

**BOOK OF THE FIRST CHURCH OF  
CHRIST IN MIDDLEBOROUGH,  
PLYMOUTH COUNTY, MASS.  
WITH NOTICES OF OTHER  
CHURCHES IN THAT TOWN**

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Book of the First Church of Christ in Middleborough, Plymouth County, Mass. With notices of other churches in that Town by Various

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\* Note.—Disc. refers to the Discourses which are paged independently. An account of the first organization, the successive pastors, records, &c., will also be found in them.

## HISTORICAL NOTICE.

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“Considerable exertions were made by some of the early settlers to Christianize the natives. In Middleborough and many other places, these efforts were attended with a good degree of success. At the commencement of the Indian war, in 1675, there were three churches in this town, one at Namasket, one at Titicut, and one at 'Sowampset, the last of which, contained 35 members; all of them, 90 members.” (S. Eddy's Com. Pl. Book of Hist. Reading.)

“In the year 1685, Governor Hinkley, of Plymouth, sent to the corporation in England, an account of the praying Indians of that colony; they amounted to 1439, besides boys and girls, which were supposed to be three times that number; at Namasket and Titicut 70, at Namatakeeset 40.” (Hutch. His. Mass., vol. 1, p. 315.)

Namasket was a mile from the present meeting-house of the first precinct, south-easterly, an Indian village of that name on a river of the same name; Titicut was an Indian village six miles westerly, on the Cohannet, or Taunton river, and Namatakeeset is supposed to be the same as 'Sowampset, a village upon the Great Pond in the south part of the town, and probably this was the name of the “Long Pond,” although the Indian name of that pond is not certainly known. There is no subsequent account of these churches. No doubt, the “Nam-



aschucks," worshipped with the first settlers, and before the organization of our church in 1694, had become extinct or had migrated.

That part of Middleborough, which is now the first precinct, was purchased of the Indian sachem, Wampatuck, in March 1662, by "twenty-six men," and confirmed by the government of the Plymouth colony, January, 1663, with some other purchases made of the "Black Sachem," Tispaquin, sachem of Namasket. The town was incorporated by its present boundaries, July 1st, 1669, and afterwards fully confirmed by the court at Plymouth. From 1669 to 1675 the town sent deputies to the court. But in 1675 the Indian war broke up the settlement, and the purchasers returned to Plymouth. In 1679 they returned to Middleborough with their minister, Rev. Samuel Fuller, and made a permanent settlement. In their re-organization they mention the loss of their records, when their houses were burnt by the Indians.

The following are the names of the "twenty-six purchasers" who were here when the war broke out, and who probably returned after the war. Their minister was with them in 1675; and as he was one of the original purchasers, he was probably with them in their first settlement in 1669, as otherwise they would not probably have been allowed to remove from Plymouth. The town is about 14 miles on its South line, about the same distance from that line to its north,—contains more than 100 square miles, and is, in extent of territory, the largest town in the Commonwealth.

JOHN THOMPSON,  
ISAAC HOWLAND,  
FRANCIS COOMBS,  
*SAMUEL FULLER,*  
JOHN MORTON.

MOSES SIMMONS,  
SAMUEL BARROWS,  
SAMUEL EATON,  
FRANCIS BILLINGTON,  
GEORGE SOULE.

NATHANIEL SOUTHWORTH,	SAMUEL EDDY,
EPHRAIM TINKHAM,	SAMUEL PRATT,
HENRY WOOD,	GEORGE VAUGHAN,
WILLIAM NELSON,	JOHN SHAW,
DAVID THOMAS,	JACOB THOMPSON,
JOHN COBB,	FRANCIS MILLER,
JABEZ WARREN,	JOHN HOWLAD,
EDWARD BUMP,	JOHN ALDEN.

In 1680, the town provided a house lot, and twelve acres of land for Mr. Fuller, and it seems he then lived in a house upon it, which they call *his*. His salary was "£20, to be paid one quarter in silver and the rest in produce, corn at two shillings, and wheat at four per bushel." The tradition is, that he lived in a house a little east of Dr. Sturtevant's. The town agreed "to turn out and fence his field, and every one that did not, was to pay a bushel of corn." The first meeting-house was between his house and "the Green," and in August, 1701, was sold at auction for £5 2s., the town having, the year before, built a meeting-house on the "Lower Green," nearly opposite the present school-house, "thirty-six feet by thirty, and sixteen stud," as by vote of November, 1690. It had two ridge poles and four gable ends. In 1745 the roof was taken off, and a "pitched roof" put on. The meeting-house on the "Upper Green," was built the same year; the parish having separated into two meetings; one held by the "old lights," or "standing party," and the other by the "new lights," or "revival men." Of the "old lights," Rev. Thomas Weld, was pastor; of the "new lights," Rev. Sylvanus Conant. The "old lights" broke up in the year 1754 or 1755, and soon after the old house was sold, and of the materials a dwelling-house was built where the parsonage house now stands. The parish were again united and Mr. Conant was the acknowledged pastor of both

“old lights” and “new lights.” The site of the old house is now plainly to be seen just below the school-house. The house on the Upper Green was built by proprietors, and was sold in 1828, and the materials removed, but not until the dedication of the present meeting-house, January 1st, 1829.

The church was organized, and Mr. Fuller ordained pastor, Dec. 26th, 1694. On Mr. Fuller's death, August 17, 1695, Mr. Cushman, afterwards minister of Plympton, Mr. Clap and Mr. Cutting were successively invited to supply the pulpit. In August, 1696, Mr. Thomas Palmer was applied to, and engaged to preach a quarter of a year, for which he was paid £13. In October, the town voted him £35 for a salary.” In November, 1698, the town voted “that his goods shall be brought from Plymouth at the town's charge,” and he was probably ordained, May 2nd, 1702, (though possibly a year or two sooner,) not without strenuous opposition on the part of a number of the members of the church. Committees were soon chosen by the town and by the church “to devise means of a regular, comfortable, and peaceable settlement.” He was charged with misbehavior in the church and with intemperance. The first council was convened by the church *ex parte*, and it condemned him; the second, called by the town and the church, advised that, “as the town earnestly desired, both old and young to enjoy his ministry, he should continue his ministry until the council should meet more fully;” and finally, twelve churches were convened, and advised the church to *depose* him. In 1705, his salary was £40. In 1706, the same, “provided he continue in the work of the ministry the whole year; if removed, to pay him proportionally.” In November 1706, they voted “to seek out a