

**RECORDS OF REV. ROGER
VIETS: RECTOR OF ST.
ANDREW'S, SIMSBURY,
CONN., 1736-1800**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649398973

Records of Rev. Roger Viets: Rector of St. Andrew's, Simsbury, Conn., 1736-1800 by Albert C. Bates

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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ALBERT C. BATES

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VIETS: RECTOR OF ST.
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RECORDS
OF
REV. ROGER VIETS

RECTOR OF

ST. ANDREW'S, SIMSBURY, CONN.

AND

MISSIONARY FROM THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF
THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS

1763-1800

BY ALBERT C. BATES
Librarian Connecticut Historical Society

HARTFORD

1893

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

In the year 1740 there was organized in the easterly part of the town of Simsbury, Connecticut, known as Scotland, and within the limits of the present town of Bloomfield, the Episcopal parish of St. Andrew's. From the humble beginning of six persons it grew rapidly, in spite of the ill repute in which the sect was held by the Congregationalists. The year 1744, previous to which a glebe of fifty acres had been purchased and a church erected, marks the coming of their first pastor, Rev. William Gibbs, who was sent to the mission by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. His active labors were suddenly brought to a close after ten years by a melancholia or loss of mind. This grievous trouble was brought upon him by the barbarous treatment to which he was subjected for refusing to pay a tax laid for the support of the Congregational minister within the limits of whose parish St. Andrew's was situated. For this refusal he was arrested, thrown over a horse, and with hands and feet bound together so as to secure him to the horse was conveyed to Hartford jail. After this he performed his ministerial duties occasionally as his health would permit, and continued to reside in the parish until his death, March 22, 1777, "in the 63d year of his age, and the 33d of his mission, and 23d of his illness."

In June, 1759, Roger Viets, a native of Simsbury and a graduate of Yale College the previous year, with the degree of A.B., who through his reading in the college library had become converted to the Episcopal belief, was employed by the parish as a lay reader. After he had served two years in that capacity the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was informed that "his religious Principles and moral Character are such, that the People of Simsbury are

desirous of engaging him in their Service, if the Society should see fit to indulge them, in his Favour, with some Addition to the Salary allowed to that Mission." Upon this, "the Society taking the Case of Mr. Gibbs's Parish into Consideration, have agreed to receive Mr. Viets into their Service, and make him an Allowance of 201 per Annum, for the Care of the Church of Simsbury, as soon as he shall be admitted to holy Orders and enter upon the Care of that Parish." There being no Bishop at this time in America, Mr. Viets made a voyage to England and was admitted to orders in the spring of 1763. Upon his return he at once entered with energy upon his duties as rector of the, at this time, somewhat disorganized parish of St. Andrew's. Nor were his labors confined to this parish alone; a glance at his record of christenings will show that his work extended into other towns, some of them forty or more miles away. Under his active ministry the church increased in size and prosperity, and a new mission called St. Ann's was established at Salmon Brook in the present town of Granby, about five miles distant, where services were held one Sunday in each month. A church was also built at Great Barrington, Mass., about thirty miles distant.

His reports made to the "Venerable Society" contain numerous references to the insults and petty persecutions to which himself and his people were subjected. After having paid their rate towards his support, his followers were often forced to pay a further rate towards the support of the "dissenting" minister.

At the breaking out of the Revolution Mr. Viets favored the royalist side of the cause and in consequence was closely watched. At one time, upon suspicion of having aided in the escape of some royalist prisoners, he was seized and thrown into Hartford jail, where he was kept for a time in irons. He continued his ministry here until the close of the Revolution. In 1787, upon the invitation of the "Venerable Society," which until the acknowledgment of American independence had given its aid to the Episcopal parishes, he removed to Nova Scotia and became rector of the church in Digby, where he continued to reside until his death August 11, 1811.

An important event in his life was his visit in 1800 to the scene of his former labors in Connecticut, at which time he christened many of the children of his old friends and former parishioners.

During his connection of twenty-eight years with the parish of St. Andrew's its prosperity was noteworthy, as is shown by the fact the number of church families under his care increased during that time from 75 to 280.

Mr. Viets, who was known as a cultured and scholarly man, had a well-selected library said to have been the best in the colony in his day. He was the second of the ten children of Captain John and Lois (Phelps) Viets. He was born March 9, 1737, and was twice married, first to Hester Botsford who died April 25, 1800, and second to Mercy Isaacs. He was the father of eight children, descendants of some of whom still reside in Nova Scotia.

