

The
One Hundredth Anniversary
of
The Dedication
of the
Congregational Meeting House
Rocky Hill
and the
One Hundred Eighty-first
of the
Founding of the Church

1727

1808



"Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster,"

In Memoriam.



MEETING HOUSE.
Dedicated September 22, 1808.

Historical Sketch.



THE ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY was incorporated in 1727 under the name of Lexington. One year later it was changed to Stepney, but from the first the society went by the name of "Rocky Hill." March 19, 1895, the Ecclesiastical Society was dissolved, and the church was incorporated as the "Rocky Hill Congregational Church." The first meeting house was built in 1722-1724. This was followed by the present edifice, which was erected during the ministry of Rev. Calvin Chapin, D. D., 1806-1808, and was dedicated September 22, 1808. It is one of the best preserved of the old New England colonial churches. There have been some slight changes in the interior, such as a partition cutting off the rear of the choir gallery, the closing up of the slave gallery, removal of seats from the galleries, substitution of slips for pews, and the removal of the high pulpit and sounding board. In 1903 the church was thoroughly renovated in harmony with the original design.

The church probably attained its largest membership in 1844. May 5th Dr. Chapin preached his 50th anniversary sermon. The membership then given was 244. Its present membership, September 22, 1908, is 158.

The Officers of the Church.

Pastor, Rev. F. P. WATERS, since February 1, 1905.

Deacons: { WILLIAM ROBBINS, since 1882.
HORACE R. MERRIAM, since 1897.
SAMUEL ASHWELL, since 1906.

Trustees: { LEON B. HUMPHREY, 1906. Dr. ORIN A. MOZER, 1907,
FRANK CHURCHILL, 1906 EDWARD L. KING, 1908.
PETER B. GRISWOLD, 1906. Dr. FRANK L. BURR, 1908.

Sunday School Superintendent, EDWIN L. KING.

Clerk, GEORGE B. STILLMAN, 1902.

Treasurer, WILLIAM G. ROBBINS, 1882.



REV. CALVIN CHAPIN, D. D.

Ministers.

DURING the 181 years of the church's life it has been served by twenty ministers; also, between the different pastorates, others have supplied. The first pastor was Rev. Daniel Russell, who was installed June 7, 1727, and continued for thirty-four years. His successor, Rev. Burrage Merriam, was pastor for eleven years, beginning February 27, 1765. Reverends Bulkley, Fuller, Atkins, Lyman and Wolcott supplied the pulpit until Rev. John Lewis was settled, June 24, 1781. His pastorate was eleven years. Rev. Percy Boardman and Rev. William Brown supplied until 1794, when Rev. Calvin Chapin was ordained and installed pastor, April 30, 1794. His was a life pastorate, terminating with his death in March, 1850. Rev. L. B. Rockwood, who was a colleague of Dr. Chapin, became his successor, July 10, 1850, and served the church for nine years. Since then the pastorates have been of short duration :

Rev. GEORGE M. SMITH, '59-'63.	Rev. EGBERT N. MONROE, '85-'87.
“ HENRY FORD, '64-'67.	“ AARON C. ADAMS, '88-'93.
“ MERRICK KNIGHT, '67-'72.	“ CLAY D. CHUNN, '94-'96.
“ WILLIAM P. FISHER, '72-'77.	“ HENRY H. DAVIES, '97-'98.
“ S. Y. LUM, '77-'79.	“ LORING B. CHASE, '99-'01.
“ WILLIAM B. MILLER, '79-'81.	“ WILSON R. STEWART, '02-'04.
“ C. S. AYER, '84-'85.	“ THEODORE HOFFMAN, '04-'05.

Rev. F. P. WATERS, February 1, 1905.



HOME OF REV. BURRAGE MERRIAM.
Built by him. Now the residence of Mr. William Shoeborne.



HOME OF REV. JOHN LEWIS.
Built by him. Afterwards owned and occupied by Dr. Calvin Chapin.
Now the residence of Mr. Henry H. Humphrey.



HOME OF REV. LEBBEUS B. ROCKWOOD.
Now residence of George B. Andrews.

Objects in View.

AS a fitting memorial of the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the meeting house, the church has had two objects in view: the securing of a parsonage and a new organ. Although in the original grant from Wethersfield there were sixty-three acres of land known as "parsonage land," no parsonage has ever been built, the ministers either owning their own residences or renting, while the parsonage land has passed into other hands, the proceeds having been absorbed in other expenses of the society.

