

HISTORICAL SKETCHES
OF
EARLY LISBON
AND HISTORY OF
THE NEWENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



250TH ANNIVERSARY
1723 - 1973

THE NEWENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
U. C. C.

LISBON, CONNECTICUT

TWO HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

September 30, 1973

Compiled from Newent Church records, Calkins' History of Norwich, Gridley's History of Samuel Kirkland, Calkins' History of New London County, Hurd's History of New London Co., Perkins Genealogy, Kinsman Genealogy, etc.

I am greatly indebted to the many people for the loan of pictures, clippings, books and the gift of good advice. Also the Otis Library, the State Library in Hartford, the Conn. Historical Society Beardsley Library, Winsted, the Kirkland, N. Y. Library.

There are possibly imperfections in some areas of this history, as in researching the writer finds different authorities vary on dates, names and places.

Compiled by Mrs. Dorothy Knight Fitch —1973

PERIOD PREVIOUS TO ORGANIZATION

Before commencing the actual history of The Newent Congregational Church perhaps it would be appropriate to consider for a moment the period which predated the organization of the church society.

In drawing aside the curtain of the past we must remember that all the land which is now the town of Lisbon consisted of a wild tract included in the nine miles square which was the town of Norwich and was acknowledged by England to be part of the Mohegan Indian territory. Norwich had given the Showtucket Indians, who were headed by their sachem, Owaneco, son of Uncas, about 300 acres in the section "Between the Rivers", that is, between the Quinebaug and the Shetucket, because he was in poor circumstances and had no place to keep his people. The Indians called the river Showtucket or Shotuck.

As this 300 acres was a gift, the town of Norwich set up rules ordering that the Indians must not work, hunt nor fish on the Sabbath; that the land must be fenced against roaming cattle and swine; that the demand of an annual contribution of ten deerskins must be adhered to. Owaneco gathered his clan of 20 or 30 families into this area and lived at peace with the white settlers. For a number of years they abided by the rules set up, hunted, fished, secured pelts of furbearing animals and laid up stores for the winter, but as deer became more scarce they were unable to keep up their payment of deerskins. Consequently, many of them gradually scattered to other places, altho some still remained in Newent, and, as has happened in so many cases, they were treated as second class people in the land where they were born and lived.

Owaneco in his youth was a bold warrior, enterprising and with a strong and vigorous constitution. He was quite cooperative with the white men and was able to speak enough English to be understood. In reading the history of King Phillips war and battles with the Narragansett Indians we find that Owaneco obtained considerable renown and was considered Sachem of the Indians east of the Connecticut River, but in his later years he became too fond of strong drink and quite liable to make poor bargains in trading away land.

After King Phillip's War Owaneco assigned to "my loving friend, James Fitch, Jr." on December 22, 1680 care of all the Showtucket Indian land and a few years later it was deeded to Fitch. Capt. Fitch, son of Rev. James Fitch of Norwich had already been given 100 acres "between the rivers" as compensation for providing nails for the new meeting house in Norwichtown to the value of 12 pounds. In 1696 Capt. Fitch recorded the whole tract to himself over the protest of the town of Norwich. Apparently the town did consent and Capt. Fitch claimed the whole 1800 acre grant of what is now Lisbon.

Capt. Fitch sold his grant in 1694-5 to purchasers from Ipswich, Mass., Joseph Safford, Richard Smith, Meshach Farley, Matthew Perkins and Samuel Bishop.

After the Showtucket Indian reservation had been almost cleared of its native occupants, one of the English owners found an old Indian woman, who had come from a distance, taking the bark from his birch trees and trespassing on his ground. Upon remonstrating with her, he was met with an angry and indignant rejoinder, "This land yours!" she exclaimed. How you get it? Indian land—all of it. You white folks come here—drive away poor Indian and steal his land. That the way you get it!" No doubt this expressed the feeling many of the Indians had when from time to time they had to relinquish their ancient grounds to the whites and their hunting and family patterns were broken.

In 1725 the Norwich proprietors gave a quit-claim deed to Capt. Jabez Perkins, Lt. Samuel Bishop, Joseph Perkins and John Safford, of all the Indian land in the "crotch of the rivers" and of all contained in Maj. Fitch's 1800 acre grant, for the sum of 75 pounds, money in hand, paid to these proprietors provided the Indians should be allowed to remain and occupy the tract that had been given them. As mentioned above the Indians dwindled away and in 1745 the descendants of Owaneco and other principal Mohegans, gave a quit-claim deed in the sum of 137 pounds to Newent citizens relinquishing all right and title to the tract in the "crotch of the rivers", called the Indian Land, abutting southeasterly on the Quinebaug. However, a few Indian clans still remained, but they abandoned their aboriginal ways and became rural laborers, domestic servants, some even becoming church members and Christians.

These Showtucket Indians, like so many others, left no trace of themselves except perhaps a few arrowheads mixed with the soil and they would soon have ceased to be remembered had not some Norwich historians gathered up and pieced together the fragments which remained of their unhappy history.

THE FIRST SETTLERS

Settlement of Newent was for many years obstructed by a variety of claims arising from a confusion of grants and transfers, but settlements were commenced in 1718 with sixteen persons on the roll of accepted inhabitants, designated as "farmers in ye Crotch of ye Rivers".

Samuel Bishop	Jabez Perkins	William Read
Samuel Coy	Joseph Perkins	Samuel Rood
Eleazer Jewett	Josiah Read	Samuel Rood, Jr.
David Knight	Josiah Read, Jr.	Henry Walbridge
Daniel Longbottom	Joseph Read	
Samuel Lothrop	John Read	

These families of farmers, of course, also consisted of their wives, children, servants and other workmen which might have brought the number up to sixty or seventy people.

For many years the only public gathering place for Christian assembly in the nine miles square was the First Church at Norwich Town. It also served as the center of social, religious and political life. Previous to the building of the meeting house in Newent whole families made their way to this church situated on a rock-faced hill for protection against unfriendly Indians (now known as Meeting House Rocks).

Going to church in those days was no picnic as, for many, this meant a distance of up to eight miles. Therefore, the older people travelled on horseback, but the younger folks often walked the whole distance, which goes to show that religious privileges then were valued very highly. The long trek called for stalwart men and hardy women and children as there were no roads, as such, only paths or Indian trails climbing over the hills and through wild, rugged and wooded areas. (Mrs. Clara Hyde Beckwith of Franklin mentioned that when she was a girl on the Hyde place, now the Grant farm, her mother showed her the remains of the old saddle path which traversed across the farm). Rattlesnakes haunted the rocks and sunny ledges and a note is made in Calkins History that a bounty was set in 1721 on these reptiles. Some Newent men were able to cash in on this bounty. In order to cross the Shetucket River a ferry was run in good weather, but many freshets and storms, particularly in the winter and spring months, made the crossing almost impossible. We suspect the ferry was no more than a raft poled back and forth across the river by one or more men.

If we could be allowed to go back in time and view these people as they wended their way to religious services it might remind us of the picture in the old school books "Pilgrims Going to Church". The Norwich historians have stated that the men carried firearms upon their shoulders and upon arriving at the meeting house stacked them outside while someone watched over them. Those wealthy enough wore "black beaverett" hats made of wool which were quite costly. The poorer wore a "buff-cap", knit from woolen yarn. Coats were long and straight, falling below the knee, no collar, so the neckcloth of spotless linen, fastened behind with a silver buckle, was fully displayed. Red woolen stockings were much admired. Shoes were very coarse, square

toed and adorned with enormous buckles. Boots lasted a man's lifetime. Long hair was very much in vogue and was combed back and gathered into a queue and wound with a black ribbon, as one had to be very solemn on Sunday.

The women came to church dressed very well, although not gay or gaudy. They owned finery, but left that at home on Sunday. Their short gowns were puffed out by stiff petticoats, but neatly covered with a white apron of linen or muslin, stiffly starched. Sleeves were usually short with mittens to the elbow leaving fingers and part of the thumb bare. Coats were short and the head was covered with a "riding hood", which was thrown back during the meeting and any bonnets were also taken off. It is noted that younger women were very particular to have their hair nicely curled before going to meeting. It probably can be said that this fashion trend continued long after these people were attending their own meeting house in Newent.

THE FIRST MEETING HOUSE IN NEWENT

When the New England colonies were settled churches were included in their government. The Congregational system of church polity and discipline permeated the colony. In 1675 it became a law that a meeting house should be erected in every town. If the people failed to do so at once, the magistrates were empowered to build it and charge the cost to the town. Although Lisbon had not at that time become a town it was through the influence of a family named Perkins that the Newent Congregational church was organized in 1723, although the Society had been established in 1718 as Norwich North East Society by division of Norwich First Society.

The Colonial Legislature was petitioned to grant them a distinct society and settle a minister. The petition, dated May 8, 1718, bore the following names:

Thomas Walbridge	George Rood	Joseph Read
Samuel Bishop	John Lamb	John Bishop
Josiah Reed	Samuel Rood	Isaac Larance
William Reed	Jabesh Rood	Isaac Larance, Jr.
Daniel Longbottom	John Bacon	Samuel Lothrop
Eleazer Jewett	Moses Hagget	John Read
David Knight	William Adams	Samuel Coy
David Knight, Jr.	Nathaniel Dean	Jeremiah Tracy
William Walbridge	Timothy Allen	Francis Tracy

The reply was as follows: "at a General Assembly holden in Hartford, in his Majesty's colony of Connecticut in New England on Thursday, the 8th day of May in the fourth year of the reign of our sovereign, Lord George, King of Great Britain, etc., A.D. 1718 - Upon the consideration of the petition of the farmers inhabiting between the rivers Quinabaug and Shoutucket: This Assembly do now grant to the said farmers the liberty and privilege of a parish and society by and of themselves within the said town of Norwich, for the settling, upholding and maintaining the publick worship of God amongst them, with all such liberties, powers and privileges, as other societies and congregations in this Colony generally have and do enjoy by law; always provided, that

the said farmers bear their proportionable charges in the town until they have procured an orthodox minister among them."

Then we find a resolution dated October 11, 1722 at a General Assembly meeting at New Haven, with Capt. Jabez Perkins, representative, "Resolved by this Assembly, That for the future the Northeast society or parish in the town of Norwich be called by the name of Newent". Thus we find Newent a significant name long before Lisbon was known to this locality.

In 1721 there had been a great revival of religion in the First Church Society (Norwich Town) denouncing the Saybrook Platform as a rule of discipline. Also, Newent people were weary of the hardships of traveling the long distance for church affairs. These may have been motives for the building of their own meeting house.

It may be well to record a short history of the family whose wisdom inspired the building of the first church in Newent and whose name is inscribed in the church records for more than a century. Joseph Perkins, whose forebears had migrated from Newent in Gloucestershire, England, to Ipswich, Mass., came to this area in 1695 accompanied by two of his brothers, Jabez and Matthew. Between them they purchased from Capt. James Fitch about 1200 acres situated between the rivers. This land remained in the Perkins family until the early 1800's and became known as "Perkins' Crotch". Matthew preferred to return to Ipswich and sold his portion to Joseph. From the Perkins' genealogy we find that the two brothers, Joseph and Capt. Jabez were leading men in the affairs of the town and church during their lives; their descendants are still quite numerous in Connecticut and are also found scattered over a great part of the United States and have continued to take a leading part in the communities where they live. Joseph was a very influential man, both in Newent Society and in the church, being selectman of the society and elected Deacon of the church, which distinguished him as Deacon Joseph Perkins. He, like most of the early settlers, had a large family and was the father of eleven children. The second daughter, Mary, became the wife of Newent's first minister, Rev. Daniel Kirtland. The eldest son, Joseph was a physician in this town for many years, having graduated from Yale College. He became well known both in medicine and surgery performing all major operations in the area.

