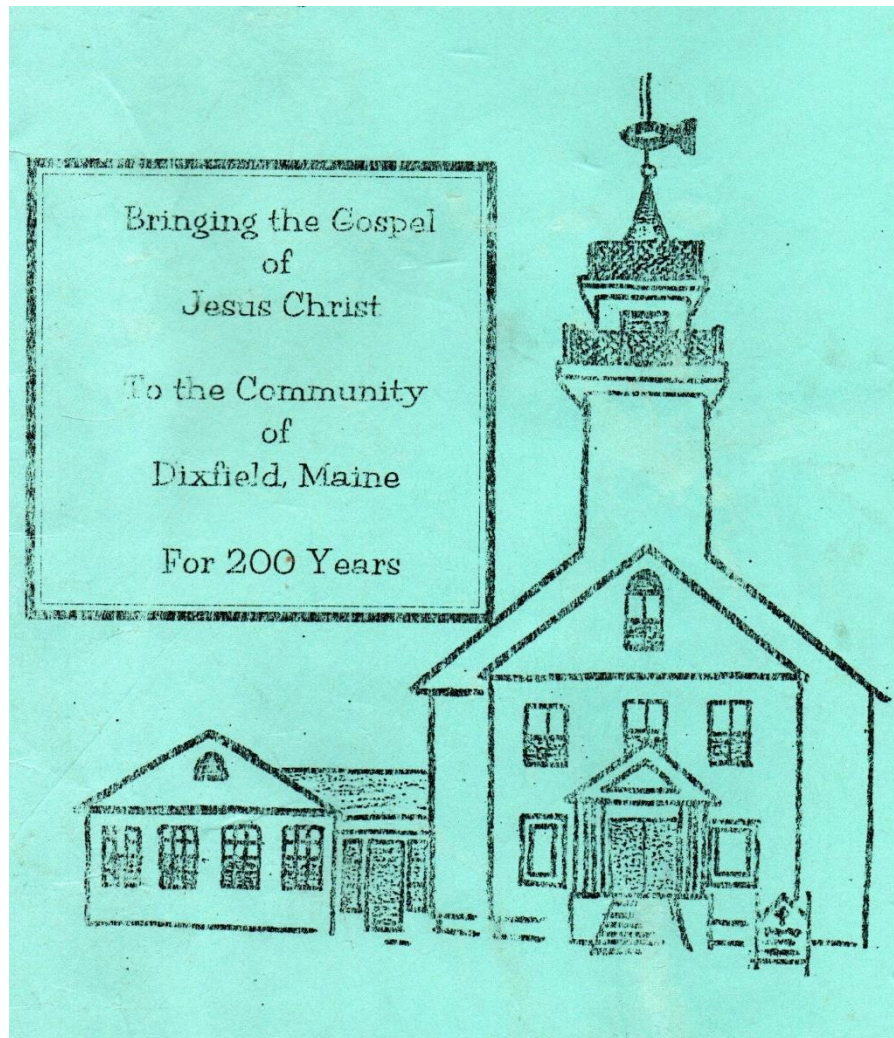


Dixfield Congregational Church

“The Church on the Hill”

Dixfield, Maine

National Association of Congregational Christian Churches [NACCC.org]



1806 - 2006

Historical Sketch
1806 – 2006
“The Church on the Hill”
By Reginald W. Wing
Edited and assembled by Steven Karlgren

Acknowledgements and Credits

Lorraine Smith for her Historical Church writings.
Paul and Patricia Jones for their assistance with research.
Dexter and Darlene Berry for coordinating production and assembling.
Patricia Wing for proof reading and her patience.
Dixfield Historical Society for proving access to Early Church Records.
Trustees for underwriting the project.

Officers for the year 2006

Dexter Berry - Moderator – Annual Meeting

Charlotte Hayes - Clerk

Dexter Berry - Treasurer

John Morang - Assistant Treasurer

Trustees

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Leslie Skibitsky	Andrew Irish	
Dexter Berry Ex-Officio	John Morang Ex-Officio	

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Paula McDonald	Beverly Glover	Hugh Daley
Shane Jamison	Prudence Schofield	Kathy Irish
Charlotte Hayes	Dexter Berry	Ronda Ducret

Missions

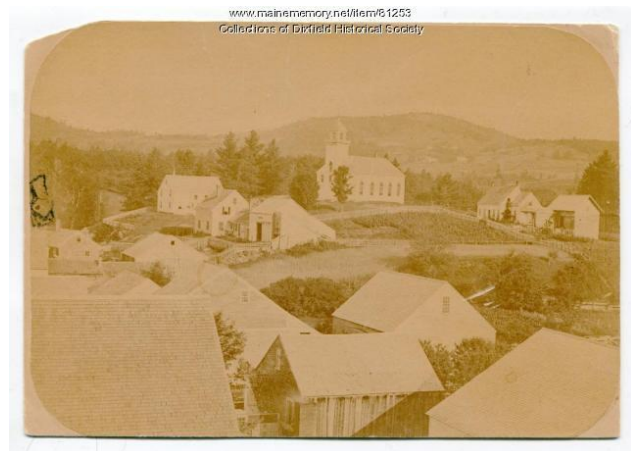
Diane Ray	Helen Elward	Patty Jones
Patricia Wing	Terry Record	Isabelle Verkaart

Christian Education

Deborah Morang	Joy Hodgson	Samatha Noyes
Diane Ray		

The Story of the Congregational Church “The Church on the Hill”

Our history is so far interwoven with the settling of Dixfield, especially that area known as The Village, that we must begin with a brief review of the early pioneers and their struggle to carve a living from a portion of the wilderness known as the province of Maine.



The establishment of the Congregational Church which was to become known to us as “The Church on the Hill” was just a dream in the minds of those early settlers as they cleared the forests that were to become known as Holmanton in the province of Maine.

To understand the why and by whom “The Church on the Hill” was established we must look to the early settlers of what we now call Dixfield.

From its earliest beginnings, religion played a large part in the lives of its founding families.

Due to an unrest in Sutton, Massachusetts over taxes and religious matters, many young people picked up their few belongings and started a new settlement in township #1 designated as Androscoggin purchase #1 in the Province of Maine.

The earliest incorporations, in what is now Oxford County, were Paris 1793, Jay – Livermore 1795, Bethel 1796, Rumford 1800, Dixfield 1803 followed by Peru and Canton 1821.

From the records of Androscoggin purchase we learn, Colonel Jonathan Holman, Deacon Asa Waters, and Captain Andrew Elliott, all of Sutton Massachusetts tried to purchase township #1 in 1787. The final papers for purchase of the township could not be accomplished until July 2, 1789.

In the Summer of 1790, Colonel Holman and Jeremiah Robison started to lay out the township in 100 acre lots. Several summers were required to accomplish the task.

It was decided, at a meeting held in Sutton, Massachusetts, by those who had purchased land in the new settlement, that four lots of 320 acres each would be reserved for public use. One was for the first settled minister, one for the use of the ministry, one for schools, and one for the future use of the general court.

From 1789 through 1795, much time was spent in the summer months laying out the roads required for the township.

Peter Holman was the first settler arriving in 1791, and followed soon after by Aaron Severy in 1792.

On March 30, 1801 it was voted that every right (land area purchased) have a settler upon it or every proprietor have as many settlers as he has rights, in two years from this date, or forfeit 50 acres upon each right that is deficient to the use of the propriety.

Much work was required to build a community in the Maine woods.

A church building was not the first thing on the minds of the early settlers. They were certainly religious people. However, their first duty was to other matters.

To understand the people who established our church and why they waited until the 1820's to build it, we must have an understanding of the early days of Holmantown.