The realization of both of these objects adds greatly to the felicity of this celebration. The parsonage now stands ready for occupancy. By a vote of the church it is to be known as the Chapin Memorial Parsonage, in memory of Rev. Calvin Chapin, D. D., whose pastorate of fifty-six years was the longest in the history of the church. It is fittingly located on land once owned by Dr. Chapin and presented to the church for the exclusive use as a parsonage lot by Mrs. Delina Sessions. The value of the parsonage, including land, contributed labor and material, is about \$4,000. A considerable portion of the funds was contributed by former residents of Rocky Hill, their friends and descendants. The largest single contribution came as a memorial of Mrs. Elizabeth Chapin Kimball, a granddaughter of Dr. Chapin, who in her girlhood lived in her grandfather's family, and who always took a warm interest in Rocky Hill and in its church.

The parsonage faces Chapin Avenue and has a commanding view of the center of the town and far to the north.

Deacons.

OWING to the absence of definite records prior to 1781, as to the diaconite, the conclusions of Dr. Rufus W. Griswold, in his historic paper on the diaconite, are here followed. According to this the first deacons and their successors were :

1727 JONATHAN CURTIS,	1727 BENJAMIN WRIGHT,
1733 DAVID GOODRICH,	1753 EBENEZER WRIGHT,
1782 THOMAS CURTIS,	1766 NATHANIEL ROBBINS,
1789 EBENEZER GOODRICH,	1782 JOSIAH HUNTINGTON,
1805 ASCHALE MERRIAM,	1794 BENJAMIN WRIGHT, 2d.
1808 SETH HART,	1795 ELIAS DICKINSON,
1814 HEZEKIAH WHITMON,	1811 SIMON BUTLER,
1829 ISRAEL WILLIAMS,	1829 JEHIEL ROBBINS,
1838 JARED G. DIMOCK,	1843 JOEL GOODRICH,
1891 EDWARD N. WARNER,	1852 THOMAS D. WILLIAMS,
1897 HORACE R. MERRIAM.	1882 WILLIAM G. ROBBINS.

A third deacon, SAMUEL ASHWELL, was elected April 6, 1906.

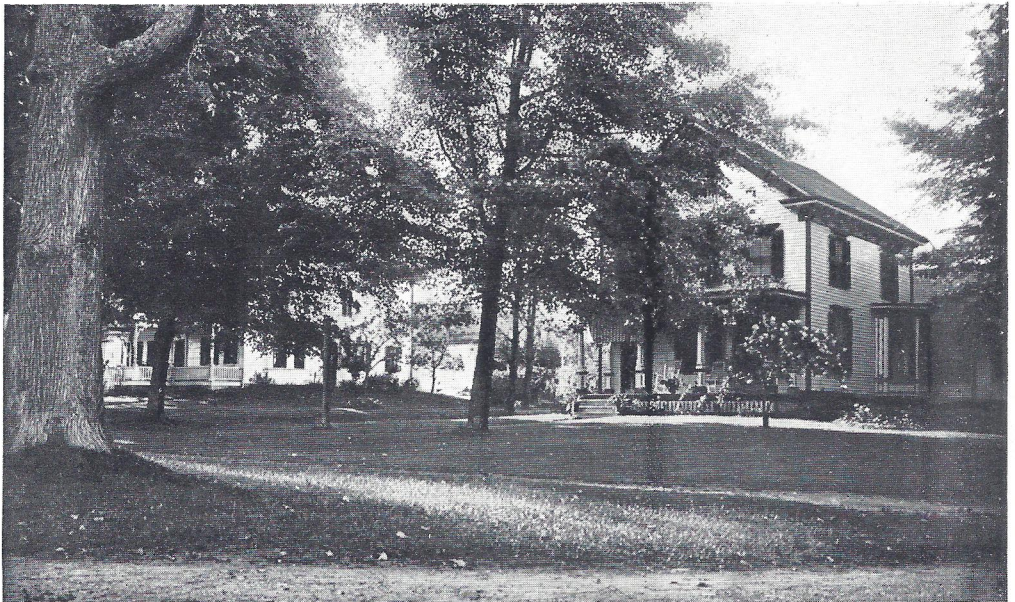
NOTE.—Deacon Jared G. Dimock died in 1888, having held the office of deacon a little over fifty years. His was the notable deacon's record in the history of the church, as Dr. Chapin's was the notable minister's record. As a token of regard to his memory no successor was elected till 1891, when Edward N. Warner was chosen as his successor.



RESIDENCE OF DEA. WILLIAM ROBBINS.



RESIDENCE OF DEACON HORACE R. MERRIAM.