Attempting, on one occasion, dangerous operation, the patient, who was a slave died. Displeased at the loss of his slave, the master charged the surgeon "with having sent his victim prematurely to the Devil". Perkins thereby said, "It is fortunate that the only loss falls upon the owner, as the slave could not possibly suffer from an exchange of masters." Dr. Perkins also filled the office of Deacon from 1756 until his death on July 7, 1794.

Over 250 years have now passed into history since, through the persistent effort of this Perkins family, the first meeting house was erected and was known as the First Church of Christ, supposedly from the First Church of Christ in Newent, England. It continued in use for nearly fifty years. It was a "meeting house" in the true sense of the word—a coming together place for worship and companionship as well as for Society business.

Little or nothing is known of its style or size, but according

to custom of the early 1700's in all probability it was a large barn-like structure, square, with the door in the center of one side. It evidently had no type of heating for the winter months and probably was a good place to catch cold. The parish records show that "it was not destitute of decoration", at least a "cushen" had a place in the pulpit. There was some sort of a belfry as mention is made later of repairing the bell.

It is reasonable to assume that the structure was built immediately after the church was gathered as it is recorded that "January 4, 1725, the proprietors grant that spot of land the Newent meeting house now stands on and the common land adjoining to that Society for their use so long as they shall have occasion for it."

Also included in a petition to the General Court dated May 10, 1722 in which a request was made for leniency in their taxes, a paragraph shows at that time "we have raised and covered a meeting house big enough to hold our inhabitants and at present we have with us a minister who preaches ye gospel amongst us to our good satisfaction". He undoubtedly was Rev. Kirkland. This leads us to believe the building was put up during that spring.

This first meeting house stood nearly half a mile below the present church on the west side of the road (now State Rt. 169) near the old railroad underpass. Later this became the site of Daniel Hatch, the ferryman's house, which has been gone many years. At the present time the modern ranch type house of Charles Whitaker occupies the site.

In these Anniversary days of 1973 our minds can almost see a pageant on a stage as we picture not only the coming of the settlers, the buying out of the Indians, but especially we see the laborious work connected with the erecting of this first meeting house with lumber brought in by horse and ox teams, hand hewn from their own land, hand made nails and wooden pegs.

THE FIRST MINISTER — REV. DANIEL KIRKLAND 1723-1752

When the Newent Ecclesiastical Society was organized in 1723 the town of Norwich lost no time in setting apart sixty acres of land for the use of the first minister.

As evidently the affairs of the Society were under the control of the Perkins family we find that "On Jan. 17, 1720, in town meeting ordered, that if the Perkinses at their return from Boston, do not bring with them a minister to preach in the crotch of the rivers, or satisfy the selectmen, they shall have one speedily the rate-makers shall put them into the minister's rate." (this being Norwich First Society). They did not procure one at once, as ministers were scarce who needed parishes. Yale and Harvard were the only colleges educating for the ministry and pastors were quickly snapped up by larger and growing parishes.

By failing to procure a minister to be resident here the Society's charter would lapse. The condition contained therein would necessitate the paying of taxes to the First Society and Norwich made an urge for Newent people to procure a pastor.

Subsequently, however, the church was constituted and a church call was sent to Rev. Daniel Kirtland as follows: "We the brethren of the Northeast Society in Norwich subscribing

hereunto, have, after sufficient time of probation and with mature deliberation unanimously invited and called Mr. Daniel Kirtland to the work of the ministry among us in this place, desiring he may have the pastoral charge of us in the Lord.
Newent in Norwich, November 18, 1723."

Signed by: Joseph Perkins Isaac Lawrence, Jr.
Jabez Perkins Jeremiah Tracy Nathan Bushnell
John Read William Read, Jr. David Knight, Jr.
Isaac Lawrence John Safford Timothy Allen

Rev. Kirtland accepted and was ordained as minister of this first church in Newent on December 10, 1723. Among the several ministers of the area who assisted in his ordination was his brother-in-law, Henry Willes, pastor of West Farms (now Franklin).

The original members consisted of Rev. Daniel Kirtland, Samuel Lothrop, Joseph Perkins, John Bishop, Jeremiah Tracy, Isaac Lawrence and Isaac Lawrence, Jr. The church "rested" on these seven pillars, a favorite number in those days. The first Deacons were Joseph Perkins and Samuel Lothrop.

On December 25, 1723, the church agreed to practice discipline according to the Cambridge Platform drawn up in 1648 for Congregational churches. Although closely related to Saybrook they would not adopt the Saybrook platform. On the same day rules of communion were unanimously voted "to have a sacrament of ye Lord's Supper administered once in six weeks from March to ye last of October from thence one in two months to March again." A Doctrine of Faith and the Church's covenant were immediately drawn up and signed by a dozen of the leading men of the Society. We assume it was about this time that acquaintances in Newent, England, remembered their friends and relatives in Newent, in the Colony of Connecticut by sending over a complete pewter communion set which is still a prized possession of the present Newent church.



The 1723 pewter Communion set

The church was an important influence upon the inhabitants thenceforth. Nearly all prominent men and persons of authority were actively connected with the local church. The minister was not only the religious head, but political counsellor of his people.

Newent Society was fortunate in choosing their first pastor, as Rev. Kirtland was a warm-hearted, sensitive man, an accomplished scholar with high aspirations and commanded the respect of his people. As recorded in Stark's Biography he was "a man of fine talents, ready wit, amiable temper and disposition, a devoted minister of the gospel". He was a native of Saybrook, Conn., having been born there June 17, 1701, next to the youngest of ten children of John and Lydia Pratt Kirtland who were of Scottish descent. He graduated with a bachelor's degree from Yale College in 1720 at the early age of 19. When he was only 22 he was called to Newent, a ministry which continued for nearly thirty years. (the first meeting house was later referred to as the Kirtland church or Kirtland meeting house.)

On July 15, 1723, just a few months previous to his ordination in December he married Mary, the second daughter of Joseph and Martha Morgan Perkins. Eleven children were born to them, all in Newent Society. Four of them died as infants or young children. However, the seventh child, John was one of the first settlers of Norwich, Mass. and evidently prompted the name of Norwich. Samuel, the tenth child, born Nov. 20, 1741, became the well-known missionary to the Oneida Indians in the so-called West, the West at that time being central New York state. As there were few families in the Colony, intermarriage is often noted, thus we find two of the Kirtland sons marrying their cousins, daughters of the Perkins family.

Although there are few notes of happenings during the early years of the church the following are excerpts from church records during Rev. Kirtland's pastorate, which were presumably written with homemade ink and a quill pen and in his handwriting as clerk.

December 1735 - a committee was chosen to seat the meeting house according to age, estate and office. This is the first record of seating. We wonder whether there were pews, if so, did they face East as was the custom in the colonies.

The men who settled Connecticut believed that everyone should be able to read the word of God. Every church, therefore, had its teacher as well as its preacher. In 1700 every town of seventy families was required to maintain a schoolmaster able to teach reading and writing. Towns of a smaller size had to keep a school half a year. So it was that in January 1736, Newent Society gave its attention to educating its children. By a vote of the men of the church a schoolmaster was hired who was to keep school for five months of the year. Then in 1738 the church ordered "that a school be kept in each part of town and name a committee to oversee it". These so-called schools were probably "kept" in someone's home at first.

In that same year of 1738 committees were order to "oversee" the highways, as by that time roads of a sort had been built for ox teams and horse travel.

In a petition to the October 1727 session of the General Court the inhabitants of Newent stated that they have been great-

ly afflicted by a "distressing sickness" for two years in succession, especially in the summer. In 1726 every family but one was afflicted and about twenty persons died in three months. In the summer of 1727, every family, with no exception, was struck and one-sixth of the male heads of families died. The farmers could not get in their crops and, though kindly assisted by people from other parishes, they lost much of their grain and hay. Presumably this was smallpox, which was a very contagious and quite fatal disease.

At each annual meeting a tax collector was appointed and rate was set for taxing the people. Those who were unable to pay in money paid in anything useful, such as wood, corn and other products of the earth.

By the year 1729 records show that 78 had joined the church. During the revival of the 1740's thirty-five more were admitted.

When the church council convened it was usually at Rev. Kirtland's home as they met the last week in December and the meeting house was unheated and cold. A meal was always served and paid for by each person eating. One might picture a crackling fireplace, flickering candles and men's voices enjoying the warmth of fire and good company, in contrast to the cold barn-like meeting house across the way.

At this December meeting each year a treasurer was named to pay the pastor, repairs to the church building, take care of money's for schools and pay bills which may be past.

Diligence and frugality were the golden rule of Newent's people. Money was scarce and barter was prevalent, thus they were unable to give much support to their minister. In 1734 he was paid 100 pounds annually, although there was a gradual increase as years went by until 1749 when he was paid 500 pounds. It still was a pittance on which to raise a large family.

In 1740 the meeting house needed a number of repairs. The bell and windows were mended as was the communion table and seats. The "clabords that are like to fall off" were nailed and repaired. These improvements were made by Jacob Read, David Lamb, Joseph and John Safford.

Because of anxieties connected with some of his flock separating from his church (see Separatists), as well as the distress of being unable to comfortably support his family, Rev. Kirtland's health failed, which led to a meeting being called on December 27, 1751, when it was voted that Deacon Lothrop and Deacon Lawrence, with the standing committee for the ensuing year, shall "promise a regular candidate of the ministry to assist Rev. Mr. Kirtland in the work of the ministry during his present weakness both of body and mind so far as money may be raised by subscription or by a free contribution".

After a number of meetings at which other ministers were called in for council they voted in October 1752 "not to invite the Rev. Mr. Kirtland to resume his ministerial labours again in the Society", although he did not formally resign until January 1753. A Rev. Wells, John Curtis, Mr. Chapman and Noah Wadham filled the pulpit at various times, and Rev. Kirtland's salary was not paid until March 1754 and then only 250 pounds.

Partially recovering his health he settled in Groton and there he was installed pastor at the First Church in 1755, but

after two years his health broke again and he returned to his old home in Newent where he passed the remainder of his life "amid the scenes of his early labors, cheered by many friends and the honorable success of his missionary son, Samuel by whom he was partially supported". He was readmitted into membership at Newent October 21, 1758 and became an active member, often called on to serve on committees and held many meetings again at his home. He remained here until his death in May, 1773 at the age of 72. As no monument was ever erected to his memory, the spot where he is buried is forgotten and unknown—presumably in the South Cemetery (now Ames Cemetery) as a number of the early settlers are buried there. There is mention of a family lot, but we have no record where it might have been.

Names of eighty-nine church members are listed at the time of his dismissal. It is also well to note that he proudly led the delegation into the Columbia church for his son Samuel's ordination on June 18, 1766. It was said to be the largest delegation of preachers, Indians, church members ever to gather anywhere in New England up to that time and lasted the whole weekend.



Samuel Kirkland, missionary to the Oneida Indians

Rev. Kirtland (his son, Samuel, changed the name to Kirkland) had no writings printed as far as known, but the supposition is that he did compose a small pamphlet about the calamity which occurred at the rebuilding of Lathrop's Bridge.