The duty of the settlement was to have 10 acres felled, five of said 10 sowed and seeded, a house 16 feet square, and a man to live on it the same six months every year for three years or forfeit 50 acres on each right as previously stated.

The area known as Holmantown was a vast tract of land consisting of all the land bordered between the town lines of what is today Jay, Canton, Wilton, Carthage to the Swift River, and down the Androscoggin to the Canton, Jay town lines.

Today what was Holmantown is divided into two sections: First, Mexico which consists of all the lands East and West between the Swift and Webb Rivers, bounded by Roxbury and Carthage on the North, and the Androscoggin on the South. Second, the remaining portion, and by far the largest area, makes up what is today Dixfield.

The town as we know it today is not a unified whole, nor has that ever been the case. From the earliest of days, we have been divided, (only in our minds of course).

When the first settlers arrived, they established five distinct areas. First - Peter Holman, Jonathan Holman, John Marble, Levi Newton, and Simeon Newton, settled the area of Dixfield Center or Common as we know it today. Second - Severy Hill area settled by Aaron Severy, Samuel Tucker, Israel Richmond, Gardiner Brown, and Ebenezer Harwood. Third - the Canton Point Road area settled by Daniel Torrey, Francis White, George Wilson, Stephen Stone, Antipas Holland, John Holland, and Nathan Holman. Fourth - the Science Hill area settled by Bartholomew Hutchinson, Solomon Leland, William Eddy, and Johnathan Morse. Fifth - the Dixfield Village area where our church was established, and settled by Isaac Torrey, John Gould, Amos Trask, John Stockbridge and Joseph Mitchell.

During the years 1800 - 1810, more and more people were coming to our area to make their home.

On June 21, 1803, Dixfield was incorporated as a town. The first town meeting was held at Dixfield Center, because at that time all the focus was in that area where the first settlers arrived. The first settlers listed on the census of Holmantown 1800: Men and Boys only:

Samuel Tucker	Aaron Severy
Isreal Severy	Gardner Brown
Ebenezer Harwood	Solomon Leland
William Eddy	Johnathan Morse
John Marble	Peter Holman
Daniel Torrey	Oliver Putnam
Francis White	John Goodwin
George Wilson	Simeon Newton
Amos Trask	Levi Newton
Antipas Holland	John Holland
Nathan Holman	Stephen Stone
Isaac Torrey	John Gould
William Eddy	Jonathan Holman
Joshua Mooer or Moor	Bartholomew Hutchinson
John Dix and Southgate	Isaac Gleason (Mexico area)
Daniel Lunt	Merrill Knight
Listed in Holmantown 1800 Census	First Settlers - Lunts Grant Peru in 1810 Census.

As was typical in those days, several things happened following the establishment of most settled areas. First a saw mill and grist mill were built. They were at the confluence of the Webb and the Androscoggin Rivers, built by Dr. Dix 1793 -1795.

The next three things required in the minds of the settlers were first a little red school house, second a little white church, and third a little blue lodge.

The little red school houses were built in the several districts. Two or more schools were built in each area between 1803 and 1830, with a total of 13 in all. Little white churches were established in several areas of town, and the little blue lodge (Masonic Lodge) was established in 1828, located over Morrill's Tavern at Webb River, across from Dr. Dix Saw and Grist mills.

By 1828 when our church was built, the 1830 census listed 134 families in the several areas of Dixfield.

Considering that Mexico and Dixfield were separated prior to 1830 census, the town was growing very fast.

The following 1830 census lists only men, boys and six widows.

1830 Census of Dixfield, Maine

Levi Stowell	Isiah Tibbetts	Enus Hingham
John M. Eustis	John Morrow	Freeman Griffeth
Phillip Abbott, Jr.	Isaac Stanley	Silas Barnard
James Williams	Charles Eustis	Abraham Howland
Nicholas Chesley	Charles T. Chase	Christopher Walker
Darius White	Benjamin Doyan	Rufus Jefferds
Hector Phelps	Jona Holman	Josiah P. Holt Jr.
John Kenny	Joseph Weller	Jonathan Holman
Josiah R. Hall	Ephraim Marble	John Marble
Baldwin Marble	Elias Nelson	Antipas Williams
Joseph Yetten	Samuel Holland	Stephen Stone
Origin Stone	William Child	Nathan Holman
Erastus Hall	Isaac Holman	Josiah Newman Jr.
Daniel Foster	James D. Whitman	John B. Ludden
Josiah Dunn	Eli Morse	Phineus McLaughlin
William Morse	James Estes	Charles Brown
David McIntire	Moses Coolidge	Barnabus Kenny
Simeon Newton	Job Glines	Fairbanks Newton
James White	Moses Park	David Marsh
Andrew Marsh	John Marsh	Luther Parks
Calvin Park	Benjamin Parker	Isaac Torrey
John Gould	William Jones	Meletiah Dillingham
Ruben Dillingham	Joseph Foss Jr.	Joshua Marsh
Thomas Townsend	Michael Thomas	Jonas Tucker
Thomas Morse	Joshua Dunn	Elisha Clark

Samuel Knight	Isaac Hathaway	Eliot Harper
Aaron Severy Jr.	Samuel Severy	Abijah White
Peter Holman	Jacob Kidder	Tyler Wait
Aron Wait	Jacob Newton	Levi Newton
Isaac Wait	Frances White	Oliver Putnam
Samuel Torrey	John Turner	Ebenezer Holman
Waldron Morse	Aaron Coolidge	Asa Severy
Daniel D. Torrey	Joseph Peterson	Elijah Morse
Noah Townsend	Jacob Severy	Archibald Severy
Aaron Severy	Enoch Chase	John Tucker
Alfred Brackett	Isaac Huim	Joseph Foss
Samuel Foss	John Brown	Nathaniel Kinney
John Thomas	Isaac Park	Spencer Thomas
Obediah Wood	Stephen Kenney	Lorenzo Mitchell
Jonathan Morse	Simeon Cade	Cyrus Eddy
Ira Leland	Solomon Leland	Henry King
Bartholomew Hutchinson	Gersham Hall (Waite)?	
	Widows Listed	
Betsy Mitchell	Clarissa Babb	Ruth Park
Betsy Walker	Mercy Holman	Ester Kidder

The Congregationalists that made up the nucleus of those who were to build “The Church on the Hill” lived in what was known at the time as The Village, located by the Webb River.

The census indicates a possible 134 households, but only a small portion lived in The Village. Most lived in the several outlying areas.

The records indicate that in May 1806 the Congregational Society of Massachusetts arranged to send missionaries to preach in this area. The original members of the Society were:

Andrew and Mahitable Elliott	Ester Kidder	Joseph and Lucy Wheeler
Sally Waite	Samuel and Polly Park	Lois Leeland
Lucrecia Marble		

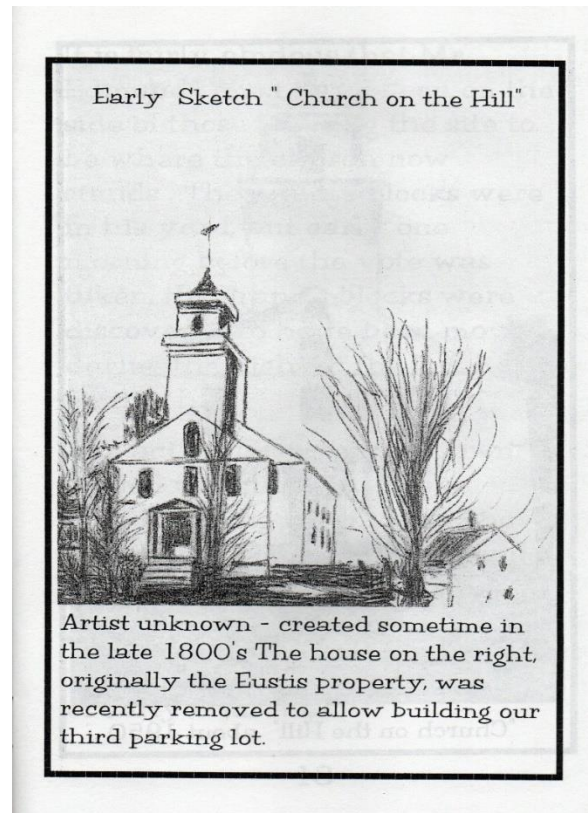
They drew up a confession of faith and signed a covenant as a religious group. Thus began a long history of faithful adherence to Christian principles, that has held for these 200+ years, for which we today are the beneficiaries. The actual records are very skimpy on details. However, much has been accomplished and we have much to be proud of.