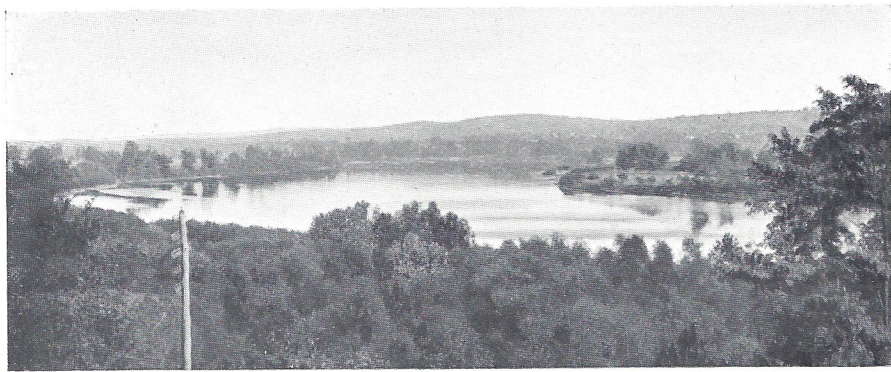
RESIDENCE OF DEACON SAMUEL ASHWELL.

The Town of Rocky Hill.

THE earliest settler of Rocky Hill was Samuel Boardman, who received a grant of land from Wethersfield in 1649. In the vote conveying this land it was described as "20 acres of land on the south side of Rocky Hill." This is the first record of the name. It clung to the place notwithstanding other names were voted, as Stepney, and Third Eccleastical Society. So when the town was set off from Wethersfield in May, 1843, its corporate name became Rocky Hill.

In the History of Ancient Wethersfield, Dr. Rufus Griswold thus writes concerning this small strip of territory, $3\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ miles:

"In its geographical situation and physical features it is one of the most beautiful towns in the valley of a river unsurpassed in natural beauty by any stream on this continent. The view from the crown of the trap rock hill, both as to the foreground of the meadows below, and the villages around, as well as in the distance, with the windings of the silver-grey river between;



VIEW FROM THE PARK.

reaching on the east, to the Glastonbury range of hills; on the north to the city of Hartford with its domes and spires, and further on to the Hoosic chain of mountains in Massachusetts; swinging thence down to the Talcott mountain, to Southington and Meriden; and from thence stretching easterly to the straits below Middletown, is one of unsurpassed loveliness."

This glowing description will not appear exaggerated to any who visit Shipman's hill on a clear day.

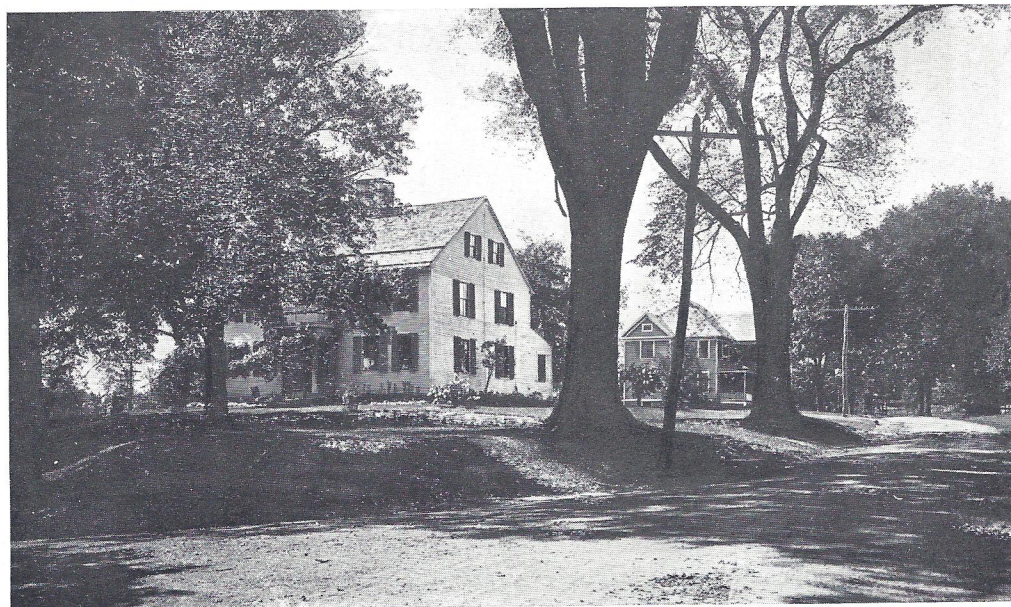
The town's greatest population was about the time the Valley Railroad was built, 1872-4, when it was 1,150. The last census gives 1,025. With the completion of the trolley from Hartford to Middletown, Rocky Hill will not only afford one of



ELM STREET.

the most beautiful localities for residence on the Connecticut River, but also one of the best in point of communication with neighboring cities.