In 1728, at the rebuilding of the bridge on the Shetucket connecting Newent and Norwich, which had been destroyed in the freshet of 1727, a part of the framework gave way and over 100 feet of the bridge and forty men went over into the water. The water was low and they were thrown upon the rocks below. Among the most seriously injured was Daniel Tracy, who died the following day.

THE SEPARATIST CHURCH

Early in the 1740's a great religious revival affected many Connecticut churches. Entire towns suspended business and gave themselves up to religious services which produced amazing emotional effects. This great awakening produced a deep split within many Congregational churches and Newent was one of them.

In 1744 a majority of the members at Newent favored the Saybrook Platform which had been denounced in the 1720's. A vote was taken to receive it as a rule of discipline which led to much discord within the church. This problem seems very remote to us today, but was a vital concern to these early settlers.

In 1745 several members petitioned the General Assembly "to be set off from us". A special meeting was called to form a committee to send their objections to the petition and Joshua Hutchins was voted money to go to Hartford as agent.

The agitation of these disputes resulted in seven members seceding from the Newent church, namely: Jeremiah Tracy, Joseph Safford, Thomas Negroe, Anna Safford, Sarah Safford, Lydia Safford and Kezia Bishop. One of the seven, Jeremiah Tracy, became their minister and did the preaching—a work which the Newent church in their records "solemnly declare that the Lord had not called him to do".

The reason given by the seceders for withdrawing from the Newent church were various. Joseph Safford, one of the most active against the church's stand gave the following reasons: 1. The church was not organized with sufficient church officers. 2. Members were admitted who were not able to say that they believe that Christ is formed in them or that they have faith in him. 3. Members admitted into the covenant who were not in full communion.

Jeremiah Tracy declared that the Newent church in words professes Christ, but in works deny him; that persons are received into the fellowship without giving a sufficient account of their having an interest in the church. Thomas Negroe looked upon the church to have separated from the truths as well as from God. Anna Safford, Sarah and Lydia Safford declared similar reasons. Kezia Bishop pleaded "want of identification here and that she could not join with the church in infant baptism".

On January 17, 1746 it was voted that these people's reasons were insufficient to neglect public worship and called upon them "to retract and return to the church with proper reflections upon themselves". Thereupon Lydia Safford asked to return. The remaining six with others of the community including Andrew and Ruth Tracy, Moses Hagget, Amos Jackson, Elizabeth Wood, Elizabeth Smith, Elizabeth Longbottom and Martha Wentworth separated, and after continuing to meet in people's homes for a while longer, decided in 1750 to form a Separate church without "obtaining in an orderly way a dismission from their former church". A building was erected on what is now Town House road on the hill across from the Franklin Bromley place. Laymen carried on the services until March 1752 when Bliss Willoughby was called and ordained as their pastor.

The separation was a harrowing experience for the Newent church, as its membership was small anyway, but we find there was scarcely a church in the whole state which was not troubled and torn by conflicting opinions respecting church government and their qualifications for communion. In the course of ten years, at least twenty churches of Congregational Separatists were formed in various parts of the state. As these churches were not recognized by the legislature of Connecticut their members were still taxed to support their former ministers and this

led to a number of instances of petty persecution, private suffering and even imprisonment. In the eyes of the law the Separate was a fugitive and a vagabond. The legislature finally had to enforce the law concerning rates. This probably led to many coming back to their previous congregations. Although the wound appeared to be healed, it was still festering. Thus some merged with other denominations, especially the Baptists.

When the Separatist church was taken down, its frame was carted to the easterly section of the parish and it is said was used in a barn on the Tracy farm, (now Fred Whalley's) this being about 1768.

Their covenant, which had been signed by over sixty-five men and women, was taken to Bennington, Vermont by Deacon Safford and others. The First Church of Christ, which is the oldest Protestant church in Vermont was formed on December 3, 1762, by the union of the Separatist churches from Massachusetts together with members of the Separatist church in Newent. Among the treasures of this Bennington church is a little book in which is bound together fourteen well-mounted folio sheets, with a few fragments, which turn out to be the records of the Separatist church here in Newent. What a story it would be could one but tell how these old records travelled via horseback over trails and paths from Newent way off to the Green Mountain section of Vermont.

Those sixty-five signers were not all Newent people, as many came from surrounding towns who belonged to the Separatist church. A copy of the covenant is included among the records of Newent Congregational church today.

REV. PETER POWERS - 1756-1764

Newent was fortunate a second time in procuring a pastor of "marked ability, character, earnest and energetic in action". Rev. Peter Powers, a native of Hollis, N. H. and a graduate of Harvard in a class with John Hancock, later a signer of the Declaration of Independence, had preached on probation for a number of services. He was extended a call on October 21, 1756, which he immediately accepted. It is in this call that we first note the wording "the Third Church of Christ in Norwich".

Rev. Powers was ordained Dec. 2, 1756, and a new covenant and a Doctrine of Faith were drawn up at once, the covenant being signed by thirty-five responsible men in the Society. Here we again see several Perkins names as well as Kinsman, Lawrence, Read, Bishop, Bushnell, Lothrop, Tracy, Knight, Lamb, Crosby, Kirtland, Wood. By a majority vote Jacob and Joseph Perkins, Jr. were chosen Deacons.

Rev. Powers and wife, Martha Hale Powers, had three sons and a daughter, all born and baptized in Newent.

The church, again, was not without its internal troubles with individuals because of its strict discipline of members. Beginning at a meeting on November 11, 1757, Martha Wentworth, wife of William Wentworth of Canterbury, "a member in full communion", was admonished severely, censured and debarred because she "walked disorderly, have been frequently and notoriously guilty of the heinous and shameful sin of drunkenness and have been seen

diverse times when unseasonably from home disguised with strong drink".

In 1758 trouble came again in the person of Rebecca Jackson, who "would not sit down in charity with Nathaniel Bushnell and Margery, his wife". After two or three committee meetings the dilemma was given over to the Deacons to resolve. Rebecca then gave them the reasons, viz: "because her brother Nathaniel Bushnell and Margery, his wife, had inveigled her father-in-law, Mr. John Jackson, to leave her and go to live with them and in a clandestine way got him away, and thereupon had sued her husband and put him to needless and unjust cost for his maintenance" and, secondly, "because the said Nathaniel Bushnell had charged her with taking a false oath" and "because the said Nathaniel Bushnell had slandered them to the selectmen of the Town of Norwich in saying that they neglected their duty to their father in not taking suitable care of him". The church looked upon all these reasons as insufficient and disallowed her church privileges.

In February, 1759, the Society laid out six school districts, the distinct bounds of each being recorded in the church minutes. Voted not to raise any money by way of a rate to support the schools, but rather to use loan money and "country school" money which belonged to the Society, on condition that money be raised by subscription to keep school eleven months, said schools to be free for everyone. Jeremiah Kinsman was voted school committeeman. By 1764 a seventh district had been added.

By the summer of 1760 a movement took form that a new place of worship should be built. At the same time the council decided not to spend any more money in repairing the old "Kirtland meeting house". Establishing a site was a momentous question. A committee, set up by the County Court, fixed a place for the new meeting house to stand upon, "a place where there is now a stake and a heap of stones erected on Jeremiah Kinsman land near the highway about 22 rods Northeast from said Kinsman dwelling house in said Newent". This site was voted by more than two-thirds of the inhabitants and legal voters.

In the meantime, many of the Newent people were "impoverished" in money and materials by the burden laid on them by England to help her in a military way against the French when Canada became an English colony. Also Hanover had been incorporated as a separate Ecclesiastical Society in 1761 and a fund of 1600 pounds was raised by subscription to support a minister there, as they had been meeting in private homes for several years in that section of Newent.

Life as a minister here was no bed of roses. Due to the extraordinary rise in price of necessities, Rev. Powers had asked several times for a raise in pay, but was denied each time. He was in very poor circumstances and was troubled that the Separatists were not helping to pay his salary. The council said they were very satisfied with his ministry and would be glad to have him stay, but in the early winter of 1764 he relinquished his pastorate. From Newent he went into a new settlement near Haverhill, N. H. on the Connecticut river and there organized a church consisting of members from both sides of the river. Here he was immediately installed and preached his own installa-

tion sermon. He made his parish visits by canoe, rowing himself up and down stream. He found this a much easier mode of travel than having to mount a horse and stumble over half-cleared pathways, as in his former parish in Newent. He served this pastorate in Newbury, Vt. until 1784 when he removed to Deer Isle, Maine and was minister there until his death in 1800.

A bi-centennial was held in July, 1965 at Newbury, Vt. in his honor. A few notes from this celebration follow: "This huge and successful Bi-Centennial marks the 200th anniversary of Rev. Powers founding of the First Congregational Church at this epic scene of his long, bitter struggle with the British and their Tory allies during the War of the American Revolution.

"He was a fearless leader for the cause of American independence. He was fired upon by the Tories after delivering two famous sermons, "Tyranny" and "Toryism Exposed", on September 10, 1780. A British military force was sent from Canada to Newbury for the express purpose of silencing him and several other leading patriots. However, he eluded them and continued to promote the cause of liberty among his many followers in large areas of Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. A price was set upon his head and he was constantly threatened with assassination by persons sending unsigned letters through the mails and by persons and groups having vested financial interests with British. Five of his sons served as soldiers in the Continental Army. The eldest, Peter, Jr., was killed during the New York campaign.

"In recognition of his great courage, sacrifice and effective leadership which was so important in the establishment of the United States the legislature of the State of Maine authorized (in 1965) a marker to be erected in his honor and memory".

HANOVER SOCIETY

As mentioned previously, Hanover, in the northwestern section of Newent Society had been incorporated in 1761 into a separate Ecclesiastical Society, the seventh in Norwich. During the next four or five years the movement to found a church had been under way there. Services had been held, however, presumably in various homes. Much talk and many meetings finally materialized into building a place of worship as their records show that "May 13, 1766—the council after forming, repaired to the meeting house where a suitable sermon was preached by the moderator."

Our records only read - "Hanover church is formed in the parish of Hanover, which takes away several members from the church at Newent".

The following were the incorporators:

MALES—

David Knight
Benjamin Peck
Abner French
Jonathan Knight
Samuel Bishop
Matthew Perkins
Nathan Bushnell
Joseph Bushnell
David Knight, Jr.

FEMALES—

Lydia Perkins
Abigail Bishop
Abigail Knight
Hannah Perkins
Elizabeth Bushnell
Zerniah Tilden

We must give those seven or eight families much credit and they must have been very dedicated people to think of building a new church in Hanover at that time. Many of the church people were practically poverty stricken in both money and products on account of the French and Indian wars draining them of supplies. There was little money to support a pastor let alone afford money and material for a new building.

Pastors in those days worked for little pay, but gave their congregations a good foundation of "old time religion". Pastors and their families were much loved by their parish and many stayed on year after year. Such a one was the first minister of Hanover, Rev. Andrew Lee, D.D. who served almost 64 years.

Shall we take a glance at Hanover and what went on in the world in 1766? What were people talking about and doing?

