



1836-1911

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FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH.

WESTFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

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SEVENTY-FIFTH  
ANNIVERSARY EXERCISES

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HISTORICAL ADDRESS

METHODISM IN WESTFIELD

DELIVERED BY

ROBERT CHAPIN PARKER

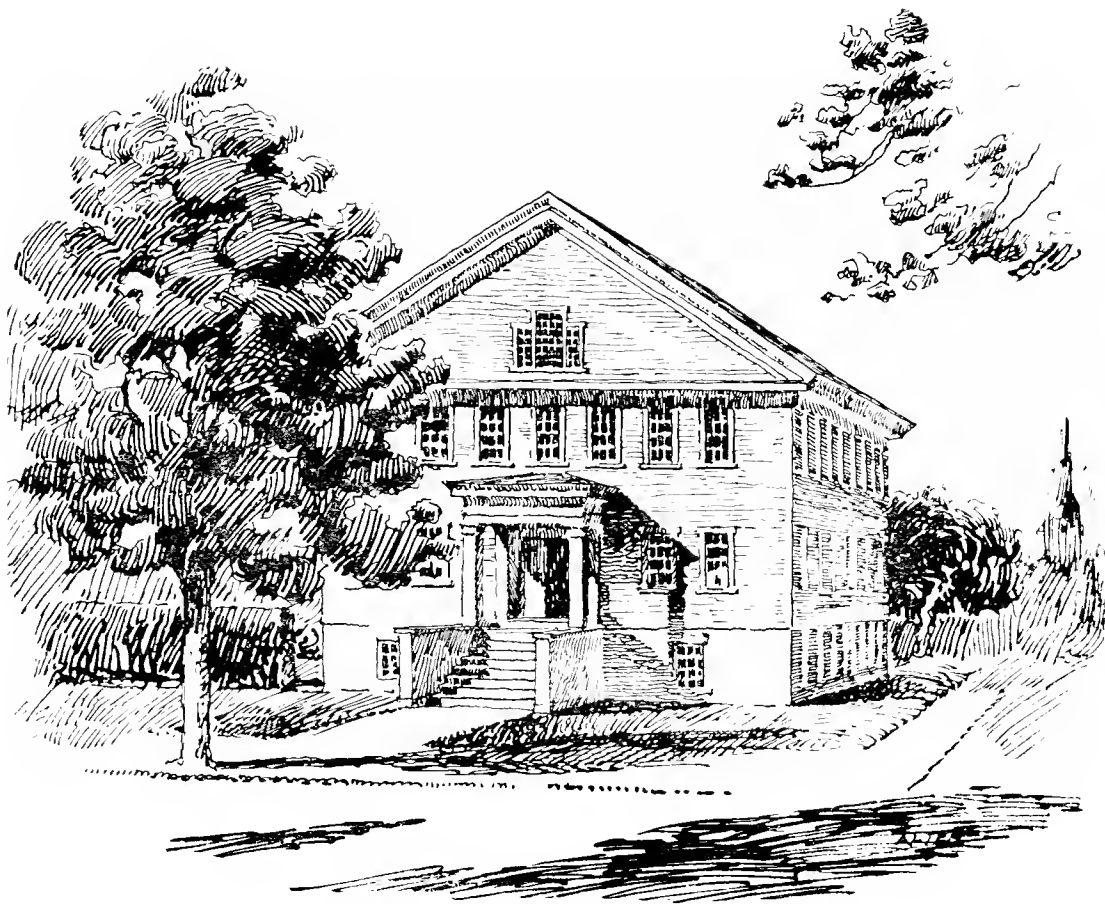
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1911

AT 6.30 P. M.

