

**HISTORY OF THE FIRST ECCLESIASTICAL
SOCIETY IN EAST WINDSOR: FROM ITS
FORMATION IN 1752, TO THE DEATH OF
ITS SECOND PASTOR, REV. SHUBAEL
BARTLETT, IN 1854**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649536580

History of the First Ecclesiastical Society in East Windsor: From Its Formation in 1752, to the Death of its Second Pastor, Rev. Shubael Bartlett, in 1854 by Various

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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FROM ITS

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REV. SHUBAEL BARTLETT,

IN 1854.

WITH A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF REV. MR. BARTLETT, AND HIS
FAREWELL DISCOURSE, PREPARED FOR THE FIFTIETH
ANNIVERSARY OF HIS SETTLEMENT.

HARTFORD:

PRESS OF CASE, TIFFANY AND CO.

1857.

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HISTORY

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FIRST ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY IN EAST WINDSOR.

THE sanctuary in which to worship God, and the school-house in which the youthful mind is to receive the rudiments of education, have ever been the true insignia upon the standard of the Pilgrims, and wherever we find their descendants establishing a settlement we shall see amid the trees of the vast forest, or on the hill-top of the open country, the spire of the meeting-house pointing up to the eternal dwelling-place above, and its humble attendant nestling in some bye corner or near the highway path. They have never been noted for the beauty of their architecture nor for the pleasantness of their location, and have long been the jest of the heartless writer and the ignorant traveler, but to those who can sympathise in the true dignity and happiness of man, and can understand his dependence upon a pure heart and an understanding mind, there is a beauty in their tasteless architecture and a grandeur in their unpretending simplicity. To the native of

Castlebury

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New England however, they have charms that touch the tenderest chords of his heart. They are the near associates of that loved spot where his youth was matured. They are part of the "home of his childhood," and wherever else may be his residence in after years, that home with all its hallowed associations will still keep a clasp upon his heart and maintain its moral sway.

Many have already gone out from us, and are contending on the battle-field of life over the broad area of our country, and others are preparing to go. To such this unpretending narrative will contain subjects of deep interest. May its perusal bring up wholesome thoughts of past days, and recall those lessons from the Word of God which you once listened to in our old Scantic meeting-house.

The rapidity with which towns spring into existence at the present day forms a striking contrast to their progress one hundred years ago, and the present generation would have but an imperfect idea of the struggles and hardships endured by their ancestors should they judge them by what their eyes now witness of the process by which churches are founded and societies collected for their maintenance. Especially would this be the case in reference to the parish of which this record pretends to be a memorial.

Only those whose memories can reach back to the latter part of the last century can realize the immense strides which our whole country has made in the progress of social power, and it is only by recalling from the page of history events which to us now

appear almost fabulous recitals, but which only date back from the middle of the last century, that we can bring home to our perception the fact of the mighty development of wealth, and refinement, and social comfort.

In the year 1754 we were a part of the vast British empire. We acknowledged allegiance to a sovereign across the sea, and humbly prayed His Majesty for every privilege we needed, and willingly yielded our purses to his call, and fought under his standard against his enemies.

The native Indians were then in the very heart of our country. They encircled within their hunting-grounds the finest and most fertile portions of it, and their numbers were so many and their power so significant that they were alike feared and courted by the opposing forces of the civilized armies which in that day made our fair land the field of warfare.

In 1754, Washington was a young man just emerging into notice, an officer under the king, traversing with dauntless courage the wilds of the West, and training himself unconsciously for the splendid position he was in maturer years to occupy in our struggle for liberty and right.

Seventeen hundred and fifty-four was the epoch of Braddock's defeat. In 1757 occurred the remarkable massacre by the French and Indians at Fort William Henry. In 1759 the immortal Wolfe fell at the storming of Quebec, and that fortress, with the vast possessions of the French in the northern portion of America, fell into the hands of the British.