In Norwich, for instance, there is a thriving business in shipping with the West Indies, London and the far East. Long teams come in to Norwich blocking up the roads around what is now Norwich Town Green, bartering their farm produce for molasses and other needed products, or possibly some tight little jug of West India rum. Houses are heated mostly by fireplaces, although a certain man named Benjamin Franklin has contrived a kind of stove which was said to make a wonderful heat. It was also whispered around that this same gentleman had learned to catch lightning and to bottle it.

George Washington was only 34 years old and had already shown his merit in the French and Indian War. He had just recently married Martha Custis and was living at Mt. Vernon.

The Stamp Act was now in effect which soon would lead to the Boston Tea party.

It was in this year of 1766 that Samuel Kirkland, the first Newent minister's son, returned from the Iroquois Indian country in New York state where he had been a missionary, and took up further studies at Wheelock's school in Columbia, where he was ordained a minister of the gospel. He then returned to what was then the West where he served for many years with the Oneida Indians educating them in the arts, science and religion and founding what is now Hamilton College in Clinton, N.Y. He is considered one of the greatest of home missionaries.

The above narrative is taken from a historical sketch given by the writer at the 200th anniversary of Hanover Cong'l church—May, 1966.

A NEW MEETING HOUSE

The Society now was without a regular minister and were "in a weak and scattered state" and "for several years showed but feeble signs of life". Rev. Levi Hart of Pachaug and a Rev. Joel Benedict were trying to keep the flock together. However, some of the more aggressive men were determined to get a new place of worship built.

A number of methods of getting things started were inquired into. The Separatists had abandoned their meeting place and on

Feb. 8, 1768, the Society voted that "any number of inhabitants who wish to purchase the Separatist church building at their own cost and move it to the place staked out for a new meeting house may do so and it can be used for meetings". Also that "those people may have the old meeting house to use in the most prudent manner in repairing and refitting the one so moved".

The following month a committee consisting of Dr. Joseph Perkins, Elisha Lothrop, Solomon Safford were to "treat with ye proprietors of ye Separatist meeting house and to see if they can purchase ye same reasonably".

At the same time, it seems that some people wanted to repair the old Kirtland building so it would be comfortable to use. Voted May 15, 1769, that "anyone wishing to cover it with clabbords and shingles, make new doors and new glass it and repair the inside, at their own cost, could do so, provided the work be done by the first of November of that year". It is evident neither of the above projects were done, which left the old building to further deteriorate.

A committee comprised of Solomon Safford, Jeremiah Kinsman and Elisha Lathrop was voted February 28, 1770, to survey the "society's land called the meeting house lot where the meeting house (the Kirtland church) now stands" with full power and authority to make sale of same and execute proper deeds, the money to be used toward the new meeting house.

For six or seven years affirmative votes had been taken to build the structure with no one wanting to take the 'bull by the horns', so to speak. This was mostly because of financial reasons. Happily, there was one, Capt. Jeremiah Kinsman, who was active in all walks of public life and a prominent business man, who had a deep interest in the welfare and progress of the Society. He had the foresight and faith to call the townsmen together. When the meeting was gavelled to a close a resolution had been made to raise 400 pounds by subscription to get the project under way. He, as principal manager of the enterprise, commenced the work. Finding it extremely difficult to procure suitable lumber in this vicinity and money being so scarce, a quantity of farm products was collected from the willing subscribers, such as pork, beef, corn and other grains. These were shipped to Maine as supercargo in charge of Robert Avery in exchange for oak and pine lumber.

Avery performed his mission well and returned to Norwich, landing his cargo of lumber at the wharf. From there it was conveyed to its destination in Newent by farmers who owned teams of oxen and horses. What a sight that must have been!

Meanwhile, Joseph Kirtland and Samuel Bishop, Jr. "being desirous to encourage and promote the building said House and with view to accommodate ourselves and the rest of the inhabitants of said Newent . . . and considering the advantage that will accrue to us, do hereby fully, freely and absolutely give, grant, quit-claim, release, convey, and confirm unto Jacob Perkins, Esq. and the rest of the inhabitants of said Newent one tract of land containing about 1¾ acres for sole use and purpose of a meeting house, stables and horse houses".

Now that the initial uncertainties were resolved, building of the meeting house proceeded and was laid out to be 50 ft. long and 38 ft. wide with 24 ft. posts, to face southeast. The frame was

raised in May, 1771 and was finished that summer. The following year a vote was taken to sell pews to help pay the cost of building it. Thirty-nine men signed up for this.

Although we have all grown to cherish the church in which we worship today, the writer often tries to visualize that second church building with its high tower without and its high pulpit within, with its broad center aisle, box pews, its galleries and its separate section for male and for female negroes. Certain seats in the gallery were elevated more than others for the tything men or supervisors of behavior. The inside was finished with pine.

It would have been most gratifying to Rev. Kirtland to have seen this new place of worship, the result of the labors of himself and parishioners. Unfortunately he passed away only two weeks previous.

REV. JOEL BENEDICT - 1771-1782

In November, 1770, while Joel Benedict was acting pastor, a committee was called together to reorganize and renew the Covenant and ask the Separatists to return. The following persons who had separated were reestablished as members of the Newent church:

Deacon Joseph Perkins	Mary Perkins
Deacon Jacob Perkins	Elizabeth Perkins
Jacob Read	Ruth Tracy
Joseph Read, Jr.	Sarah Rhutt (Rood?)
Solomon Safford	Elizabeth Durfee
Andrew Tracy	Mary Safford
John Bingham	Zurviah Lawrence
Elisha Lothrop	Sarah Safford
Ebenezer Tracy	Elizabeth Bottom
Joseph Knight	Mary Read
Nathan Read	Mary Tracy
Timothy Perkins	Jennett Gordon

Rev. Joel Benedict, a native of Salem, N.Y. and a man of "classical attainments" accepted the call to minister to this new church and henceforth the building was called the "Benedict Church".

His ordination had taken place at the home of Rev. Daniel Kirtland in Feb. of 1771, the old meeting house being in a state of disuse and the new one not yet built.

Rev. Benedict's five children were all born in Newent and were baptized in the new church.

Rev. Benedict was at Newent just previous to and during the Revolutionary War and because of the heavy taxes for support of the war the Society failed to provide him with sufficient maintenance. He believed it was the duty of a Christian church to see to it that their pastor have a comfortable support so long as they retain him in their services. Therefore, a number of times during his pastorate he had to call a special meeting in order to receive his salary. Early in 1781 he was asked to supplement his salary by his own means. Of necessity, by April 1782, he had to sell his dwelling house and land to defray his living expenses. Although there was harmony and affection between him and the church he decided the time had arrived to dis-

continue his pastorate. His resignation was accepted April 30, 1782 with great regret.

He then settled in Plainfield where he distinguished himself as a Hebrew scholar and teacher. Hebrew, he said, was "the language of the angels". He was pastor there for the next thirty-two years up until the time of his death in 1816. (Rev. Levi Nelson of Newent preached his funeral sermon). In the old burying ground in Plainfield stands a stone where we may read the words "The good man needs no eulogy; his memorial is in heaven". However, a memorial does stand in his memory, as a library building was joined to the present Plainfield parsonage and opened July 1, 1899. It is still open to the public by appointment.

1782-1790

For the next eight years Newent Society was without a regular minister and again the Rev. Levi Hart, together with responsible men of the Society, kept the church alive, administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and performed whatever duties arose.

Because sufficient maintenance of a minister had been so difficult in past years, in 1784 a committee was appointed to forward a subscription for the purpose of creating a permanent fund, the interest of which should go toward support of the minister. Sixty persons gave sums ranging from two pounds to 70 pounds. By 1783 this fund amounted to \$10,000.

About five years after the close of the Revolutionary War Newent together with Hanover was set off and incorporated into a town called Lisbon. It was doubtless named after Lisbon, Portugal, from the fact that Hezekiah and Jabez Perkins, Newent residents, traded as commercial shippers from Norwich with Lisbon in Portugal and may have suggested the name.

REV. DAVID HALE - 1790-1803

In the fall of 1789 a committee was chosen to repaint the church in anticipation of acquiring a pastor. This vote was subsequently revoked and voted instead to use the money to help pay the pastor's salary, and so the meeting house remained unpainted.

The interval of eight years without a leader finally ended when Rev. David Hale was installed June, 1790.

David Hale, the twin son of Richard Hale of Coventry, was a descendant of the earliest settlers of Massachusetts. David was one of twelve children and no doubt experienced plenty of hard work on his father's large farm.

An older brother, Capt. Nathan Hale, is well remembered, of course, as having undertaken to obtain information from the British for Gen. George Washington during the Revolutionary War. He was apprehended by the British and executed as a spy, September 22, 1776. At that time David was only a boy of fifteen living at home.

A graduate of Yale in 1785, he came to Newent as a fine scholar, his "gentle manners" aiding him in making friends very easily. One month before his installation as pastor he married Lydia Austin and the following year their only son, David, Jr. was born and was baptized at Newent. David, Jr. was to become well known as owner and editor of the "Journal of Commerce", a New York daily newspaper.



The Parsonage as it looked circa 1810



The Parsonage about 1930

"Twas during the summer of 1795 that Rev. Hale built himself a home near by the meeting house (this was later to become the Newent parsonage). He, like his predecessors found his salary deficient. In order to provide a better livelihood for his family he decided to open a boarding school in his home. He was very popular as tutor and teacher. In consequence his house became filled with pupils from various parts of the county. Although tradition has it that the parsonage was an underground railway for escaped slaves before and during the Civil War there seems to be no records to substantiate this.

It was during his pastorate that a Deacon's Fund was started by contributions on sacramental, or communion, Sunday, to go to needy members of the parish. This system is still in use today.

Poor health befell Rev. Hale early in life and in April, 1800, he requested that a church committee be chosen to find a pastor to supply the pulpit jointly with him. His letter of resignation is dated November 20, 1802, but, as his people held such a friendly feeling for him and was "most tenderly loved" his dismissal did not come until April 1803. He still wished to maintain a connection with Newent church and was admitted into simple membership at once and was soon chosen church clerk. He stayed with this church until December 14, 1806 when he took a letter to the Coventry church. He served that town as representative for a number of terms and became a Deacon in the church there.

REV. LEVI NELSON - 1804-1855



In May 1804, a Rev. Levi Nelson, while passing through Lisbon on his way home to Massachusetts, put up for the night at a home here. As Newent church at that time had no settled minister he was persuaded to stay and preach a couple of Sundays. He proved to be such an impressive speaker that the congregation made the decision in September of that year to extend him a call.

Although in poor health he accepted, little realizing at the age of 26, that he would invest his life in Newent church and community and make such a great impact on the whole area dur-

ing a fifty year period as pastor. He states in his "50 year Sermon" that his health was poor all through the years, but managed to fulfill his duties as pastor here and also in many places around the area on an exchange basis. He sometimes went as far as Massachusetts, which most certainly was a long distance over rough roads. The wheels which carried him were usually a two-wheeled gig, or chaise, with a collapsible top, drawn by his faithful horse. He often preached two sermons, on occasion one at Newent and one at some other church.

His first wife, Abigail, died two years after his ordination. He remarried, his second wife being Mary Hale, niece of Rev. David Hale. A daughter Anna was born to them in Lisbon who died at the age of twenty.

He was ordained Dec. 5, 1804, at the home of Jedidiah Safford. He agreed to accept a salary of 100 pounds (333.34) and managed to live on this small stipend until 1838, when, entirely unsolicited, the congregation voted to give him another 100 pounds.