LOCAL GLOSSARY.

- CIDERBROOK** — In the south part of the town of Avon.
- COHABIT** — That part of Guilford now called North Guilford.
- FALLS** — Now the village of Tariffville in the town of Simsbury; so called from the rapids in the Farmington River at that place.
- HOPMEADOW** — The business center of the town of Simsbury.
- JUDEA** — That part of the town of Washington which was set off from the towns of Woodbury and Litchfield.
- LOWDEN** — Perhaps the present Loudenville near Albany, N. Y.
- MORETOWN** — The extreme south part of the town of Westfield, Mass.
- NEW PRESTON** — That part of the town of Washington which was set off from the towns of Kent and New Milford.
- NOBLETOWN** — In the town of Westfield, Mass.
- NORTHINGTON** — Now the town of Avon; formerly a parish of Farmington.
- POQUONNOCK** — A village in the town of Windsor.
- SALMON BROOK** — The business center of the town of Granby.
- SCOTLAND** — The locality in which St. Andrew's is situated.
- SPENCERTOWN** — A village in the town of Austerlitz, N. Y.
- SUFFRAGE** — The extreme southeast part of the town of Canton.
- TERRY'S PLAIN** — In the eastern part of the town of Simsbury.
- TURKEY HILLS** — Formerly a parish of Simsbury; now the town of East Granby.
- WEATOGUE** — A village in Simsbury, south of Hopmeadow.
- WEST SIMSBURY** — Now the town of Canton.
- WINTONBURY** — Now the town of Bloomfield; formerly an ecclesiastical parish comprising parts of the towns of Windsor, Farmington, and Simsbury, whence the name Wintonbury.

CHRISTNINGS.

[1] I Christned.

At S^t. Dunstan's in the West
London April 24th 1763
In the Parish of S^t. Dunstan's
in the west London May 5th
A. D. 1763

Two Children
a female Child named
Alce
a female Child
named Anne

At Marlborø in Province of Maïsa-
chufets Bay N. England.
July 10th A. D. 1763.

a female Child of
Joshua Rock of
Westbury named
Nancy.

At S^t. Andrew's Church Symsbury
July 17th A.D. 1763

A male Child of John
Hygley named Heber.
A Male Child of Elisha
Grifwoud named Elisha
A Male Child of Sam^l
Northaway's named
Isaac

July 31st A. D. 1763.

A female Child of
Timothy Addams Ju^r.
named Lydia

August 7th 1763

At Josh. Holcomb Jur^r Falls
At Moretown in Westfield
August 11th 1763

A female Child of Paroe a
free Negroe named Jane.
a male Child of John
Millar Ju^r. named
Oliver.

At S^t. Ann's Ch^h Salmonbrook
August 21st 1763

a male Child of William
Moor Named King
a Female Child of Ditto
Named Eve
a Female Child of Ditto
named Sarah

At S^t. Andrews Ch^h Symsb^r
August 28th 1763

a female Child of Dan^l
Alderman named
Elizabeth.

[2] At S. Andrew's ch ^h Symb ^r Sep ^r . 11 th A. D. 1763	A Male Child of Tho ^r . Davies named Phinehas A Male Child of Thomas Davies named Philander A female Child of Thomas Davies named Sarah A female Child of Thomas Davies named Elizabeth. A male Child of Maskil Bacon Ju ^r , named Daniel.
At S ^t . Ann's Ch ^h Salmonbrook Sep ^r . 18 th A. D. 1763	A male Child of Isaac Moore named Jacob Holcomb.
October 2 nd A. D. 1763 At Suffrage At Eben ^r . Moore's Turkeyhills October 7 th 1763	A male Child of Amos Cafe named Seth. A Female Child of Ebenezer Moore named Zubah, A Female Child of Ebenezer Moore named Violet. A male Child of Joel Moore named Joel Furbish.
At S ^t . Ann's Church Salmonbrook October 9 th A. D. 1763 At great Barrington October 23 rd A. D. 1763	A male Child of Miles Wooster named Miles. A female Child of Nehemiah Mefenger named Mary A female Child of Beriah Thomas named Margaret
At Egremont Octob ^r . 24 th . 1763.	A male Child of John Tullar named Seneca. A female of Ditto named Parlina A male of Ditto named Martin A male of Ditto named Joel