How often in those early years the congregation met for church services is not stated. It can be assumed that the deacons conducted regular services.

Communion was held once or twice a year when a minister would come. Also, baptisms would be held at those times for people joining the church.

The first baptisms were held in May of 1806 for the children of Andrew Elliott, Jacob Kidder, and Solomon Leland.

For the years 1806 until they moved into their new church structure on the hill, services were held in private homes.



Following the building of the church structure on the hill, a dedication ceremony was held November 28, 1828, for the purpose of consecrating and dedicating the church to the mission of preaching the gospel and bringing the saving grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to the community.

The actual building of the structure was not without its difficulties.

Several factions were involved in determining where the church was going to be located. Meetings were held throughout the year to determine the site where the church should be built.

As the picture on the left clearly indicates, the church was built where it now stands today. The granite blocks that serve as the foundation of the church had been cut at Sheet Stone Quarry and conveyed to the town prior to being needed.

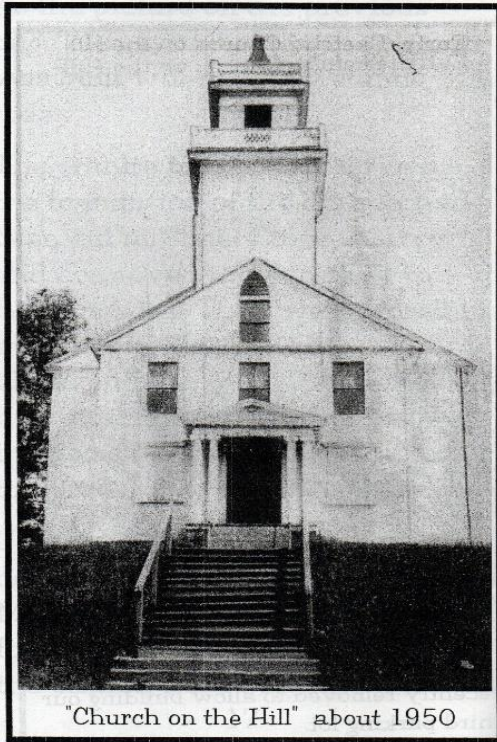
They were stored in the yard of Mr. Edmunds' blacksmith shop (near the old fire house on Main Street), awaiting the decision of the congregation as to which site would be approved.

Charles Lyman Eustis had donated a piece of land on lower Main Street near the old cemetery for a church site. Many wanted the church built there.

It is fairly obvious that Mr. Edmunds must have been on the side of those wanting the site to be where the church now stands. The granite blocks were in his yard, but early one morning before the vote was taken, the granite blocks were discovered to have been moved during the night to the location on the hill.

The action by those unknown, settled the question. I have found nothing to indicate who moved the blocks. Mr. Edmunds was perhaps the prime suspect.

Old town histories are replete with feuds among the members of early churches.



"Church on the Hill" about 1950

In the early days a church was one place where it was possible to release passions. "The Church on the Hill" was no exception to the rule.

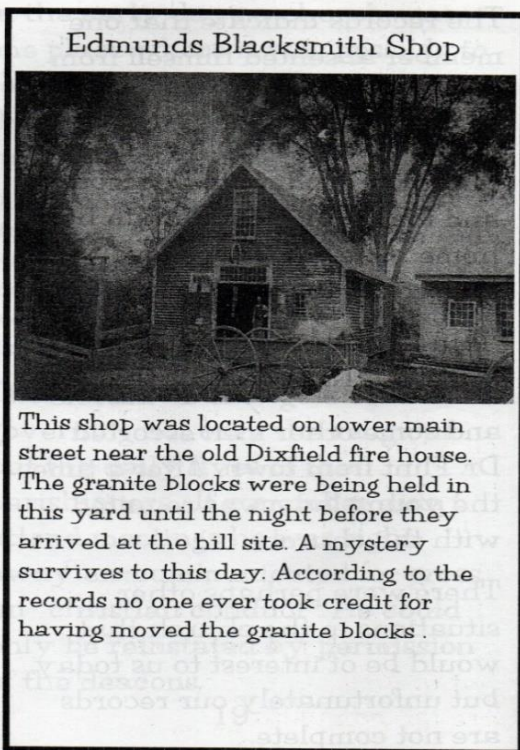
Discipline and moral behavior were stressed, and offenders were dealt with by the deacons of the Church. Being a member was a matter of serious business. Membership was obtained by strict examination and a vote of the Church.

There were strict regulations governing not only the religious but the daily lives of the parishioners. If a member didn't attend meetings, he was right away ex-communicated for gross un-Christian conduct. He could only be reinstated by permission of the deacons. The records indicate that one member absented himself from meetings and was right away ex-communicated. Another member was disciplined for improper conduct to her mother and for keeping Dr. Flint in her home. She was suspended from church for these actions.

Isaac Waite's diary entry of June 10, 1828 tells us that he and some other men escorted Dr. Flint from town. After a time, the young lady was reunited with the church. There were perhaps other situations in the church that would be of interest to us today, but unfortunately our records are not complete.

The Parsonage on Main Street, was purchased from the Estate of Joseph and Ira Edmunds. It served the Church well for many years.

The Church struggled through the early years. Their attempt to keep the doors open was a noble effort until 1845, at which time the Church found itself in a position where it could not afford the cost of meeting in the large church, and they rented a new chapel located on Main Street where they met until 1877. It was purchased from Sherman Austin in 1856.



Edmunds Blacksmith Shop

This shop was located on lower main street near the old Dixfield fire house. The granite blocks were being held in this yard until the night before they arrived at the hill site. A mystery survives to this day. According to the records no one ever took credit for having moved the granite blocks.



The Parsonage on Maine Street, purchased from the Estate of Joseph and Ira Edmunds.

It served the Church well for many years.

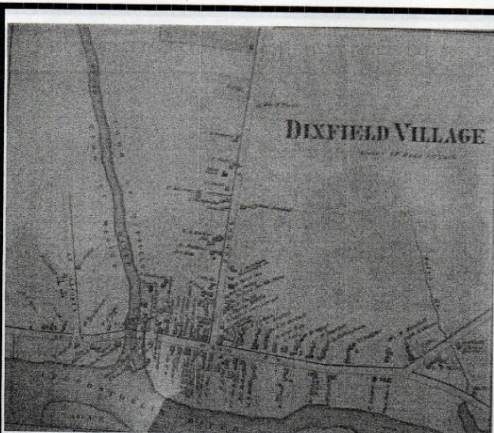
The chapel was sold in 1877 and became a private home. It is still standing today, the only house on the right below the old fire station on lower Main Street, known as the Wing house when the year book of 1932 was printed. It was the home of Alfred and Carrie Wing during the early 1900's. Grandfather to the compiler of this Historical Sketch.

The records do not indicate where, or if, the Society continued to meet following the sale of the small chapel in 1877.

It is assumed that one of the following must have transpired:

1. They continued to meet in private homes?
2. Some united with the Universalist's?
3. The rest were dispersed among the several churches meeting in town?