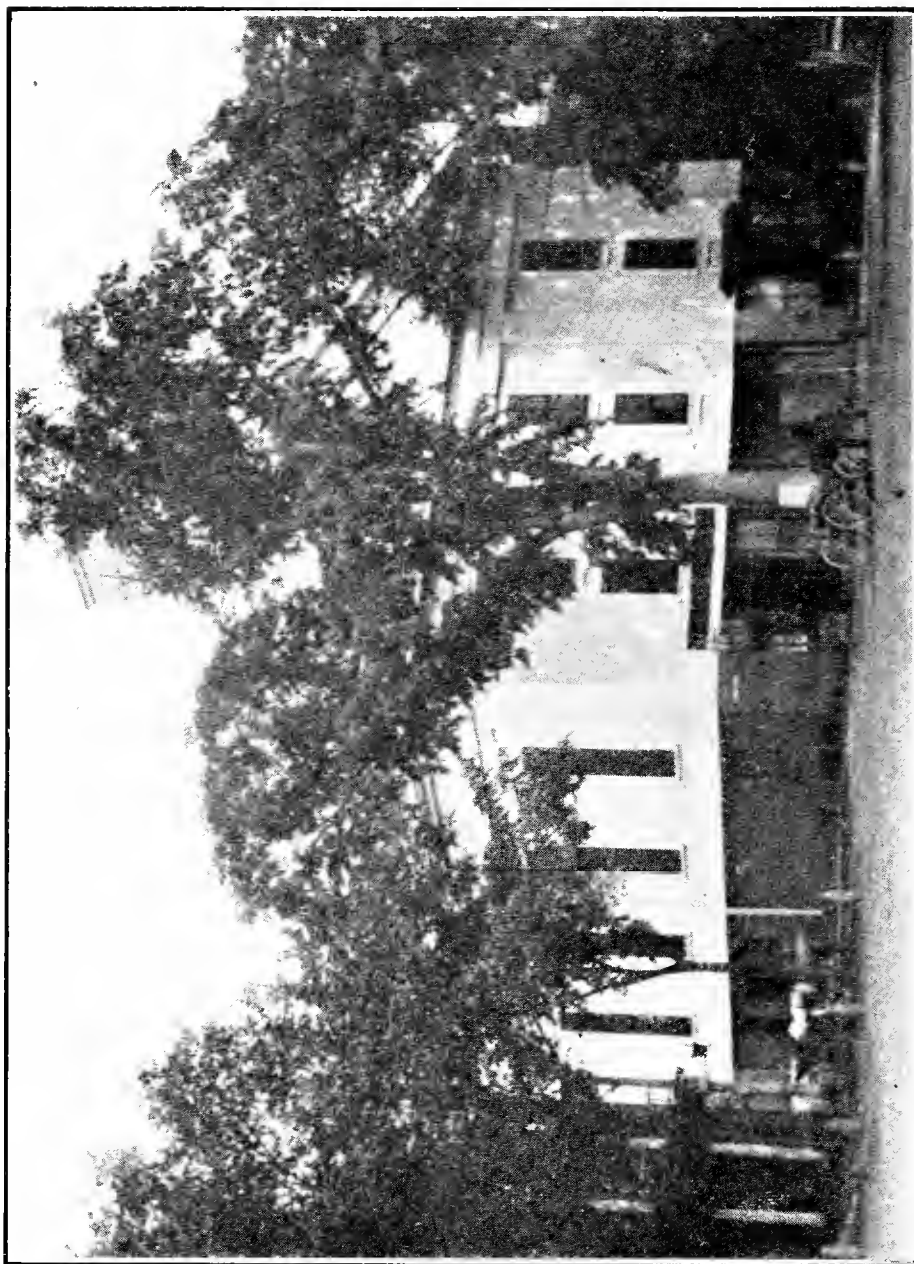
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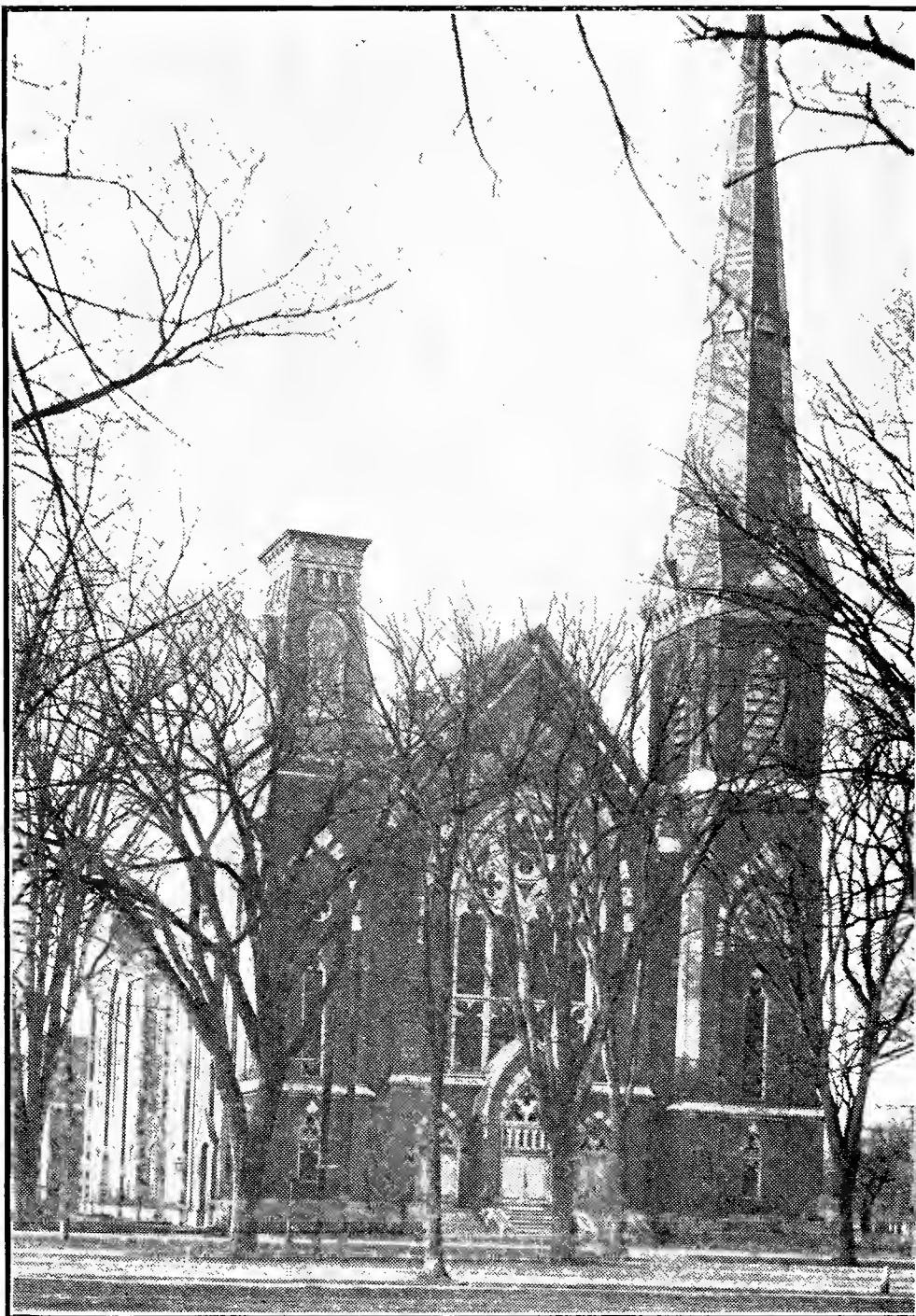




