

HISTORY
OF THE
FIRST PARISH
WESTON, MASSACHUSETTS

—BY—

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There is very little concerning the early life of this parish which has not been printed, and much of the material for this paper has been taken from books and pamphlets, copies of which are among the parish records. Copies of these books and pamphlets have, at one time and another, been generously distributed among the members of the parish.

The first part of this paper is taken from a manuscript account of the founding of the church in Weston, written by our former Parish Historian, Miss Mary F. Peirce, and placed by her at the beginning of the Parish Scrap-book:—

“On May 9, 1694, one hundred and seventeen persons, among them thirty-three ‘Farmers,’ objected to the place selected for a new meeting house, near the central part of what was then Watertown, desiring to have it placed farther west, where it would be more convenient for themselves. The place that had been selected was the choice of a Committee chosen by the ‘Governour & Council,’ who had reported, April 17th, 1694. In spite of the opposition, the meeting house was built on this spot, and accepted Feb. 4, 1695–6.

“Oct. 2, 1694, at a General Town meeting, [Watertown] it was voted ‘That oer neighbors the Farmers being upon Endeavers to have a meeting house amongst themselves the Town consents that They may come as far as bever Brooke upon the Country Road Leading to Sudbury and so to run North & South upon a

line to the End there may be peace and settleme^t amongst us.' ” Miss Peirce copied these items from Volume II of the printed “Records of Watertown.”

Rev. Dr. Samuel Kendal, one of the former ministers of this church, in his “Century Sermon,” written in 1813, says that on Jan. 9, 1695, “the inhabitants of this section of Watertown [the Farms] met and agreed to build a meeting house thirty feet square, and to place it on land of Nathaniel Cooledge senior, by the side of the road at the head of Parkhurst’s meadow. This spot was a little in front of the present house, the road then passing more south than at present.” The meeting house has always stood within a stone’s throw of this spot, but formerly farther west, with a road across at the back of the church from the County Road to what is now Church Street.

“‘Sometime in August 1695’ money was contributed for preferring a petition to the General Court, praying for leave, as it is expressed in the records, ‘to set up the public worship of God amongst the inhabitants of the west end of said town’ meaning Watertown. It does not appear when the petition was preferred to the General Court; but the prayer of it was granted at the May session, 1698. Some doubts arising about the eastern boundary of the precinct, the General Court, at their May session, 1699, passed an explanatory order in these words, ‘The bounds of said precinct shall extend from Charles river to Stony Brook Bridge, and from said bridge up the brook northerly to Robert Harrington’s farm, the brook to be the boundary, including the said farm, and comprehending all the farms, and farm lands to the line of Cambridge and Concord; and from thence all Watertown lands to their utmost southward and westward bounds.’ The same bounds, in the same words, are defined in the act of incorporation of the town.

“In 1696 agents were chosen to contract with workmen to build the house, which was called The Farmers’ Meeting House, a very appropriate, significant and honourable appellation.”

The last three items, quoted from Kendal’s “Century Sermon,” Miss Peirce said, “must have been taken by him from the

Farmers' Book of Precinct Records, because there is no mention of them in the Watertown Records. When the precinct became a town, 1712-13, the records of the Precinct ceased, and the Town records were without doubt entered and continued in the same book. This is the book that is now lost. In a volume now remaining to us, the same arrangement may be seen. The first thirty-one pages were devoted to the records of the First Precinct, 1746-1754. At the last date, by the incorporation of the town of Lincoln, a part of which had for some time formed the second precinct of Weston, the records of the first precinct were discontinued, since its boundaries now coincided with those of the town, and the Town Records, 1754, were entered and continued in the same book. This book has been printed."

Among the State House Records is a paper dated June 14, 1698, O. S., June 24, 1698, N. S., giving permission to the Petitioners to build and furnish a meeting house, and to settle a minister to dispense the word of God unto the inhabitants living on the West Side of Stony Brook.

Watertown formerly included what is now Watertown, Waltham, Weston and a part of Lincoln. In ecclesiastical affairs this town was connected with Watertown about sixty-eight years. The tradition is, that formerly the inhabitants of the remote westerly part of this town went to worship at the remote easterly part of Watertown. Dr. Kendal said that in this they manifested a zeal for the house and worship of God, not often found among their descendants.

"Meetings of the precinct were holden, Nov. 8, and Nov. 15, 1698, officers chosen, and further provision made to complete the meeting house. August 25, Sept. 15 and Nov. 16, 1699, measures were taken to finish the meeting house, and to procure a minister. Feb 14, 1700, the precinct voted to have a minister to preach in the meeting house, to begin the second sabbath of the ensuing March, and thence forward to continue to preach in said house. Thus it appears that the small house, begun in 1695, was not so far completed, as to be occupied till March, 1700." On March 16, 1697-98, the farmers were exempted by

Watertown from the church rates 'because they have built a meeting house for themselves.' The money for the building was at first obtained by subscription, but afterwards it was carried on at the expense of the precinct.

