00	Ensign John Bancroft	1- 10- 00
-- 10- 00	Thomas Boutall	1- 10- 00
-- 10- 00	Corpll John Goodwin	1- 10- 00
----------	John Golm	1- 10- 00
-- 10- 00	Corpll Joshua Eaton	1- 10- 00
-- 10- 00	Lt. Abraham Briant	1- 10- 00
1- 00- 00	John Pratt	1- 00- 00
1- 10- 00	Jonathan Poole	1- 10- 00
1- 10- 00	Kendall Parker	1- 10- 00
1- 00- 00	Cornalus Brown	1- 00- 00
1- 00- 00	James Person	1- 00- 00
1- 00- 00	William Briant	1- 00- 00
3- 00- 00	John Horbord	3- 00- 00
1- 00- 00	Thomas Bancroft	1- 00- 00
1- 00- 00	Thomas Poole	1- 00- 00
1- 00- 00	John Mackentire	
1- 10- 00	Ensigne Ebenazor Bancroft	1- 10- 00
1- 00- 00	Ebenazor Parker	1- 10- 00
1- 00- 00	Lt. Joseph Brown	1- 00- 00
1- 00- 00	Nickolas Brown	1- 00- 00
1- 10- 00	Leftn Joseph Burnap	1- 10- 00
1- 05- 00	Thomas Briant	1- 05- 00
1- 00- 00	Frances Smith	1- 00- 00
1- 00- 00	Samuel Liley	1- 00- 00
0- 10- 00	Danel Snow	0- 05- 00
1- 00- 00	William Cowderey	1- 00- 00
1- 00- 00	Jonathan Eaton	1- 00- 00
----------	James Boutall Jr.	1- 00- 00

The year 1709 witnessed an effort of the inhabitants and proprietors residing north of the Ipswich River to obtain a meeting-house in that section. The Town appointed a committee--Maj. Swayne, Lt. Parker and Capt. Nichols to ascertain the minds of the petitioners. Two years later these petitioners started a movement to be set off as a separate Parish. This was successful in 1713 resulting in loss of income to the membership of both the First Parish and the Church.

1710

An indication of the size of Sabbath collections in the old Meeting-house the following data is given:

May	21		£ 1- 0- 8	Sept	3		£ 1- 4- 3
"	28		1- 8- 1	"	10		0-17- 2
June	4		0-19-11	"	17		0-15- 2
"	11		0-18- 8	"	24		1- 6-10
"	15	Assist Day	1- 3- 2	Oct.	1		0-17- 6
"	18		1- 1-10	"	8		1- 4- 8
"	25		1- 3- 6	"	15		6-14- 2
July	2		1- 4- 4	"	22		1- 6- 8
"	9		0-15- 2	"	29		1- 5- 8
"	16		1- 8- 6	Nov.	5		1- 7- 8
"	23		1- 4- 8	"	12		1- 3- 6
"	30		1- 1- 5	"	16	Thanks-giving Day	1- 13- 0
Aug	6		0-11- 0	"	19		0-16- 0
"	13		1- 4- 0	"	26		1- 3- 9
"	20		1- 2- 1				
"	27		1- 0- 5				

and so on thru the year.

1711

The Second Parsonage

There appears to be very little recorded about the Second Parsonage built on the Hart land at the corner of Lafayette and Common Streets. It was built in 1711. Jonathan Pierpont came as minister in 1689, and was owner of the first parsonage, which he occupied until his death in 1709. Two years later the Town chose a committee to treat with Mrs. Pierpont about buying her house but negotiations evidently failed.

Voted "to build a ministerial house 40 feet long 19 feet wide and 15 feet stud, with a room at the back side 15 feet square, and to build a barn 20 feet square, 11 feet stud, and leanto on one side or one end for the use of the ministry".

Voted "to lay a pasture for the ministry from the Pond Square to the highway. The Town subsequently increased the

length of the new parsonage to 41 feet and the leanto on the back side, the length of the house, 11 or 12 feet broad.

This Parsonage was the home of Parson Brown from 1712 to 1732, and of Parson Hobby from 1733 to 1765, when it became in 1769 the residence of Parson Caleb Prentiss,--to whom it was subsequently sold.

This building was enlarged in 1739, was long known as the "Prentiss House".

It was not until 1804, about the time of the coming of Parson Reuben Emerson that the third Parsonage was built on land to the east between the meeting-house and old Pond Lane.

1712

Rev. Richard Brown was settled as the fifth minister. With his coming this unusual vote by the Town was entered on the records: "that if Mr. Brown should die and leave a widow here in Reading the Town will, upon their own cost and charge, transport Mrs. Brown to Newbury". The Rev. Brown was a graduate of Harvard College, class of 1697. He died in 1732 aged 57 years.

1713

The Town voted: "to fence in 3½ acres of land for the ministry, to lye between Thos. Bryant's house and the Meeting-house, near the Pond, in the most convenient place, and leave out to the Common, from the back of Cann's house a straight line to the Draw bars near the horse block".

Then voted "in lieu of the above, four acres, to be fenced in on the back side of the Meeting-house and so down to the Pond". This is said to refer "to the old Meeting-house, which stood at the east end of the second burial ground," and describes the same piece of land, concerning which there was a warmly contested law suit," brought by Parson Reuben Emerson against Benj. B. Wiley, for trespass across the fenced parsonage lot. The case was carried to the Supreme Judicial Court and its decisions were against the Parson, in three trials. These decisions were based on a Town Vote in 1741, when the Town confirmed action giving to the Parish <u>forever</u> all the Common land as the following fully described:

Voted"that all the Common lands from Capt. Thomas Nichols' (late Noah Smith (s) to the Great Pond (now Quannapowitt Pond), and so up the side of the Pond as far as Timothy Nichols' little orchard (where J. G. Aborn's shoe factory now stands), by the Pond, and that are now unfenced; also all the land on the west side of the Meeting-house that is between that and Hodgman's brook (the brook near Church Street R. R. crossing), and so from said brook up the great hill as far as the Southwest corner of Dea. Goodwin's land (Dea. Goodwin

owned where James Eustis now owns), by the road; also by the foot of the hill by Dea. Goodwin's, running round the hill as far as Kendall Bryant's barn (Kendall Bryant lived a short distance west of Jose h Hartshorn's) shall continue to lie unfenced as they are, excepting a few poles against Dr. Hay's land (late Geo. W. Hartshorn's) not exceeding twenty for the use of the Old Parish, for highways, a Training field, a and Burying place, and the more convenient coming at the pond with flax and creatures, and also to accommodate the neighbors that live bordering on said land for their more convenient coming to and improving their own land and buildings, all the aforesaid lands to remain unfenced as they now are, and to the use of the Old Parish and neighborhood above said forever, never to be disposed of for any other use whatsoever, without the consent of every freeholder in the Parish".

A fairly complete report of the Massachusetts Supreme Court Decision on this famous suit is to be found in the Appendix of "Ancient Redding" by William E. Eaton, 1935, copies of which are to be found in the Beebe Town Library, and in the State Library at Boston.

Reference is made in 1713 to the horse sheds near the Meeting-house.

"Thos Briant was paid 3s for 100 boards to close ye backside of ye horse house & work and 4s work done on ye M. H. bell."

This year £6 18s was paid for "fencing in ye ministerial pasture behind ye Meeting-house," Nine different individuals furnished the railes, more than 650 of them, with more than 50: 5 foot posts.

The parsonage garden was fenced, Cost £7:2:7. There were two gates to this garden"as the bill exhibits " a pair of hinges to hang a gate 3s; and a pair of hinges to hang the Litel gaite 5s 6d." It took nine men to cut, cart and furnish boards, and work on the gates and gate yard.

1717

The setting off of the territory of Reading, north of the Ipswich River in 1713, and the building of a Meeting-house and Parish House with a Town grant of thirty pounds, took away a large number of the supporters of the First Parish religious activities.

1718

There is reproduced here a photostatic reproduction of a petition by the inhabitants of the North Precinct that is valuable for its phraseology, and as an indication of the handwriting signatures of the individual petitioners.

1719

This year Parson Brown found his "living" rather slim--"no cheese, butter, malt, no Stock of meal, nor more than one bushel of corn, nor money to buy" and so he addressed a letter to the inhabitants of Reading as follows, a characteristic document of the times:

1720-1

This year a catalog of members of the First Parish Church showing 184 men and women; 20 of Lynn End, not yet dismissed to the new Lynn End Church; 19 from Charlestown End; and 7 from Malden, a total of 236.

1722

The First Parish Voted "a committee to consider how and where to enlarge the Parsonage and report". Jona Poole, Dea. Thos Nichols, Capt Jos. Burnap and Ensign Thos. Bancroft were named.

This year the First Parish began its own records. Copies of these records from 1722 to 1845 are to be found in the public libraries of Wakefield and Reading.

1724

The First Parish this year voted "to take up two acres of land distinct, in the low ground below the lower burying place, and add it to Mr. Brown's Parsonage, upon condition, that after it is once fenced, he will maintain the fence, so long as he improves the above said two acres of land; that he quit the ministerial meadow to the use of the Town, and engaging to let us have a liberty of passing and repassing in the winter season, with horse and cart over the land, that was formerly Isaac Harts, from Mr. Hodgman's corner and so out at Dea. Thomas Nichols house, that was formerly Landlord Burnap's: and upon condition that our friends and neighbors in the Pond Row to the East side of the fence upon their own cost and charge." This probably refers to land lying on the west of Pond Row, that then ran from Church Street to the Pond, some distance to the East of the present Lake Avenue.

1725

1725 Setting the Meeting-house.

The Committee reported names of those "who are to set in the old seats" and "To the Gate Pew on left hand of the Pulpit, Capt. Burnap's wife and Serg. Burnap's wife." "To fill up share places, John Parker's wife and Wid. Thos. Damon:" and also "to fill up share places, Thos. Nichol's wife and Nathaniel's wife." Into the front body seat Edward Brown and Richard Nichols. Into the north part of the front gallery, John Swain.

Reading Aprill 9t 1725.

At a meeting of the Comite for seating the
meeting hous
the persons that are
to set in the new seat--
and the old seate from
the abve.

Kendall Boutell
John Willey
James Wesson
Jno. Poole
Tho. Burnap
Tho. Bancroft
Jno. Merow.--

To the Gate Pew one
Left hand of the pulpit
Capt. Burnaps wife
Sargt Burnaps wife.

To fill up Those
Plases John Parkers
wife and Mr. Thomas
Daman.

