

**CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF
THE DEDICATION OF THE
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING-
HOUSE,
RINDGE, N.H. JANUARY 11, 1897**

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Centennial Celebration of the Dedication of the Congregational Meeting-House, Rindge, N.H.
January 11, 1897 by Various

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VARIOUS

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1797

1897

Centennial Celebration

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CONGREGATIONAL MEETING-HOUSE

RINDGE, N. H.

January 11, 1897.



PETERBORO':
TRANSCRIPT OFFICE, JOHN SCOTT, PROPRIETOR.
1897.



Congregational Church.
Photographed Jan. 1897.

PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS.

In response to word circulated among the people, the congregation met in the Vestry of the Congregational Church on the evening of Dec. 17, 1896. After the regular prayer meeting, the congregation resolved itself into a business meeting, with Rev. J. P. Richardson as moderator and H. W. Fletcher as clerk. The subject to be considered was the advisability of celebrating the centennial of the dedication of the present meeting-house on Jan. 11, 1897. The meeting voted to celebrate the occasion with afternoon and evening exercises and an intervening collation. The whole matter was committed into the hands of a general committee consisting of Rev. J. P. Richardson, Dea. H. E. Wetherbee, and Nathan A. Hale.

The general committee met, the next day, and appointed eight special committees. The appointments are here given, with one or two changes, caused by inability to serve.

Committee on Speakers:—Dea. H. E. Wetherbee, Mrs. O. D. Converse, A. F. Symonds.

Music:—Mrs. J. P. Richardson, Mrs. H. A. Stearns, M. L. Goddard.

Printing:—Mrs. Sarah R. H. Towns, Mrs. Clarence F. Towne, Emma E. Leighton.

Finance:—F. D. Converse, James H. Richardson.

Decorations:—Mrs. F. T. Wetherbee, Ella F. Brigham, Mrs. Otis H. Norcross.

Entertainment:—Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Emory, Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Fletcher.

Collation:—Mrs. M. W. Hale, Mrs. F. D. Converse, Mrs. H. W. Wellington.

Stabling:—A. M. Hale, F. L. Barrett, R. D. Converse.

All these committees served with enthusiasm and efficiency.

The committee on printing issued 400 invitations and sent them forth to friends outside the town, including sons and

daughters of Rindge. They also issued 600 programmes to be distributed at the celebration. The finance committee obtained from about fifty persons in town contributions of one dollar each. In addition to this and smaller amounts, Dea. W. A. Hale contributed two dollars; Mrs. Lucy Ramsdell, two dollars; Geo. H. Ingraham, five dollars; Ezra S. Stearns, ten dollars; Mary L. Ware, ten dollars; and Rodney Wallace, twenty-five dollars. These contributions proved sufficient, not only for meeting the expenses of the centennial, but for tuning the organ and for guaranteeing the publication of a centennial pamphlet. Incidental to the celebration was a gift from Marshall Wetherbee of fifty dollars in gold to go into the parish treasury.

THE CELEBRATION.

Monday, Jan. 11, 1897, was an exceptionally good day for the celebration. The weather was fair, and neither too cold nor too warm; the wheeling was better than might have been expected; and the evening was a moonlight one. Promptly at 2 o'clock, P. M. a congregation had assembled that nearly filled the spacious audience-room of the church. The exercises began with an organ prelude, "Gloria in Excelsis," by Mrs. R. E. Holgate. Rev. Dr. Foster read the 121st and 122d Psalms and offered prayer. Rev. A. C. Fay read the original hymn for 1797, and the last four stanzas were sung by the congregation. Then came the Address of Welcome by Dea. H. E. Wetherbee, followed by "Jesu, Lover of My Soul," sung by Miss Mabel Poland. The next in order was the historical address by the pastor, Rev. J. P. Richardson, and this was succeeded by "There's a Voice among the Angels," rendered by the quartette, Mrs. J. P. Richardson, Miss Eva A. Fletcher, Mrs. Holgate and Miss Poland. Rev. Frank G. Clark then stood forth as the only former pastor present. He told of the heroic struggles of the church with a debt, on which they were paying an annual interest of six hundred dollars. Again and again did they respond to his call to grapple with that great debt, till finally, under Pastor Riggs, they succeeded in cancelling it all. After Mr. Clark's address, considerable time was spent in listening to letters read by Mrs. Towne and Mrs. Towns of the committee on invitation or printing. Among these were three by former pastors. Pastor Dickerman wrote: "Precious memories will be recalled of those who have gone over the other side, and of changes that have occurred, in the nation and in the world, since your fathers and mothers dedicated your house to God. They have gone: kings and empires have passed away, but the church remains." Pastor Riggs wrote:—"There are many churches whose history has covered