A committee to select a minister chose Mr. Thomas Symmes, Oct. 8, 1700. Probably he declined, for Dr. Kendal said that he found nothing more about him in the records, but he heard that he afterwards settled at Boxford, and from that place removed to Bradford, where his father had been minister. Mrs. Alice Morse Earle says in one of her books that at the planting of the First Church in Woburn, Massachusetts, the Rev. Mr. Symmes showed his godliness and endurance (and proved that of his parishioners also) by preaching between four and five hours, but he was another Mr. Symmes. Sermons often occupied two or three hours in those days.

On July 6, 1702, the precinct gave Mr. Joseph Mors, of Medfield, a call. Evidently Mr. Mors was not able to decide immediately, for after a day of fasting and prayer the call was renewed September 28, 1702, with the offer of an annual salary and the promise to build him a house. Two months later Mr. Mors accepted the call with some conditions. January 8, 1703 the precinct accepted his answer and voted to begin his house. On September 22, 1703 it was voted to raise the house on the 4th of the next month. The next year it was put into Mr. Mors's possession and money was granted to enable him to finish it, but in this year [1704], according to Dr. Kendal, difficulties arose regarding Mr. Mors's settlement in the ministry in this place, and this state of affairs continued for several years, until after asking advice, "after much delay and perplexity, it was determined that the precinct should purchase Mr. Mors's 'housing and lands,' and indemnify him against pecuniary loss, and that he should leave them in the spring of 1706. The next year, December 31, 1707, Mr. Mors conveyed the premises to the precinct's committee." In the "Account of the Celebration of the Two-hundredth Anniversary of the First Parish in Weston" Mr. Russell said "it is probable that the street now called School

Street was afterwards laid out through what had been Mr. Mors's land." His house was near the one now occupied by Miss Fannie Jones. The grounds of dissatisfaction with Mr. Mors are unknown, but he had never been ordained, and was not a settled minister. Dr. Kendal says that the council called to consider the case condemned both minister and people, and decided that both were at fault, and that Mr. Mors was afterwards settled at Stoughton, now Canton. He preached in that town ten years and was then ordained. After remaining there ten years more he was dismissed. After his dismissal he was called to Randolph, but declined the call, and remained in Canton until his death in 1732.

After having been presented several times at the Court of Sessions for not having a settled minister, the precinct, on Feb. 4, 1708, gave a call to Mr. William Williams. He accepted the call Aug. 23, 1709, and "a church was gathered in this place, and Mr. Williams was ordained Nov. 2, 1709, about eleven years and a half after the Farms had become a distinct precinct. The church consisted at first of eighteen male members, nine from other churches, and nine who had not been communicants. Jan. 4, 1710, two deacons were chosen."

"March 30, 1710, money was granted to finish the meeting house. By this we learn that the small meeting house, only 30 feet square, begun in 1695, was not finished in fifteen years. March 1718, a motion was made in town meeting to build a new meeting house, but the matter was postponed until Oct. 23, 1721, when the town voted to build one and raised the house the following summer."

Rev. William Williams was born in 1688, and was the son of Rev. William Williams of Hatfield. This Mr. Williams of Hatfield was a cousin of Rev. John Williams of Deerfield, the father of Rev. Warham Williams of Waltham. These cousins were classmates and neighboring ministers in the frontier settlements. The ministry of Rev. William Williams continued here in this parish for forty-one years wanting nine days and he was the first minister settled over this church in Weston.

In those early days many congregations assembled at the beat of drum or at the loud blowing of a conch-shell. We have no means of knowing how they were called together in this town, as Dr. Kendal does not speak of it and neither does the early record of Mr. Williams. There is no mention of a bell until Oct. 14, 1782 when the warrant for the town meeting says "To hear the Proposals of the Proprietors of a Bell which was purchased with a view to the Benefit of the Town—and actthereon—" The matter was brought up at another town meeting and given to a committee of five men to decide and report upon later. Nothing more is said in the records about a bell until some years afterwards.

The earliest meeting houses had no pews, but forms or benches, the men on one side, and the women on the other, and they entered by separate doors. The girls sat with their mothers and the boys usually sat on the pulpit and gallery stairs with a tythingman to keep them in order. The congregations in some meeting houses were rather disorderly owing to seating the boys together. It was a terrible punishment to a boy to be escorted by the tythingman to a seat beside his mother for his misbehavior. The ministers timed their sermons by an hour glass and preached until the sand had all run out. Often the hour glass was turned over and the sand ran out more than once. In those days all labor stopped at sunset on Saturday night and on Sunday evening restraint was taken off.

In 1722 the congegation in Weston ceased to worship in the small square meeting-house and the new one was finished which stood until 1840. The first house was used twenty-four years and the second one one hundred and eighteen years. The second one was larger, with square pews and galleries, and seats with hinges, called "slam seats." Miss Peirce, at one time, began to draw a plan of this old meeting house as it probably was built at that time. She had asked certain old people then living about the plan of it, where the windows, doors, porches, galleries, etc., were situated, and from the old records which gave the numbers of the pews assigned to the different families,

she was able to draw much of the inside, and to write on the pews the names of the occupants. Unfortunately this plan was never quite completed, probably on account of insufficient records. This second meeting house was repaired in 1800, when a steeple and two porches were added, and soon after the present bell was procured. This bell is marked inside "Paul Revere & Sons, 1801." Col. Lamson in his "History of Weston" says that the first bell weighed only 164 lbs., and that it was probably brought down from Canada in one of the expeditions against the French and Indians. He also says that Mr. Revere paid \$72.88 for it, when he put in the new bell.