Into the front Bodys
seat Edward Brown
Richard Nickols

and To fill up Those
Plases Thomas Nicols
wife and Nathannils
Wife----------

Into the North Part of
the front galery
John Swayne.

1727

July 2. Lordsday. as the public service was ended at the First Parish Meeting-house, there was a terrible thunder storm. Lightning struck the building,"broke off the vane and spindle, broke the turret in pieces, shiveried off the clapboards on the west and south sides from top to bottom, and shattered one of the doors." The Parish Voted "to procure a new bell for the Meeting-house with the old bell so far as that will go, and what that will not do, to be paid by way of a Rate."

Also Voted "to build a turret on the Meeting-house for the bell.".

1728

The Debits and Credits of the Parish makes mention of 4s paid "Thos. Nickolls for transporting the bell to Charlestown". This was doubtless an old bell given in exchange for the Meeting-house bell purchased in 1715. Raham Parker was paid £ 1 ""for 1000 shingles to repair ye gutter of ye South Dorman of ye Meeting-house" "John Batchelder "for shingling on gutter and fining nails" was paid 12O. John Damon also helped on the shingling for he drew 16s but part of this was for "setting the fence." This year Kendall Boutaill swept the Meeting-house and rang the bell. Jonathan Temple worked 3 days on the Meeting-house repairs. John Temple was paid 11s 9 d for 1000 shingle nails and 100 double.

This year was "repair year" for Dea. Gibson did some "glazing in the Meeting-house;" Dea. Nickols "mended the fence around ye parish pasture;" and Timothy Nickoll was paid £ 1-02s "for 300 bricks and 18 pavements to mend ye parish house and 8 pavements & setting up about ye parsonage".

1729

This year the First Parish Church dismissed ten Charlestown End male members and several females, to the new Church in Stoneham territory which had been incorporated as a Town three years previously. The easterly line run thru the centre of Smith's Pond on northerly to a point close to Albion Street.

The north part of Malden, now Greenwood, was annexed to Reading.

1730

This year there was an effort made to move the Meeting-house. It was voted 51 to 44 not to do so. This may have been sponsored by the "Wood End" members who favored a location to the west on Elm Street. The Call for the meeting read: Benj. Brown Collector, was notified "in his Majesty's Name" to call all inhabitants of the Parish to a meeting "to know whether ye Parish will move ye Meeting-house of sd Parish to ye centre of the Parish."

1731

The First Parish voted "to give the old "Pulpit Cushion" to the "Wood End," "which they have asked for in a Christian and charitable way and their manner, in their subscriptions to the new one."

At a Parish meeting held on March ye 18, 1731 the "Debts and Credits" reported showed total expense of £127-19-10 of which £110 was "our Reverend Pastor's" salary; the balance covered seventeen items of expense all for the Meeting-house and parsonage.

The new bell evidently arrived this year as an item read: "Pd Timothy Goodwin 9s-8d for hanging ye bell" and "Pd Jonathan Bancroft 40 for "Colster & Keys for ye bell." Landlord Wesson "for ye Raising Super for ye Terret and intertaining ye Glazier" was paid £ 2:17:6.

1732.

Rev. Richard Brown died Oct. 29 aged 57 years after a ministry of twenty years.

1733

Wilmington members were this year dismissed.

At Parson Brown's funeral from the old Meeting-house the bill of expenses reflects the customs of that day. Rev. William Hobby, class of 1725 Harvard College, came as pastor.

1733

Copy of a bill of expenses of the funeral of Rev. Mr. Brown:

	£	s.	d.
To Thomas Eaton for provisions	2	1	0
" Nathaniel Eaton for fetching up the wine	0	15	0
" Lt. Nathaniel Parker for 5 qts. Thom.	0	8	0
" Samuel Poole for digging Mr. Brown's grave	0	8	0
" Landlord Wesson for Rhom,	0	10	6
" William Cowdrey for making the coffin	0	15	0
" Andrew Tyler of Boston, 6 Gold rings for funeral	10	18	0
" Benj. Fitch of Boston, Gloves, etc.	17	0	0
" Mrs. Martha Brown for wine furnished,	5	0	0
" Eben Storer of Boston, Sundries,	8	0	0
Total	45	15	6

Rev. Wm. Hobby was ordained pastor in September and again we cite a bill of expense:

	£	s.	d.
Paid Mrs. Ann. Archer of Boston	2	18	0
" Jonathan Williams of Boston 1 Bbl. Wine	13	8	0
" Jonathan Call of Charlestown--Bread,	2	12	0
" Sundry other persons (36 in number)	46	8	1
	65	6	1

The Parish voted "to accept of half an acre of the Parsonage land to enlarge our Burial place if Mr. Hobby giveth leave."

1734

Voted in March to repair the Parsonage, and in September not to do so.

1735

The First Parish Voted:

1st, "not to build a new Meeting-house;"
2nd, to repair the old Meeting-house thoroughly by shingling the roof in the same form that it now is, except the taking off the north dormer, and clapboarding the same as far as needful, and by plastering the same Meeting-house upon the beams which plastering is the last thing to be done. Then voted to take off the east and west dormers and carry out the gambrel roof so far south as is convenient. Appropriated £350 for said object.

Six members were granted permission to build their own pews "in ye hinder part of ye wing seats of men upon their own charge & they shall be upon ye same foot with other pews in ye same circumstance and ye Comity are to place two more women in them if they find convenient room".

Later this method of laying our pews became a troublesome feature of "seating the church," and led to "charges of disorderly conduct."

1736

"A Post and Well Crotch was furnished the Parsonage at a cost of £1:12s." and a "little Necessary house" that cost £1: 15s."

Voted "to take off ye East & West Dormans of ye Meeting-house & carry on ye Gambrill Roofe so farr South as is convenient".

1738

The Parish voted: "to take ye Parsonage into their own hands to manage to ye best advantage for Mr. Hobby". This plan continued for many years.

1739

Paid Capt. Thomas Eaton £150 old tenor "for repairing and finishing the Parsonage house," that was known later as the "Prentiss House". The extent of the work done is shown by the Committees report. The report of the Committee referred to above is as follows:

1st To raise up the back side equal to the foreside and to advance a Bevell or Gambrell roof, suitable in proportion to said house; to board the roof and double board the upper part of said roof and shingle said roof with good cedar shingles, and to put up suitable weather boards; to window frame and casement the foreside, east end and back side, as they now are as to bigness; also, new sett the old glass--what is good--and to provide for and glaze the rest, that the old will not do; to clapboard the foreside, east end and backside and to head the windows that are needful and to finish the covell, and make suitable for the foreside and backside, and case them and do what is proper over the doors, and case the windows withinside of the addition; to finish the wall and Gable end with boards and clapboards and windows suitable to the best part of the house, and eve-troughs and trunk for ye foreside of said house; to color all that is needful to be colored, with spanish brown, and to the finishing of the inside of ye addition.

To lay two floors, to lathe and plaster the wall of the three rooms and to case two rooms overhead and to make two partitions; and to make suitable stairs and doors for the addition; and to raise the chimney as high as is needful."

"Capt. Tho. Eaton took the job."

Six members were given "liberty of building as seat behind ye middle front seat not to be Raised higher than ye women's Pew in ye South gallery."

1740

A "Horse Block" was built at the Parsonage. Cost £1

1741

This year was notable in that the Town confirmed the granting of Common Lands to the Parish. See decisions of the Supreme Judicial Court in the suit of Parson Emerson vs Benj. B. Wiley for trespass, in which the Parson was defeated. Also the Counter suit of Wiley against Parson Emerson for the Parish, Wiley settled for $600 as damages.

1742

Built "Twenty Rod of Stonewall on ye Parsonage for fencing. Twenty more rods were built in 1749, twenty more in 1750 and 1752, and the remainder in 1753. More wall was needed and it was laid in 1757.

1743

Four members were given permission "to sett in ye Short seat before ye comunity Pew where Mr. Jonathan Parker's wife and others sitt, provided they do not raise the floar of sd seat no Higher than an Inch Board will raise it."

1744

Six members were "given liberty to build a Pew or Seat at ye North End of John Walton Jrs Seat." This year Benj. Wessen's wife "was ordered out of a Pew and Thos. Green's wife given a seat there".

1747

Two members were given permission "to build a seat over the North west story."

1749

Voted to "build a seat Between the women's fore seat in the gallery & the Pulpit," and that eight members could "build a Pue in the hinder part of the Seats in the Side Gallery near the Northwest stairs".

1750

Paid Mr. Hobby "for his negro sweeping the Meeting-house and ringing the bell for one year (1749) £3: 10s. Permission given "to build a Seat or Pew at ye North end of ye Seat where Capt. Ebenz. Nichols & others Sett."

The building of a new Meeting-house in the North and West Parishes did not solve all the difficulties of the inhabitants of those districts; they still had to come for many years to the First Parish Meeting-house to transact Town business.

1752

The Parish voted to alter the form of the Parsonage barn by putting "a 10 foot addition at ye West End."

Rev. Charles R. Bliss in his Commemorative Sketch of the Wakefield Congregational Church," published in 1877 treats comprehensively of the history of that Church from 1644; and its administrations by the successive ministers, but with few references to the physical properties and conditions of successive houses of worship.

Referring to the time when Parson Hobby was his venerable predecessor Rev. Bliss wrote: "Should you go back 125 years you would see in the pulpit the Rev. Wm. Hobby with powdered wig and gown and bands. About him, you would perceive an ordor of sanctity and authority which the clergy of modern days finds it quite impossible to obtain".

"The Deacons would be sitting near the Pulpit in places of honor, and a flavor of sacredness, somewhat milder but still very marked, would emanate from them. The congregation would be seated according to ideas of priority and senority--the more grave and wealth and revered occupying pews which the deference of the people had permitted them to cushion and ornament, while in carefully estimated rank, the less rich and influential are assigned seats corresponding to their degree".

By this quotation we are given a picture of the inside of the early Meeting-houses.

1754

This year the "Velvet and Leather of the Pulpit Cushion" was stolen. A committee was appointed to prosecute the thief, who later confessed and on order of the Court, settled with a cash payment.

1759

To further identify the small building that stood to the east and rear of the Second Meeting-house we have the following vote:

> "Voted to give Leave for a number of persons by Subscription to move the School house In the South part of the Parish near the old Seller between the Meeting-house and the Parsonage house and with the £10-13s 4d allready voted to Repair the old School house and with the old school house to build a new School house upon the place above mentioned and the sd house to be the Parishes house."

