



Dublin Historical Society

Dublin, New Hampshire 03444 • Founded 1920

Newsletter No. 74 – November 2008

A CHURCH IS BORN IN DUBLIN

The Community Church has had a long and distinguished existence under various names, and there is no reason to doubt its legitimacy and legal status. Still, a birth certificate is a comforting thing to have, and the Church's has been missing for over one-hundred and fifty years.

By happy accident, we have acquired that missing document, reproduced overleaf. It is the lost record of the official "embodiment" of the church in Dublin and of the ordination of the Rev. Joseph Farrar, its first minister.

In his *History of Dublin, New Hampshire*, written shortly after the Town's Centennial celebration in 1852, the Rev. Levi Leonard noted that the ecclesiastical records were deficient and that Mr. Farrar had left no account of the events of his brief ministry. Turning to the Town records, Dr. Leonard recounted the origins of the Church in Dublin. There was occasional preaching in Dublin as early as 1767. Later there were several candidate preachers, among whom was Joseph Farrar, who preached a dozen times before he was offered the post of minister.

A qualified man could preach without being an ordained minister, but could not be ordained except as the minister of a particular church. Similarly, a church (meaning a body of believers, not a building) could not exist without a settled minister. So the ordination of Mr. Farrar and the "embodiment" of the Church in Dublin were accomplished in a single ceremony.

After reproducing verbatim Joseph Farrar's letter

accepting the call to be Dublin's first minister, Dr. Leonard continues:

"At a town-meeting, March 3, 1772, 'Voted to have the ordination the tenth day of June next. Voted to send to the following churches to attend the ordination, viz.: the church in Lincoln [Mass.], the church in Weston [Mass.], the church in Groton [Mass.], the church in New Ipswich, the church in Sherborn [Mass.], and the church in Monadnock No. 4 [Fitzwilliam].'

"According to the above vote, Mr. Farrar was ordained on the tenth day of June. What pastors and delegates were present, who preached the sermon, and performed the other services of the occasion, is not known."

Dr. Leonard assumed that the ordination was performed on the date mentioned in the Town's vote. Thanks to the newly discovered document, we now



The **Winter Pot-luck Supper** will be held in the Vestry of the Community Church at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, February 27, 2009. (Snow date: February 28)

Jane Cayford Nylander, President Emerita of Historic New England (formerly The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities) will give an illustrated talk entitled

"Folk Art On the Move: New England Parades, 1788-1940"

Please bring a main dish, salad or dessert.

Dublin June 19th 1772

The Churches of Lincoln Groton Monadnock N^o 4 & Swanzy by
their Rev^d Elders & Delegates & the Church Sherborn by their Delegates
having Met at the House of M^r Thomas Morse in Dublin agreeable to
Letters Missive formed into an ecclesiastical Council

- I Voted that the Rev^d M^r Lawrence of Lincoln be Moderator of this Council
II Voted that the Rev^d M^r Goddard of Swanzy be Scribe
Then proceeded to embody a Church in said Dublin

having Looked into the proceedings of the inhabitants of the Town of Dublin
III with Respect to the calling & settling M^r Farrar in the Work of the Ministry
among them were unanimously of opinion that they have been regular
III Voted Unanimously to proceed to Ordination

V Voted that the Rev^d M^r Lawrence give the Charge

VI Voted that the Rev^d M^r Dana give the Right hand of Fellowship

Regulation

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This bit of paper, here reproduced actual size, is all the record there is of the founding of what is now the Community Church. Fortunately the Rev. Mr. Goddard wrote legibly, although his grammar and spelling were a little shaky.

know that the ordination took place, not on June 10th, but on the 19th. We also know, as Dr. Leonard did not, which pastors and delegates were present and who preached the sermon.

The document, transcribed with modern spelling and punctuation, reads as follows:

Dublin June 19th, 1772

The Churches of Lincoln, Groton, Monadnock No. 4 & Swanzy by their
reverend elders and delegates, and the Church [in] Sherborn by their delegates,
having met at the house of Thomas Morse in Dublin agreeable to
letters missive, formed into an ecclesiastical council

I Voted th[at] the Rev. Mr. Lawrence of Lincoln be Moderator of this council

II Voted that the Rev. Mr. Goddard of Swanzy be Scribe

Then proceeded to embody a Church in said Dublin

Having looked into the proceedings of the Town of Dublin
III with respect to the calling and settling [of] Mr. Farrar in the work of the ministry
among them, were unanimously of opinion that they have been regular

III Voted unanimously to proceed to ordination

V Voted that the Rev. Mr. Lawrence give the charge [sermon]

VI Voted that the Rev. Mr. Dana give the right hand of fellowship

Joseph Farrar, the ordinand, was a native of Lincoln, Mass., and had grown up there before attending Harvard. That is presumably why an invitation was sent to the Church in Lincoln, Mass., and probably the reason why Mr. Lawrence, the Lincoln minister, was elected to preside at the meeting and to preach the sermon. (It seems to have been customary to have the candidate's own minister present at an ordination. At the ordination of Mr. Farrar's successor, Edward Sprague, in 1777, the Rev. Samuel Langdon, Mr. Sprague's pastor in Cambridge, Mass., preached the sermon. He also happened to be President of Harvard.)

Weston is a town next to Lincoln, and why its Church was invited is unclear. Perhaps Mr. Farrar had friends or relations across the town line. At any rate, no one from Weston came.