FIRST METHODIST CHURCH IN WESTFIELD



SECOND CHURCH



PRESENT CHURCH



REV. PHILIP L. FRICK, D. D.

## **Philip L. Frick**

Son of Conrad and Frederica Frick; born at Denver, Colorado, Jan. 20, 1874. Graduated from the East Denver High School 1893; the University of Denver 1897. Taught in Central High School, Pueblo, and Manual Training High School, Denver. Completed course in theology leading to degree of S. T. B. at Boston University in 1901. One year of postgraduate study in Germany at the University of Berlin and the University of Halle, specializing in Philosophy and Comparative Religions. 1903, received from Boston University degree of Ph. D. for work completed under Professor Browne. First appointment, while a student at the School of Theology, at Appleton church, Neponset. Admitted to the New England Conference, 1902, and for two years pastor at Flint Street, Somerville; 1904-1908, First Church, Chelsea; Westfield, 1908-1912; Delaware Avenue, Buffalo 1912—. Married Oct. 1, 1902 to Ruth Rishell, daughter of Professor C. W. Rishell of Boston University School of Theology. One daughter, Elizabeth Frederica Frick, born March 26, 1904 at Somerville. Received degree of D. D. from University of Denver, in 1914. Author of "The Resurrection and Paul's Argument," published in 1912.