Two years later the Parish raised "eight pounds to add to the money allready raised to Buld the new school house; and that it shall Stand on the Edg of ye hill on the East side of ye Meeting house on the North side of ye Road that leads to Deacon Fitches hill". (Church Street)

1765

The Parish raised £26-13s-4d to defray the expenses of Parson Hobby's funeral; one-half to be paid Mrs. Hobby for mourning etc.

Pd. John Walton, Jr. £2:1:11 "it being for a coffen &c for the Rev. Mr. Hobby, deceased," This vote was on May 7th. Also "Pd. Capt. John Goodwin 15s:4d "for mending the Parsonage fence, and for four quarters of lamb for Mr. Hobby's funeral". On July 7, 1766 "Pd. Thomas Pratt 6s:4d--3 far. twelve pounds of Pork for Mr. Hobb, 's funeral". "Pd. John Temple 12s, 2f. "for one Barril Syder for Mr. Hobby's funeral and for nails and mending the school house, etc." "Pd Capt. John Swain (July 17, 1766) 6s:1d: 3 far. for Bread and malt for the funeral of Rev. Wm. Hobby". John Lamson of Charlestown received £3:1s "for the Parson's grave stons"; and Capt. Nathan Parker £1:14s:5d for "bringing up Mr. Hobby's gravestones, etc."

Voted "to see if the Parish will agree upon the location of a new Meeting-house or if in disagreement to leave the choice to disinterested gentlemen".

1766

This year the matter of building a new Meeting-house was again brought up.

The Town Voted, "That the new Meeting-house, whn built, shall be located 8 or 10 poles something easterly and southerly from where the Meeting house now stands".

On Feb. 5, 1766 the First Parish considered the location of the new Meeting-house and passed the following vote:

"To accept of ye report of the committee chosen to Pick upon a Place to buld a new Meeting-house which is as followeth:

"We have attended said Service and have Viewed the plan and the Roads and Seen the Distances of all the Inhabitants of this Parish to the Meeting-house whare it now Stands and Likewise their Distances to Several other Places Proposed to Set the meeting-house have also heard the please and alligations in favour and against Each place and can find no place proposed that will make so little Walking for the whole Parish and Discommode so few as about Eight or ten Pole Easterly and Southerly from whare the meeting-house now Stands. Tharefore are

of the opinion that when ever Said Parish Shall Buld they Sett it at or near Said Place".

MAP OF 1765

COL. NICHOLS OLD MAP OF 1765

This map shows locations of the inhabitants of the First Parish and their dwellings in 1765, and was prepared in part to show the relative distances of the houses from the Meeting-house.

The list following is of great value as definitely locating the homes of residents of what is now the Town of Wakefield 172 years ago.

	M	Qrs.	Rods
Rev. Mr. Hobby, was the Prentiss house			32
Samuel Poole, old tavern, now removed,	0	0	49
Samuel Nichols,) on the place of the late	0	0	75
James Barrett,) Dea. Aaron Bryant	0	0	75
Col. Ebenezer Nichols, old Rayner House, now removed,	0	1	02
John Vinton, late Samuel Wiley place, and Dr. Richardson's	0	1	14
Capt. Cornelius Wotton,	0	1	32
John Nichols, late Noah Smith house,	0	1	32
Samuel Felch, where Adam Hawkes now is	0	2	30
Michael Sweetser, where Asa N. Sweetser now is	0	2	56
Benjamin Smith, late Dr. Hart's old house now removed	0	3	06
Isaac Smith, where Dr. Hart resided, now removed	0	3	14
Jonathan Evans, near R. R. bridge in Greenwood, now removed	1	1	05
Daniel Gould, where E. Pitman now is	1	1	72
Richard Upham, where P. H. Sweetser resided	1	3	50
William Green, where Charles W. Green now is	2	0	04
William Green, Jr., now owned by Wid Waitt,	2	0	32
Thomas Green, now owned by C. W. Green	2	0	69
Capt. David Green (old house), late Nathan Green place	2	2	02
Capt. David Green house formerly Judge Nash's	2	2	40
Lt. John Walton, Late Benjamin Walton place	1	2	63
James Smith, late Ezekiel Oliver place	1	3	03
Ensign John Smith, Almshouse place	1	2	62
Amos Boardman, late Lowell Emerson's	1	3	22
Jonathan Poole, Jr., where Leonard Wiley resided	0	1	75
Ca t. Samuel Bancroft, Wakefield's Rattan Factory	0	2	52
Thomas Wiley, late David Wiley place	1	2	35
Nathaniel Wiley, late Eli Wiley place	1	2	75
Nathaniel Wiley old house, near above now removed	1	3	33
Ephraim Weston, where Mrs. Dr. Spaulding, now is	0	0	58
Noah and Lilley Eaton, late Dea. Jacob Eaton's	0	0	72
William Gould, late John Gould's now removed	0	0	52
Dr. William Stimpson, where the late Lilley Eaton lived (father of Hon. Lilley)	0	0	46
Thomas Burnap where William Brown now is	0	3	22
Thomas Emerson, the Dr. Cushman place	0	3	68
Joseph Underwood, where Rev. Mr. Clayes now is	1	0	00

Dr. Oliver Swain, now David Batchelder's old house	1	0	41
Thomas Parker, late owned by Suel Winn Jr.,	1	1	03
Nathaniel Swain, near where East Schoolhouse is	1	2	39
Capt. John Swain, near late Issachar Stowell's old house,	1	3	16
John Swain Jr., near where Abraham Gould now is	1	2	72
Jeremiah Brown, where E. A. Upton now is	1	3	61
Nathaniel Brown, lately owned by Rev. Horace Eaton	2	0	36
Josiah Walton, now the Austin place	2	0	71
Jotham Walton, where Oliver Walton now is	2	1	17
Jonathan Brown, now Daniel P. Emerson's	2	1	43
Jonathan Cowdrey, now Mrs. Col. J. Hartshorn's	0	0	76
James Emerson, now Mrs. James Emerson,	0	1	45
Ebenezer Gould, late Charles Gould place	0	2	43
Capt. John Goodwin, now James Eustis	0	1	60
Thomas Hay, now the heirs of the late Benjamin Emerson	0	1	60
Dr. William Hay	0	2	38
Thomas Damon, now Mrs. Varnum Holt	0	2	52
Benjamin Hartshorn, now Joseph Hartshorn,	0	2	56
Ebenezer Damon, now Mrs. Lydia Winn	0	2	63
Wid. Lambert, late Dea. David Smith place	0	3	01
Jeremiah Bryant,) these houses stood a			
James Bryant) short distance westerly	0	3	06
of Joseph Hartshorn's now gone	0	3	48
Nathaniel Cowdrey, late Aaron Cowdrey place	0	3	09
Capt. John Goodwin, (upper place)since Matt F.Leslie	1	0	26
Joseph Gould, where E. E. Emerson is, house removed	0	0	76
Joseph Emerson, where Thomas Emerson lived	0	1	15
Nutting or Bacheller house, heirs of late John White, Jr.	0	1	47
Munroe, formerly Nichols, now Mrs. F. B. Eaton,	0	1	71
John Batcheller, Cordis House, now removed	0	2	52
Capt. Benjamin Brown, now Lucius Beebe	0	3	03
Joseph Brown, house near the above now removed	0	3	17
John Pratt, the late John White, Sen., place now removed	0	3	49
Dea. Brown Emerson, now Dr. F. P. Hurd	1	0	05
James Woodward, the late Stimpson place	1	1	01
William Eaton, where Rev. Mr. Barry is	1	0	64
Ensigh Hopkinson, where E. Sumner Hopkins is	1	1	16

1766

Parishioners at Wood End sought relief from Parish expenses on the ground of living "more than four miles from the Meeting-house!" So the Parish,

Voted:

"that those persons at the First Parish, in Reading, that live more than four miles from Reading First Parish Meeting-house and do not accept of drawing

so much money out of the Parish treasury as one-half of their minister's yearly rate amounts to, shall have liberty to go off, they and their estates, to Reading North Parish or to Wilmington which they shall choose, if they desire it".

There had been contentions on this and other matters for many years and so it was that three years later (1769) the separation came with the setting off, of what is now Reading, as the Third Parish.

1767

The First Parish voted:

"to make a thorough repair of the old Meeting-house, as soon as may be, and to make pews and sell them and raise £200 (by tax) to pay the balance."

This vote was reconsidered at a meeting held June 8, 1767, and a few months later it was Voted:

"to build a new Meeting-house in the First Parish, about 8 or 10 poles southeasterly from the place where the old Meeting-house now stands; the new house to be 70 feet long and 50 feet wide and 28 feet posts with a steeple and porch," and chose Ebenezer Nichols, Capt. John Goodwin, Samuel Bancroft, Jonathan Eaton, John Batchelder, Timothy Pratt, and Nathaniel Wiley, a Building Committee. John Walton Jr., and Androw Beird were added to this Committee.

At this time it was also voted:

"to raise £100 toward the new Meeting-house over and above what was Raised before and to choose a committee to git the work Don and compleated."

The Wood End people, at this time made at least two unsuccessful efforts to have the new Meeting-house built on a site about half-a-mile to the westward.

The Parish did give consent to those at Wood End, living more than three miles from the Meeting-house, "to goe to the North Parish or to goe to Wilmington".

This brings us to the erection of the Third Meeting-house of the First Parish for which the sum of £600 was voted.

THE THIRD MEETING HOUSE

1769-1892

THE THIRD MEETING HOUSE-1769

Ministers--

Caleb Prentiss	1769-1803
Reuben Emerson	1804-1850
Alfred Emerson	1845-1853
Joseph P. Hull	1853-1856
Joseph B. Johnson	1857-1860
Charles R. Bliss	1862-

The Third Meeting-house, erected in 1769, stood a few feet south of the main entrance to the present stone church. Recent excavations in Church Street uncovered the stone foundation piers. Messrs. John Walton Jr. and Andrew Beard, carpenters were added to the Building Committee. This Committee selected Messrs. David Nelson and Asa Todd as the contractors.

This Church building remained, with serveral remodelings in 1837 and 1859, and continued to be the house of worship of the Congregational organization until 1890 when the Fourth Meeting-house was erected.

The Third Meeting-house was a substantial building and when it was torn down in 1890, one of the historical buildings in Massachusetts was sacrificed to modern needs.

Facing to the West, as did its predecessor it had a frame of massive oak cut from the parish ministerial lot. At one end was a tower with a handsome steeple or spire, and at the other end a two-stoned porch. There was a gilded weather cock at the apex of the spire, the work of Jonathan Cowdrey a clock and buckle maker who lived in an old house that stood just east of the present Hartshorne house on Church Street.

