

Dublin Historical Society

DUBLIN, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03444 • FOUNDED 1920

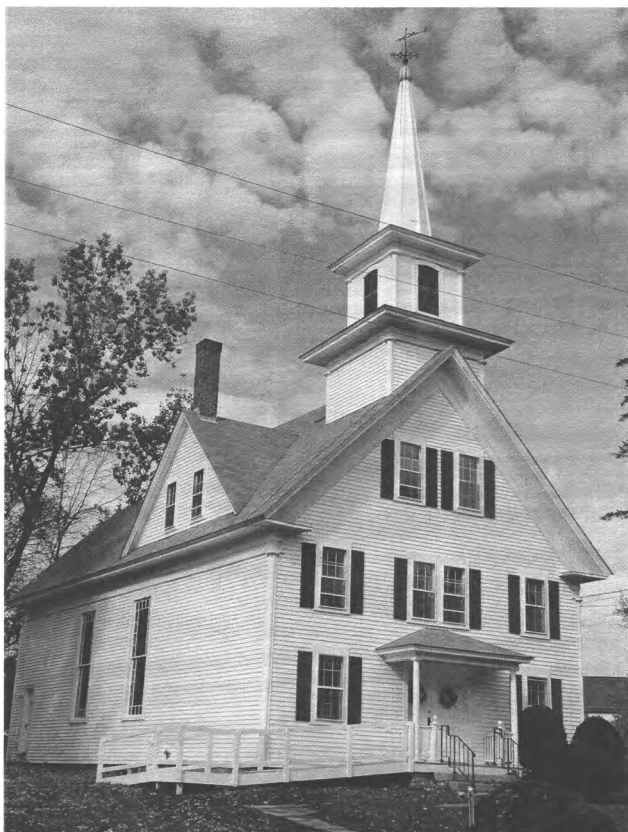
Newsletter No. 96

November 2016

Meetinghouses and Churches of Dublin

PART TWO

The March 2016 issue of this newsletter addressed houses of worship built in Dublin before 1840. This issue includes three churches built in Dublin in the early 1840s before the Harrisville secession, when in 1870, the northern third of Dublin including the villages of Pottersville (now Chesham) and Harrisville were annexed to the newly incorporated Town of Harrisville. Also covered here are the fate of the 1818 “centre Meeting house” and the second First Trinitarian Congregational Society church.



Lisa Foote

Baptist Society Meeting House in Chesham showing dormer added in 1910

BAPTIST SOCIETY MEETING HOUSE

In 1840 the Baptist Society Meeting house (built on Brown Road in 1797) was disassembled and moved nearly a mile west to what was referred to as Pottersville, then the northwest corner of Dublin. Rededicated in 1844 it stood near the intersection of what are currently Chesham and Brown Roads just northeast of the Dublin District #7 schoolhouse. Another remodeling took place between 1867 and 1869 at which time the building was moved about 700 feet to its current location on Chesham Road, southwest of that same schoolhouse. Given the short distance of the move, it is possible that teams of oxen pulled the building intact to the new site. The two-stage steeple and the pressed tin ceiling were probably added at this time. A final renovation in 1910 added the dormer on the south side and a bell for the steeple.

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

In 1842 the Methodist Episcopal Church of Marlborough also constructed a church in Pottersville. It provided a house of worship for a congregation which since 1796 had met in private homes and by 1835 periodically in the 18th century meeting house on Frost Hill in Marlborough. The new church's location, shown on 1853 and 1858 maps, was

SAVE THE DATE

Our Annual Potluck Supper will be held on Friday, February 17, 2017



DHS Richardson/Scribner Collection

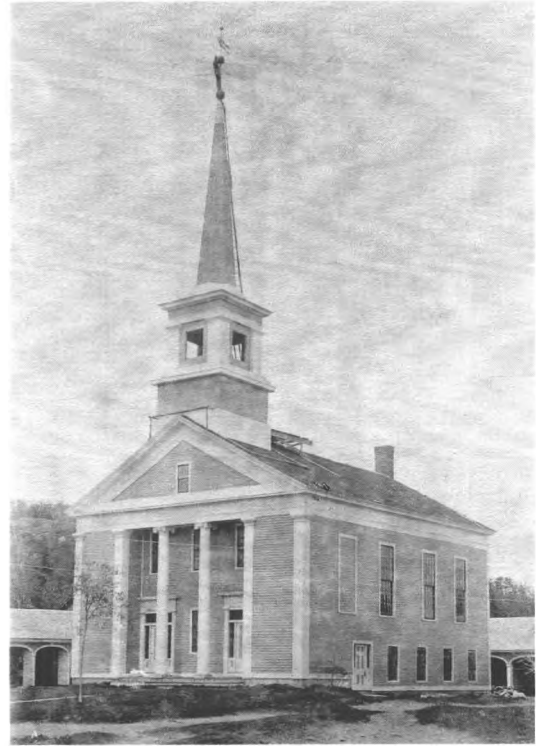
Steeple collapse in 1949

After WWI the congregation remained small, entering into a federation with the First Congregational (Unitarian) Church, sharing ministers and services for at least 10 years. The steeple survived the 1938 hurricane, only to topple into the front yard in 1949. It was not replaced. The next year the Dublin Women's Community Club bought the building for \$1 and used it until selling it to the Town of Dublin for no profit in 1977. Historic items preserved from the church include one of the pews and the lectern displayed in the DHS Schoolhouse Museum, and the pewter communion service displayed in the Dublin Public Library. The US Post Office has been the tenant since 1978.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL (UNITARIAN) SOCIETY CHURCH