ROBERT CHAPIN PARKER

## **Robert Chapin Parker**

Was born at the home of his maternal grandfather, Abel J. Chapin in South Livonia, N. Y., January 19, 1871, son of Robert F. and Elizabeth E. (Chapin) Parker, and grandson of Rev Samuel Parker, a veteran member of the Central New York Conference. He moved to Westfield, Mass. with his parents in 1875, when his father was elected president of the American Whip Company, and Westfield has been his home since. He was graduated at the Westfield High School, 1888; East Greenwich, R. I., Academy, 1889; Wesleyan University, (B. A.) 1893; South Carolina College, (LL. B.) 1895. Admitted to the Massachusetts Bar, 1896; clerk of District Court of Western Hampden 1896-1901; Special Justice of the same Court since 1902. Member of School Committee 1901-1907, and chairman for four years. Lay Delegate to General Conference, Los Angeles, 1904. Married Mary E. Snow (B. U. '99) October 14, 1908. Official positions, —Steward since 1896; Sunday School Superintendent since 1909. Vice President, Massachusetts Sunday School Association; Chairman of Committee of Management, Northfield Summer School of Sunday School Methods; Secretary of Directors, Westfield Young Men's Christian Association; Clerk of Trustees of Westfield Academy; President of Springfield District Camp Meeting Association.



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The history of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Westfield naturally divides itself (1) into the days of the circuit, without a special place of worship,—(2) the era of the edifice on Main street,—(3) the time of the structure on Elm and School streets,—(4) and then the latter years, the abiding in this spacious building in which we are now gathered. These four divisions are of uneven length, but they are simple and evident, and perhaps as desirable for the purposes of our short survey as could be made. The first period, that of the circuit rider with his courageous faith, covers about forty years; the second, that of construction and adjustment, ten years; the third, that of unrest, revival and aggressiveness, thirty years; and the fourth and last period, that of consistent progress, substantial prosperity and assured position, thirty-five years. If you prefer, you may characterize it thus:—first, the coming of the missionary, fearless, tireless, and with the message of “Whosoever will”, supported by an ecclesiastical organization especially adapted for the spread of a new gospel in the wilds of a new country; then, the erection of a special place of worship, dedicated as the home of this new sect; in a decade, this place outgrown and a second structure put up, for the same sect and their popular doctrine; a score and one-half years flying by and the trend of events then demands strongly another and much improved church building, well located.

The olden circuit-rider, rugged in his righteousness, rich in his experience, zealous in his labors, and strenuous in his activity, his horse and his bible his constant companions, appeals strongly to our imaginations. Popular or unpopular, learned or unlearned, gracious or rude, alone or with his fellow laborers, he was always picturesque, and always aggressive. He preferred to be invited to visit a new community, and he preferred to

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have his audience furnished, but he was not at all insistent. He had a message and he had authority for delivering it—yea, verily, he was held strictly responsible by district and conference as to how he fulfilled the high calling that was his. Can you not see him as he approaches the attractive little community of Hoop-Pole in the year 1794? Riding slowly along on his faithful horse, saddle bags well extended with supplies for several days, now and then taking in somewhat of the beautiful scenery about him, occasionally glancing at a book held in his hand,—of wiry build, of ruddy countenance, of kindly but firm face, initiative stamped in his every appearance, he pauses to make inquiry, and then boldly rides up to the Widow Loomis' house and dismounts. Throwing the reins over a convenient post, carefully gathering his precious saddle-bags in his arms, he mounts the front steps and gives the knocker a resounding thump. The Itinerant had arrived, and Methodism had entered the confines of Westfield. We become a part of the famous Granville Circuit, centering at the renowned Beech Hill, and which in 1800 belonged to the Rhinebeck District of the New York Conference and furnished the Presiding Elder with a territory extending from the Hudson to the Connecticut.