The continued existence of "The Church on the Hill" was assured because the several churches in town united together in 1912 to re-organize the Congregational Church.



Dixfield Village

Map shows Dixfield village prior to the re-organization of Dixfield Congregational "Church on the Hill"

CONFESSION OF FAITH AGREED UPON BY THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH EMBODIED IN DIXFIELD MAY 3, 1806

1. We believe there is one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost equal in all divine worship and adoration and the Creator of all things.
2. We believe the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments to be given by inspiration of God and the only rule of Faith and practice.
3. We believe that God made man upright, but that he fell from the state of holiness and happiness and brought himself and his prosperity into a state of total sinfulness and exposed them to ruin.
4. We believe that God did not leave mankind to perish in the ruins of apostasy without a

Savior but in the riches of His Sovereign love and mercy gave His Son to die for them.

5. We believe that except a man be born again by the special influence of the Holy Spirit he cannot see the Kingdom of God and that all who are thus renewed are justified only by the rightness of Christ received of Faith alone.
6. We believe that the children of God are kept by His mighty power through Faith unto eternal salvation according to His promises.
7. We believe that God hath had and will always have a church in the world in spite of all opposition.
8. We believe in the general judgement, resurrection of the just and the unjust and that they who have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life eternal and they who have done evil to the resurrection of ever-lasting damnation.
9. We believe that God hath chosen the vessel of mercy to Salvation through sanctification of the Spirits, and belief of the truth according to His distinct purpose of election.



Church Windows Dedication listing

Window 1-In memory of Wm. Putman presented by his wife, Sarah E. Putnam

Window 2-In memory of Luther H. and Arivilla H. Ludden

Window 3-Rev. Manley B. Townsend 4899 - 1902

Window 4 In memory of Albert G. Hinds and Mary S. Hinds

Window 5 In memory of Elbridge G. Harlow

Window 6 In memory of George S. Holman

Window 7 Memory of W. W. Smith, B. L. Marble, & Lucy Marble

Window 8 Presented by Family of Eli Edmonds

Window 9 Memory of Vesta E. Fairbanks and Llewellyn Fairbanks

COVENANT AGREED TO BY THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH EMBODIED IN DIXFIELD, MAINE MAY 3, 1806

We whose names are here unto inscribed apprehending ourselves called of God into the Church state of the Gospel, judging ourselves altogether unworthy of so high and holy a calling being made the subjects according to His eternal purpose of love in Christ before the world was. We do this day in the presents of God, Angels, and men, solemnly give up ourselves into God in Christ avouching the Lord Jehovah to be our God and portion - and engage in His strength to walk in all the commands and ordinances of the Gospel to far as the same shall be made to us; particularly we engage to attend to the tests of the new covenant, baptism, and the Lord's Supper and conscientiously to wait upon God publicly and daily in our closets and families. We do also give ourselves up one to another promising to watch over one another, and be watched over according to the Scripture rule; carefully avoiding sinful stumbling blocks and offences, where union and edification might be obstructed, taking the Gospel rule of discipline for our directory. We engage to receive none to our communion who cannot give a rational, scriptural evidence; of a work of sanctifying grace to their souls; whose lives in a judgement of Christian Charity do not correspond thereto. We do also covenant to devote our offspring to the Lord and do our duty to them in religious instruction, training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; that they may be His. We engage to obtain from all vain amusement, such as gaming, frolicking, etc. and to endeavor to dissuade all under our care from following in such sinful courses. May the Lord pardon our many sins and infractions, ripen us for, and at last receive us into His heavenly kingdom, through our Lord Jesus Christ the great head of the Church, to whom with the Father and Holy Ghost, world without end, Amen.

Andrew Elliott, Mehitable Elliot, Polly Park, Ester Kidder, Lois Leland, Samuel Park, Joseph Wheeler, Lucy Wheeler, Sally Waite, Lucretia Marble.

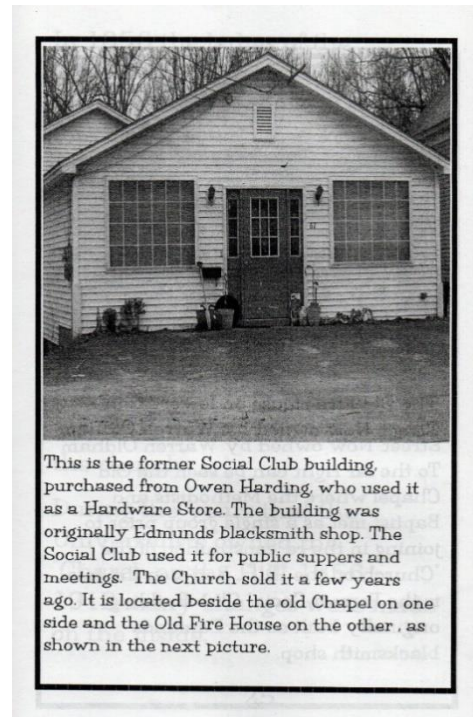
We, the subscribers, missionaries, with the assistance of the Rev. Mr. Belden of Winthrop having examined a number of persons who offered themselves as candidates for admission into the

Church to be embodied, or a work of Grace wrought upon their souls by the Spirit of God, viewing those persons who have subscribed the foregoing.

It is evident that the physical Church on the Hill was vacant from 1845 until 1855, as it was too expensive to maintain, it sold at action to Cyprus Eustis for 350 dollars. He and 37 others formed a new Society and the name of the Church became the Universalists Meeting House.

The pews were sold to the members and the money we used to reimburse Mr. Eustis.

Since there were 58 pews, each member owned 1-58th of the meeting house.



Several members of this group drifted to worship with the Congregationalists who were meeting at their new chapel on lower Main Street.

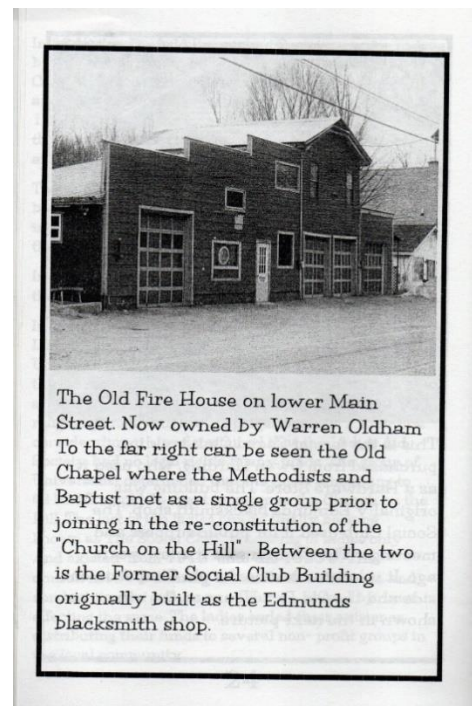
In 1849 the Dixfield Benevolent Society was formed by the original group of worshipers of the Congregational Church. It was started by 31 women and 13 men. Dues were 25 cents a year for men and 12 ½ cents a year for women. They met at one of their homes every two weeks. The ladies came in the afternoon and the men came to supper in the evening.

The society was re-organized in 1850 and the name became the Circle of Industry. The membership had increased to 49 women and 22 men. Starting in 1853 the meetings were held every Thursday at 2 PM.

In 1856 the Society was re-organized and became the

Universalists Circle of Industry with 59 members.

In late 1856 a committee of the Congregationalist Ladies Aid from the group on Main Street visited the Universalists Circle of Industry and asked for some of the funds (because part of the Universalists had separated, desiring to hold on to their orthodox religion, joined with the Congregationalists). After due consideration it was determined that the Ladies Aid Society had no legal rights to any funds. The group of Universalist determined that the funds amounting to \$210.10 would be spent to improve "The Church on the Hill". The last of the ladies' groups finally became known as The Social Club, consisting of ladies only, and existed from 1912 until the 1990's.