When completed in 1818 the second or "centre Meeting house" with its grand four-stage steeple belonged to the town, and local taxes paid the minister's salary. However, the Toleration Act of 1819 prohibited towns from using taxes to pay ministers. With less obligation to support the church, town residents probably spent little on the building, given the town likely used it infrequently for town meetings. We do know that it took six years to pass a warrant article proposing the installation of stoves to heat the Meeting house and two more years for the selectman to implement it finally in 1830.

For unstated reasons town meeting voted in 1847 to sell the "centre Meeting house" at auction; Thaddeus Morse paid only \$87.50 for the town's interest in it on October 2, 1847. A similar fate befell the Meeting house in Marlborough when that town sold it at auction for \$100.50 in 1849, repurchased it and sold it again in 1860 for \$50. Some materials were salvaged from the circa 1780 structure before it collapsed in 1865: the door stones relocated to "before the doors of the Methodist Society."



DHS

First Congregational Society Church circa 1895

Jonathan K. Smith, a deacon of the Dublin church since 1836, loaned the congregation the money to buy the second meeting house building from Morse and presumably worship continued there until 1852 when the building was dismantled, with materials from it used to build the more modest church which now stands across from the Town Hall. Chamberlain's Tavern/Fiske House, a site once considered for the building of the "centre Meeting house," was moved to the east to make room for the construction of the church.

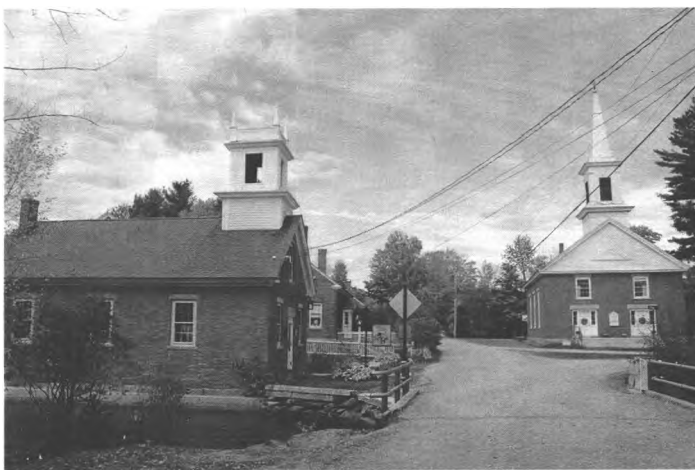
Paid for by subscriptions from the congregation, the new church with its two-stage steeple and Greek portico was dedicated on March 2, 1853. In an ironic twist the town abandoned the brick town house built on the common in 1823 and used the vestry of the new Congregational church as a town hall and for town meetings from 1853 until 1883.

Renovations seemed necessary about every thirty years. The original bell from the 1818 meeting house was recast in 1876, and the spire topping the steeple was repaired in 1878. In 1908 discussion ensued about replacing the spire "which is much out of repair" and purchasing a new clock. Architect John Lawrence Mauran proposed a design for a new steeple which reproduced the four-stage steeple on the second meeting house, substituting a clock for the palladian window. In the end the simple spire was replaced in kind and the mechanical clock, which needed manual winding (a gift to the town from the Village Improvement Society in 1905) remained unchanged.

one half mile southwest of the Baptist Meeting house described above, but no images or descriptions of the building have yet been found. The congregation worshiped there exclusively until 1859, at which time the unused church of the Baptist Church of Christ in Marlborough (built in 1843 on Main Street) was used for one half of the services. In 1862 the church in Pottersville was sold and the Baptist church on Main Street was purchased. A photograph of the church taken before extensive additions and renovation in 1891 shows a modest, 1 1/2 story, wooden structure with a two-stage steeple over the entrance typical of the period. A 20th century fire gutted the renovated church, currently the site of the Community House of Marlborough, part of the Federated Church of Marlboro which blended three denominations—Methodist, Congregational, and Universalist into one parish in 1927.

SECOND ORTHODOX CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

Bethuel Harris built two congregational churches in the center of the village of Harrisville for workers in his woolen mills. After petitioning in 1840 to form the “Second Orthodox Congregational Church”, he paid most of the \$1000 cost to construct a 30’ by 40’ timber frame building faced with brick with a modest four-pointed cupola. Within two years he built a larger brick church with a two-stage steeple across the street, which could accommodate 350 people. He again assumed the majority of the cost of \$3500. The smaller 1840 building, then called the Vestry, was used as a community school from the mid 1840s until 1857, when a two-story wooden schoolhouse was built nearby. Falling into disrepair and lacking a floor, the Vestry was at times used as a sheltered swimming area before it was given to the town in 1967. It currently houses the Harrisville Library. The larger church underwent extensive renovation in the 1950s which removed much of the historic interior detail.