The clapboards, by vote, were to remain unpainted and so remained for many years.

There were 50 pews in this new Meeting-house and these were disposed of as follows:

No. 1.

"On the Left hand Next to Pulpit Stares," reserved for the minister, then the highest tax payer had the first choice, the second highest the second choice, and so on. The pews were numbered in order of choice; no matter in what part of the house they might be situated. The first pew was sold for £100, old tenor; and then dropped to twenty shillings on every pew through the whole.

Permission was given to build seats in the back side of ye seats in the men's gallery, taking the seats from the old Meeting house.

That the £600 was not sufficient to meet the cost of the new Meeting-house is shown by a vote on Sept. 28, 1769, when the Parish voted to turn over the money received from sale of the Pews "to settle with Jonathan Masson of Boston, Joseph Briant Junr., of Stoneham Mr. Jeffrey, Mr. Manner and Mr. Gardner all of Salem for money hired and for Intress Due".

John Nichols was paid £1:4s "for Carting one Lode of Mrs. Hobby's Goods to Boston"; and Thomas Damon was paid 10s "for another Lode to Boston, it being over and above the four Cords of Wood the sd Damon has out of the Ministerial Lot, with three cuts of--- timber. That Mrs. Hobby's had aplenty of household goods Nathaniel Wiley received £:4s for "carting one Lode" more.

This year we find various payments on the new Meeting-house:

Pd. Benj. Pike of Newbury Port £9:7:4 in full for himself and six men and their Block in Razing the New Meeting House.

To cash pd. for one chees for the Razing.

To cash pd for Lemmons for the Razing.

Pd. William Richardson & Joshua Eaton for Meet for the Razing 14s 9d.

Pd. Mr. Grimes Tufts for Bred for the Razing--£1:4

Pd. Capt. Daniel Spofford £1:1:4 for bringing the Rigging from Newbury Port & carrying them back again

Pd. David Nelson July 11 in part of the first payment toward the M. H.--£17:6:8. Pd same July 29, £20:10:4. Pd same Aug 2.-£21:12:0.

Pd. Samuel Herrick £1:4 for Razing etc.

Pd. David Nelson £52.

Oct. 3 Pd Col Pitman & Capt. Darly of Salem £2:5:3:2 for use of Roaps "for to raize the Steeple of the New M. H."

Oct 4. Pd Nelson £4:10:0

Oct. 21 Pd James Emerson £3:4 for Carting Rocks & Bords for the New M. H.

Pd. John Nichols for same £2:14

Oct. 25 Pd Capt John Swain, for same 18s, 4d, 2f.

On Sept. 4 1769 there were recorded these Votes:

1. "No Pue Shall be Sold to any Person that lives out of the Parish, excepting to Daniel Gould Jr., Abraham Gould Jr., of Stoneham or to Mr. Stoddres heirs of Boston without Consent of the Parish".

2. "No Pucher of any Pue or Pues Shall Sell his Pue or Pues to any Person that lives out of the Parish provided the Parish or any Person that lives in the Parish will Give him his first Cost".

The pews sold were to be held by the purchaser or heirs forever.

The Pews were taken as follows:

No. 1.	Minister Pew	No. 37.	Noah and Lilley Eaton
" 2.	David Green	" 38.	) Jacob Upton
" 3.	Thomas Eaton	" 39.	) " "
" 4.	John Smith	" 40.	Joseph Gould
" 5.	John Goodwin	" 41.	James Smith
" 6.	Ebenezer Nichols	" 42.	Daniel Bryant
" 7.	Ens. John Batchelder	" 43.	Joseph Bryant
" 8.	Benjamin Smith.	" 44.	Benjamin Brown
" 9.	Mrs. Eliza'h Lambert.	" 45.	Joseph Emerson
" 10.	Ebenezer Wiley		
" 11.	Brown Emerson		
" 12.	John Pratt		
" 13.	Nathaniel Wiley		
" 14.	Isaac Smith, Jr.		
" 15.	William Green		
" 16.	Jona Eaton		
" 17.	Joshua Eaton		
" 18.	John Batchelder		
" 19.	Michael Sweetser		
" 20.	Jonathan Evans		
" 21.	John Walton, and Oliver Swain.		
" 22.	Nathaniel Brown.		
" 23.	Thomas Green		
" 24.	James Emerson		
" 25.	Abraham Gould		
" 26.	Thomas Eaton		
" 27.	Jonathan Brown.		
" 28.	John Nichols		
" 29.	Tho. Damon and Jona Hartshorn		
" 30.	John Walton		
" 31	Susan Weston and Anna Emerson		
" 32.	Jeremiah Brown		
" 33.	Tho. Emerson		
" 34.	Samuel Poole		
" 35.	Tho. Hay		
" 36.	Nath'l and Jona Cowdrey		

No. 46. Joseph Brown
" 47. Benjamin Hartshorn
" 48. John Vinton
" 49. Tho. Parker
" 50. Daniel ----, etc. etc.

1769

This year 1769 may be considered as one of the most important since the incorporation of the Town in 1644:

1st. The erection of a new and more commodious Meeting-house, with the Pastor's position vacant.

2d. The separation of the "Wood End" in habitants into a Third Parish.

3d. The adjustment of moneys paid by the Third Parish toward the new Meeting-house; not finally settled until 1773.

4th The settlement of a new minister, Rev. Caleb Prentiss with a £200 settlement, £80 salary, 20 cords of wood yearly, "brought to his door," together with the use of the parsonage.

5th. The general economic and political situations that six years later led to the Revolution.

Under date of Aug ye 4th 1769 we find the following:

"Received of ye Committee: for Building the New Meeting-house in the first Parish in So. Reading (viz) Ebenezer Nichols Esqr; Cpt John Goodwin; Ensign John Bacheller & Mr. Nathaniel Wiley the Sum of one Hundred & Eighty three pounds, fourteen shillings and three pence; being in full for Bulding and finishing said New Meeting-house it being money that the above Committee hiered of Naning Jeffers and Gardner of Salem for the use of Said Parish, we say Rec'd by us.

David Nellson.
Asa Toald.

Reading's historian reviewing incidents 50 years back in 1812, wrote:

"Near the site of their present church there stood the old Congregational meeting-house. It was erected in 1769; was a large, unpainted edifice, with a Porch on one end, and a tower, and a tall, slim spire, with a weather-cock at the other end. Its front door was on one side of the house and opened to the south. It was very much out of repair; its clapboards were loose and falling, and afforded to the Yankee school boys a fine source of whittling

material for darts, arrows, etc."

It was in this house that Mr. Haines, the School-master, "eloquent and humerous", delivered an oration in 1815 on the occasion of peace following the war of 1812 with England.

We know of no plan of seats in the Third Meeting-house but assume that they followed a general plan with the pulpit in the centre of one of the long sides, with the minister's pew and that of the elders on either side of the pulpit, the balance being along the remaining sides with a few central pews. The plan of the first meeting-house of the Third Parish with its 28 pews may have been copied from the parent meeting-house. This is not unlikely and is here reproduced for that reason.

This year there was a vote to sell the old Meeting-house by "Public Vandoo".

The Parish records for some years show many changes in pew ownership. For example:

1. Simon Jones, cordwain for $42 paid by Miles Cook, tin plate worker sold "one moiety on half of a certain pew, bounded westerly by the broad aisle, northerly by a small aisle back of the body seats, easterly by Jeremiah Briants pew and southerly by an aisle in front of Jeremiah Brown's Pew."

2. William Boardman, house wright, for $30 paid by Miles Cook, sold "a certain undivided moiety or half of a pew, situated on the floor of the meeting-house, bounded westerly by the broad aisle, northerly by the Pew of Aaron Burditt, easterly by Pew of Jeremiah Bryant, and southerly by a narrow aisle".

Upon completion of the new Meeting-house we find this vote on November 23, 1769:

> "To give Leave for any Person or Persons to buld Seats or Pews in the Back Part of the Galery at their own cost, and to have them "During the Parish's pleasure," at this meeting the vote was passed to "Sell the old Meeting-house at a Publick Vandue".

1770

Voted "to move the wall at the Northeast corner of the Parsonage house Lott and also the Parsonage barn to ye west."

Voted "that those Persons that Desire it may have Liberty to Set their horshouses on the north side of the Road behind the Meeting-house and also on the South side of ye Road at the South west of the meeting-house."

An unsuccessful attempt was made this year to appropriate "any Seat or Seats to the Singers". It was at a meeting on Sept. 20 1770 that it was voted to sell the Parsonage; also "to devote ye Pue behind ye Decon's Seat or the Elder's Seat (so called) to the Use of the Deacons and for trantient ministers."

The First Parish sold to Pareon Prentiss, for £333 6s 8d the parsonage land and buildings, said lands consisting of three pieces; That which the parsonage house stood on, that behind the Meeting-house, and that near Dr. Wm. Stimpsons." This last lot it is believed was a small lot to the west of the present Main Street between Church Street and the Pond in what is now Wakefield Park.

We do not know of the reasons for this sale as it left the Parish without a parsonage for many years, as it was not until 1804 that a new parsonage was built on Parish land east of the Meeting-house bordering Pond Lane on the east.

In reviewing old time scenes and places about 1812 a local chronicle said:

> "At this time the Prentiss house was still standing and occupied in part by Thomas Emerson, then newly married. Another part was occupied by a Mr. Williams, 'the barber of the village" and on account of his quiet and cheerful disposition was called the "happy man". The Chronicler goes on to say that "this old Prentiss parsonage was built about 1740 by the First Parish particularly for Rev. Mr. Hobby;" that the parson occupied it from 1733 till his death in 1765.

When Rev. Mr. Prentiss purchased the property he gave the equivalent of about $1100. He had a claim against the Parish for some $200 and gave his note for the balance of some over £133.

It was not until 1780 that the Parish finally gave Parson Prentiss a deed, and with it surrendered the security that it held, evidently without any payment by the Parson in liquidations of the notes involved.

Mr. Prentiss made this his home until his death in 1803; and some twenty years after the property was purchased by Burrage Yale; sold by his heirs, and such as remained stands today on Travers Street in Wakefield.

Parishioners were given "liberty to sett their Horsehous on the north side of the road behind the meeting-house and also on the so. side of ye road at the south west of the Meeting-house "

In 1871 the Town purchased the old Prentiss parsonage lot or at least that part situated at the corner of Lafayette and Common Street as a site for a new High School building, completed and dedicated, October 10, 1872.

1771

The Thirteen men-members were Chosen "Queresters of Persons to tune the Psalm" and were seated, "a part of them in the Elders Seat and Part of them in the short Seats in ye mens Side Gallery."