We instinctively associate religious services, especially preaching, with a regularly instituted place of worship, a church. The itinerant was familiar with churches and occasionally had the privilege of preaching therein, but it was rare compared with his holding forth in house, in school house, and if the audience was large, even in some hospitable barn. He went forth with his fellow circuit-rider, visiting the classes, organizing new classes, laying foundations for future church organizations and dignified structures, making the round of the whole circuit, possibly once in two weeks, perhaps only once in four weeks. Occasionally he was able to meet with a certain class or preach in a certain settlement on Sunday, but more often on some week night. Ministering to the sick, consoling the sorrowful, burying the dead, advising the troubled, saving the lost and up-building the republic, these brave, resolute, wise and hardy pioneers, these itinerants of the former days, these honored circuit riders, have left us a splendid heritage. No page of our early history, shines brighter. They labored and we have entered into their

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labors. They laid the foundations and we erected the superstructure, but they laid the foundations deep, with their sacrifice, their toil and their devotion. Their illustrious record belongs not alone to the great church which they made possible, but it is also the property of the country which they honored and endowed in its early days of trial, perplexity and experiment. All honor to the itinerant! His saddle was his parsonage, scattered communities his parish, experience his teacher, the St. James Version his authority and an ever-present God his consolation.

The Granville Circuit, composed of many surrounding classes and charges and originally in the New England Conference, in 1800 was placed in the New York Conference, and continued therein until 1829, when the greater portion of this Circuit was set off to New England, where it more properly belonged and where it has since remained. Beech Hill, of familiar sound and lofty elevation, the location of whose original church building, is now marked by an inscribed boulder recently erected through the enterprise of one of our young men, D. B. Aldrich; Feeding Hills, now honored by a memorial church built by one of our own members, E. R. Lay; and Hoop-Pole, were three of the early regular classes of this extensive circuit, extending from Agawam to Worthington and beyond, and taxing to the utmost the powers of the two brethren assigned each year as itinerant preachers. In 1798 in September, the Conference met at Granville with about fifty ministers present, the largest assembly of Methodist preachers ever assembled in New England. In 1800, this Granville Circuit reported 300 members, and in 1810, 352 members while in that latter year Lynn had but 245, and Boston only 306. The reports tend to show that the circuit-riders received their support in some other way than funds, for the few dollars contributed are merely nominal, but their zeal knew no financial limitations.

The year 1800 was marked by two events of real importance. The Rev. Billy Hibbard, who had joined the Conference in 1798, was with the Rev. Truman Bishop assigned to the Granville Circuit, and for all of that year he rode among the various stations and classes and had the honor of forming the first class in

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Westfield, at Hoop-Pole. Hibbard was one of those unique men, who left a reputation behind him. He prided himself on the familiarity of his name. At a Conference session when the roll was called, and the name Billy Hibbard was announced, the presiding bishop ventured to make an alteration, "William Hibbard." The Reverend "Billy" arose, with all the dignity and fearlessness of his circuit riding career, drew himself to full height and vigorously protested, "My name is 'Billy.'" The bishop modestly retreated and never again was there any attempt to make over the Rev. Billy Hibbard. Most of his career was passed in New York state, but his active twelve months on the great Granville Circuit were such as to be remembered. He has written:—"Some threw stones at me, and some set their dogs on me, as I rode along. But the Lord defended me. I never had a stone to hit me, or a dog to bite me. Some threatened to whip me, but I escaped." A company lay in wait for him in a swamp, through which he had to ride from Springfield to Westfield, proposing to whip him, but as he was passing a house before he came to the swamp, a woman called to him that Brother A was sick and wanted a visit, so he turned his horse and rode cross lots to Brother A's house and on leaving him went another road, escaping the mob. .

Amasa Stocking, an exhorter, started revival services that became of such importance in Hoop-Pole, that it became necessary to remove to Moses Sackett's barn to accommodate the congregation. The Congregational society in the center of the town, the natural and assumed guardian of the town's welfare, became alarmed over the proceedings and called a meeting of the society to see what should be done "to steady the ark in Hoop-Pole." They wisely sent their pastor. He went and saw and rejoiced. He reported there was no danger of Hoop-Pole for God was there. Mr. Stocking was licensed as a preacher and for some years he held forth in school houses and private houses, but he never became a regular itinerant or circuit rider of the Conference. He is an excellent illustration of the splendid work performed by local workers in many of the early pioneer fields. It is told of Brother Carter of Russell, one of the old-time preachers, who held many services, that one night, returning home, he was so absorbed in some heavenly theme, as to walk right by his own home.