Lisa Foote

Harrisville's Second Orthodox Churches built in the 1840's when the mill town was still part of Dublin

Currently, both the Baptist church building in Chesham and the later Second Orthodox Congregational church building are owned by the Community Church of Harrisville and Chesham.

FIRST TRINITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY

The suitability of the 1836 brick church on Dublin's village hill discussed in the last issue seems to have been questioned a mere 15 years after its construction. Records show that it was offered to the town for a town house in 1852, but the town declined. In 1855 when no buyer could be located, the congregation appointed a committee “to superintend taking down and rebuilding our Meeting house on or near the Flatt so called or otherwise dispose of it and build a new house if the means can be obtained.”

For twenty years no action was taken. Yet when faced with the cost of replacing the roof on the brick church, the congregation clearly decided to go into debt to build a new church “on the flat”. The *Peterborough Transcript* wrote on December 7, 1876, the church “is built of wood, 36 feet wide and 40 feet long and is with the exception of a portion of the roof, entirely new material. The spire and vane is 75 Ft. in height, and is the termination of a well-proportioned steeple The entire architecture, workmanship, painting, etc. has been faithfully performed by A.H. & H.A. Hopkins of Greenfield. The whole expense is \$3000.” Photos show the curved pews arranged in a semi-circular fashion. Although it no longer has a steeple, you would recognize it as the building housing the post office.



Dublin Public Library/Henry D. Allison Glass Plate Negative Collection

First Trinitarian Congregational Society Church, circa 1930, now the Dublin Post Office



Aftermath of Hurricane of 1938 at Dublin Community Church (formerly First Congregational (Unitarian) Society)

The steeple would be in the news again when in the hurricane of 1938 the wind tore off the spire which then pierced the roof, the tip coming to rest in the middle of the pews. With contributions from more than 270 donors the steeple was rebuilt by R. O. Leonard of Framingham, MA and rededicated in July 1939.

The town clock was replaced by an electrically driven one with lighted dials in December of 1947 and is a memorial to those who served in WWI and WWII.

Space constraints dictate that discussion of the four churches built most recently in Dublin be continued in a future newsletter: Emmanuel Church built in 1888, Our Lady of the Snows built in 1905, the Kingdom Christian Ministries church built at Fairwood in 1965 and the Mountain View Bible Church created in 1982.

—Lisa Foote

NOVEMBER IS MEMBERSHIP MONTH

Membership dues and donations provide our operating funds for the year. Please use the enclosed dues envelope to renew your membership and to provide any change of address or email contact information. Rest assured that we will only use your email address for DHS business, particularly if we have to postpone the potluck supper in February.

Thank you in advance for your generous support.

IN MEMORIAM

The Society reports with great sorrow the recent loss of **Ann Worcester Walsh** and **G. Blake Sabine**. We extend our condolences to their families.

2016 ADDITIONS TO OUR COLLECTIONS

We extend our thanks to those who donated material to DHS over the past year.

Our bookshelves welcomed the following. Tim Murray gave us a copy of his book *Keeping Faith: Fifty Years at Fairwood* as well as a 12-page log kept by Maria Louisa Aldrich of bandages made and sent to troops in WWI. Jason Haliwell compiled *Stories of the Settlers of the South Slopes of Monadnock* in 2016 and gave DHS a copy. Augusta Petrone donated a copy of Levi Leonard's 1855 town history, and we bought *Greek Epic: The Latchis Family & the New England Theater Empire They Built* by Gordon Hayward.

Several collections of photographs were given. Sharon Monaghan gave us photos of Gerald Ford's visit to Dublin in 1975 and photos of the Community Church documenting the 2015 removal of maple trees; Rusty Bastedo gave images of the interior of the former house, Loon Point; Pauline Metcalf shared images of the Pumpelly family; Ruth Oja Leo and Cornelia Throssel donated school class pictures from 1917 and 1954. Ann Clarkeson allowed us to copy a photo of Pat Mann dressed as Thayer's Angel of Monadnock.

Will Morgan sent us a collection of his recent writings, and Mary Elizabeth McLellan sent her hostess book from 1987-1990. Mystery soup anyone?

We also purchased two portraits rendered in pencil with funds from the John Harris Memorial Fund. One is a portrait of a young man done in 1928 by Nancy Brush Bowditch. Barry Faulkner drew the second portrait, that of Rebecca Caldwell, a longtime summer resident. This drawing was found hidden, several layers under a framed poster of the Bill of Rights. Our thanks to Elaine White for offering it to us.

Steve Baldwin donated the clamp or vice, the bubble level and the sterling silver butter knife blade pictured below, which he located after asking permission to search the rear of Yankee Field with his metal detecting equipment.