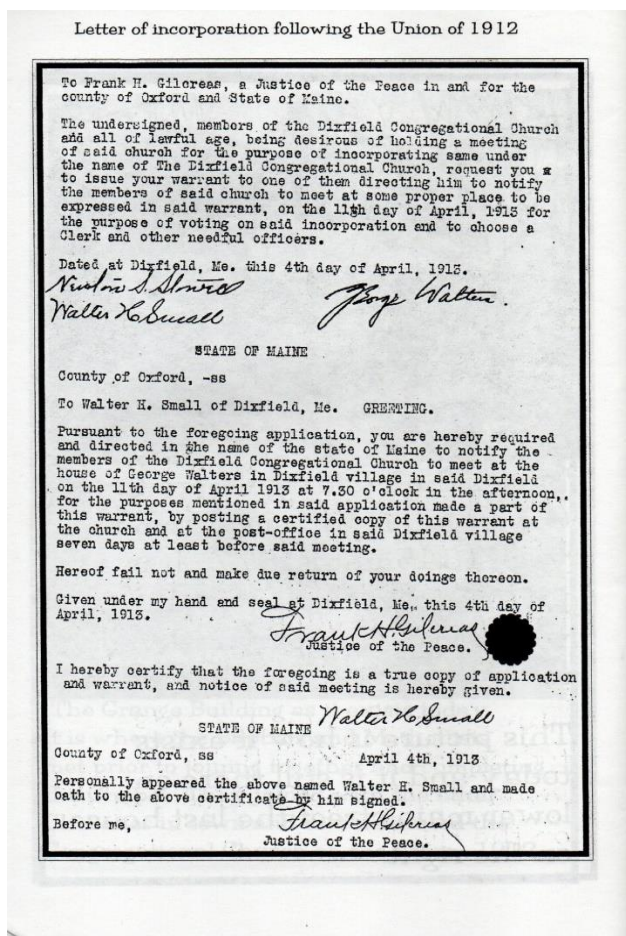
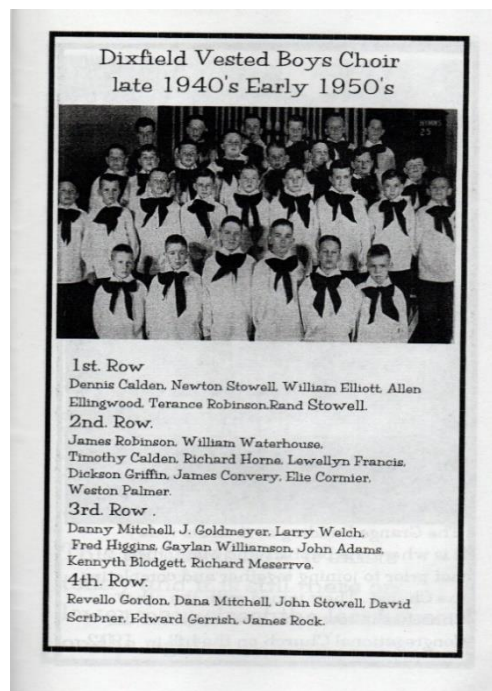
The Church in 1994, desiring to handle its own funds, and conduct its own affairs as a Church, passed By-Laws effecting the same. The ladies ended their existence, distributing their funds to several non-profit groups in the local community.

In 1856 the ladies of the Church voted to pay 75 dollars towards the purchase of a bell for the church.

Mr. Eustis traveled to Boston and attended an exhibition of bells. He bought the winner in the contest for the best tone. The tone of our bell is exceptionally fine, for which we may be grateful to the "Circle of Industry". Some of their members were not members of the church.

During the years that the Universalists owned "The Church on the Hill" 1856 – 1912 many changes were made on the inside.

The original balcony was torn down (prior to the



renovation the entire congregation had to turn around and face the balcony at those times when the choir and organist were the center of attention). During this time also, the doors at the entrance of the pews were removed.

The two side pews in front of the church, situated on either side of the pulpit platform were removed.

Several of the stained-glass windows of the church were installed during this period.

Was it at this time the new porch entrance was installed? I could find nothing in the records to indicate when it was added on to the structure.

The Universalists continued to meet at "The Church on the Hill" until the union with the Baptist in 1912. The Methodists as a separate group, were meeting at the Grange Hall from 1887 until 1903. They were not in existence in 1912, as they had joined with the Baptists and

purchased the chapel that was originally built by Rev. Edgar Wheeler. He had tried to form a body of believers known as “The Christian Church of God”. Nothing ever came of this movement. Rev. Wheeler passed away before the chapel was completed

The Baptist and Methodist group finished constructing the building.

The Baptists, after uniting with the Methodists, worshipped at the Chapel until the Union of 1912.



Church Choir 1947
Director Nate Weston



Girls in their Sunday best 1956

The Baptists and Universalists Bodies, separately, and unanimously, voted to effect a union.

They petitioned the convention officers with the result that a commission was formed to petition and recommend what should be done.

It was recommended that it should be a union rather than a mere federation, which was accomplished to the satisfaction of all the concerned parties.

Among the leading local men who brought about the union of the Churches were several men whose business talents and manifest were of inestimable value: George Walters, George Merrill and John Harlow, from The Church on the Hill Joseph Edmunds, Philetus Torrey, and Walter Small from the Folks at the Chapel. At the meeting of the newly formed Union Church, a unanimous call was extended to Rev. Ransom E. Gilkey, a Baptist minister visiting friends in Dixfield at the time. After the most earnest consideration, Mr. Gilkey accepted in June of 1912.

He agreed to try it for six months.

Many of his Baptist friends predicted that it would not be a successful union.

At the end of six months, he resigned, but his efforts were so successful and his personality so generally beloved that he was immediately called upon to reconsider his resignation. He did, and agreed to become the permanent pastor.

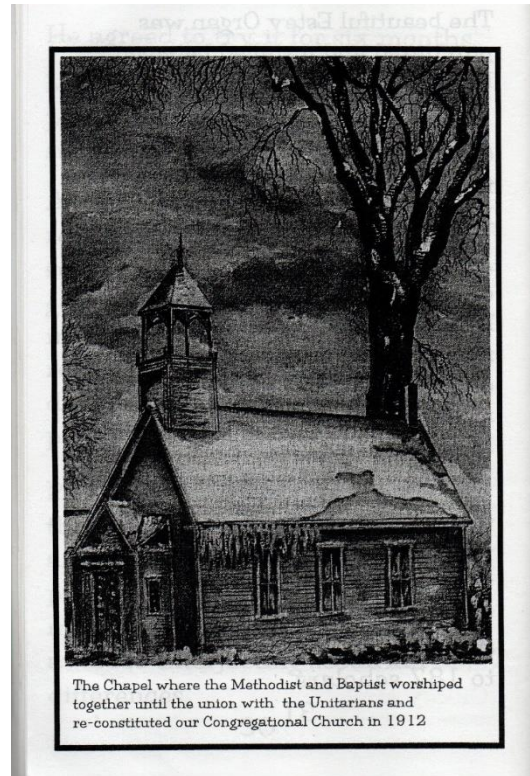
Rev. Gilkey piloted the church through the early years of union, and to his credit he utilized the pulpit to preach only the basic message of Christianity and avoided interjecting sectarian differences.

The beautiful Estey Organ was purchased and installed between March and June of 1917. In 1928 the State Conference of Congregational Churches was held in Dixfield at "The Church on the Hill".