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During the pastorates of Rev. Reuben Harris and of Rev. Thomas Thorpe, in 1812, a class was formed in the center of town at the corner of Main and Elm streets, in the Joel Farnum house. This residence was the headquarters of the itinerants passing through Westfield. Hotels and inns were none too plenty at best, and even if they were accessible, the circuit riders had not the opportunity to stop at them, because of financial limitations. These hospitable homes of the Farnum type, so frequent and so blessed, in the days of the itinerant, helped make possible, the founding of the Methodist Church, and they deserve mention. However, it was not a one-sided affair, for the circuit riders were delightful guests, bringing in much of their experiences in the outer world, and contributing to relieve the tediousness and the ever-present strain of pioneer life. The class consisted of ten and was under the leadership of Oliver Sikes, a leader and local preacher, afterwards an itinerant preacher. We find Mrs. Farnum as one of the original members. Strange as it may seem to us the class was officially connected with the church at Feeding Hills. Methodism now had a foot-hold in the center of the town, and received its regular visitations and sermons from the already actively engaged duo of clergymen assigned each year by the Conference to the Granville Circuit. It was to be twenty years before the Methodists of the center of the town were to have a regular place of worship, erected for their use. The revival at Little River in 1818, in connection with the labors of Guy Noble, must have added to the strength of the local organization.

Probably Nathan Bangs, Presiding Elder of the Rhinebeck District from 1813 to 1817, was the most distinguished of the men who had oversight of this great district extending from the Hudson to the Connecticut. The wonderful fore-sight of our ecclesiastical system in looking after all desirable communities, has been made possible, by the office of Presiding Elder and District Superintendent. How these worthies of the olden days were able to perform their duties makes us marvel! No railroads occasional stage coaches, and poorly constructed highways were obstacles they encountered, in traveling their widely-stretching districts. Dr. Bangs, afterwards the distinguished church historian and able writer, was a giant in those days, in mind and



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body. His position as Presiding Elder was materially aided by natural influence that he had over others. In walking, it is related that he had inclination to hold his head on one side. This habit was unconsciously copied by intimate personal friends. After a Conference session, it is said to have been interesting to watch the effect that Dr. Bangs had exerted upon the young preachers, consciously or unconsciously, in their imitation of his mannerisms. "Young Bangs," some wag called them. It is all a wonderful testimony to the power of the wonderful man who travelled this district for several years and afterwards became one of the intellects of the church, of whom the denomination has reason to be proud. The graduation of class-leader, intinerant preacher, presiding elder and bishop, justified itself in those early days even more than now, but the presence of a really great man like Dr. Bangs, was a real aid to the system.

In the order of human events, it proved desirable, even necessary, to erect a church structure. We can readily imagine the struggles, even privations found necessary, to make this possible. In a new country, without manufacturing or special industry other than agriculture, and with primitive means of transportation, the building of a church edifice was made possible only by the resourcefulness of the people themselves. Timber was obtainable near at hand and everybody was familiar, by close acquaintance, with actual manual labor. The church at Hoop-Pole, so well-known to all of us, was dedicated in the latter part of the year 1829. For those times it must have been a really worthy edifice. It is interesting to note that its building coincides with the year in which the Granville Circuit, or that portion of it especially concerned with Hampden and Hampshire County, was set off to the New England Conference, and became a portion of the Springfield District, with Rev. David Kilburn as Presiding Elder. Rev. Elbert Osborn, who with Rev. L. Mead, closed his pastorate of the Granville Circuit in May 1829, reports preaching once every two weeks in Westfield, in a private house, on a week evening, which gives us a very fair idea of the status of Methodist worship in Westfield, at the time we separated from the Rhinebeck District and New York Conference and began receiving pastors from the New England Conference. The erection of the new church was an event of great importance

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to all Methodists of this section. We can hardly appreciate what it signified, after the years of worshipping in residences. Brother Kilburn preached the dedication sermon from the text, "This is none other than the House of God," a well chosen theme for those interested people, at last settled in a "House of God."