It is from Rev. Nelson's diary that much of historical value is gleaned. It was during his pastorate that the following events took place:

1. In 1808 the first hearse was purchased. The hearse house stood just in back of the present Parish House.
2. As Rev. Nelson had evidently purchased Rev. Hale's house and farm, the church voted in 1812 to raise \$1100 by subscription to purchase "the farm and buildings to be kept for the minister". (portions of the land have been sold for building lots in recent years, but the house has been the Newent Parsonage up until 1968 when it was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Chic Dale who now occupy it). The committee to see to buying the Hale house consisted of William Adams, Tyler Brown, Joel Hyde, Andrew Clark, Joseph Jewet, Jabez Read and Barnabas Hyde.
3. During the War of 1812 all churches held a fast day proclaimed by Congress. Rev. Nelson often rode with the militia and held prayer sessions for them.
4. In 1815 more stables were erected in the rear of the church and horse blocks were placed for the people's convenience.
5. Voted to supply pews below the gallery for the elderly colored, but this vote was later rescinded and the colored must occupy their allotted seats in the gallery.
6. Money was raised by subscription in 1819 to build a steeple.
7. In 1820 Capt. Andrew Clark furnished a bell and his name was engraved thereon, but the bell became cracked in a few years and a subscription had to be raised to have it recast.
8. Women of the church did spinning and weaving for the Nelsons. He stated, "Blessed be God for their kindness, may they be rewarded".
9. Aug. 10, 1814 he was called as chaplain to the Norwich regiment and marched with them to oppose the British who threatened to destroy Stonington.
10. A bass viol was used for music, oil lamps for lighting and two wood stoves for heating the church.
11. In 1827 a vote was made to lay out a burying ground near the meeting house. A half acre was laid out on the land

of Joseph Jewett just east of the church. As there seems to be no record of it ever being used the exact spot is not known, but it perhaps was on the old abandoned road which at one time went easterly past the church.

12. In April 1847 the Society purchased from Henry Robbins the unused store and tavern building in the corner of the garden adjoining the parsonage to be used as a conference house, singing school and a place to hold temperance meetings and was for many years thereafter known as the Conference House. On October 14, 1847, it was voted that the church Society committee be directed to let any part or portion of their conference house to the selectmen of the town for holding public meetings in connection with their business. It was used for that purpose until the mid-1900's.

The weather in those days was a topic of conversation as much, or more so, than today. We can visualize the gale of 1815 as set down in Rev. Nelson's diary—"Saturday, Sept. 23, 1815: This was a memorable day. It rained in torrents till towards noon. About 8 o'clock A.M. the wind changed to the southeast suddenly; the wind which blew with considerable force immediately into a terrible gale, the greatest violence of which was between 9 and 10 A.M. It gradually abated afterwards. None can recollect a southeast wind to be compared to this in fury. Fruit trees and other timber, with all wood fences were levelled with the ground. Many barns and some houses were thrown down; many other houses were unroofed. The seaport towns suffered beyond calculation; and multitudes of vessels were destroyed. And alas, it is understood that some lives were lost." He mentions that the following week was spent in mending fences, saving apples, etc.

July 24, 1821—"This morning a shocking event took place in this Society. Qualin Howland has lived with a woman by the name of Sarah. He is a negro, she a squaw. Report says that each left a companion in the state of Rhode Island, with children. Sarah has been deranged for some months. At times she has been distracted and Qualin has been obliged to confine her. This morning she was chained in the house as he went to work. The house took fire, it is supposed by her means, and she and the house were burned. She, however, was permitted, by the length of the chain, to go as far as the door, and when the house fell, it so liberated her that she fell out of the door, partly consumed."

Nov. 11-17, 1806—"Three children of Elizabeth Harrington, also a Joseph Harrington, who was a town pauper all died in same house. It was supposed these four were poisoned with arsenic, as nearly a pound was discovered in the well on the day of one of the funerals."

Mar. 3, 1815—"The church held a special meeting concerning Bro. Jeremiah Tracy, that his team had been driven upon the Sabbath by a man in his employment. Bro. Tracy made his explanation, but it appeared to the church that he had not been sufficiently upon his guard in ascertaining the conduct of his teamster when upon his journeys. Bro. Tracy said he was sorry and after being admonished by the church the difficulty was settled."

In the late 1800's—Dr. Tyler Browne, while a young man in

college was target shooting by his house while children were playing on the church lawn. A girl by the name of Brumley ran across the road and was shot in the head instantly killing her. The large maple tree at the front of the church was set out immediately after the incident upon the spot where she fell.

On December 5, 1854 Rev. Nelson preached his "Half-Century Sermon" in which he stated that only one of the 38 members who received him as pastor in 1804 was then living (Mrs. L'Hommedieu of Norwich), but of the ordination choir four were present and united in singing again the same hymns that formed a part of the original service. He mentioned that he had preached 5050 sermons, attended 1245 conference meetings, received 285 into the church, baptized 404 and performed 274 marriages.

The church grew, not only in numbers, but in influence during his pastorate and in consequence the Society gained strength from year to year.

He was a teacher as well as a preacher and fitted many young men for college who became influential people because of his early teachings.

We read that Miss Francis Manwaring Calkins, the Norwich historian spent some time in the family of Rev. Nelson in 1825 for the special purpose of advancing her knowledge of Latin. She was thus able to read it and to teach it having opened a select school for young ladies in Norwich Town. She later wrote the two quite complete histories of Norwich which have been referred to and portions copied time after time.

Another was Doctor Charles Jewett who wrote "he (Rev. Nelson) never had an enemy. A clear, plain preacher, in whom the young people were interested with their fathers and mothers. They revered and loved him. He believed in the Catechism as a text book in the family, school and church. He taught it, too, in public schools, as well as in church on 'Catechising Sundays' and he counselled his people to use it, along with the Bible, in the family".

In his later years he leaned heavily upon a staff and moved slowly about. Mrs. Eva Hyde kept in her possession a top piece of one of the newel posts to the steps going up to the pulpit. It is worn and shiny as it is said that that was the post which "Father Nelson", as he was affectionately called, always placed his hand upon when ascending the steps to the pulpit. (The piece has been placed by the Hyde family among church mementoes in the George Helmboldt memorial cabinet in the sanctuary).

Father Nelson's death came after a short illness at the age of 76, and was buried from the meeting house which he loved. Within the pulpit and gallery were draped in black, while without a cold December rain spattered against the windows.

He and his family are all buried in Ames cemetery. The church appointed Deacon Potter to provide the inscription on the monument, which was as Father Nelson wished—"not glittering and unsubstantial, but like himself, solid and strong".

A memorial gift of a pulpit was given by Henry Bishop, a descendent of the first families, in honor of Levi Nelson and his wife.

REV. DAVID BREED - 1857-1861

DOWN WITH THE OLD AND UP WITH THE NEW

Back in 1853, talk generated a few sparks about building a new meeting house, as "the old Benedict church was seated in decaying dignity upon gently rising ground, with its barrack-like row of sheds spread at the side like wings. The outside of the edifice had been covered and recovered, as the wear and tear of years demanded, but no tool or painter's brush, under pretence of improvement or repair, had invaded the interior since it was first completed". A building committee consisting of Daniel Brown, Jeremiah K. Adams, Edmund F. Tracy, Hezekiah Read, Martin Nevins, Martin Crosby.

During the next two years efforts were made to paint and repair the meeting house, but to no avail. So it was that in January, 1858, a vote was made to take down the old meeting house "with care and pile it up for purpose of using parts in building a new meeting house".

Rev. Breed preached an historical sermon on March 21, 1858 as a last farewell to the old meeting house which was to close its doors that day. His 18 page sermon entitled "It is the Last Time" was printed into booklet form, copies still being among the church property.

He said, "Great changes have been wrought in the community since the erection of the meeting house in 1771. Only one individual now living in the parish who was living here at that time, one Thomas Kinsman who was three years old. One other living in New York state, Lydia Hibbard and one Mrs. Lydia Breed of Norwich, who also was three years old at the time. Nearly three generations have passed away.

"Probably not less than 8000 sermons have been delivered from this sacred desk, enough to make 400 good sized volumes; and none of them delivered in vain, though those who delivered them, were, no doubt, sometimes almost discouraged in their work and despaired of accomplishing any good by their preaching.

"It is doubtless a sad thought to many that this venerable edifice should be taken down. They run their eyes over it and point out a spot where an honored father and a beloved mother used to sit. No matter who occupies the pulpit, they are comparatively strangers, they can think of none but the beloved Father Nelson as belonging in this place, so completely had he become identified with it through the years.

"Soon the sound of the hammer and of the axe will be heard demolishing these walls. As we cross the threshold of this house today and its doors close upon us, the last leaf will have been written."

If it had been restored rather than demolished it would have remained to this day as a picturesque link with the past, as it is believed to have been the last specimen of the old New England sanctuary which still existed in the "nine-miles-square".

What was called a "Festival" was held that summer of 1858 before the old building was dismantled. Records show that there was plenty of sewing and baked goods on sale.



Newent Congregational Church - circa 1900

In June, 1858, a resolution was adopted "that the front of the new meeting house stand where the front of the old one now stands". The present church was subsequently built and was publicly dedicated with appropriate ceremonies on September 15, 1858. The architect and builder is said to have been Ebenezer Tracy, the Lisbon cabinet maker. While construction was in progress worship services were held in the conference house.

The architecture of the exterior has remained about the same with the exception of the tall steeple which was taken down in 1908 when supporting timbers became unsafe. The belfry was then roofed over as it stands today. (Harry Hull was hired to do this work). The interior has had only a few alterations when from time to time a need arose for convenience and attractiveness, with the exception of removal of the pulpit and building of a platform in 1887.

Rev. Breed asked to be dismissed in November 1861, to pursue his ministerial career further.

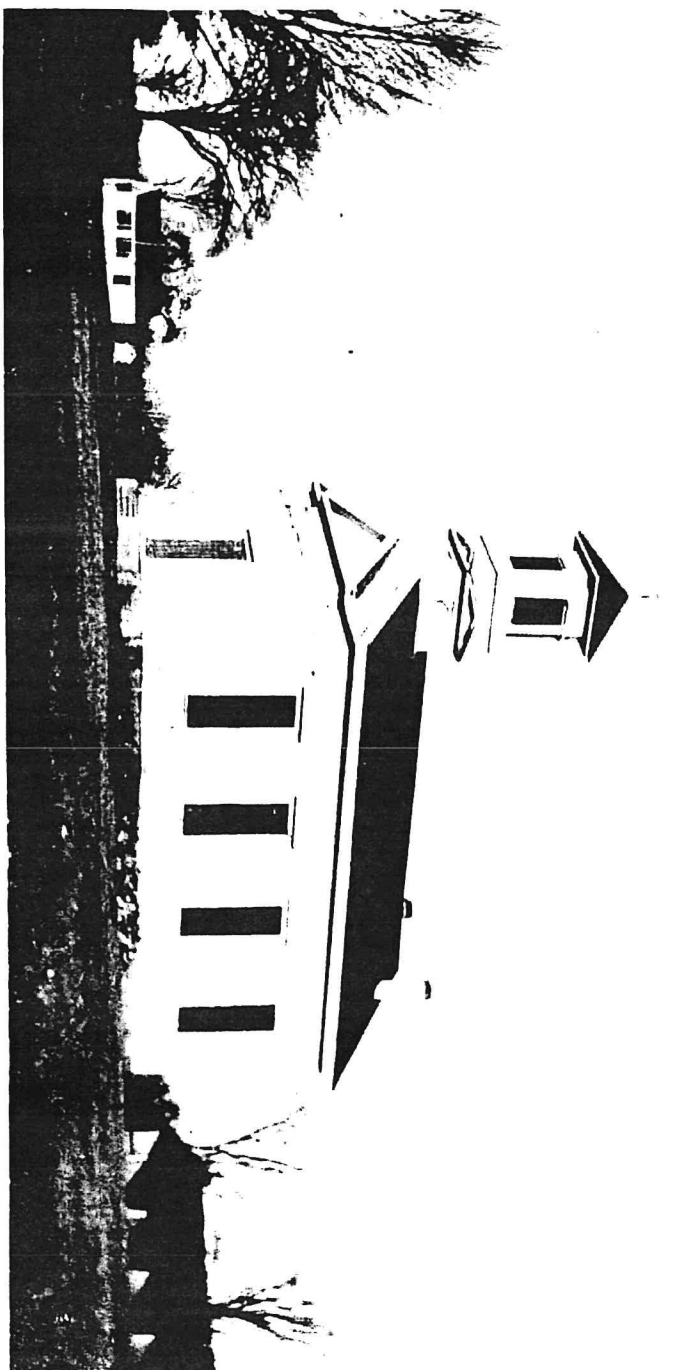
Following him were:	Rev. Lewis Jessup	1862-1865
	Rev. Simeon Waters	1865-1867
	Rev. John Haskell	1867-1871

Of these three pastors there seems to be but scant record.