1774

Prior to and during the Revolutionary War the First Parish Meeting-house was the scene of many important meetings. This old record came to light:

> "Town of Reading being assembled by Notification from one to another at the meeting-hous in the first Parrish in sd Town on Monday the 29th of this instant August 1774.

1. "Voted Samuel Bancroft Esqr. Moderator.

After reading the Acts of Parliment this day Received from authority and also Reading a Letter from the Committees of Correspondence of Charlestwon & Cambridge the Town there Proceded."

2. "Voted to choose a Committee to go Concord and meet the other Commites of the Towns in the County on the thirtieth day of August 1774.

Voted the Committee to Concist of three viz.

Benja Brown
Jonathan Flint
Joseph Parker".

1775

This year military stores, brought from Salem, were stored in the old Meeting-house until ordered removed to Watertown. During and before the seige of Boston many of the inhabitants of Charlestown and Boston flocked to and temporarily settled in Reading, and these were welcomed at the Sunday worship at the Meeting-house, and were inspired by the patriotic sermons of Parson Prentiss. In fact the old Meeting-house was the center of the Town's activities during the years of the Revolution.

Parson Prentiss Kept a diary. Some entries were brief, to wit:

The Battle of Lexington was recorded: "The Regulars marched out of Boston to Conkord where the Fight Begaine and 90 of our men were killed."

Yet this same diary contained thirty pages of Gifts:

" a fine shirt for wedding"

Eleven entries of:
"a leg of pork"
"a live pig by the Parish, 75 lbs".

And I find a reference reading: "then the old church with the stocks behind it, and I remember the last victim" ***"and the old red school house that stood just north of the ancient parsonage". This doubtless refers to the small school building that stood between the Third Meeting-house and the Parson Emerson parsonage.

1782

This year parishioners of the First Parish, dissatisfied with the preachings of Parson Prentiss, petitioned that the Parish

"1st, refuse to vote Mr. Prentiss his salary

2d, to release the dissatisfied ones for being taxed for his support.

3d, to choose a Committee to see on what terms Mr. Prentiss will quit his desk."

The Parish voted to "dismiss the whole". There was no reflection or objections to his moral character as a man and a citizen, but to his "peculiar sentiments as a divine,"--leaning to what we of today call the Unitarian faith. He continued as minister until he died in 1803, on Feb. 7th, in the 34th year of his ministry.

Following the Revolution the affairs of the First Parish as affecting the Meeting-house, offer little for this record of passing events up to 1812 when the First Parish was incorporated at the Town of So. Reading.

1784

Voted "to raise £50 Lawful Money to fence in the Burying Place". It is thought that the fence as it stands in 1936 is as it was placed 152 years ago.

1785

It was in the old Third Meeting-house that on June 6th, the Parish inhabitants in Town meeting, voted "to choose a Committee to petition the General Court to be set off a distinct Town by themselves" and appointed a Committee consisting of Ebenezer Hopkins, Nathaniel Wiley and Doct John Hart to present such a petition. The General Court denied the petition. And so for twenty-seven years (i.e. to 1812) the Parish continued to express this desire to become a separate town.

1787

On Dec. 17, 1787 William Flint and Peter Emerson, in the presence of their fellow citizens, gathered in Town meeting in the old Meeting-house, listened to important duty-instruction as follows:

"Messrs. William Flint and Peter Emerson, Gentlemen: The choice we have this day made for you to represent this Town in the Convention to set at Boston on the second Wednesday of Jan. next sufficiently shows the Confidence the Town reposes in you. But as the matter to come before you is of the utmost National Concernment we trust you will not think it amis for the Town to give you some of their Sentiments on the subject. Considering the present weak State of the Federal Head we think it absolutely necessary that some further power be given to Congress, or a dissolution of the present Union of the States will probably come. We wish you, therefore, without prejudice or Profession candidly to attend to all the

Arguments that may be brought for or against the proposed Constitution and will consider that this Constitution is framed for 13 States by whom there must be Condescentions. If any alterations can be made for the better,---Constitution without interrupting the Union of the States we ask you to use your Endeavors to effect it. Many things in the Constitution adopted evidently tend to promote the good of the whole Community. Therefore, after the most mature Deliberation you shall think that--is not the Tendency of every Part, we wish you not to cast away the Good with what you may think not to be so valuable, but to use your Endeavors that Emendation may be made, and not that the whole may be rejected, lest the Union of the States may be broken and Confusion ensue".

The above report was accepted by the Town Dec. 17, 1787.

1791

The first clock to be placed on the Meeting-house filled a long filled want. A committee attended to the installation. The Parish record reads:

> "We have imployed Mr. Mulliken of Salem a clock maker to inspect the Clock which is erected on the Meeting-house by the Committee, who in form us that it is a Strong Substantial piece of work and Supposes that it will Likely to perform good Service".

That this clock was intended to run eight days is apparent from a vote in 1793: "to Petition of the Corner of the Steple by the Stairs Leading into the mens gallery for the Clock weights to Come into that it may Run Eight Days".

1795

Isaac Needham deeded to Abraham Gould of Stoneham for a consideration of Six pounds, Pew No. 12, "bounded Easterly by the Pulpit Stairs, Southerly on the Ally westerly on Said Abraham Goulds piew and Northerly on the wall of the house".

1796

This year a new Sounding Bord was built.

1797

The Parish Voted "to Sell the Ground in the East Galery Sufitiant to build Piews against the Wals." The Conditions of this sale read:

> "The Conditions of Sail are as follows that is to say the Gound Suffitiant for the four Piews in the East Galery together with the Staff thereon to be Struck off at the highest bidder and if aney dispute arise

to be set up again--The Piews to be Compleated in Nine months and said Piews to be Numbered Beginning at the door, one two & etc."

"Piew No.	1	To Capt Nath'l Cowdrey	2-1-0
" "	2	Magr Amos Boardman	3-10-0
" "	3	Mr. Oliver Pope	4- 1-0
" "	4	Lt. John Sweetser	4-11-0
		Total	£ 14- 3-0 "

1802

The roof of the Meeting-house was reshingled at a cost of $300.

1803

The Tythingmen received scant notice in the old records, nevertheless their duties were troublesome at times, especially this year when Capt D. Smith Capt. T. Emerson and Co. A. Bordman were named to assist the Tythingman "to regulate the Boys in going out of the Meeting-house".

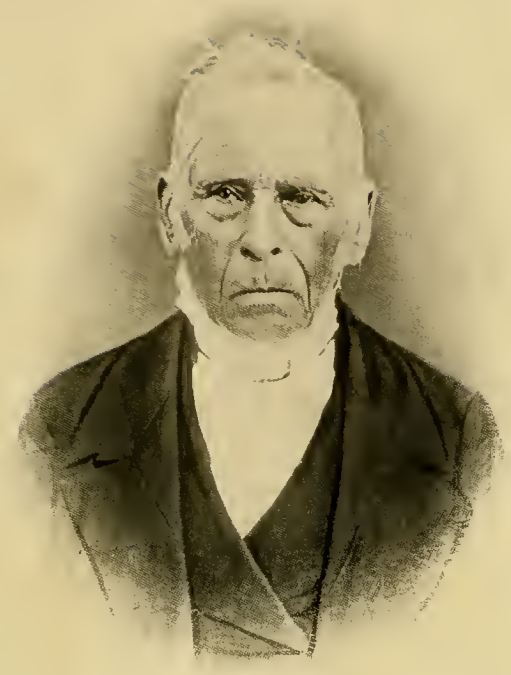
Following the death of Parson Prentiss his widow was given liberty to continue to occupy the minister's pew.

1804

After hearing Rev. Reuben Emerson in the Pulpit for twelve successive Sabbaths the Parish, by a vote of 72 yeas, 20 nays, 12 neuters, extended him a call as the Parish Minister, with a settlement of $500, yearly salary of $500 to which was to be added eleven cords of hard wood and four of pine.

The new minister objected to the above offer, stating that he "wishes for a parsonage to consist of convenient buildings with a garden, $600 per annum and fifteen cords of oak and three of pine." These conditions were granted except the salary, shall be $500, and the Parish voted on August. 16, 1804 "to purchase or build a Parsonage House," with David Smith, John Hart and Thos. Emerson Jr. as a Committee.

This Committee reported that they "could not obtain a situation which would be advantageous for a parsonage house."



REV. REUBEN EMERSON.

Rev. Reuben Emerson was the eighth minister of the old parish, one of the old school, and had the longest pastorate of any in the history of the parish. He was born in Ashby in 1771; was the son of John and Katherine (Eaton) Emerson, and grandson of Dea. Brown Emerson, of the First Parish in Reading. He married, in 1800, Persis Hardy, of New Hampshire. Largely by his own exertions and sacrifices he secured a liberal education, graduating from Dartmouth College in 1798, and was ordained to the sacred profession at Westminster, Vt., in 1800. He became pastor of the old parish in 1804, and remained as such until his death in 1860, having been sole pastor forty-one years, and associate pastor with Rev. Alfred Emerson fifteen years longer.

Mr. Emerson came to the parish when the disturbances in the theological world, sometimes called the Unitarian controversy, were at their height, and it is probable he was mainly instrumental in saving the old church from being moved from its ancient foundations of doctrinal belief. He was the successor of Rev. Caleb Prentice, whose mild, humanitarian sway had not prepared his parishioners to resist the power of the Arminian wave. Mr. Emerson firmly adhered to the doctrines of Calvinism, was cogent in reasoning, and faithful and fearless to proclaim what he considered to be the whole counsel of God. During fifty years he was one of the most respected and influential citizens of the town, and was a warm friend and advocate of the causes of education, temperance, and the emancipation of the slave. He was noted for his musical tastes and talents, and these qualities were inherited by his children in a marked degree. By blood and name he was allied with many of the ministerial profession, being a lineal descendant of Rev. Peter Buckley, Rev. Edward Buckley, early ministers of Concord, and Rev. Joseph Emerson, the first minister of Mendon, whose son, Peter Emerson, settled in Reading about the year 1694. A brother, the Rev. Dr. Brown Emerson, was many years a beloved pastor at Salem.

The children of Mr. Emerson were: Brown Handel Buckley, Charles Milton, John Calvin, Catherine, Anna Fiske, and Reuben Washington Emerson, but no known descendants are now living. His residence during the long period of his pastorate as undershepherd of the flock in the old parish was in the third parsonage of the First Parish, situated on the northerly side of Church Street, and easterly of the church, but since removed to Salem Street, near Main Street.