No well-regulated account of this important dedication ever omits the experience with the heating of the house. Foot-stoves, soap-stones, and other early forms of primitive warmth were possible, to say nothing of the old-fashioned sheet-iron wood stove, but it is possible that the heating equipment for the place had been delayed. Anyway, November or December are cool months, and recourse was had to kettles filled with charcoal, placed about the auditorium. The services proceeded and after a time the Presiding Elder noticed a seeming lassitude upon the part of his hearers, then a sleepiness, and even an evident unconsciousness. A retiring man, of sensitive disposition, might have considered it a possible result of his sermon, and attempted to put more stress into it, or at length, embarrassed, sat down too confused to proceed. Not so, Brother Kilburn. His varied experiences had developed a resourcefulness and a quickness of decision and action, so necessary in those days. He simply stopped his discourse, took instant command of the situation, ordered the offending kettles removed, the windows and doors thrown open, the room thoroughly aired, and when all the people were restored to consciousness and ability to appreciate a worthy discourse on a really great occasion, he calmly proceeded with the dedication, in decency and order. Just how many people from the center used to wend their way to the Hoop-Pole Church we do not know, but we assume it must have been several of those interested, for the distance is not great. The erection of this first church building naturally gave encouragement and standing to the Methodist work throughout the borders of the whole town.

Until the spring of 1832 the name Granville appeared as the leading place in the printed minutes, with Westfield, Feeding Hills, etc., as subordinate, but now Westfield arises to the dignity of the Head of a Circuit, so-called. And coinciding with this, comes the planning and erection of a church building in the

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center of the town, for the dignity of being at the head of the circuit, was hardly to be borne, with no established place of regular worship. The town of Westfield presented the lot, at the corner of Main street and Clinton avenue. The corner stone was laid with ceremony and the address was delivered by a visiting minister from Springfield. The frame of the church was raised with some delay. The timbers were large and heavy and the help was small. Some extra assistance was borrowed from Erastus Grant's shop and the walls went up. Henry Douglass fearing that if the men scattered for dinner, they could not be readily assembled afterwards, sent around the neighborhood for pies and other satisfying eatables. The weary workers sat on the timbers and rested and refreshed themselves, and before night-fall, they had almost entirely completed the raising. But, alas,—after the frame had been raised, it remained uncovered, all the season, and made it possible for the unfriendly and critical, as they passed by to wag their heads and say, as of old, "This man began to build and was not able to finish."

The work of finishing the house proceeded slowly. It was not until the spring of 1833 that the frame was boarded and shingled and a floor laid. A rough pulpit was extemporized, rougher seats installed and meetings actually held in the new structure.

The good Methodist people of Westfield now felt hopeful and had reason to rejoice. The new church actually up, the vestry finished and good summer accommodations on hand. In the fall, came the completion of the church and its dedication, September 10th, 1833. To quote from the *Westfield Journal*:—"The audience was large and respectable, and the services solemn and interesting. The church is large and commodious; it is finished in handsome style; it adds much to the appearance of our village." The dedicating sermon was preached by one of the most eloquent men of those times, Rev. Hiram H. White, who had recently come to Springfield and his text was one dealing with "The House of the Lord." It is indeed interesting to note that one of the pastors sent by the New England Conference this same year has left behind him a distinct reputation for the beauty of his voice, and it was in this new place of worship that the humble Methodist people of Westfield, had the splendid op-

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portunity to listen to this preacher so signally endowed. The circumstances of the recently erected edifice, the worshipful character of services conducted in worshipful surroundings, and the charm of Brother Tucker's musical voice, must have left an impression upon the many souls gathered herein, from time to time.

We are not surprised to read of the gracious work of these years immediately succeeding the building of the new church. Brother Ephraim Scott reports 1834 and 1835 as "Years full of glory, the two best of my life." "Forty were added to the church, most heads of families." The Reverend Paul Townsend also reports "I spent two happy years in Westfield and God blessed my labors." The charge seems to have enjoyed a certain popularity with the clergy, which has come down to the present day.

The second period of our historical division concludes with the pastorate of one of the really great men who have served this church. Just before his arrival in Westfield, Hiram Harrison retired from the Superintendency of the Sunday School and Thomas Kneil entered upon that position. Also an event of such significance as to be difficult of appreciation took place. The Boston and Albany railroad was opened, with all that that meant to the Commonwealth and its towns in possibility and accessibility. The Granville Circuit was no longer on the outskirts, but it became and remained, with other communities and circuits, more accessible and nearer-at-hand.