A Bethany Bible class was organized October 21, 1924 for the ladies and functioned until 1940. A men's Bible class was also organized October 21, 1924 and meetings were held in the Masonic banquet rooms.

The Sunday School was held at the chapel on Main Street which was acquired when the union of the churches took place. In 1924 they had 12 classes with 128 students. By 1926 it had grown to 187 scholars.

I can remember when we attended in the 1950's. There were so many in attendance coming and going that the police officer Parker Tibbetts, served as a crossing guard for all the children on Sunday mornings.



Circa 1926 - Notice the doors are missing and a porch was added.

Our teachers in grades school and Sunday school were the same when I attended. To name a few, Mrs. Pepper, Mrs. Holman, and Mrs. Dill. Those were the ones I remember. I am sure there must have been more. I could not find Sunday School listed in the history.

The Church has also been fortunate in always having an excellent choir for our services.

Several buildings have been owned by the church over the years.

The first chapel on Main Street sold in 1877.

The chapel that was formally the Baptist chapel recently sold, and is now an antique shop.

The Social building, originally Edmunds's blacksmith shop, was acquired from Owen Harding in 1948. It was utilized by the Church Social Club for years before being sold. It stood beside the chapel on Main Street.

The Rand Stowell House was a parsonage in the early years and sold sometime in the 1800's.

In later years "The Church on the Hill" also owned a parsonage. It was purchased from Preston Brown trustee to Ira E. Edmunds wife of Joseph Edmunds. It was sold within the last few years.

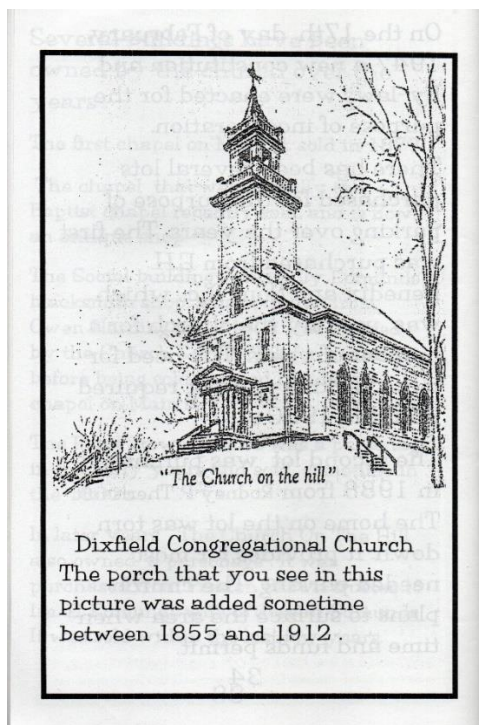
On the 17th day of February 1947, a new constitution and By-Laws were enacted for the purpose of incorporation.

There have been several lots purchased for the purpose of parking over the years. The first was purchased from E. H. Benedix and Sons Inc., which was used by the church for a number of years. The need for more parking was not required until the 1980's.

The second lot was purchased in 1988 from Rodney P. Theriault. The home on the lot was torn down. It provided for the most needed parking. The church plans to surface the area when time and funds permit.



Inside of Church circa 1900 then the Universalist



Dixfield Congregational Church
The porch that you see in this picture was added sometime between 1855 and 1912.

The third lot, which we now use for handicapped parking, was created by purchasing what was formally the William Eustis House. It was located at the rear of the church, purchased from the government, torn down to create a parking lot by using fill and bringing it up to the level of the church foundation.

(I mention this because over time all evidence of the former property will have disappeared.)

Over the years very many renovations and new additions have been added to the church both inside and out. Church work parties over the years have been very successful.

In June of 1960, a drive was launched to raise funds to put a new addition on the church.

Through generous contributions of the people of Dixfield, both church members, and those who had a strong feeling

of connection to the church, a new addition was dedicated in October 1961. It provides a Sunday school area, pastor's study, new bathrooms, and a wonderful kitchen area. It also provides room enough for church meetings, public suppers, and a host of other functions for the benefit of both our church and the community.

Two pillars were recently installed just inside the entrance of the church to add support for the bell tower and to allow it to be put back level.

Very many projects have been undertaken over the years and are too numerous to list. They were made possible by the work of many hands to whom the church is most grateful. (You know who you are.)

We have had several organs and pianos, several furnaces, and many kitchen items etc. made possible by generous contributions from our church members. (A big thank you to those who made it all possible.)

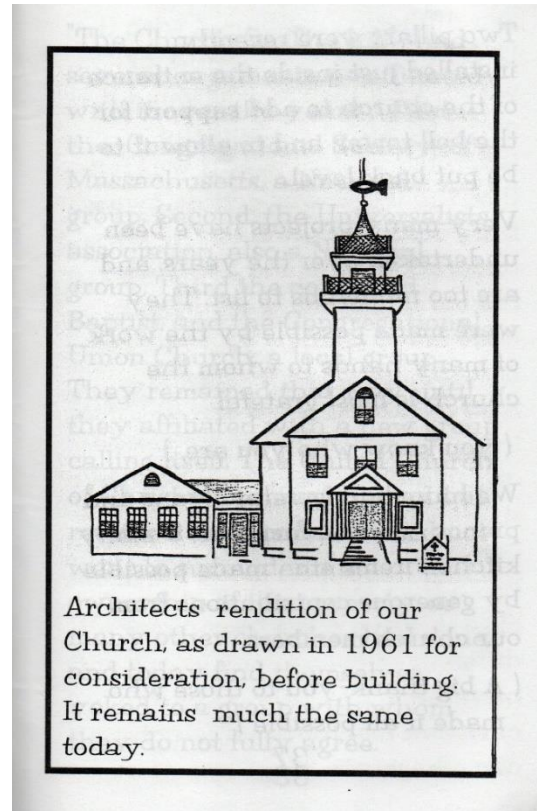
"The Church on the Hill" had several organizations affiliated with it over the years. First the Congregational Society of the Massachusetts, a national group. Second, the Universalists association, also a national group. Third the combined Baptist and the Congregational Union Church - a local group. They remained that way until they affiliated with a new group calling itself The Union Church of Christ. Our church joined but retained autonomy. We did not want to surrender our ownership of the property as many other churches had done and today find themselves yoked to a group with whom they do not fully agree.

Our affiliation continued with the U.C.C. until July 10, 1994 at which time the Church found it could no longer support the teaching of the U.C.C. It was felt that the U.C.C. was getting away from the basic teachings of the scripture that had always been the cornerstone in keeping our church together.

We have always prided ourselves in being composed of people who come from many different religious backgrounds.

Beginning with the Union of 1912 the focus has always been on maintaining unity. Preachers who have been led to pastor our church have come from many different religious persuasions and have preached only on basic Christian teachings, of which we can all agree.

Shortly after severing ties with the U.C.C., our church applied for affiliation with the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC), founded in Plymouth,



Massachusetts, the Mother Church of our own Congregational worship. We have remained with that affiliation to the present time.

The founders of our church built wisely, soundly, and in the love of God, and being a union of several denominations, have always avoided the danger of sectarian strife.

We must zealously safeguard this precious inheritance from the labors of our forefathers.

We may perhaps be justified in regarding our church as a very real symbol of that future unity - not uniformity - of Protestantism, for which the best minds, and the most earnest spirits of our age are yearning.

We stand today as a monument to Christian Unity, formed as it was, at the union of 1912 by the several Christian groups, who truly put aside their differences and pledged to worship in the spirit of true Christian faith.

We pray that this wonderful tradition that we have inherited will long continue.

So Mote It Be.