Just before the ordination and installation of Mr. Williams, several of the inhabitants who had joined churches in Watertown and Sudbury asked to be dismissed from those churches in order to join the new church in Weston. On Oct, 12, 1709, these persons met at the house of Mr. Williams and conferred together. After the reading of the Confession of Faith put forth by the Synod of Churches held in Boston to which they all assented, the Covenant was read and subscribed by them all. Three weeks later Mr. Williams told the women living in this town that if all who were communicants in neighboring churches would signify their desires to him whether they wished to be dismissed from them, he would attend to the matter for them. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was first administered in this church Jan. 5, 1709-10, to be continued once in two months. Some years afterwards it was altered to once in six weeks, and omitted in the winter months.

The meeting houses, as they were always called, were icy cold in winter, for there was no means of heating them, and the women sometimes carried little foot-stoves filled with live coals to keep their feet warm during the service. Men sometimes brought their dogs to serve as a foot-muff. When stoves were first introduced they met with great opposition in some congregations. Mrs. Earle, in the book which I have mentioned, tells many amusing stories about their first use, one of which is that in Litchfield, Conn. a woman fainted on account of the great

heat from the stove, only to be told on recovery that there had been no fire lighted in it.

Mr. Williams, who according to Dr. Kendal lived in the house which had belonged to Mr. Mors, was one of an illustrious family. He was a graduate of Harvard, and since he was the minister here for forty-one years must have been satisfactory to the people for a long time, but in the year 1750 he was dismissed from the church, for what reason the records do not state. Dr. Kendal said that after his dismissal he was a peaceable parishioner, and treated his successor with kindness and respect. He was a cousin of Jonathan Edwards. His father and two of his brothers were ministers. He married in 1710 Hannah, the daughter of Rev. Solomon Stoddard, of Northampton. She died in 1745, and he later married Mrs. Sarah Stone of Holliston. Mr. Williams died in Weston, March 6, 1760, aged 72 years, and was buried in our old cemetery.

In early days "noon houses" were common, and these might have been seen by the side of many an old meeting house, a long, low, mean, stable-like building with a rough stone chimney at one end. These were necessary where people came from so great a distance that they could not go home at noon. There they ate their lunch and talked and warmed themselves before the afternoon meeting. I have never heard that Weston built a "noon house." It was not needed here, because the meeting house stood near a tavern where people could go. I have heard that they went to a room in the tavern, and to one other place, a house which used to be just above where the Episcopal church now stands.

Rev. Samuel Woodward succeeded Rev. William Williams in the ministry, and was ordained Sept. 25, 1751, eleven months and one day after the dismissal of Mr. Williams. He was a graduate of Harvard College, and was born in Newton. He at first hesitated about accepting the call as the salary offered did not seem to him to be sufficient; at length however, the salary being increased, he accepted. It was the custom then for the congregation to provide firewood for the minister, that

is, they paid him money and so many cords of wood. In 1753, Mr. Woodward built and afterwards occupied the house on Concord Road, now the residence of Dr. Chandler Robbins. His successor said "he was greatly beloved by the people of his charge, by his brethren in office and all his acquaintances. He had uncommon social talents and delighted to make every one happy, but in his most pleasant and free intercourse with his people and friends he never lost sight of the dignity of his office, or of the great object of his ministry." He was the descendant of an ancient family in Newton, being the son of Ebenezer Woodward and Mindwell Stone Woodward and was born there Feb. 1st, 1727. Soon after his settlement in Weston, on Jan. 11, 1753, he was married to Abigail Williams, the daughter of Rev. Warham Williams of Waltham. Mr. Woodward was the minister of this church during the Revolutionary war. On the morning of April 19, 1775, having been told that the British were coming, a company of one hundred men assembled, it is said, in front of the house of Capt. Lamson, which stood near where the house of Mr. George D. Pushee now stands. There Mr. Woodward offered prayer and then joined the ranks. There was a mistake in the report however, for instead of taking the Watertown road to Worcester, the British took the Lexington road to Concord. Mr. Woodward rendered active service for one day, and then returned to his pulpit.

During the early days of the church the inhabitants in town meeting settled all its affairs and the business meetings of the town were held in the meeting house. In 1755 the first pews were built at the expense of the applicants, and the occupants thereof were said to own the pews. Certain committees had charge of seating the meeting, when the congregation was seated with deference to rank and importance. This custom sometimes caused dissension among them.

Rev. Mr. Woodward and his wife had a family of twelve children, most of whom died very young. His two daughters, Abigail and Miranda, became the wives of his successor, Rev. Samuel Kendal. His son Cyrus, nineteen years old, in the

sophomore class at Harvard, died of a fever, Sept. 10, 1782. The Sunday following, his father preached his funeral sermon. A copy of this sermon, and also another one of Mr. Woodward's preached at Lexington, April 19, 1779, were recently given to the Weston Public Library, by a former resident of this town, Mrs. Sarah Maria Barry of Melrose. In the parish safe is a printed sermon of Mr. Woodward's, "preached Oct. 9, 1760, Being a Day of Public Thanksgiving on occasion of the Reduction of Montreal, &c." A few days after Mr. Woodward preached the funeral sermon for his son, he too was taken with a fever, and died Oct. 5, 1782, in the 56th year of his age, and the 32nd year of his ministry. His grave-stone may be seen in the old cemetery.