The shipping and ship-building industries, for which the town was once noted, have passed, but other industries have

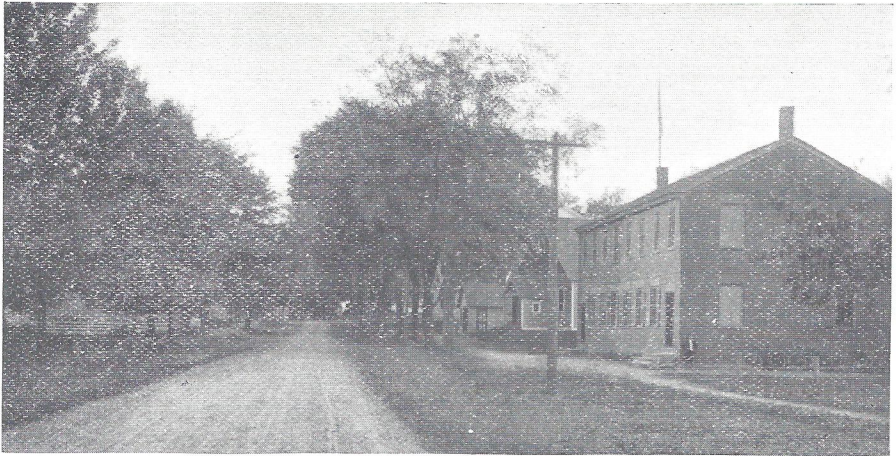


Residences of W. R. GRISWOLD and Dr. O. A. MOSER, looking up Elm Street.

followed. To-day there are two manufacturing plants, the Champion Mfg. Co., by the river near the station, and the Drop Forge at Dividend, also a large quarry which is furnishing the State and neighboring cities with their stone roads.

Of the other two churches in town, the Methodist meeting house was dedicated in 1896. Its present pastor is Rev. James M. Yard. The Catholic church was built in 1879, and the present priest is Rev. James Lawless, who resides in Cromwell.

The schools of the town are consolidated and under the management of a board of education. There are three school houses now in use, the south, west, and center, where the children are advanced through the eighth grade, when the town provides for their ninth grade in the Hartford schools.



THE CENTER SCHOOL, built 1803.

The town has also co-operated with the State in providing high school advantages either in Middletown or Hartford for all who desire to attend.

Inasmuch as our greatest asset is our children, a most encouraging sentiment is spreading throughout the town that the inalienable right of every child, who is to be a future citizen of this great republic, is the opportunity for the very best training and development.

The fusion of urban and rural populations, of which this town is a typical illustration (having many residents who daily go to the city for their business), is not only stimulating the people to the realization of the highest educational ideals, but is also contributing to a mutual understanding and respect both for city and country life. The city and the country each has its



MEADOW BROOK BRIDGE.

own peculiar characteristics, which are not antagonistic, but complementary. The former emphasizes the solidarity of society,



DR. GRISWOLD'S CORNER.

Dr. Griswold's residence in the foreground on the corner.

the latter, individual initiative ; one illustrates the power of combination, the other that of individual character. The great problem of the future is the blending of these two factors. How

can this problem be better solved than by the urban man of business making his residence in the country? Thus will he give his family immediate touch with nature, where God's work is least marred by man's invention, and where at the same time he may bring the amenities of the city life to grace and quicken the social relations of the country.

Thus Rocky Hill, through the mingling of city and country life, is contributing to what may fittingly be called the renaissance of country and home life in New England.



Centennial Committees.

GENERAL COMMITTEE.

Samuel Ashwell, *Chairman.*
Edwin L. King, *Secretary.*
William G. Robbins,
Horace R. Merriam,
George B. Stillman,
Dr. Oran A. Moser,

Peter B. Griswold,
Mrs. Ella Churchill,
Mrs. W. R. Griswold,
Mrs. Samuel Ashwell,
Mrs. W. E. Pratt.

Sub-Committees.

INVITATION.

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George B. Stillman,
Peter B. Griswold,

Rev. F. P. Waters.

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Frank G. Sherwood,

William Lenox,
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RAISING FUNDS FOR CENTENNIAL.

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Frank Williams,
Amy Merriam,

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