Members of "The Church on the Hill" 2006

Baker, Ella	Berry, Darlene	Berry, Dexter
Blood, Frances	Blodgett, Derek	Brown, Clarissa
Buchanan, Fred	Buchanan, Sandy	Buzzell, Stephanie
Carlton, Frances	Child, Tyrene	Cochran, Randall
Collins, Charlotte	Cotton, Lora	Coulthard, Craig
Coulthard, Rebecca	Cunningham, Walter	
Daily, Shay	Daily, Rye	Daley, Vaughn
Daley, Hugh	Demars, Ken	Demars, Lisa
Dimilner, Nancy	Ducret, Ronda	
Elward, Helen		
Francis, Harry	Frost, Bernard	Frost, Rheanne
Fuller, Alan	Fuller, Joan	
Gensel, John	Glaus, John	Glover, Pete
Glover Beverly	Grant, April	
Haines, Nancy	Haines, Richard	Harnden, Margaret
Harvey, Katherine	Harvey, Millissa	Hayes, Charlotte
Hodgson, Joy	Holman, Lorraine	Holman, Roth
Howard, Clara	Hutchinson, Alan	

Irish, Andrew	Irish, Jason	Irish, James
Irish, Kathy	Irish, Nicole	Irish, Terri
Jamison, Shane	Johnston, Michael	Jones, Patricia
Jones, Paul		
Kennedy, Marjorie	Kennedy, Montell	Knapp, Elisa
Knight, Susan		
Leavitt, Marcia	Leavitt, Stephen	Leavitt, William
Leavitt, Robert	Leavitt, Angela	Leblanc, Melinda
McDonald, Paula	Morang, John	Morang, Deborah
Newell, Homer	Noyes, Chris	Noyes, Samantha
Overdoff, Taja		
Pellitier, Sharon	Powell, Judy	Putnam, Amanda
Rain, Frank	Ray, Diane	Ray, Richard
Record, Terry	Roberts, Phil	Rowland, Patricia
Saltonstall, George	Saunders, David	Schnorr, William
Schnorr, Fe	Schofield, Prudence	Skibitsky David
Skibitsky, Leslie	Skibitsky, Meredith	Skibitsky, Scott
Smith, Lorraine	Steele, Paula	
Tapley, Nancy	Taylor, Laurie	Townsend, Peggy Sue
Tunnicliffe, Jean		
Verkaart, Isabell		
Waite, Mathew	Walton, Mary	Wing, Patricia
Wing, Reginald		
New Members:	Arsenault, Megan	Brown, Marion
Pratt, Joe		

List of Pastors

Ministering to the Folks living in what is known as The Village

First Congregational Church of Christ in Dixfield 1806 – 1877

Jotham Sewall	Daniel Libby	E.S. Hopkins
J.P. Chamberlain	William V. Jordan	John Elliott
R.C. Bedford		

Dixfield Universalist Church 1856 - 1912

George “Father” Bates	Stanford Mitchell	Otis Johnson
Manley P. Townsend	Charles Hayden	William T. Gaskin
E.W. Webber		

Methodist Church 1897 - 1903

G.B. Hannaford	W.E. Purington
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Freewill Baptist Church 1903 - 1912

Manville Holman	Albert Baldwin	Thomas Scamon
W.O. Kierstead	C.A. Parsons	Rev. Longley
Paul Curtis		

The Groups pastored by the above were unified in 1912.

Dixfield Congregational Church 1912 – 2006

Ransom Gilkey	Thomas Hatt	Frederick H. Young
Clifford Cross	Morley Durost	Morton Sorensen
Lewis Mills	Daniel Fenner Jr.	Neil Wilson
Daren Morgan	David Dodge	John Gensel

Two Poems Written about our town and church

To Dixfield Maine

*Among the rugged hills of Dixfield, Maine
There dwell the friends I love:
Folks honest genuine and truly dear
Inspiring as the Stars above!*

*Upon the scenic bluff of Dixfield, Maine
There stands the church I love:
Where organ, mellow song and pastors' prayer*

Breath peace and joy of live enough!

*Beneath the lofty pines of Dixfield, Maine
There lies the home I love:
Where fellowship, good will and Godly cheer
From harassed heart the doubt remove!*

*Indeed, oh, spirit true for Dixfield, Maine
Thou, rt one I'll ever love:
Shining beacon for each passing year
A holy seed of God's white dove!*

By "Van" 1937

Our old wooden church
(to the tune of the old rugger cross)

*On a Hill in our town stands an old wooden church
A symbol of forgiveness for sins
And we love this old church where the sinners and saints
Can always find a place to come in*

*So we'll attend this old wooden church
Till the Lord at last calls us in,
We will love this old wooden church
And exchange it some day for our sins*

*Oh this old wooden church, so adored by the few
Is a heavenly refuge for me
For the doors never close and there's always a pew
And a smile from pastor Johnnee*

*So we'll attend this old wooden church
Till the lord at list calls us in,
We will love this old wooden church
And exchange it some day for our sin*

By Dexter Berry 2006

Sunday October 8, 2006

Corner Stone Laying
and
Re- dedication Ceremonies

Bicentennial Celebration
1806 – 2006

Dixfield Congregational Church
N. A.C.C.C.

1



Participating Past Masters
Acting as:

Grand Master	R.W. Reginald W. Wing
Past Junior Grand Warden	
Deputy Grand Master	W. Dexter Berry
Senior Grand Warden	W. Stephen Leavitt
Junior Grand Warden	W. Les Gatchell
Grand Secretary	W. Ralph Clarke
Grand Chaplain	W. Hugh Daley

Acting as:	
Grand Treasurer	W. David Berry
Senior Grand Deacon	W. Dale Carlton
Junior Grand Deacon	W. David Saphier
Senior Grand Steward	W. Montell Kennedy
Junior Grand Steward	W. Malcolm Gill
Grand Tyler	W. Ed Gerry
Grand Marshall	W. George Saltonstall
Past Grand Standard Bearer	

Lodge opening 9:00

Church Service 10:00

Following the Church Services, the Congregation assembled at the front of the church on the West side of the Church entrance. The Masons assembled on the East side for the purpose of performing the Corner stone ceremonies.

2

The Chairman of the Church Council Leslie Skibitsky briefly addressed the Acting Grand Master, stating:

The Dixfield Congregational Church being engaged in bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Community of Dixfield, Maine respectfully requests that a corner stone be laid according to the ancient forms and ceremonies of the Freemasons.

Acting Grand Master:

From time immemorial it has been the custom of the Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons to lay, when requested so to do, with their ancient forms, the corner stone of buildings erected for the worship of God, for charitable objects, or for the purposes of the administration of justice and free government, and of no other buildings.

This Corner Stone, therefore, we may lay in accordance with our law, and gladly do so, testifying thereby our obedience to the law and our desire to show publicly our respect for the government under which we live.

The First duty of Masons, in any undertaking, is to invoke the blessing of the Grand Architect upon their work.

Let us pray.

3

O most glorious and eternal God. Great Architect of the Universe, who makes' all things by thy power and adorns all things by Thy bounty, and fills all things with thy goodness, and sanctifies the heart and gifts of Thy servants, who in the days of old didst graciously accept the house which our grand master, King Solomon, erected to Thy glory! We praise Thee and bless Thee that Thou hast thus far prospered the handiwork of us Thy servants, who are this day met together in Thy fear and love to lay the corner stone of this building, dedicated to Thy service as The Congregational Church of Dixfield, Maine. Associated with the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. We humbly pray Thee that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to sanctify this house by the outpouring of Thy holiness from on high. Let the Sun of Righteousness ever shine here, and the bright illumination of Thy Grace. That which we dedicate do Thou bless. That which we offer do Thou accept. Those who shall assemble here do Thou visit graciously and enlighten, now and even unto the great Accounting Day, when we shall receive the due reward of our labors in the Grand Lodge Above. Amen

Response: *So mote it be.*

The ceremony of laying the cornerstone presented by permission and as directed by the Grand Master agreeable to the ancient customs and practices of Freemasonry:

4

Acting G.M. gives the square, level, and plumb to the chairman of the Church Council. Saying:

May the all-bounteous Author of Nature, the Supreme and ever living God, bless the inhabitants of this place with all the necessities, comforts, and conveniences of life - assist in the continuation of the good works begun here some 200 years ago - protect them till time shall be no more, and may He grant to us in needful supply, the Corn of nourishment, the Wine of refreshment, and the oil of joy.