In olden times many meetings of the church were called to consider the behavior of the members. Many such are recorded in the printed "Church Records." In many cases people were suspended from the Communion until they had made "Christian satisfaction" as they expressed it. They were restored to the "Charity and Privileges" of the Church by vote. The old "Church Records" tell of several contributions for charitable purposes during the ministry of Mr. Woodward.

At a Town meeting, Oct. 14, 1782, it was "Voted to grant Sixty-Six Pounds thirteen Shillings and four Pence for the relief of the Distressed family of our Deceased Pastor (exclusive of the funeral Charges)." At a Town Meeting a month later it was "Voted to grant the Sum of Fifteen Pounds to defray the Charges of the Funeral of our late Rev^d faithfull and Beloved Pastor."

Samuel Kendal, who succeeded Mr. Woodward, was the son of Elisha Kendal, and was born in Sherborn, Mass., July 11, 1753. His father was a blacksmith, and had very little money, so that the boy was obliged to earn his way through college. By industry and strict economy he purchased his freedom from his father at the age of nineteen. When he was fifteen years old his father moved to Nova Scotia. After having obtained his release from his father he crossed the Bay of Fundy in a

light, frail boat, and came back to Sherborn to begin his studies with the minister there preparatory to entering Harvard College, but first served for a time in the army of the American Revolution. He was ordained here in Weston, Nov. 5, 1783, thirteen months after the death of his predecessor. He was then thirty years old. He received 43 votes, against 19 opposing votes for his settlement. Eleven of those who voted against him entered a protest, which received no attention except that it was placed on record. His salary was to be ninety pounds in money and twenty cords of wood. Dr. Kendal received the degree of D.D. from Yale College. It was during his ministry that the spirit of sect was beginning to divide the churches, and every church must stand on one side or the other. In this controversy Dr. Kendal favored the liberal side of the question. His appearance was dignified and commanding. He was one of the most genial and pleasant of men, but it was not prudent to trifle with him. Early in his ministry he married Mary Austin of Cambridge. She died within two years without children. In 1786 he married Abigail Woodward, the daughter of his predecessor. In seven years she died, and in 1794 he married her sister Miranda. Dr. Kendal purchased the estate now owned by Mrs. Francis B. Sears. In 1791 the house was destroyed by fire. This fire occurred in the night. The roads were almost impassable on account of a deep snow, so that few neighbors could know of the fire, and none of them reached the place until the house was destroyed. The family found shelter until morning in a small building used for a study. They moved into the house built by Rev. Mr. Woodward, Dr. Kendal's father-in-law, on Concord Road, now occupied as before stated by Dr. Chandler Robbins. The people of his congregation built him a new house on the site of the old one. The old house which was burned was built in 1795 from hand-hewn timber given by the parishioners and with hand-made nails.

Both Mr. Woodward and Dr. Kendal fitted young men for college. Dr. Kendal, to meet the expenses of his college course, taught school in Waltham during vacations, so that on the day

of his graduation in 1782, after paying his expenses, he had \$200.00. His early life was a hard one and he always worked hard. His father in Nova Scotia was loyal to American interests, and was in danger of imprisonment. He fled to his son in Weston, leaving in Nova Scotia six daughters, of whom three were married. The other three, on hearing that their brother was settled in Weston, took passage on a vessel bound for Boston, and arrived unexpectedly at their brother's door in a state of destitution, having walked from Boston to Weston. His friends furnished the girls with homes until they were able to earn their own living.

Dr. Kendal must have had a strong constitution for in his "Century Sermon" which he preached in 1813 he says that "though he has experienced some indisposition, he has not been kept from the house of worship but one sabbath, either by sickness or inclemency of weather, for thirty years, nor has he left the pulpit without a supply, on his own private business, but two sabbaths within the term." He also says "On comparing dates it will be perceived, that this town has been without a settled minister only two years and one day for one hundred and three years the thirteenth of last November [1812]. The three ministers ordained in this place have filled the office more than a century." Perhaps Dr. Kendal may have inherited his vigorous constitution from his father, who survived his son ten years, and who died at the great age of ninety-nine. When he was ninety he walked from Weston to Salem in one day, it is said. Among the parish records are two sermons written by Dr. Kendal, and a Report which he wrote as Chairman of a Committee to inquire into the origin, objects, etc. of the General Association, so called. Sprague's "Annals of the American Pulpit" gives a complete list of Dr. Kendal's published writings. There are also three manuscript sermons. Nearly all of these were in the possession of his granddaughters a few years ago, Mrs. Knox and Miss Maria J. Marshall, whom some of us remember with a great deal of pleasure, who with their mother, Mrs. Sophia Marshall, the daughter of Dr. Kendal, lived in the house now called the

"Teachers' Lodge." Mrs. Abigail Hobbs, another daughter of Dr. Kendal, lived in the house now occupied by Mr. George W. Abercrombie. Both Mrs. Marshall and Mrs. Hobbs lived to a good old age, ninety years or more, and were much loved and respected.