In 1765 the memorable Stamp Act was passed, and received the royal signature, and the first spark of that fire which finally kindled the blaze of the Revolution, was struck out, and the lion aroused in the hitherto passive breasts of our sires.

Six years after the incorporation of the town of East Windsor, at a meeting of the inhabitants convened on the first Monday of August, 1774, to deliberate on the dangerous situation of the liberties of the American colonies and the distressed condition of the town of Boston, Erastus Wolcott, Esq., was chosen moderator, and after the subject was largely discussed, the following resolution was unanimously passed :

“ That the measures which the British crown and parliament of late years have thought proper to adopt in relation to the colonies of America, in the opinion of this town, wear a very threatening aspect to their liberties and tranquillity, and deserve the most serious attention.

The Act for raising a revenue, for His Majesty, in America, to defray the expense of the administration of justice, and the support of civil government, and the defense of His Majesty's dominions in America, was made not only on principles subversive of the darling privilege of the English constitution, in taking away the property of the subject without his consent, but also with the further view to place it in the power of the crown to support a government in America independent on the people, and His Majesty undertaking to increase and pay the salaries of some of the American officers, who appeared most forward to favor the views of the crown, out of his American revenue, that used to be done by the people without any expense to the crown, affords ample proof of

such a design, and that the court and government of Great Britain design to have the government of the colonies entirely in their own hands. The situation of our affairs is truly distressing, but in the opinion of this town it ill becomes the offspring of those that have done and suffered so much in the cause of liberty to give up the most valuable blessings of life; but we ought to exert ourselves with great firmness, union, and resolution, to avoid the oppression that threatens us. We ought,

1st. In the first place most devoutly to look to Him, whose throne is in the heavens, for help and deliverance.

2d. That in the management of this unhappy controversy we ought to treat His Majesty, our rightful sovereign and his parliament, with a becoming conduct and expressions of loyalty and respect.

3d. We entirely approve of, and very much rejoice, that there appears to be such unanimity of sentiment in the colonies.

4th. That we judge it of the greatest importance that the several provinces, cities, towns, and each inhabitant thereof, lay aside all party and selfish views, and firmly abide by the decisions of our delegates about to assemble in Congress.

5th. In the opinion of this town every man that from lucrative motives, prejudice, or other mean and narrow views, shall counteract these measures, ought to be looked upon as a traitor to his country, and treated not with violence on his person, but with neglect and all the proper marks of disesteem which such a character deserves, and be made sensible of his ill conduct by denying the benefits of society, of commerce, and the common advantages of civilized life.

6th. That we look upon it to be our duty tenderly to sympathize with and liberally to contribute

to the relief of such as or shall be reduced to want in this struggle for liberty, and to do all in our power to encourage and strengthen those that appear for the support of it; and the inhabitants of this town do hereby agree, resolve, and engage, to conduct themselves in this important crisis of affairs, agreeable to the sentiments and duties set forth in the above-mentioned particulars. And that

William Wolcott, Erastus Wolcott, Charles Ellsworth, Jr., Esq., Captain Ebenezer Grant, Benoni Olcott, Lemuel Stoughton, Daniel Ellsworth, Jr., Edward Chapman Grant, be a committee to keep a correspondence with the towns of this and the neighboring colonies, and to promote and forward such contributions that shall be made in this town for the relief of the poor in Boston under their present distress."

How far off, almost in fairy land, do our minds now place these events and the state of society which this record brings back, and yet all these occurred since the formation of our ecclesiastical society in 1752. The physical aspect of the parish then had not much to recommend it, almost a continuous forest spread over its eastern section, with only a few cleared spots where settlers had felled the trees and were cultivating the openings which their own hands had made. The beautiful undulations of its surface, the rolling hills, and winding streams, and rich meadows, which now please the eye and afford a picturesque home-view to almost every location throughout its whole area, were then hidden beneath the spreading arms of the giant oaks.

As early as 1736, settlers began to select favorable spots for location amid the forests—some choosing