Labor on this task of preserving this edifice that has been handed to you down through the years from 1806 and be blessed, in the work. May Wisdom continue to be found within its walls to enlighten, strength to encourage, and sustain all those who fall within its influence, and the beauty of Holiness to adorn all their works.

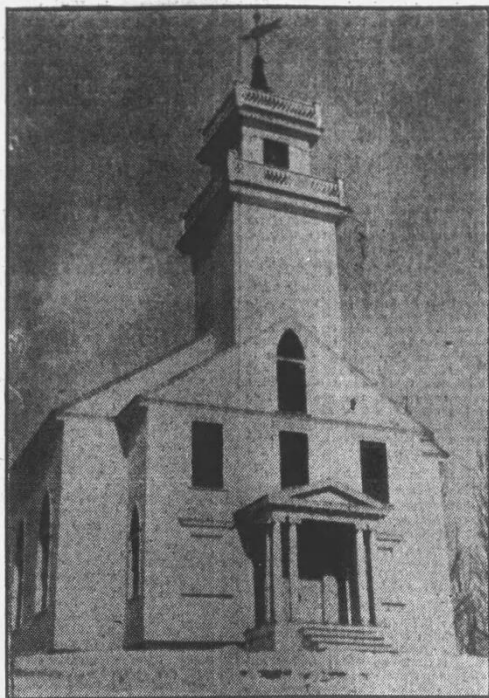
(Following the Dedication ceremonies presented by the brethren listed in this presentation concluded with the Acting Grand Master saying:)

Acting G.M. *In the name of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Maine I proclaim that the Corner Stone of the Dixfield Congregational Church has this day been found square, level, and plumb, true and trusty, and laid according to the old customs of Freemasonry.*

5

DIXFIELD "CHURCH ON THE HILL" CELEBRATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Centennial Program Yesterday with Address by Pastor, Rev. T. B. Hatt—Dedicated Nov. 28, 1828 as a Universalist Church—In 1912 Reorganized as Congregational—Previous Pastors



DIXFIELD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Dixfield, Dec. 2.—An impressive and interesting program was held at the morning service, at the Church on the Hill today in observance of the 100th anniversary of the dedication of this church. The choir rendered the appropriate hymn "The Church's Sure Foundation." An historical sketch of the early church and the several changes in church organization and building during the past century was read by Miss Lizzie M. Russell, followed by an original poem by Mrs. Ada Murch Smith. The pastor Rev. Thomas B. Hatt gave fitting remarks in relation to the event, prior to the excellent discourse delivered by him from the theme, "The Birth of a New Period." This was followed by a vocal solo by Mrs. Wynifred Staples Smith, and a selection by the choir, "Faith of Our Fathers." There was a large attendance of members and friends.

Church History

The first Congregational church in Dixfield was organized May 8, 1806, by Alexander McLean, missionary from the society for propagating the Gospel, and Jonathan Sewell, missionary from the Massachusetts Missionary Society. There were eight charter members. Meetings were held at the homes of the several members and by invitation until 1846, when the house on lower Main street, now occupied by the Wing family was built by Charles Lyman Eustis for a chapel, where church services, Sunday schools, mid-week prayer meetings and occasional lectures, were held, for many years. The chapel was remodeled, and rededicated, Feb. 8, 1857. Rev. I. P. Richardson preached the sermon, text from Psalms 84:2.

The "Church on the Hill" which was first dedicated Nov. 28, 1828, has always been known as the Universalist church, although pastors of various denominations, held meetings there from the time it was built, 1828 to 1895, when the Universalist church was re-organized, April 1, with eleven charter members, C. L. Dillingham, and Eugene L. Kidder, being the only two sur-

living charter members.

Rev. T. B. Payne was the first pastor after this organization in 1895, followed by Rev. E. W. Webber, Rev. Harry M. Daniels, Rev. Stanford Mitchell, Rev. Manley B. Townsend, and Rev. William E. Gaskin. Following Mr. Gaskin's pastorate which closed May 15, 1911, the pulpit was supplied by college students, and settled pastors of other churches, until May 27, 1912, when the present Congregational church was organized by the uniting of the Universalist and Free-Will Baptist churches of this community, with 46 charter members.

Rev. Ransom E. Gilkey was instrumental in this united body, and became the first pastor, retaining that position for 12 years, until his death, which occurred, Feb. 22, 1924.

The pulpit was supplied through the spring and summer of 1924, until the first of September when Rev. Thomas Burton Hatt began his labors, as pastor of the church. The church membership on Nov. 22, this year numbers 225, with a graded

Sunday school of 14 classes—enrollment of 156. Mrs. R. E. Gilkey is superintendent of the Sunday school, who has been successful in the work for several years. The Men's class with the pastor, Rev. T. B. Hatt as teacher and the Bethany Bible class, including the adult women of the Sunday school, are active in their efforts in caring for the sick and shut-ins, and for the social functions of the younger men and boys.

State Conference a Guest

The Congregational State Conference was entertained May 8, 9, 10, of the present year by the Dixfield Congregational church and parish, when 256 delegates, pastors, and members of the various churches, throughout the State, were entertained by the Dixfield people. During the three day's session, the largest number known in history of the State conference in Maine.

DURHAM STATE ROAD

MEETING AT EUREKA GRANGE HALL TUESDAY EVENING—SUPPER AT 7 O'CLOCK

Much interest is being shown in the meeting which is to be held at Durham, Tuesday evening Dec. 4 for the purpose of discussing the proposed plan for a State highway from Auburn, to Freeport. The affair is to be held at Eureka grange hall and will be preceded by a supper at 7 o'clock.

The construction of the State road from Auburn, down the South River road through Durham, to Freeport would open up a large territory to better means of transportation and take the heavy traffic off the Gray road it is argued by the exponents of the plan. Since the agitation was started the feasibility of such a plan has spread rapidly and much enthusiasm is expected at the meeting Tuesday evening.

The cities and towns of Auburn, Lewiston, Durham, Pownal, Freeport and Portland are all said to be strongly in favor of the plan and is promising their support. The Chambers of Commerce of Lewiston, Auburn and Portland will also be represented at the meeting. Prominent citizens of the various places named are making plans to attend and it is expected that the grange hall will be filled Tuesday evening when the matter will be freely discussed.

The distance from Auburn to Freeport is said to be 18 miles, several miles of which are already constructed under the State aid plan. Last year one mile on the South River road, Auburn was constructed. Durham has already constructed several miles and Freeport two or three. With those sections already constructed it is hoped that the route may be one of those designated as a State highway and completed under State supervision.

RANGELEY

RANGELEY, Dec. 2.—Mr. and Mrs. Raymond H. Bartlett are receiving congratulations on the birth of a nine-pound daughter, Nov. 29. The young lady has been named Priscilla Coburn.

Mr. and Mrs. George W. Pillsbury entertained 71 relatives Thanksgiving Day. Basketball and pitching horse shoes were enjoyed. Fred Pillsbury, whose birthday occurred Tuesday was presented with two birthday cakes.

Miss Mae Hawhurst has been awarded the prize in Franklin County Health poster contest. The posters were made last spring and exhibited at the Farmington fair last fall.

Mr. and Mrs. Percy Stacey and

GOING S