In a biographical sketch of Dr. Kendal written by Mr. Hornbrooke, he relates this anecdote, that one Sunday afternoon a man was driving through the town in violation of the law. Dr. Kendal met him and commanded him to stop, but he kept on. Then the minister took the horses by the reins, and stood in front of them until the sun had set. Then he allowed him to continue his journey. The law against travelling on Sunday was very strict, and an old newspaper of Boston "The Columbian Centinel" of December, 1789, says that George Washington, on his way through Connecticut to New York, having missed his way on a Saturday night, was obliged to ride a few miles on Sunday morning, and was stopped by a tythingman. After sufficient explanation he was allowed to go on.

Dr. Kendal's remark when he saw his sermons burning at the time his house burned showed his sense of humor. He said that for once at least his sermons were able to give light.

An anecdote has been told of what happened one Sunday when Dr. Kendal was absent. It was the duty of the clerk of the parish to read, after the sermon, the intentions of marriage. The clerk at that time was a young man, and at some social gathering his friends had dared him to read some unauthorized notices among the others. Now was his time to do it when Dr. Kendal was not there to hear, so after reading a few proper notices, he read two or three ridiculous and preposterous ones, much to the delight of his young friends and the indignation of the older ones, who told him that if Dr. Kendal had been there he never would have dared to do such an outrageous thing.

In the year 1814 Dr. Kendal attended the ordination services of his friend and classmate Edward Everett, as minister of the Brattle Street Church in Boston. He spent the night at the house of his daughter, Mrs. Thomas Marshall. He was at the

time suffering from a severe cold. He returned to Weston the next day urging his daughter and her family to spend the following Sabbath with him. They found him very ill, and he died in a few days from typhoid pneumonia, after a ministry here in Weston of thirty-one years. Dr. Kendal's two wives, Abigail and Miranda Woodward, each had four children.

By a vote of the town passed March 7, 1814, the expenses of his funeral, including mourning apparel for the family, in all amounting to \$332.00, were paid by the town, and a committee was authorized to procure, at the expense of the town, grave-stones to be erected in memory of Dr. Kendal as large as those erected in memory of the late Rev. Mr. Woodward.

Just after the death of Dr. Kendal in 1814 the town voted to accept a stove given by individuals to be placed in the public meeting house. Thus it appears that there was no heat there until 116 years after the church was organized.

The fourth minister of the Weston church was Joseph Field, Jr., ordained and settled here Feb. 1, 1815. He was born in Boston, December 8, 1788, and was the son of Deacon Joseph Field, of the New South Church in Boston, a merchant in the shipping trade who had four children, the only son and third child being the minister of this church. Joseph Field, Jr., was a graduate of the class of 1809 in Harvard College, and was the first distinctly Unitarian minister settled in Weston.

There being no Divinity School in Cambridge connected with the college, Mr. Field studied with Rev. Dr. Kirkland until the latter became the President of Harvard College and afterwards with Rev. Dr. William Ellery Channing. The call to the Weston church was nearly unanimous; a few were not quite ready to decide on any one, wishing to hear them a few more times. The morning of Feb. 1st, 1815, when Mr. Field was ordained, was bitterly cold with the mercury in the thermometer at eight degrees below zero. President Kirkland's coachman, who drove him up from Cambridge, froze his nose and ears, and it has been reported that at the ordination banquet the fruit froze on the tables.

Before his marriage Mr. Field lived in the house of Mrs. Kendal, widow of the former minister, but later he purchased from his friend, Isaac Fiske, his house and land on what is now Central Ave., Mr. Fiske building another house near him. Mr. Field was both poetical and musical, we are told. He was a remarkable flutist and a good singer, and wrote a poem for Commencement day at Harvard when he graduated.

Mr. Field married, Oct. 16, 1816, Charlotte Maria Leatham of Roxbury, a highly educated lady, who had musical tastes also. Mrs. Field's father, Mr. John Leatham, was an Englishman, but her mother was French. The family lived in France for many years, where the three daughters were educated. Mr. Leatham married an English lady for his second wife, who, with her step-daughters, came to America after her husband's death. Mr. and Mrs. Field had six children, two sons and four daughters. One son and one daughter only survived their parents. The son, Charles L., married and lived at different times in the town. The daughter, Charlotte M., who was unmarried, continued to live in the old homestead after the death of her parents, and for many years played the organ in the church. In 1837 Mr. Field had a call to Waltham, where they were always delighted to hear him, but he declined the call and spent the rest of his life in Weston in the house where his descendants have lived to this day. Mr. Field was an Overseer of Harvard College for 16 years, and from that institution he received the degree of D.D. on Sept. 25, 1840. He was the pastor of this church for 50 years, and at the end of that time he resigned, and on Feb. 1, 1865, the church celebrated his Fiftieth Anniversary with appropriate exercises, when he preached his last sermon, and was given \$800.00 as a gift from the parish. He attended the church services after that as long as he was able, and took part in the exercises at the installation of Rev. Edmund Hamilton Sears, his successor. The exercises at the Celebration of Dr. Field's Fiftieth Anniversary were printed. He was much beloved by his parishioners. He had a happy and cheerful spirit, and great love for children, and always had something pleasant to