REV. R. MANNING CHIPMAN - 1871-1879

Rev. Chipman was very much interested in the history of the Lisbon area and wrote a lengthy historical and biographical manuscript. The original copy is filed in the State Library in Hartford. It was during his pastorate that the church celebrated the

Newent Congregational church showing the Center Schoolhouse



150th anniversary of its organization with services lasting from morning into the evening with a large attendance. The committee set up for this celebration consisted of Elijah Baldwin, M.D., Hon. J.K. Adams, Jonathan Lathrop, Eleazor Bushnell and William A. Johnson, Esq.

Of the three ministers to follow Rev. Chipman there is very little record, although the regular business of the church, Sunday services and a Sunday School were maintained. Annual meetings were recorded and the membership rolls were kept up to date by the clerk.

Rev. Josiah G. Willis 1880-1882
became blind - lived in Wilbraham, Mass.
Rev. John B. Griswold 1886-1898
Rev. Quincy M. Bosworth 1886-1898

Noted during the 1890's by Rev. Bosworth "very few are attending meetings". "Our society is weakening in many ways." "Too many excuses". "Over one-third of the members are absent. Sometimes only one came for a special meeting". Those were the days of WCTU and evening prayer meetings which brought out more people than the regular church services.

Neither one of these three were installed as a "settled" pastor. In fact, David Breed was the only installed minister since Father Nelson.

REV. EDWIN BRADFORD ROBINSON, D.D. - 1898-1902

While yet a student at Yale Divinity School Rev. Robinson filled the pulpit during October of 1898 and was called as pastor soon thereafter. He was ordained November 21, 1898. He and his wife began their married life here in Newent parsonage and here their daughter, Dorothy was born. She later went into ministerial work herself. Incidentally, it is interesting to note from a newspaper clipping "that Benjamin R. Gardner (of Jewett City) was the one who was requested in those early days by the late Frank E. Olds, a liveryman on Anthony St., to drive to the railroad station and meet a couple bound for the parsonage in Newent. This couple turned out to be Pastor Robinson and his bride, returning from their honeymoon trip. It can be officially stated that they were delivered to their new home safe and sound".

In his sermon at our bi-centenary celebration in 1923 he said, "I remember my first christening was in a home below the arch and the ever-to-be-remembered name of Wilhelm August Budeit, suggesting new blood being transfused into the veins of this ancient community. My first funeral was that of the mother of George Ross, whose loyalty to this church is witnessed summer by summer. I also had the joy of seeing this building thoroughly renovated. I have never seen any institution like the Conference of the Six Churches and appreciate the help it gave me as a young minister."

He started a weekly adult Christian Endeavor Society, as well as one for the juniors which met on Saturday afternoons. These continued for a number of years.

He was dismissed by his own request in February, 1902, and went to a church in Holyoke, Mass. where he held the record for length of pastorate among Congregational churches of Massachusetts. His dismissal from Newent church was consented to

with deep regret. The church council expressed its gratification of his work thus: "His hopeful earnest, devoted service has been appreciated and has resulted in a united and responsive cooperation on the part of the people and in building up of the church in numbers and in strength."

He preached his half-century sermon in Holyoke November 14, 1948 when his close friend Dr. Rockwell Harmon Potter, spoke at the evening service. His daughter, Dorothy, was ordained there in 1925 with representatives from Newent church being present. He often came back to visit here and gave Rev. James Boyd's ordination sermon in 1938.

REV. WILLIAM J. REYNOLDS - 1915-1937

Born in Jackson Co., Ohio, Sept. 13, 1856, Mr. Reynolds was licensed to preach at the age of 20 and was ordained at 25. He served churches in Ohio, N. Y., Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and came to Lisbon from the Congregational church at Ekonk, Conn. He came from a long line of ministers, his great-grandfather, grandfather and his father were ministers and quite naturally he fell into line. His younger son followed, being the fifth generation of the same family making the ministry his life work.

There were two sons born to him and his first wife. She died in 1913 and in 1916 he wed Maude Macdonald of Quaker Street, N. Y., who came with him to Lisbon.

Many of the congregation today remember his hobby of growing flowers, principally dahlias and gladioli, and his pride in showing people through his Pilgrim Gardens which became world wide. He promoted better gardens in New England and was unanimously made a member of the American Civics Assoc. because of it. Also, for more than fifty years he wrote articles for religious journals and magazines.

Being deeply interested in the schools of Lisbon, early in his pastorate he sought consolidation of the schools in town. After a dozen years of agitation a Central school was built on land owned by the church.

He was here during World War I years and was sometimes openly criticized for bringing certain phases of the war into too many of his sermons.

He, with members of the church, prepared a two-day bi-centenary celebration for September 1923 when it is recorded 229 were in attendance on the Saturday when the Six-Church Conference met and 350 on the Sunday. Former members arrived from Foochow, China, California, Mississippi and a number of other states. The anniversary sermon was given by a former pastor, Rev. Edwin Robinson, D.D. who recounted much of the history of the church. He was followed by Sherrod Soule, D.D. who gave the life story of Samuel Kirkland, missionary son of the first minister.

Mr. Reynolds retired from the ministry in June 1937 after sixty years of service in the pulpit. A farewell reception was given him and Mrs. Reynolds upon this occasion by members and friends. He spent the remainder of his life in retirement at Quaker Street, N. Y. where he died February 12, 1945.

REV. JAMES BOYD - 1937-1942

Rev. Boyd came to us from a church in Wantogue, L.I., New York, having accepted the call on December 5, 1937. He was ordained at Newent on June 29, 1938 with the Rev. Edwin B. Robinson giving the ordination sermon.

Due to more families moving into town and inspired by the introduction of more modern ideas as instituted by Rev. Boyd the membership began to grow and the Sunday School flourished. A number of new groups were formed which brought more interest into the church, viz:

Mrs. Boyd and Mrs. Claude Wilson - ran a Vacation Bible Class.

Mrs. Cora Clarke - formed a girl's club which met during the week for sewing and religious education.

Rev. James Boyd - boy's study group.

Mrs. Claude Wilson - girl's class which met with Hanover groups.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hyde and Mrs. Carl Johnson held classes of intermediates.

A very active Youth Fellowship continued for several years, as well as an Activity Club consisting of adult men and women which met periodically. It was this club who were inspired to have new steps built at the church entrance.

It appears that these several activities may have been the spark to set aflame renewed growth which has pretty much continued since.

Because he was convinced that his ultimate service in the church and the ministry at large would be greatly increased by continued study and work in New York his request of resignation was accepted October 7, 1942 "with sincere regret".

He has returned occasionally to visit with friends and was present at the dedication of the Parish House in 1956, and has since held pastorates in the state of New York and in Ohio.

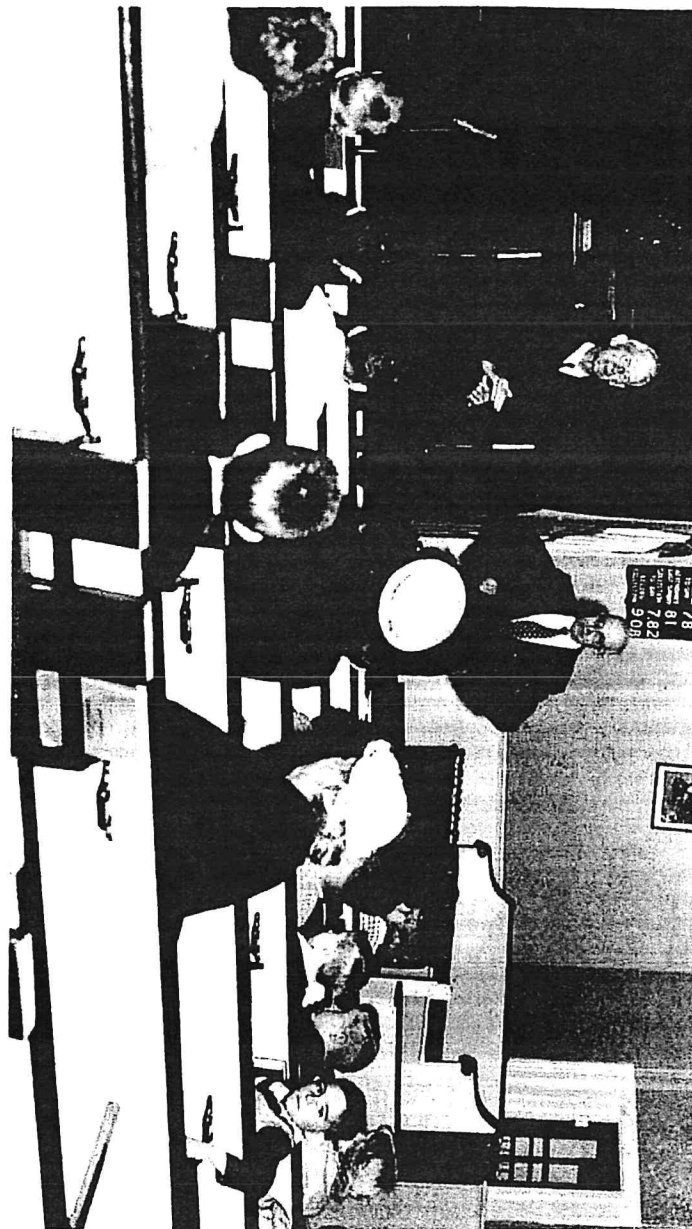
REV. ISRAEL DANIELS - 1943-1958

Rev. Daniels was born December 18, 1880, in Manchester, England migrating with his wife, Emma Gibson, to Canada in the spring of 1905 where their first child died. In the winter of the same year they travelled to South Dakota where they resided for the next 37 years.