a greater number of years than that of the Rindge church, but none whose record is more glorious, or that has been more faithful to the sacred and important trusts that have been committed to it. Two such pastorates as those of Doctors Payson and Burnham are enough to shed imperishable lustre upon any church organization. And when to these are added the names of other faithful men whose labors have been of briefer duration, but who have wrought with the same faithfulness and zeal according to the measure of their ability and opportunity, the hundred years furnish a history in which a people may take a pardonable pride." Pastor Merrill, in his letter, said:—"I have one of the first batch of shingles that ever covered the roof of the old church, which I preserve as a memento. Mr. Thomas Buswell informed me that it was on the church over fifty years, and, when it was shingled the second time, the best of the old shingles were culled out and put on a shed roof at his residence. I happened to be at his house when they were removing them, more than forty years afterwards, and secured one. It is quite sound except a little crumbling at the thick edge. The part which was exposed to the weather is worn to about half its original thickness, I suppose from the action of the water on the roof. The timbers in the roof I shall never forget. It is a good sign that the people cherish the old building in these days when there is so little reverence for the past." Hon. J. B. Walker sent the following:—"There are but few of the old time, two story meeting houses now to be found in the State. There is one at Jaffrey, one at Washington, one at Lyme, one at Henniker, one at Webster, one at Exeter, and perhaps a few others. These all speak of the period when we had Church and State in New Hampshire; when the people of an entire township went up together to their common sanctuary to worship. When kept in good condition, as yours has been, they attest the religious character and respectability of the generations which span the town's history. My grandfather, Judge Timothy Walker of Concord, repeatedly preached to the good people of Rindge in the years 1761 to 1764, inclusive, and was present when the former meeting-house was

raised on the 25th and 26th days of June, 1764, and received from them a call to the pastorate: the first, I think, extended by them to any one, and, so far as I know, the only one he ever received. Constraining reasons prevented its acceptance, and the disturbances which preceeded and accompanied the Revolution soon withdrew him to the duties of civil life and to a seat upon the judicial bench. The old Hingham, Mass., meeting-house was *two* hundred years old in 1881. That yours may be carefully guarded and stand indefinitely is my sincere hope." Rev. Dr. George L. Prentiss expressed his regrets thus:—"I have never been in Rindge; but the name for more than half a century has sounded to me almost as familiar and pleasant as that of my native town. The wife of my earliest pastor—a woman of rare loveliness and a dear friend of my mother—was a daughter of Rindge. And my wife (Elizabeth Prentiss), who was a granddaughter of Rindge, used to talk about the place as if she had been born there. I am sure, therefore, that no stranger could take part in the one hundredth anniversary of your meeting-house more heartily or more gratefully than I should. Nothing but midwinter and the infirmities of old age will keep me away." Rev. Dr. W. W. Rand, Secretary of the American Tract Society, responded thus by mail:—"I regret exceedingly that my duties here prevent my acceptance of your kind invitation. Memories of the venerable meeting-house, of the sightly parsonage where my grandfather Payson and his honored wife so long resided, and of the quiet farmhouse some three miles off where my father was born, and where some of my vacations were passed, draw me powerfully; and it would refresh me greatly to revisit the old scenes, and to meet the very few who remember my parents. My mother, Grata Payson Rand, died in 1818, and no one living probably remembers her. My father, however, Rev. Asa Rand, died in 1871, and some may recollect him. I trust that Providence will smile on your celebration in honor of His own house, and that the exercises will strengthen all the heavenly influences that centre in the dear old church, and that its sacred pulpit will always be unswervingly loyal to the whole word of