say to any whom he met. He was a member of the School Committee for twenty-seven years. Rev. Dr. Chandler Robbins of the Second Church in Boston, who afterwards lived in Weston, said of Dr. Field, "His kindly greeting, his cheerful manner, his truthful countenance, his child-like simplicity, his perfect honesty, his independent spirit, his wise and racy speech, his goodwill and his charitable judgment are among the prominent traits which are at once recalled at the mention of his name. Within my own recollection the praise of Dr. Field was in all our churches for learning, wisdom and soundness of speech; and a general expression of approval was heard from the lips of his ministerial brethren when it was known that his Alma Mater had paid to his professional merit the highest honor it could confer. He was not a man to be soon forgotten by those who knew him in his best days." Some of us can remember seeing him when we were children. After his resignation he continued his connection with the church as its Senior Pastor. He died Nov. 5, 1869. It was during the pastorate of Dr. Field that the first Sunday School was started in the year 1827. The first superintendent was Miss Abby Kendal, one of the daughters of Rev. Dr. Kendal, and later the wife of Mr. Samuel Hobbs, as before stated.

In 1837 the warrant for the parish meeting called this society for the first time *The First Parish*.

The first mention of a Baptist in the Church Records is where it is recorded that Oliver Hastings, afterwards Deacon, was baptized in Framingham in July, 1772. Four years afterwards several other persons joined him, and they held meetings in the south part of the town usually in each other's houses. In 1797 a Methodist chapel was erected. Later these Baptists and Methodists were exempted by the town from paying any taxes for the support of the Congregational Society (so called). It is probable that they were the ones who protested against the settlement of Dr. Kendal in 1783.

In early days the church music is said to have been rather poor as the congregation had no notes, and many of them no

psalm-books. The psalms were "lined" or "deaconed," that is, each line was read separately by the deacon, and then sung by the congregation. The psalm tunes to be sung were voted upon at the meetings of the church. As these had to be learned, it was not wise to try to learn too many. At a meeting on Nov. 6, 1724, it was voted to sing fourteen tunes, and their names were given. A little later a few more were added to the list. As the singing was by ear it was very uncertain. In 1772, by vote of the town, the singers were allowed to sit together. Thus the first choir was started.

Stringed instruments were probably introduced to assist the choir in Dec., 1800, for at a meeting of the church on Dec. 5th they considered "whether they would continue such instruments of music as have been here introduced in public worship on the Lord's Day." It was voted in the affirmative. There are two bills in the parish safe, dated 1826 and 1836, for violin strings and for repairing the bass viol. In Mrs. Earle's book which I have spoken of, she says, "violins were violently opposed in churches, but after consultation a compromise was agreed upon by which violins were allowed in many meetings if the performers 'would play the fiddle wrong end up;' thus did they persuade themselves that an inverted fiddle was not a fiddle at all, but a small bass-viol." In 1805 the town appropriated \$60.00 for the purpose of encouraging sacred music in Weston, and a committee was chosen to hire a singing master. After this the singing in the church improved.

In 1814, Augustus H. Fiske, Esq. gave a clock for the interior of the new church. This was placed on the front of the gallery facing the minister. Since the choir was behind the congregation, the custom was then for the congregation to rise and turn around when the hymns were sung. The clock is now in the reading-room of the Public Library.

In 1852, during the ministry of Dr. Field, money was subscribed for an organ which was bought and placed in the gallery. The Benevolent Society gave \$50.00 towards it.

The successor of Rev. Dr. Field in the Weston church was

Rev. Dr. Edmund Hamilton Sears, who began his ministry here as the Associate Pastor with Dr. Field in May, 1865, a few months after the celebration of the latter's Fiftieth Anniversary. Dr. Sears was born April 6, 1810, in Sandisfield, Mass. His family was descended from one of the Pilgrims of John Robinson's congregation. In his twenty-second year he entered Union College, in Schenectady, N. Y. He graduated in 1834. After studying law for some months, he decided that the ministry was better suited to his tastes, and he found an opportunity to teach in the academy at Brattleboro, Vt., and at the same time to study divinity with the Rev. Addison Brown of that place. After remaining there one year, he entered the class in its second year at the Harvard Divinity School and graduated in the year 1837. He preached about a year in the West, then accepted a call from the Unitarian church in Wayland, and there he was ordained on Feb. 20, 1839. On the 7th of the next November he married Ellen Bacon, of Barnstable, Mass., and they immediately took up their residence in Wayland. After remaining there a very short time Mr. Sears accepted a call to Lancaster, Mass., in 1840. There they spent six happy years, when his health began to fail, and his physician prescribed absolute rest and quiet, and to find these he purchased a small farm in Wayland. The church at Wayland was again ready to welcome him, and he was re-installed in 1848. By light labors in his garden and small farm he regained sufficient strength for his pastoral duties. Mrs. Sears was a true helpmate, ever devoted to the needs of her husband, and her watchful care never failed him. After preaching in Wayland during the greater part of seventeen years, there came to him a call to the church in Weston which he accepted. Dr. Sears was a profound thinker, and wrote several books of prose as well as beautiful hymns. His two Christmas hymns are sung in many churches. A few months ago this item appeared in one of the Waltham papers, "Seventy years ago Rev. E. H. Sears wrote the words of this famous carol, 'It Came upon the Midnight Clear' at his home at Tower Hill in Wayland. It was written for the Sunday School Festival and sung there for the first time in 1850."