THE THIRD PARSONAGE-1804

On Sept. 5, 1804, the Parish Voted:

"to purchase a piece of Land of Doctr John Hart, near his house for the Price of one thousand dollars for the purpose of erecting a parsonage house and other buildings convenient thereon for the ministry in this place, & that they should be compleated in one year from this date."

It was also decided to sell Parish land to defray this expense.

A Committee, Lieut, Benj. Walton, Capt. David Smith, and Lieut. John Sweetser, was chosen to "draw a draught of the buildings to be erected". They reported, "that a dwelling house ought to be 38 feet long & 28 feet wide with one stack of chimneys: the Barn to be 31 feet by 24; and the Shed 28 feet by 14 feet."

This report was accepted and the above committee appointed to "carry into effect the building of the new Parsonage".

The Third Parsonage, built in 1804, a little distance east of the Meeting-house, was built the same year that Reuben Emerson, the eighth minister was installed. It was to provide the good parson with a suitable domicile and here, he and his family lived until his death in 1860 aged 88 years. In its original shape it was a plain two-storied building with a flat or tipped roof and was at first without an Ell. Years after it was remodeled to a Colonial Mansion type, and today stands on the south side of Salem Street, a little distance to the east of Main Street.

In this venerable Meeting-house on Oct. 17, 1804, the birth year of Reading's historian, Rev. Sylvester Sage A. M. pastor of the First Church of Christ in Westminster, Mass., delivered a powerful sermon at the installation of the Rev. Reuben Emerson, the Eighth pastor: He took his text from Matthew X 27 "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house tops." This sermon was published in pamphlet form "by desire of the hearers," to which was added "The Right Hand of Fellowship" given by Rev. Mr. Sanborn of Reading.

1805

That the action of September 5, 1804 was reconsidered as on January 1, 1805 the Parish passed this vote:

> "to give up the Deed of 8 acres of Land the Parish bought of Doctr. John Hart and to build the Parsonage house on the land near the Meeting-house that said Hart has relinquished to the Parish." Likewise "to pay Mr. Emerson the interest on $700 at 6% till the Parish see cause to purchase Land for the Parsonage House."

These two records appear:

> "The bell and sweeping the Meeting-house let to Jese Pope for the sum of $14.75." The following year Mr. Pope received only $8.85, but the year following Col. Bordman bid off the bell for $10.

> "The Burying Yard to Col. Amos Bordman for $3.15."

The Parish instructed the Assessors to dispose of the horse-block, back of the Meeting-house.

This year we discover that Town meetings were occasionally held at private houses as the entry:

> "Voted that this meeting be adjourned to Mr. Stephen Hale's Hall, and to be opened at 7 o'clock P. M. "

This, too, was the recorded first evening Town Meeting.

1806

A fence was "built round the Parsonage house". The next year the parsonage buildings and fence were painted.

1808

Voted "to sell the ground on the right & left hands; where the 3 body seats now stand on the floor for pews." The ground and

other seats were sold at auction; "the ground for six pews for $304, the seats for $7.50."

1809

The old Meeting-house Bible, worn with constant thumbing over the years, was ordered rebound.

1810

Some of the more liberal Church members made an effort to secure permission "to have a lecture preached in the Meeting-house by any of the neighboring ministers, whom they wish, once a month, or oftener if they please".

The Parish made answer:

> "that none but Congregational ministers should preach in the Meeting-house in said parish."

The vote was 43 to 23.

Here ends the records of the Meeting-houses of the First Parish up to the year 1812, when the territory known as the First Parish, was incorporated as the Town of South Reading.

The care of the First Parish property and the calling of Parish meetings were vested in a Board of Assessors.

From 1812 on all Parish meetings dealt only with the Meeting-houses, ministerial control, maintenence and such Common lands as were held in possession, separate and distinct from Town business and Town territory.

1812

On February 25, 1812 the territory of the First Parish was incorporated at the Town of South Reading. The first Town Meeting was held on March 5, in the old Third Meeting-house, there being no Town Hall, and the center school house not of sufficient size to accommodate the townspeople. Among other Town officials elected were two Tythingmen--Benj. Emerson and Joseph Hopkins.

The First Parish as an institution did not lose its identity as proprietor of Meeting-house and ministerial lands, but continued as a Corporate body even unto this day.

This separation of Town and Parish, as distinct in authority and possession, is shown by the fact that after the incorporation of the Town the Town claimed the right to continue to supply the schools with wood from the Parish ministerial lot as had been the practice.

To this the Parish objected. The Town persisted and by order of the school committee had Jonas Parker cut and bring five cords from the ministerial wood lot. Whereupon the Parish prosecuted the Town through the Town's Agent. The case was carried to the Supreme Judicial Court on the grounds of trespass, and its decision was in favor of the Parish, "as the Parish had a legal claim to the wood-lot by reason of possession." The Parish recovered judgment for $15 and costs, thereby getting full pay for the wood removed.

1813

March 1. Voted to raise 800 dollars for Ordinary Charges. It was this year that, in the Parish Warrant, is found the first use of the "Congregational Meeting-house" where voters were requested to assembly. In subsequent years this change continued.

A vote on April 4 reads: "Agreed with Jonathan Emerson to ring the bell and swep the Meeting-house and take care of the Clock from the first of March last to the first of March next, for six dollars and 50 cents".

1814

Voted to raise 85 dollars. The prosecution of trespassers on the ministerial woodlot came to a head this year when Jonas Parker "did, by order of the Town School Committee, cut and carry off five cords of wood for the use of the Town," was sued and the Parish recovered judgment in the Supreme Judicial Court for fifteen dollars damage and costs. This decision re-established the rights of the Parish, a right that had come down through the years past.

THE FAMOUS PAUL REVERE BELL

1815

This year the following action, inaugurated by the Parish was taken, "We the undersigned, being Committees of the Town of South Reading and of the Parish in said Town, duly elected do hereby contract and agree on the part of said Town and Parish the Town shall forthwith provide a new bell, the Parish giving the old bell toward the same; upon the following terms and conditions; and we do mutually agree on the parts of said Town and Parish respectively, that said conditions shall be ever hereafter faithfully kept and observed to wit: that the new bell shall be hung and always kept in the place where the old one has been; (i.e. in the tower of the Meeting-house) and that said new bell shall be always hereafter used in the manner and for the purposes for which the old bell has been heretofore used and for those purposes only; without any kind of alterations without the mutual consent of both the parties to this contract".

The "report was accepted and the contract therein contained carried into full effect." This action made clear the separation of the Parish interests from that of the Town and further that the Parish

had maintained to some limited degree its rights coming down through the years from 1639.

The new bell was bought of Paul Revere and his name in relief appears thereon. The old bell of 1715 was taken in part payment. The bell was first hung in the Third Meeting-house where it was first hung by Jonathan Emerson; later transferred to the old Town Hall, removed on its destruction to the former high school building, and a few years ago placed in the Lucius Beebe Memorial Library. It is a valuable relic of the past.

Jonathan Emerson raised his price to eleven dollars and fifty cents for ringing the bell, etc. Mention is made in an article for a Parish Meeting, "to see if the Parish will sell the Woodhouse and stons belonging to the center school-house". No action taken. The Meeting-house was damaged by a severe gale and repairs were made at once. It was also voted to erect a cupola above the bell, and secure the windows by "putin bars across them", and to "clapboard all the Meeting-house, except the back side, the north side of the tower, the north side of the porch, and to paint the whole house". Voted $750 for above repairs, but the Committee spent $1263.89.

1816

This year "liberty was given to individuals to paint the inside of the Meeting-house and to dispense of using the lower part for on Sabbath".

1817

Voted to "sell the ground where the body seats are, and to reserve the second pew on the east side of the Broad Isle". The following year the Committee reported having given deed of the five pews sold. A committee was named "to keep order in the meeting-house on the Sabbath".

1818

The Sabbath School came into existence and added to the good use to which the old Third Meeting-house provided space and environment.

1819

The singers seats were ordered changed. The cost of ringing the bell was reduced to $7.75 for the year, but the following year Eli Yale cut the price to $6.25.

1821

Voted to dispose of the Clock on the Meeting-house.

1824

New Pews were built in the gallery. Bell ringing cost up to $14.25.

1829

Things were changing. The Bell ringing was given to Jesse Pope for $11.75, and the care of the Meeting-house to Isaac Johnson for $13.75. Prices were on the up and up.

The first recorded sale of a pew occured this year when Zonas Eaton, cordwaiver, sold to Thadeus Spalding for $10.00 "one undivided half of Pew No. 39, situated at the easterly part of the Meeting-house, it being a Boddy pew etc".

Next sale recorded was of Pew No. 32 by Martha Peters, widow and Patty Peters single woman, both of Andover to Thaddeus Spaulding for $20.00.

1830.

The Meeting-house was reshingled this year.

1831

The Meeting-house was again reshingled.

An outcome of the Emerson vs. Wiley suit that had been in Courts nearly six years was a counter action brought by Benj. B. Wiley against the Parish and the Property in dispute. A Committee was appointed to confer with Mr. Wiley and later were "impowered to defend the law suit against the Parish by Mr. Wiley."

1832

On June 18, 1832 acting on Art. 2 the Parish voted to hire $600 to settle with Wiley, Art. 2 read:

> "To see if the Parish will raise money to Settle the Claim Benj. B. Wiley holds against the Parish by the Settlement of the action he brought against them."

These suits were "the cause of dividing the Town into two great parties, created a mighty excitement and enlisted on both sides of the question a hugh amount of anxiety, prejudice, rancor and party feeling."

1834

Jotham Walton for $20 sells, Boddy pew No. 30, called the "Walton Pew" to Thaddeus Spaulding" bounded on the west and south sides by the Aisle, on the eastly Benj. Swains, and on the northly a pew of Suel Winn".

William Williams for $45 sells to Thos. Emerson Jr., "the Pew Situated on the Lower Floor, formerly owned by Thos H. Forester".

1835

Voted to repair the Parsonage house. Another vote was "that the proprietors of the chapel have liberty to set the building on the land at the west end of the Parsonage". In one of Franklin Poole's oil paintings of the old Meeting-house this Chapel building is shown a little to the north and east of the Meeting-house.

1836

This year the Parish adopted the following:

"By-Laws for the Regulation of the Parish.

Art.1. Any person wishing to become a member of this Parish may signify his wish by application to the Parish Clerk (Thaddeus Spaulding) who shall make known such application to the assessors and if the Clerk, together with the Assessors, shall be unanimous in their opinion, in receiving such applicants he shall then be considered a member of said Parish and entitled to all its privileges".