Three other children were born to the Daniels while at Yankton, S.D. Rev. Gibson I. Daniels, D.D. who now ministers to the Woodstock Hill Congregational church, but who previously was pastor of the large Saugatuck Congregational church at Westport, Conn. for over 25 years; Rev. Elizabeth Ann Skinner, wife of Rev. Bradley Skinner now of Salt Lake City, Utah and Dr. Bernard T. Daniels, a practicing surgeon in Denver, Colorado.

Rev. Daniels served as pastor of the Mission Hill, S.D. Congregational church where he was ordained to the Christian ministry. Upon coming to Connecticut in the fall of 1942 he was given a call to the Newent church in February of 1943.

A number of improvements were made to the parsonage that summer and about that time the church found it necessary to



Primary Sunday School class with Rev. Daniels
and George Heimboldt, superintendent

apply to the Missionary Society of Conn. for financial assistance to the pastor's salary.

Rev. and Mrs. Daniels were always prominent in community activities and Mr. Daniels served several terms on the Lisbon Board of Education. He also served as registrar of the New London County Assoc. of Congregational Churches and Ministers from October 1945.

On March 18, 1948 the church voted its disapproval of the merger of the Congregational Christian church with the Evangelical and Reformed church and on May 8, 1949 resolved its intent to continue as a Congregational Christian church. It wasn't until December 4, 1960 that a vote was taken to adopt the constitution of the United Church of Christ.

Rev. and Mrs. Daniels were honored December, 1952 on their golden wedding anniversary when more than 150 friends and parishioners gathered at the Lisbon Community Hall to offer their congratulations.

Since the Sunday School had grown continuously in numbers (registration 108), space to accommodate all the classes in the church building became inadequate. At that time Mr. Daniels became the force behind a move for larger facilities. As the old conference house, or so-called "Town House", located at the corner of routes 169 and 138, was not being used for town business (a new town meeting room had been established at the Central School building) and as the old records showed that it had been voted in October 1847 that the building was to revert back to the church in case the town had no more use for it, a special town meeting was called on January 26, 1953 which returned it to the church. Through the combined efforts of Rev. Daniels, church and interested towns people, excavation and construction of a foundation was completed so that during the summer of 1953 the building was moved from its location near the parsonage and attached to the church building at the southeast corner. Immediately upon its completion some of the classes were moved into it. At the time it was decided to have the kitchen in the basement, but because of the difficulty encountered with dampness and stairs and the further need for more Sunday School room in 1955 an addition was placed to the back of the building supplying an extra room and the much needed kitchen, making ample room available for church suppers and entertainments as well. Also in 1953 an oil furnace was installed in the basement of the first addition which heats the church and added rooms. The two wood stoves in the church were subsequently discarded. A formal dedication was celebrated December 16, 1953 when former ministers and church members from surrounding towns were invited. The church was packed to hear a fine program and meet friends. A history of the church was prepared by Mrs. Ralph Fitch for the day and a display of old records, Bibles, the Pewter communion set and other memorabilia were shown.

In June 1947 the Second Cong'l. church of Griswold solicited Mr. Daniel's aid in conducting services and by mutual agreement with the Newent church, he divided his time between the two for the next eight years.

After a lengthy illness Mrs. Daniels passed away in 1957. Her sons and daughter honored their mother by conducting a



The Conference House as it looked circa 1910



The Conference House - 1958



The Conference House - on its way to the church 1958

memorial service in the Newent church. Soon after Rev. Daniels had an opportunity to serve the Second Cong'l church in Griswold which he had relinquished only two years previously. Therefore, by his own request, he was released in January 1958 with sincere regret to fulfill his wish to continue with his ministry in Jewett City.

During his faithful and effective ministry Newent showed definite evidences of spiritual growth, demonstrated by inward development and interest beyond its immediate environs.

An organ was purchased in June 1958 "made possible by the devotion and sacrificial gifts of those who saw the need and determined to fulfill that need to the glory of God". It was dedicated June 1, 1958 in loving memory of Mrs. Israel Daniels, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Wibberley, Mrs. Mabel Church, Eldorus Chase and James Mather, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hyde and Mr. George Adams.

Rev. Daniels, now at the age of 93, lives with his daughter and son-in-law in Salt Lake City still possessing his usual alertness and much of the energy he displayed during his years in Lisbon. He has rarely missed the annual meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ and pays yearly visits to his many friends in the Lisbon area, and to the church of which he was pastor for a period of fifteen years.

REV. CHARLES ALLEN HAINER - 1958-1961

After graduating from McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, Rev. Hainer came to Newent as a student at Hartford Seminary Foundation having accepted a call September 30, 1958. He was ordained June 26, 1960, his father, Rev. Herbert Hainer of Hampton Cong'l church giving the ordaining sermon.

He came from a family of ministers, his grandfather served Canadian churches for sixty years before retiring, his father retired June, 1972 after 62 years of active ministry and his seven uncles (his father's brothers) were all ministers who served churches in Canada and the United States for many years.

The parsonage by this time was in need of extensive repairs. As the finances of the church would not allow such an expenditure, a special meeting was called in May 1959 to set up a committee, consisting of Malcolm Wibberley, Edward Strnad, Harold Mell, Clarence Dawley, Michael Korczynski and Walter Mish, to investigate the possible sale of the parsonage property. Nothing came of this until some years later.

Mr. Hainer, being a young man himself, took a great interest in the children and youth of the church, believing that "they are not only the church of tomorrow, but the fellowship of today". Therefore, a junior choir (under direction of Mrs. Susan Paul), a stronger Pilgrim Fellowship (Mrs. Randall Horsman, advisor), and an improved church school (Mrs. Irene Nichols, Superintendent), were formed which added spiritual growth to the church as a whole.

In the spring of 1961, Rev. Hainer requested to be dismissed to pursue his ministerial services in Hamilton, Ontario, where he married Miss Margaret Gibson and is now minister of St. Paul's United Church, Milton, Ontario, where he lives with his wife and two children.

REV. DAVID D. NELSON - 1961-1966

Following a two year stint with the U.S. Army as Intelligence Analyst in Washington, D.C. and thence preparing himself for the ministry at Harvard Divinity school, Rev. Nelson took the position of pastor at Newent in November 1961 and was ordained there the following June.

Like his predecessor, he was interested in the young people of the church and carried forward a successful Pilgrim Fellowship plan and followed through with Daily Vacation Bible School in the summer.

On May 10, 1966 he presented a letter of resignation to take effect August 28, 1966, wishing to proceed into non-clerical work. In 1970 he entered a Master's Degree program in psychology at Indiana U. in preparation for devoting his efforts in the field of social work.

The church was commended by the Conn. Conference for its forward thinking and progress in the past few years under these two youthful pastors.

REV. ROBERT WEEDEN - 1966-1969

In August 1966 a meeting was held between a committee from Newent and one from Canterbury to consider entering into a shared ministry. After due consideration it was voted on September 18th to share the Canterbury minister between the two churches. A Shared Ministry Agreement committee was set up to product a long range program as a stimulus to lift up and support the two churches in order that they may meet their commitments for the year.

Rev. Robert Weeden, minister of the church at Canterbury thus took over the leadership at Newent as of the above date. He had come to Canterbury with his wife, Wilma, and children from a chaplaincy in the U.S. Army in Germany.

"Bob" Weeden was endowed with a keen sense of humor which he generously spread through his congregation, coupled with an energetic and effective leadership. He had undergone a trying experience when the historic Canterbury church burned to the ground in December, 1963. Upon remembering how the parishioners there rallied around him in planning and re-building of a duplication of the old, he awoke an eagerness in the congregation at Newent to support a wish to improve their church property which was of such historical significance. In consequence, the church interior became pleasingly attractive with new carpeting and drapes and the entire exterior was newly painted and roofs shingled. Thoughts also, were generated to pave the driveways and provide a parking area, but this had to come later because of finances at the time.

The opportunity arose about that time whereby the parsonage could be sold. In order to offset the eventuality of a large expenditure for repairs the committee decided to sell and the Chic Dales of Westbury, L.I. became the new owners. A stipulation was made that the property "shall be used for residence only" and "not be used commercially", in order to preserve Newent Center in its traditional setting.

Under Mr. Weeden's guidance the membership grew in numbers and became stronger in a real Christian fellowship.

He had accepted a call in March, 1968 to lead the Congregational church of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Thus his resignation was accepted. A large turnout of friends and parishioners honored the family on April 21st in testimony of the high esteem in which he was held. Presently he is back in Connecticut as pastor of the Marlboro Congregational church.

REV. BRUCE BOWEN - 1969-1970

Following a year in which substitute pastors supplied the pulpit the Shared Ministry committee was gratified to introduce Rev. Bruce Bowen as candidate to serve both Canterbury and Newent. He thus took over the duties as pastor on May 26, 1969.

Mr. Bowen was born in Indiana and attended Ball University there. It wasn't until he had reached middle life that the urge to enter full time Christian work developed. In 1956 at the age of 44, with his wife, Dorothy, (a Deep River, Conn. native) and three grown children he entered Bangor (Me.) Theological Seminary to prepare for the ministry. Ordained by the United Church of Christ in 1962 he served parishes in Maine and Henrietta, N. Y.

Mr. Bowen being a man of warmth, competence and good Christian faith, the transition from one minister to another was very smooth. He generously acknowledged the work of his predecessor in saying, "Let's keep the momentum going and build together on what Mr. Weeden has started".

Some positive actions were set in motion by the Bowen's, especially a visitation program and up-dating of the active membership list. Likewise, a Couples Club was formed and the choir was reinstated. The concern of having the parking areas and driveways blacktopped came to fruition by employing a local contractor, Charles Pasteryak, to do the work.

Due to Canterbury's wish to dissolve the Shared Ministry, Rev. Bowen offered his resignation effective August 31, 1970. This was most regrettable to Newent people. Presently he is pastor of Feeding Hills (Mass.) Congregational church, but is quite interested in retiring and living in the Newent area.

Under a shared ministry it was especially difficult for these last two pastors to give undivided attention to any project and be 100% effective, but they both labored unsparingly in that direction and certainly their accomplishments are to be commended.

REV. ROLLAND EWING (interim pastor) 1970-1971

Newent people were most appreciative of the wisdom and expert guidance of Rev. Ewing as interim pastor in continuing to steer the course of the church while they were without a settled minister. If wishes could have been granted he would have staid on as pastor, but on account of his health and long travelling distance from his home in Coventry, it was necessary for him to decline.

Rev. Ewing's life had graced the Christian ministry over a long span of years. He had ministered to churches here in Connecticut at Woodbury, New Milford and Torrington, each covering a number of years.

REV. JAMES RABB - 1971-

At the close of 1970 a Shared Ministry was entered into between the daughter church at Hanover and Newent, but it wasn't until September 1971 that Rev. James Rabb of Seattle, Washington, was engaged as permanent pastor. Having served rural parishes in Washington state and in Ontario, Canada, he has an understanding of the responsibilities entailed in the functioning of rural churches. With the depth and wisdom required, Rev. Rabb has indicated that "we are continuing to be alive and responsive to our vocation as a church".

The TMTM (The More the Merrier) was formed during the mid 1950's with Mrs. Annie Mish as president and with a dozen or so young women as members. Following through with their purpose to aid the church and the community, they have kept the church school rooms painted and cleaned. Their several projects have resulted in financial aid to the church and aid to the American Indians.