From 1859 to 1871 Dr. Sears was associated with the Rev. Rufus Ellis in the editorial charge of the "Monthly Religious Magazine." In the year 1873 he travelled abroad, visiting England, France and Holland, but he spent the most of his life in quiet towns where he loved best to dwell and to interest himself in the welfare of the people around him. He had a delicate constitution and many an illness. His greatest literary work, "The Fourth Gospel—The Heart of Christ," was completed during his ministry in Weston.

Afternoon services were given up at his suggestion. In the autumn of 1874 he met with a fall and after fifteen months of weakness and suffering he died on the 16th of January, 1876, honored and beloved by the inhabitants of the town.

Mrs. Sears survived her husband twenty-one years, was ever interested in church matters, worked industriously for all the fairs, and was the president of the Ladies' Benevolent Society until the day of her death. In a serene and beautiful old age she was visited by the young people who loved her, and she was always ready with sympathy and counsel for every one. She died on the 24th of April, 1897. Dr. and Mrs. Sears had four children, three sons and a daughter, the eldest, who died in Wayland when ten years old. It was during the pastorate of Dr. Sears that the chapel was built, completed May, 1874.

In 1875 a clock was given to the town by Gen. Charles J. Paine, which the parish allowed to be placed on the church.

In June, 1876, Rev. Francis Bickford Hornbrooke was called to the Weston church to succeed Dr. Sears. He was a young man, at that time the minister of an Orthodox church in East Hampton, Conn. He was born in Wheeling, West Virginia, May 7, 1849. He graduated from Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, in 1870, and from Union Theological Seminary in 1874. He was married Sept. 18, 1874, to Orinda Althea Dudley, of Cambridge, Mass., a direct descendant of Thomas Dudley, second colonial governor of Massachusetts. He was installed over the church in Weston, Oct. 18, 1876, and graduated from the Harvard Divinity School in 1877. After preaching very

acceptably here for three years, until Oct., 1879, he resigned to take charge of the Channing Church in Newton. After preaching there for about twenty years he resigned in June, 1900, and died in Newton, Dec. 5, 1903. Mr. Hornbrooke was a large man, a talented preacher and of striking personality. He received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Ohio University in 1899. During this last year, on Nov. 28, 1920, Mrs. Hornbrooke died in Newton. Dr. and Mrs. Hornbrooke left two sons, Dudley, of Boston, and Francis Bickford, of Newton. It was voted on April 3, 1876, during Dr. Hornbrooke's pastorate in Weston, to build a parsonage. He had been living in a house on the Fiske land on Concord Road. In the autumn of 1877 the parsonage was completed, and two years later the parish was reorganized and new By-Laws adopted. These were amended in 1889 and in 1916.

After the resignation of Dr. Hornbrooke, a call was extended on Feb. 11th, 1880, to Mr. Hobart Clark. He was born in Andover, Mass., and was a graduate of the Meadville Theological School in the class of 1879. He accepted the call and was ordained and installed March 11th, 1880. He remained in Weston but a short time, about two years, and on Apr. 25th, 1882, he resigned, and went abroad, and while there he accepted a pastorate in Cardiff, Wales. He remained in Cardiff six years and during that time a fine stone church was built. He returned to America in 1890, and preached in Plainfield, N. J., and afterwards at the Church of the Redeemer, Staten Island, N. Y., where the pulpit was formerly occupied by the gifted George William Curtis. Mr. Clark remained the pastor of the Staten Island church for fourteen years, and died there at the parsonage on Dec. 26th, 1910, of pneumonia, in his sixty-third year.

The successor of Mr. Clark in the Weston church was Mr. Charles F. Russell, ordained and installed here on Nov. 18th, 1882. He had a family consisting of a wife and three children. He is so well known to us all that it is perhaps unnecessary to speak of him. He graduated from the Harvard Divinity School

in 1884. Just previous to his call to Weston he was preaching in Bedford, Mass. Rev. Mr. Russell was very energetic and interested himself in the affairs of the town as well as of the church. He was the one who suggested the centralization of the schools and the transportation of the scholars. During his ministry the E. H. Sears Guild was formed, and he was interested in the Swimming Pool and the Golf Links. In about six years after his installation the church built in 1840, in use forty-seven years, was taken down, and the present stone church was built. This was made from stones taken from the neighboring fields, and the cost was about \$20,000.00. This was completed in 1888 unencumbered by debt. Rev. Mr. Russell was one of the Building Committee and worked hard for its completion, giving liberally of his time. The stones for the flooring of the north and south porches were collected at the sea-shore by the members of the Sunday School.

The new organ placed in the church at that time was the gift of Mr. Francis H. Hastings, of the firm of Hook & Hastings, Organ builders.

In the church were placed several memorials. In the pastor's study is an ancient chair which bears the inscription, "Memorial of Rev. Samuel Woodward 1751 Pastor First Church, 1782, in Weston. Presented by his great grand-daughter, E. B. M. K. 1888." The donor of this chair was Mrs. Elizabeth B. M. Knox.