Art. 2. "Should the Clerk and Assessors not be agreed in admitting any applicant for membership or should any person apply for membership at any legal meeting duly notified and warned, he shall become a member of said Parish on his receiving the Vote of two-thirds of the legal voters present at such meeting."

1837

The Third Meeting-house was this year remodeled.

March 7. Doct. T. Spaulding, Benj. L. Boardman and Thomas Emerson were appointed a committee "to look into the subject".

Sam'l Gardner Jr. and Aaron Foster Jr. were later added.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

South Reading March 22d 1837

The Committee to whom was referred the subject presented at the last Parish Meeting relative to altering and repairing the Meeting-house, have attended to the same and beg leave to report.

Believing it highly impotant and there should be a general unaimiaty of feeling among the members of the Parish, the Committee have accordingly endeavored to use all practicable means to ascertain the views of members of the Society and especially the views of Pew-holders and we believe that three fourths or more of the members of the Society and pew owners are in favor of an alteration and a

number of those who, when first conferred with, were opposed, have since altered their views and upon further deliberation believe it necessary and your Committee are also gratified to state, that so far as they can learn those few, who have thought different from the majority, have expressed towards them none other than kind feelings. Your Committee have endeavored to make an estimate of the probable expense of the proposed alterations and are unanimous that it will not exceed twenty five hundred dollars. But there should be no mistake tending this point, your Comtee would respectfully suggest the propiety of choosing a Comtee to exemine further, with regard to the expense to obtain a well executed plan of alteration, to see how many pews can be subscribed for, and such other measures as may be thought best to adopt and report at an adjourned meeting--so that all the society can act understandingly and may know before any expense has acerued, on any alteration made the manour of obtaining ways and means to defray the same.

All which is respectfully submitted.

Thad. L. Spaulding
Benj. L. Bordman
Thomas Emerson
Committee

Thaddeus Spaulding Parish Clerk

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The Committee to whom was referred the farther consideration of the subject relating to the contemplated alterations of the Meeting-house respectfully report.

Your Committee after meeting and conferring together thought it advisable to examine personally the Meeting-houses of Andover and Lynn, and also thought it desirable to employ some competent draftsman to meet us on the ground and make a very full and particular examination of every part of the house and to have our united views relative to any alteration that may be adopted. We accordingly obtained Mr. Jepthah P. Woodbury of Lynn (the same gentleman who undertook the large Congregational Meeting-house in Lynn last year) who met the Committee at this place yesterday and spent the afternoon in consultation upon the subject and have unanimously agreed upon the following proposed alterations.

First: That there should be four slips of pews across the Meeting-house, two body and two wall pews, each to be ten feet in length and wall pews on the easterly side running the other way, also that there should be two aisles of four feet in width.

Secondly: That the pulpit be placed on the east end of the Meeting-house.

Thirdly: That there should be two doors on the westerly side to correspond with doors opening from an entry under the westerly Gallery; also two doors on the East side of the house located properly and your Committee are also unanimous that it would be expedient to have new window frames, sashes, and glass. As to the Galleries they think best to have the westerly Gallery remain as it now does; the Gallery on the South to be diminished in width to ten feet and one erected on the Northerly part of the house of the same width, and the East Gallery to be removed entirely----

We would observe also that we have authorized Mr. Woodbury (the Gentleman above named) to draft a plan and send proposals for what sum he will repair and finish the house: and he has agreed to furnish us with a plan and his proposals by the 12th of this month. It will be seen by the above report that your Committee have not been able to accomplish all the objects proposed in their last report, and would therefore recommend an adjournment of this meeting at such time as may be thought best, to examine the plans and hear proposals, and in the meantime authorize your Committee to attend to such collateral affairs connected with the subject as may to them appear most judicious.

All which is Respectfully submitted In behalf of the Committee.

Thaddeus Spaulding) Chairman

A true Copy Thaddeus Spaulding) Clerk

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

South Reading
April 19th 1837

The Committee to whom was refered the Continuation of the subject of the Proposed Alteration of the Congregational Meeting-house Respectfully report.

That your Committee obtained the plan descriptive of the alterations suggested in our last report, and which, in its general features corresponds with their views and meets their approbation. They also by this time intended to have been able to have received proposals from a number of Gentlemen, and to have learnt distinctly the full expence of the proposed alteration, but as yet we have not been able except in one instance and that was sent in under such provision and circumstances connected therewith, as that the Committee would not feel authorized to communicate in relation thereto, till some explanations might be made and also your committee think it would be improper (all things being equal) to give one applicant, an advantage over another, which would be the case if by any means one might learn the proposals of another, before making up his own. But the subject which your Committee have felt particularly interested, and to which they have given a good share of attention, has been to ascertain as far as might be, a full and fair representation of the owners of the Pews, whether in favor, or against, the proposed alteration and we are able to state that the owners of sixty of the pews including those that are owned out of town, are in favor of an alteration, that seven persons the owners of nine pews and members of the parish may be considered opposed to an alteration, and four persons who are pew holders, and not members are also opposed. We ought, however, in justice to state that most of those members of the Society, who are opposed, observed that they should not make any difficulty, if it was thought best to alter. Your Committee also have seen and obtained between forty and fifty subscribers for pews after the house shall have been finished (to be taken at a judicious appraisal) also, they think they can number between twenty and thirty more who will probably take pews hereafter.

Your Committee have endeavored carefully, to take into due deliberation all the considerations, presented against as well as in favor of the alteration, and have unanimously come to the opinion, that it is best and important that the proposed alteration in said Meeting-house in its great and general out-lines should be made, and that, as soon and expeditious as a Committee chosen, shall be able to accomplish and that said Committee befully empowered to adopt such lawful and judicious measures as may be requisite to accomplish said objects that they be empowered to make any slight alteration in said plan upon which they may be agreed, and they would also suggest the propriety (if it be legal) of the Parish (at a legal meeting duly notified and warned for the purpose,) permitting the owners of the pews to have the sole voice in the selection of appraisers for the old pews and voting according to the numbers of pews owned.

All which is respectfully submitted,

Thaddeus Spaulding Chairman
Thaddeus Spaulding Parish Clerk

A true copy

1837

This year the Parish appointed a Committee to appraise the old pews in the Congregational Meeting-house and their report was as follows:

REPORT OF THE APPRAISING COMMITTEE OF THE PEWS

"We the subscribers having been notified that at a legal Meeting of the Inhabitants of the first Parish in South Reading held pursuant to a Warrant greanted April 21, 1837 were chosen a Committee for the purpose of appraising the old Pews in the Congregational Meeting-house. Your Committee have attended to that duty and report as follows viz.

That the whole number of pews on the lower floor being seventy-three and the several sums set against their number is the appraisal.

Pews	$	Pews	$	Pews	$	Pews	$	Pews	$	Pews	$	Pews	$	Pews	$	Gallery	Pew
1	25	11	20	21	33	31	25	41	20	51	17	61	10	71	40	1	1
2	20	12	12	22	17	32	30	42	18	52	14	62	38	72	40	2	1
3	30	13	11	23	23	33	17	43	18	53	14	63	40	73	38	3	1
4	25	14	25	24	17	34	19	44	19	54	14	64	40			4	1
5	38	15	20	25	20	35	15	45	20	55	11	65	40				
6	38	16	25	26	23	36	25	46	19	56	14	66	40				
7	25	17	25	27	19	37	17	47	17	57	15	67	38				
8	25	18	19	28	19	38	14	48	20	58	15	68	38				
9	30	19	25	29	25	39	25	49	14	59	20	69	40				
10	25	20	17	30	33	40	20	50	17	60	10	70	40				
$281	-	199	-	229	-	197	-	182	-	144	-	364	-	118	-		4

$281
199
229
197
182
144
364
118
4
$1718

The whole amount of the appraisal being One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighteen dollars

All which is Respectfully submitted.

South Reading June 12th 1837.

Caleb Wakefield)
Darius Stevens) Committee.
George Emerson)

A true Copy

Thaddeus Spaulding

Parish Clerk

FLOOR PLAN OF THE THIRD MEETING-HOUSE
(see opposite page)

The figures noted in each pew were evidently of a later appraisal than that of 1837. On the reverse is this notation:

"Plan of Pews in the Congregational M. House when Remodelled in 1837".

These figures also appear, their meaning obscure, but evidently a record of the cost of remodelling:

$1917.19
142.04
392.00
100.00
50.00
106.00
75.00
205.50
106.00
200.26
1376.80
$3293.99

1837

These old pews were Sold Nov. 9, 1837. The Parish records read "Articles of Sale and plan of the pews as recorded in Book No. 2, purchased to record Deeds of Pews.

In December the Assessors were made a committee "to sell or let such portion (or part) of the pews as they may judge expedient, reserving at least Six free pews, but said Committee shall not be authorized to take less than $25 a pew, the purchaser having his choice, nor less than $2 rent for a whole pew, nor less than fifty cents for a single seat."

We find another brief mention of the "chapel"-- taking care of the Meeting-house, let out to Peter Smith Jr. $35, including the chapel, also. Bell ringing to John Emerson Jr. $10. We notice that the Assessors held meetings in the chapel.

1838

Peter Smith Jr. was given the care of the Meeting-house and chapel for one year, receiving $35. John Emerson, Jr., continued ringing the bell, compensation $10.

1839

The Parish voted thanks to John Gould "for taking care of the lads in the Gallery".

The Committee chosen to superintend the alterations of the Meeting-house and to sell the pews, reported:

The Committee chosen April 19, 1837 to carry into effect a report of a Committee made the same day by which said Committee was authorized to contract for and superintend the alteration of the Meeting-house, and at other meeting were authorized to appraise and sell the new pews and make all necessary arrangements in relation thereto beg leave to report. That on July 31, 1837 the old Pews Galleries Seats Windows & etc were sold at Auction for 169.48 the greater part of which was collected and on Nov. 9, 1837 all the pews on the floor of Meeting-house were sold, excepting one reserved as a Parish Pew, and the amount of the Sale was $5134.46, also cash received for stones belonging to the Parish to the value of $20.00. Making all that has been received $5323.94. The sum of $5134.46 was received one fourth down ¼ in 4.8 and 12 months from the time of sale, the whole sum has been laudably met, and every Vote given to the Chairman of your Committee has been satisfactorily adjusted and paid.

