

**HISTORICAL SKETCH AND ROLL
OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
WEBSTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

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Historical Sketch and Roll of Membership of the First Congregational Church, Webster, New Hampshire by Various

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VARIOUS

**HISTORICAL SKETCH AND ROLL
OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE FIRST
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WEBSTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE**



First Meeting House in West
Boscawen, now Webster, built by
the town in 1791.

Historical Sketch

and

Roll of Membership

of the

First Congregational Church

Webster, New Hampshire

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William W. Burbank

The Church Clerk has had many requests for copy from its records. Those of its early years, particularly those pages given to names of members are badly worn and becoming illegible.

To make a complete roll and preserve for the future has been the leading motive in issuing this pamphlet.

In the historical sketch are records and papers never before published: The first meeting of record of the Westerly Religions Society in Boscawen; The first Confession of Faith and Church Covenant; and Rev. Mr. Price's address at the laying of the corner stone of the Meeting House on Corser Hill.

The church roll is the result of much time and labor. Those who have kindly aided in its verification have my sincere thanks.

WILLIAM W. BURBANK, Church Clerk.

The Westerly Religious Society in Boscawen.

From the building of the meeting house in 1791 to 1804 there is no record of organized effort to sustain preaching. The pulpit was pretty constantly supplied by different preachers, but the expense was defrayed mostly by private subscriptions.

The time was past when the *town* would settle a minister: many were desirous of adopting some systematic method of providing for the preaching of the gospel. The result was the organization of the Westerly Religious Society in Boscawen. Its spirit and purpose is well stated in the preamble of its constitution.

"We the subscribers, inhabitants of Boscawen, in the County of Hillsborough and State of New Hampshire, being deeply impressed with the importance of securing to ourselves and posterity religious order and the privileges of the gospel of which we are at present deprived, and sensible that so desirable a blessing cannot be enjoyed in the division of the town where we live, aside from our entering into a social compact, we therefore do agree, and by these presents do voluntarily combine ourselves into a Religious Society for religious purposes, having ultimately in view the settlement of the gospel ministry among us."

At the adjourned meeting Feb. 23rd the committee reported that Rev. Mr. Price gave some encouragement the people wished to settle him on reasonable terms.

After voting to form a Society the meeting adjourned to the first Monday in March when an organization was effected and adjournment made to the 14th.

At this meeting a constitution was adopted and 85 names attached.

Article 3. Provided that "each member should pay his proportion of all money raised according to the valuation of polls and estate." This method of raising money was continued until 1876 when the assessment was omitted and contributions solicited, and this plan in various forms has been continued until the present time, the society being responsible to make good any deficiency. No assessment has been needed.

At the same meeting it was "voted to make application to the Rev. Mr. Price to serve them as their Minister." And a committee was appointed to confer with him.

The committee were:

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Samuel Muzzy, | Benjamin Sweatt, |
| Ebenezer Senter, | Benjamin Jackman, |
| Caleb Knight, | Lemuel Fowler, |
| Silas Call, | Enoch Little, |
| Joseph Couch, | Daniel Pillsbury, |
| Oliver Davis, | Ezekiel Morse, |

Moses Coffin.

At a meeting of the society June 4, it was voted to settle the Rev. Mr. Price in the gospel ministry in this place, that he may be given \$100. as a settlement, and an annual salary of \$330.

Rev. Mr. Price in his letter accepting the call to the society shows the general expectation of the church soon to be formed, referring to certain business conditions he writes "These being complied with I should view the way clearly opened for me to submit myself when most convenient, to the direction of an ecclesiastical council, here to be installed to the pastoral care of the church, when gathered, and the society now formed."

In 1811 the society was incorporated.

The Second Church of Christ in Boscawen

The Second Congregational Church in Boscawen was organized Sept. 10, 1804, with a membership of nine.

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Benjamin Sweatt, | Sarah Sweatt, |
| Sarah Call, | Edward Gerald, |
| Thomas Kilborn, | Anna Kilborn, |
| Paul Clark, | Ezekiel Morse, |

Mary Morse.

At the meeting for organization, Rev. Ethan Smith preached the sermon, and Rev. Dr. Wood offered the consecrating prayer. The first action of the church was in choosing Benjamin Sweatt, Moderator, and then unanimously giving the Rev. Ebenezer Price a call to become their pastor. Mr. Price accepted the call and was installed Sept. 26.

The churches represented in the council were those at Boscawen, Dunbarton, Hopkinton, Salisbury, Tamworth, Henniker and Canterbury. Mr. Price served as pastor until 1837 when at his request he was dismissed and Rev. Edward Buxton installed. In 1875 Mr. Buxton tendered his resignation. It was not accepted but for nearly one year Rev. W. C. Schofield was employed as pulpit supply in connection with his work at Salisbury. Mr. Buxton continued the pastorate until Oct. 4, 1883, when he was dismissed and Rev. Charles E. Gordon was installed.

Mr. Gordon resigned in 1891, and the pulpit was supplied by Rev. B. S. Gilman until 1892 when Rev. T. S. Lewis was installed. Mr. Lewis resigned in 1897.

Rev. N. J. Robinson was acting pastor until Oct. 15, 1899. Jan. 1, 1900, the church extended a call to the present pastor, Rev. J. Henry Bliss.