The colored window in the chancel is a memorial to Rev. Joseph Field, D.D., from his family and friends.

The two chairs in the chancel are in memory of John Lamson, and Elizabeth Lamson his wife, from their children and grandchildren.

The pulpit bears the following inscription: "Given in memory of Rev. Edmund Hamilton Sears by a few out of the many who love his hymns."

The inscription on the front of the reading-desk is as follows: "Given in memory of Isaac Coburn a wise and devout servant of this church."

The bronze tablet near the south door bears the inscription:

"To the memory of Isaac Fiske of Weston Dec. 4, 1778 Mar. 11, 1861. A B. Harvard College 1798 By profession a lawyer Clerk of the Parish 1804-1823 An Honored Member of this Church."

In 1891 a stone tablet was placed on the inside wall of the church near the north door in memory of Rev. Dr. Samuel Kendal. This tablet bears his likeness with the inscription, "Samuel Kendal. 1783-1814." The study for the tablet was made by Miss Alice Bond, of West Newton, who said that it was taken from an old-fashioned silhouette of the doctor himself, that Dr. Kendal's grandson, Gen. J. F. B. Marshall, sat to her once, and that suggestions were made by other members of the family. Miss Peirce obtained this information from Miss Bond herself.

The baptismal font was given in 1892 in memory of Harriet Ware Hall by her friends. Miss Hall was a summer resident of Weston, and was the sister of the Rev. Edward H. Hall, formerly pastor of the First Parish Church, in Cambridge.

The large colored window in the west end was the gift, in 1899, of Mrs. Henry A. Gowing, in memory of her husband. It is a scene from the resurrection, and was made by Tiffany & Co., of New York.

On May 6, 1889, Gen. J. F. B. Marshall gave the two collection plates. These are inscribed, "Give and it shall be given unto you" and "Bear ye one another's burdens." Some years later Mr. Charles H. Fiske gave two collection bags.

In 1889 the pastor and also the parish met with a great loss in the death of Mrs. Russell.

In 1898 the Parish celebrated its Two Hundredth Anniversary with very interesting exercises. The addresses on this occasion were all printed.

Apr. 14, 1898, Mr. Russell married Miss Mary Otis Rogers, of Boston.

Nov. 16th, 1907, the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Mr. Russell's settlement over the parish was celebrated with appropriate exercises in the Town Hall, to which every member of the parish

was invited. A grandfather's clock was presented to Mr. Russell, with a book containing the signatures of the donors. The exercises on this occasion were printed and were of great interest.

Mr. Russell gave great attention to the church music and gathered together a large chorus choir from among the young people in the congregation. During his ministry he assisted in compiling the "University Hymn Book" which was used in this church for some years. The Music Fund receives a substantial contribution each year from Mr. Herbert Merriam, its founder, who is a member of the choir. The Ladies' Benevolent Society and private individuals contribute each year towards the music.

In May, 1912, by the generosity of Mr. Robert Winsor, acousticons were placed in some of the pews, thereby adding much to the enjoyment of several deaf people in the congregation.

On June 14, 1912, the parsonage was destroyed by fire, and immediate steps were taken to build a new one, which was completed in 1913, at a cost of nearly \$17,000.00.

Mr. Russell preached his resignation sermon on Jan. 2, 1916, this resignation to take effect on April 1st. He had been the minister of this parish for 33 years and a few months. In accepting his resignation the parish passed a vote asking him to accept the title of Pastor Emeritus, which he now holds. In this parish there have been but two pastorates longer than Mr. Russell's, that of Rev. William Williams, the first settled minister, of forty-one years, and that of Rev. Dr. Joseph Field, of fifty years. Two others, Rev. Samuel Woodward and Rev. Samuel Kendal, D.D., his son-in-law and successor, preached here thirty-one years each.

Besides the gifts to this parish which have already been enumerated a few more must be mentioned, received in recent years. On March 25th, 1917, two beautiful silk flags, national and state, were dedicated, the gift of Rev. and Mrs. Charles F. Russell. On May 27, 1917, a flag for the outside of the church was unfurled from the belfry, a gift from the E. H. Sears Guild.

On Nov. 24, 1918, a memorial organ and a new transept were

dedicated. The organ was given by Mrs. Francis H. Hastings as a memorial to her husband, and the transept, built in memory of William Herbert Coburn, was given by Mr. Horace S. Sears, to whose generosity in various ways the parish is much indebted. In the chapel, now called the Parish House, are gifts from different members of the parish.

On Oct. 8, 1916, Rev. Palfrey Perkins was installed to succeed Rev. Mr. Russell. He had been preaching in Brighton, Mass. I shall leave him for some future historian, and will only say that we consider ourselves very fortunate, and hope he will stay with us for many years, that this church never had a more promising outlook, and that we look forward with confidence to the future.

Within a few years the parish has received bequests from Mr. George S. Perry, Mr. George Berkeley Cutter and Mrs. Mary P. Cutter, his wife, from Mrs. Caroline S. (Case) Freeman, and several gifts from Mr. Horace S. Sears, all of which have added materially to the prosperity of the parish, and it is safe to say that never in its long existence has it been in better condition financially than at the present time.