The reason for the invitation to Groton is equally obscure, but the Groton minister and one or more lay delegates attended. The Groton minister performed no function, unless he was the Mr. Dana appointed to give "the right hand of fellowship". The right hand of fellowship, a sacrament of acceptance, is used today in Congregational practice in the reception of new members into the church. Here it was

evidently a sign of reception into the ministry, somewhat analogous to the laying on of hands.

An invitation to the Church in New Ipswich may have been sent because the minister there, the Rev. Stephen Farrar, was related to Joseph Farrar. No one from New Ipswich came.

The invitation to Sherborn, Mass., is easily explained. A group of Dublin settlers had come from Sherborn (a town southeast of Boston, just south of Framingham and Natick). All five of the members of the committee appointed to select a minister were Sherborn men. That the connection between the towns remained strong is shown by the gift from the Church in Sherborn to the Church in Dublin of a pewter communion service in 1774, two years after Mr. Farrar's ordination.

The invitations to Swanzey and Monadnock No. 4 (Fitzwilliam) may seem odd, since neither town shares a border with Dublin. What about Jaffrey and Marlborough? The answer is that neither Jaffrey nor Marlborough had an organized church in 1772. Marlborough's church was established in 1778, and Jaffrey's not until 1782. So Swanzey and Fitzwilliam were the closest sources of ordained ministers.

continued on page 4

How the Document was Found

Even archivists, those latter-day harmless drudges, have occasional moments of triumph, and finding this document for sale on eBay was one of them. Nancy Campbell keeps an eagle-eye on eBay for anything related to Dublin, and we have in the past bought such things as postcards and souvenir china, but never before a historical document. Knowing that there is a substantial market for old documents, we were prepared for competition, and hoped that this one would not be bid up beyond our means.

As it turned out, there were three other bidders, but we were able to buy the document for under \$50, shipping included.

A couple of mysteries remain. First, how and where did this small (5 1/4 x 7 3/4") bit of paper, having no meaning to anyone outside Dublin, survive for 136 years? Had it been on post-Civil War woodpulp-based paper it would have crumbled long ago, but 18th century paper, being made from rags, lasts pretty much forever.

From Leonard's History we know that it was missing from the Church and Town records by the 1850s. Who would walk off with such a thing? We asked the seller (a dealer on Long Island) where he got it, but he would only say that it came from another dealer at a group antique shop in Keene.

The second mystery is why a dealer in material of this kind would put it on eBay, rather than get in touch with the person or institution to which it related? Had we been offered this document for private sale, we would probably have been willing to pay up to a thousand dollars for it, rather than the \$ 44.78 which was our winning bid. But we're not complaining.

The sequel to Mr. Farrar's ordination was not altogether happy. Within a little over three years, he "began to entertain strange fancies", and "[h]is mind became so impressed with the reality of his imaginations, that he introduced the subject into his public prayers . . ."

The result was the summoning of another ecclesiastical council, consisting of many of the same people who had been present at the ordination. Once again Mr. Goddard of Swanzezy was chosen as

scribe, and his account survives. The council's recommendation was that Mr. Farrar be suspended from duty for six months, during which time he was advised to "apply himself to some able and experienced physician." If at the end of the six months things had not improved, "we then advise that the Rev. Mr. Farrar ask, and the church vote, a dissolution of the relation."

And that is what happened.

– J. W. H.

SOCIETY NEWS

A WORD ABOUT DUES

As is customary, dues envelopes are enclosed with this, the November newsletter. Dues are for the year 2009, and are payable before January 1.

In view of the parlous state of the economy, the Trustees have decided to revert to the old figure of \$25 for a basic membership in 2009. However, our expenses do not sink with the market, and we still rely on the generosity of the many members who contribute more than the minimum.

NEW TRUSTEES AND OFFICERS

At the Annual Meeting on August 22, the children of the late **William Bauhan**, first President of the Society after its revival in 1986, presented a scroll in his honor. The scroll will hang at the Archives next to a similar one honoring Henry Dwight Learned, the Society's first President from 1920 to 1923.

Outgoing President **Rusty Bastedo** thanked retiring Trustee **Rosemary Mack** for her years of service. In her place, **Anne Anable** was elected for a three-year term. **Amedine Bella** and **Bill Goodwin** were re-elected for three-year terms.

Officers elected for the coming year were: Anne Anable, President, Henry James, Vice-President and Bill Goodwin, Treasurer. At a later meeting the Trustees elected Sharron Monaghan Secretary, Rusty Bastedo Curator and John Harris Archivist.

RECENT ASCENSIONS TO THE ARCHIVES

An important and fascinating gift has come from **Barbara de Marneffe**: the unpublished memoirs of **Marion S. Whiting**, who with her husband Jasper had an unusually entertaining life. Jasper made an early fortune as an inventor, and the Whitings spent years afterwards traveling the world. Having the right connections, they were guests at the 1911 Delhi Durbar, where King George V was proclaimed Emperor of India. In 1927, feeling the need for a permanent base, they came to Dublin and bought the house on Old Harrisville Road now owned by Mary Ellen Moore.

There has long been disagreement whether that house was or was not designed by Charles Adams Platt, a mystery now solved by a digital copy of an elevation drawing of the house, marked as having come from Platt's office. This was given to us by Professor **Keith Morgan**, an architectural historian, who found the original in the collection of the Society for the Protection of New England Antiquities (now Historic New England).

We have received a large number of books and documents on various subjects from the estate of the late **William Bauhan**. **Nancy Campbell**, **Sally Shonk Carey** and **Sharron Monaghan** continue to supply us with photographs of Town events.

To each of them, and to all our other generous donors, we extend our grateful thanks.

C R E D I T S

This issue of the Dublin Historical Society
Newsletter was edited by John Harris.

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