The Six-Church Conference—Although early records of the Six-Church Conference are absent it is found that in 1861-2, Rev. Bennett Northrup of the First Church of Griswold (Pachaug) conceived the idea that it would be a healthy thing for fellowship and spiritual growth of the six churches of the area, viz. Pachaug, Jewett City, Newent, Hanover, Preston and Plainfield, entered into a sort of partnership with each church hosting a meeting with worship, a program and dinner. In the early days these meetings overflowed with a count in the hundreds. Numbers have diminished in recent years, but the spiritual growth and good fellowship continue.

From tradition it is thought that an ancient pewter communion set owned by the church was presented to them by their friends and relatives, in Newent, England, around the time of the church's organization.

A silver communion set was given by the Baldwin family.

The church had its first organ in 1872. Before that it had a melodion and before that a seraphine. Frank Robinson played the organ for several years, then Frank Hyde became organist as a youngster of 15, and continued faithfully for a period of 57 years. Mrs. Elberta Church then took over the duties and served loyally for a number of years. Frank Hyde's grandson, Dwight, is carrying on the tradition having become organist as a lad of 16.

The Ladies Aid Society was organized in 1898 through the efforts of Mrs. Eli Hyde and Mrs. Mary Stark Randall, Mrs. Randall being the first President of the Society. It is interesting to note that their first project was to extend the chimneys higher above the roof to afford more draft for the wood stoves as it was a common occurrence to see the room filled with wood smoke causing many a tearful eye during church services. Mrs. Frank Hyde became its president in 1927 and served faithfully until her death in 1958, giving unstintingly of her time and effort that there be no idle hands on meeting day, that the Society might further the scopes of church projects to their completion. Now called the Womens Fellowship, the society still functions as a working and worshipping body of the church.

The first pulpit Bible used by the present church was given

by the Ladies Benevolent Society in 1858. The Bible being used quite recently was a gift of the Baldwin family.

Among the janitors who have taken care of the old wood stoves and done the necessary miscellaneous jobs through the past number of years were Nathan Dwight Gallup, Charles Johnson, Fred Kinnie and Albert Bradlow, who was janitor for a long time. At the present Walter Geer has taken over this duty.

There was also a church library from which books could be borrowed and Mrs. Elizabeth Whitaker, Miss Clara Hyde, and Dr. Helen Baldwin have been the librarians.

All through these many years there has been a Sunday School for the religious education of both children and adults.

Among the teachers are the following:

Mrs. Sarah B. Hadley

Miss Hannah Baldwin - teen age boys class — gave each a Bible.

Miss Lucy Baldwin - beginners class - usually girls - always gave each a doll at Christmas time which was much prized.

Dr. Helen Baldwin

Mrs. Fannie Hyde Avery

Mrs. Phoebe Bron

Mrs. Frank Hyde

Mrs. Mary Stark Randall

Deacon Strong

Miss Gussie Learned

Mrs. Sam Wibberley

Mrs. Emily Read Campbell

Mrs. Lena Bradlow Bromley

Mrs. William Reynolds

Miss Carrie Adams Hull

MINISTERS OF THE NEWENT CHURCH

Rev. Daniel Kirtland	1723-1753
Rev. Peter Powers	1756-1764
Rev. Joel Benedict	1771-1782
Rev. David Hale	1790-1803
Rev. Levi Nelson	1804-1855
Rev. David Breed	1857-1861
Rev. Lewis Jessup	1862-1865
Rev. Simeon Waters	1865-1867
Rev. John Haskell	1867-1871
Rev. R. Manning Chipman	1871-1879
Rev. Josiah G. Willis	1880-1882
Rev. John B. Griswold	1883-1885
Rev. Quincy M. Bosworth	1886-1898
Rev. Edwin Bradford Robinson	1898-1902
Rev. Tyler E. Gale	1902-1903
Rev. Oliver Brown	1904-1906
Rev. Charles W. Burt	1906-1908
Rev. Frank A. Fuller	1909-1913
Rev. T. Edward Davis	1913-1915
Rev. William J. Reynolds	1915-1937
Rev. James E. Boyd	1937-1942
Rev. Israel Daniels	1943-1958
Rev. Charles Hainer	1958-1961
Rev. David Nelson	1961-1966
Rev. Robert Weeden	1966-1969
Rev. Bruce Bowen	1969-1970
Rev. Rolland Ewing (interim pastor)	1970-71
Rev. James Rabb	1971-

DEACONS DURING THE EARLY YEARS

Joseph Perkins	1723-1726
Samuel Lathrop	1723-1755
Jabez Perkins	1726-1742
Isaac Lawrence	1742-1756
Jacob Perkins	1756-1776
Dr. Joseph Perkins	1756-1794
Andrew Tracy	1776-1807
Maj. Ebenezer Tracy	1795-1803
Jedediah Safford	1804-1822
William Adams	1809-1835
Levi Crosby	1822-1831
Freeman Tracy	1835-1855
Reuben Bishop	1835-1855
Elisha Paine Potter	1851-1858
Elias Bishop	1855-1868
Jedidiah Lovett	1861-

MISSIONARIES

Samuel Kirkland - to the Oneida Indians
William Potter - to the Cherokee Indians

MINISTERS RAISED UP — from Dr. English History Vol. I

Caleb Knight
William A. Hyde
Hiram Tracy
William R. Palmer
Aaron Kinnle

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

Dr. W. Tyler Brown
Deacon Strong
Duane Bromley
Albert Bradlow
Walter Hyde
Harold Mell
Mrs. Mabel Kampffe
George Helmboldt
Malcolm Platt
Mrs. Irene Nichols
Mrs. Dorothy Oldfield

SUNDAY SCHOOL SECRETARIES

Miss Hattie Bradlow
for about 20 years
Mrs. Harold Mell
Mrs. Walter Mish
Mrs. Ralph H. Fitch

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS - AT TIME OF PARISH HS.

DEDICATION SEPTEMBER 9, 1956

Miss Nancy Phillips	- Nursery
Mrs. Walter Jackson	- Kindergarten
Mrs. Priscilla Botti	- Primary
Mrs. Esther Hyde	- Lower Junior
Mrs. Elizabeth Franklin	- Intermediate
Mrs. Irene Nichols	- Junior
Malcolm Wibberley	- Upper Juniors
Rev. Israel Daniels	- Pastor's Class
Paul Smith	- Senior Young People
Mrs. Dorothy Oldfield	- Young Women's Group

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS - SEPTEMBER, 1973

Irene Nichols	Linda Smith
Nancy Cummings	Malcolm Platt
Dorothy Stahl	Patricia Faust
Jean Tracy	Kathleen Rabb
Sabina Bode	Patricia Hamel
Carolyn Reade	Barbara Beauvais
Virginia Smelser	Dorothy Oldfield Superintendent

Noted below are a few among the many of the membership of Newent church who have left their "footprints on the sands of time."

Dr. Jedidiah Burnham, oldest child of Capt. Benjamin Burnham, after receiving medical teaching from Dr. Joseph Perkins, Sr. practiced his profession in Lisbon, moving to Ohio in 1817. He at one time was clerk of the church. He was an original member of the New London Medical Assoc.

In the early 1800's, Tyler Browne, who was a man of prominence in the community, kept a general store in what later became the old town house. This Tyler Browne, was the grandfather of W. Tyler Brown, M.D. whose practice was in Lisbon for ten years. He went to Norwich in 1890 and became renowned in x-ray work and did research in therapeutic electricity. He had for several years the only x-ray machine in New London County.

Dr. Luther Manning carried on an active practice in Lisbon. He was assistant surgeon in the Revolutionary Army and was on duty in New London when the town burned, Sept. 6, 1781. He also was an original member of the New London Co. Medical Assoc.

Joseph Jewett, son of Eleazor Jewett, founder of Jewett City lived in a gambrel-roofed house said to stand across from where the Goldbergs now live. He was a nailer by trade, and made anything from tacks to horseshoe nails. His son, Charles Jewett, became a well-known doctor and temperance preacher. Born during the pastorate of Rev. Levi Nelson who taught him Latin, he attended Plainfield Academy and then studied medicine under Dr. Elijah Baldwin of S. Canterbury. After practicing medicine in Rhode Island and Massachusetts he migrated West with his wife and

thirteen children, using ox teams, and settled in Minnesota. He introduced highly prized vegetable seeds, fruit trees and grains to that pioneer country. His was the first ox-team to go up the valley from the Mississippi River to Hastings and it is still known as "Jewett Valley". He came back to Norwich Town and died in 1879. News of his death was telegraphed over the country from Maine to Minnesota. In Great Britain the news was received with great sorrow.

Aaron Stevens (who lived in the so-called Rist place) was bitterly opposed to slavery. He joined up with John Brown, the abolitionist, and took an active part against slavery in Kansas territory and at Harper's Ferry, Va. when a plot was organized to liberate the slaves in Virginia. With about eighteen other men they surprised and captured the arsenal at Harper's Ferry, but John Brown was wounded and taken prisoner and hanged on Dec. 2, 1859. Some believed that Aaron Stevens was hanged with John Brown, but in a letter dated May 7, 1860, from his niece the claim is that he was shot seven times while carrying a flag of truce and was executed March 16, 1860 at Charleston, Virginia.

Dr. Elisha Perkins, son of Dr. Joseph, Sr. was the celebrated inventor of the metallic tractors. (We wonder whether these may not have been the forerunner of the now prominent Acupuncture). This was a method of curing diseases, by rubbing the patient in a certain manner with small pointed pieces of metal, steel or brass, which were thought to extract the pain by a kind of magnetism. These were not met with much success here as the County Medical Assoc. called him a "quack". He, therefore, took his invention to London where his invention excited considerable notice. Mention is made in a printed pamphlet in England that he had cured as many as 200 diseased persons up until 1805.

Hezekiah Reade was born on the farm which was purchased by his ancestors from Owaneco in 1682. He attended Plainfield Academy and later became interested in the manufacture of paper. He was also a prolific writer, having charge of the department on Agriculture in a leading N. Y. magazine. Mr. Reade held a number of town offices and was clerk of Newent church. In 1873, it was through his efforts that the present Jewett City Savings bank was founded, he being its first president and holding that office for 27 years until 1900.

John Kinsman enlisted as ensign in the militia during the Revolutionary War and was taken prisoner and confined in a prison ship where his sufferings were very great and where he was nearly starved. In consequence his health was permanently damaged. Upon his discharge from the army he engaged in the hatting business in Lisbon and supplied the army with hats. In 1799, he went to Ohio and purchased more than 16,000 acres of land and established the town of Kinsman, which was then a wilderness. There he built houses, stores and a sawmill and moved his family there from Lisbon (Kinsman Rd.). He was a man of great energy and took an active part in establishing the "Western Reserve Bank", the first bank established in Ohio.

It is well for us to look back more frequently than we do with admiration upon the lives of our ancestors who under difficulties

which we can hardly appreciate struggled for principle, for justice and for their religion.

As. Rev. Robinson mentioned at the 200th anniversary: "What men have gone out into the wide world during the past 250 years bearing upon them the imprint of this Newent church of ours which has ministered so loyally to this rural community. Here have lived souls of Pilgrim stock, descendants of Elder Brewster, Isaac Allerton, John Howland and Myles Standish. Members of congress, judges, lawyers, doctors, clergy men, missionaries are recorded, as having spent their early years under the influence of this church. To the nation it has meant much that this light has been kept trimmed and burning".

Today, we all should raise our voices with Dr. Robinson to say, "May this light be forever kept shining".