The Chairman of your Committee has paid for the Parish the following sums.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

To wit to Jepthah P. Woodbury as by contract		$2900.00
For addition to the Pulpit to new Cont of plastering and other items as by bill exemined by the Committee amounting to		171.77
Making the whole sum		$3071.77
Paid	Joseph Woodbury Jun sofa & table	45.00
Paid	Thomas Averhill Jun Blinds	195.50
Paid	John Cook for painting	186.25
Paid	for lights and mats	66.55
Paid	for Old Pews	1674.00
Paid	for various other bills labor interest money & etc.	146.35
Paid	for funnel	27.25
	Making total paid	5412.67
Now deduct what he has received		5323.94
	Leaves due to your Committee	$ 88.73

This sum it will be perceived accrued the most of it by various items unforseen by the Committee, but which they deemed it their duty to pay. The Chairman of the Committee has paid all the above sum of $88.73, which together with his services he freely tenders to the Parish as a donation, unless the Parish think proper to refund the amount of $27.25, what the funnel cost, but this is left optional with them the services of the other Gentlemen of the Committee which was always so readily granted to the Chairman, he is authorised to say also, have been liberally tendered to the Parish.

Now in conclusion--should this report meet the approbation of the Parish and be accepted, they beg to be discharged from each and every trust that has been confided to them, not without however, tendering their grateful acknowledgements to the members of the Parish who have so kindly cooperated with them in their arduous undertaking and more especially would they desire to be grateful to God, who has preserved us and given us so much harmony in all our counsels and sustained us while finishing a house dedicated to His praise.

In behalf of the Committee.

Thaddeus Spaulding (Chairman

John Brown Jr., yeoman and Charles Green, yeoman in consideration of $5 sold to Reuben Green, yeoman, Pew No. 21 in the Meeting-house of the First Parish of South Reading.

1839

The Committee was thanked for their excellent work.

1844

This year completed the 200th anniversary of the Town and of the Church History of the First Parish. A full account of Reading Bi-Centennial, Celebration on May 29, 1644 is to be found in Eaton's History of Reading, and in the published address of Rev. Mr. Flint of No. Reading. The part taken by the First Parish was a conspicuous and valuable contribution. The indoor exercises were held in a spacious pavilion, erected on the Common near the First Parish Meeting house, where sixteen hundred persons assembled. The historical address by Rev. Dr. Flint delivered from a platform erected in the Common is a valuable contribution to the events from 1639. This address was printed, to which was added a full account of the day's proceedings, and other valuable historical matter. A copy of this volume may be found in the Lucius Beebe Memorial Library.

1850-1858

Between these years the records show that the First Parish Meeting-house, as well as its location, became unsatisfactory, and from year to year committees attempted to find a solution for insufficient seating accommodations, etc. There had been also considerable agitation "that the private ownership of pews worked to a disadvantage in raising current expenses, and that some pew owners who had an absolute right to occupy their pews and receive all the benefits of religious services, failed to contribute a proportionate amount toward the yearly expenses". Every effort failed to get all pew owners to surrender their claims.

So it appears that in 1858, the Parish took advantage of the general act of 1845, appraised the pews and took them over for the Parish. This act divested individual titles to all pews, vesting the legal title in the Parish where it remains to this day.

1859

The Third Meeting-house was remodeled, turned to face to the south; moved a little to the north, the spire torn down, and rebuilt with a clock. The small building and horse sheds which have been depicted as being to the rear and east may have been built about this time. The old Paul Revere bell bought in 1815 was removed to the first Town Hall erected in 1834 on the north side of Church Street at the upper end of the Common; later to the High School building and is now to be found in the Lucius Beebe Memorial Library.

1870

This year in the old Meeting-house was observed the 250th anniversary of the Landing of the Pilgrims, with addresses by

Rev. Charles R. Bliss, the pastor, by the Hon. Lilley Eaton, Rev. Jonas Evans and Hon. Paul Hart Sweetser.

This Meeting-house sufficed the needs of the Congregational Society until 1890 when it was decided upon the erection of a new house. From 1768 to 1890 this old Meeting-house had served its purpose and now on a spot, a little to the north arose the fourth Meeting-house of the First Parish.

The farewell services occured on May 24, 1890. The old third Meeting-house, demolished that year by friendly hands, to make room for the fourth edifice, was sold to George H. Maddock for $100. A large part of the timbers and boards were taken by Reuben H. Mitchell, who had been sexton for many years, and used in the Construction of a house for himself on Curve Street, Wakefield. Some portions of the old timbers were utilized to build the pulpit, five chairs and the communion table for the new church.

THE FOURTH MEETING-HOUSE

1892--1909

THE FOURTH MEETING-HOUSE 1892

Ministers:

Rev. Robert W. Wallace	1888-1893
Rev. Albert P. Davis	1894-1907
Rev. Austin Rice	1907- to the present day.

Agitation for a new Meeting-house began in 1886 and resulted in the appointment of a Committee to consider repairs on the old house. This committee finally reported in favor of a new edifice. There was much discussion in the Parish and as a result in January 1888 a committee was created to obtain subscriptions, have preliminary plans made, etc. In May 1889 a new committee came into the picture and finally on March 31, 1890 the whole project was submitted to a committee of fifteen--

John G. Aborn
George H. Maddock
John W. White
Junius Beebe
William D. Deadman
William P. Preston
Thomas J. Skinner
Samuel K. Hamilton (Chairman)
Richard Britton
David H. Darling
Edwin E. Emerson
Chester W. Eaton

Granted the necessary authority this committee, after subscriptions had been pledged up to $45,000, accepted the plans submitted by Hartwell & Richardson of Boston.

A building Committee was chosen consisting of

Thomas J. Skinner (Secretary)
David H. Darling
Junius Beebe
George H. Maddock
Samuel K. Hamilton (Chairman)

The edifice erected was of stone and the accompanying illustration suffices for a more detailed description. The corner stone, enclosing a copper memorial box, was located at the southwest corner of the building, very close to the site of the second Meeting-house.

The new Meeting-house was completed and dedicated on March 10, 1892.

The cost of the building, exclusive of gifts and the memorial windows was $106,392.71. On May 11, 1904, all indebtedness had been liquidated, and the occasion was duly celebrated.

The destruction of this Meeting-house by fire in 1909 was a severe loss to the First Parish. Immediate steps were taken to erect a new Meeting-house on the ruins, and in 1912 this was consummated in the Fifth Meeting-house of the First Parish in Wakefield.

1894

The 250th anniversary of Town and Parish was elaborately observed. The Memorial Volume published in 1896, a book of 398 pages, contains a recital of all proceedings, historical addresses, illustrations of men, public buildings, private homes and historic places all so complete as not to warrant anything in this story beyond some quoted facts touching upon Meeting-houses and parsonages of the first Parish. Returning to the Mother Church on this occasion came delegations from its daughters from Reading, No. Reading, Wilmington, Lynnfield, Melrose, Malden, Stoneham, and Charlestown.

Rev. David N. Beach, in delivering the Historical Discourse in the new stone Meeting-house on Sunday, May 27, 1894, closed with these words:

> "And brethren, when you erected this building out of solid granite and solid oak, you not only reared the one sufficient outward monument for all that the history of our Town has meant, but you erected, as a matter of art, a structure, destined, I hope, to last for hundreds of years, etc."

15

----and five years later fire destroyed it!

THE FIFTH MEETING-HOUSE

1912

THE FIFTH MEETING HOUSE-1912

Rev. Austin Rice, present pastor.

The re-building of the Meeting-house, destroyed by fire in 1909, and the raising of the necessary funds was entrusted to a Committee consisting of:

Junius Beebe,
Edward A. Carlisle
James Driver
Theodore Eaton (Secretary)
Joseph L. Gooch
Samuel K. Hamilton (Chairman)
George H. Maddock
Dr. Charles E. Montague
Dr. Oswald A. Parker
Thomas J. Skinner
Harry I. Thayer
Arthur G. Walton
C. Winsor Whitten
John W. White

This Committee chose as a building Committee:

Junius Beebe
Samuel K. Hamilton
George H. Maddock
Arthur G. Walton
John W. White.

The same Architects were employed as for the destroyed edifice.

"In approaching the task of rebuilding", reported the Committee, "it was found that the interior woodwork, including the beautiful memorial windows, together with all the furnishings had been entirely destroyed, and the exterior of the building on the west, north and east to nearly the main entrance had been destroyed or so damaged that new material and new construction was absolutely necessary. The tower and the wall on the south, on the south a little beyond the main entrance, the wall on the east, and a part of the west wall remained practically unimpaired. The exterior of the new building presents the same aspect as the former, except on the west, where the walls were raised one story to give space for Sunday School class rooms."

For more details, reference is made to the aforesaid "Commemorative Address" by Samuel K. Hamilton, Chairman of the building Committee, published in 1919.

The present edifice, the Fifth Meeting-house of the First Parish, cost in total figures $125,814.99. Towards this cost was applied $62,282.17, the amount of the insurance received on the Meeting-house destroyed.

On February 1, 1912 the edifice was dedicated.

"Here it stands, massive in proportions, beautiful in its architecture, convenient in its arrangements, and perfect in its equipment, open to the vision of all".

In a few years more there will be an opportunity to observe the 300th Anniversary of the First Meeting-house of Ancient Redding, and to recall to the present generations that that Meeting-house, with its primitive structure and God-loving members, who laid the foundation of the present Towns of Wakefield (First Parish), North Reading (Second Parish), and Reading (Third Parish).

TODAY-1936

By Rev. Austin Rice the present pastor of the First Parish Congregational Church of Wakefield, Massachusetts.

"This locality was first settled in 1639 and five years later on Nov. 5, 1644, our First Parish was organized. For nearly 300 years, this Church, with successive generations, has maintained its house of worship and through its faithful membership has been like a beacon in supporting the moral and spiritual welfare of the community.

With an enrolled membership of 1082 and a resident membership of about 930, our Church was never stronger nor better organized to achieve the high ideals of a Christian Church than it is today.

In fellowship the First Congregational Church is in accord with the faith and polity usually followed by the Congregational - Christian Churches of America.

The first great purpose of the Church is to maintain the worship of God, to increase our love and faith toward Him, and to be fitted for deeper and broader service to one another, and to all around us in the Name of Christ.

The membership of this Church is composed of those who have united themselves in a "Covenant", expressing their Christian Faith and their mutual desire to be of service. The members of the Church enter into a Covenant, that they will seek to live as children of our Father in heaven and to walk together in Christian love and brotherly helpfulness. We seek, with Divine aid, to advance the Kingdom of God and the reign of Christ in this community and throughout the world.

We believe the Church should be a HOME for all who love God. We believe it makes our lives better and happier. The Church seeks also to pass these Christian opportunities and privileges to the children, who in future years shall live in Wakefield."