It was during the pastorate of Rev. Paul Townsend that Westfield was honored by being made a separate society, and it is from that time, 1836, that the anniversary celebrated to-night, dates. Slavery began to become a prominent issue, to say nothing of the Washingtonian temperance movement of 1840. It is to our credit that the Methodists were found in the advance ranks of both these reforms, but they caused discussion and great activity in the ranks of the churches, to say nothing at all of the theological discussions of these earlier days. Some Congregationalist, feeling himself called to the task, sets about dealing blows at the Arminian doctrine, that are calculated to give comfort to all true Calvinists, and he is answered by the learned Dr. Fiske or some other suitably equipt ministerial writer. One did not rust out in those trying days.—The new church gave po-

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sition, and assurance, but it was a center of real mental and spiritual strivings. The people became strong with exercise, which was not lacking.

Jefferson Hascall was not unknown to Westfield when he arrived in the summer of 1842, to take up the work of a pastor, for he had been here twelve years previously and also had engaged in revival services. He was greeted with choice words and the kindest courtesy by the people; and the Westfield News-Letter heralded him handsomely. His appointment was highly appreciated. His eloquence and his powers of leadership, so prominent throughout his long life, bore fruits in this charge, that must have surprised those who knew him intimately. He began his pastorate without prejudice and without criticism, and the people gave heed to his word. His fine literary taste, combined with his forcefulness and initiative and eloquence would have given him a following anywhere. His meetings are said to have been prayerful, penitential and powerful. His splendid welcome in Westfield, the possibilities of the growing parish and the conditions that he found here, must have imprest him greatly, for we find him at once encouraging the people to erect a larger and more centrally-located place of worship. Dr. Hascall was a man of great plans, purposes and prospective wisdom. A lot was at once selected and the new house commenced. The frame was built near the canal in Northampton, general dimensions 81 x 63, with a vestry 63 x 47, the structure completed to contain 116 pews. Dedication day came in March 1843, less than a year after the arrival of Dr. Hascall, as pastor of the church. Is it to be wondered at that he served as Presiding Elder for 21 years and had few or no superiors in that position of executive responsibility?

The dedication sermon was preached by Rev. Charles Adams, principal of the Academy at Wilbraham, whose dependence upon the new railway on a snowy March day, made him an hour late, and then he arrived by means of horse transportation. He found Presiding Elder Ransom just about to begin the sermon. Dr. Hascall reports Dr. Adams' sermon as "adapted, original, eloquent, and giving universal satisfaction." "The choir sang excellent, solemn and devotional." The crowd was large, the pastor cheery, and the occasion surely auspicious, except for the delay

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of the preacher of the occasion. The voluntary was played by an organist from Boston. Then followed singing by the choir, "Now to the Lord a Noble Song." Lessons read by Rev. James Mudge of West Springfield. Singing by the choir, "O Thou, Whom all saints adore." Prayer by Rev. James Mudge. Singing, "Before Jehovah's awful throne." Sermon by Dr. Adams. Congregational singing, "Behold Thy Temple, God of Grace." Prayer by Rev. Dr. Davis. Doxology, Benediction pronounced by the Presiding Elder. And so the spacious new church, an edifice of which the society had reason to be proud was dedicated and set apart to the work of Methodism in Westfield. The progress made must have surprised even those who were a part of it. It is quite possible that the labors of the old circuit-riders, labors which must have seemed barren at times, were now bearing much fruit and in short season. Merely to state the fact of the dedication of two specially built churches within ten years, is eloquent with impressiveness.

Is it to be wondered at that the handsome new structure was honored with a Sunday school exhibition, on the 3d of May and only two months after the dedication? The prosperity of the Westfield Methodists was not only a matter of local interest and pride, but the New England Conference participated therein, by holding its session here, in the month of July of the following year, and thus focussed attention upon Westfield far beyond the local borders. This Conference closed the successful labors of the popular, poetical and saintly Hascall. Although it was not till 1887 that he came into the precincts of his own beautiful hymn, "My latest sun is sinking fast, my race is nearly run," he never was stationed at Westfield again. The church membership was 390 at this time, and a Sunday School enrollment of about 150, with an attendance of about 100. West Parish was made a separate station in 1843, and a minister assigned.

The Conference session of 1844 was presided over by Bishop Hedding and also by Bishop Janes who had just been elected a bishop and was officially at his first conference. The Conference Sabbath was really a great day for local Methodism. Bishop Janes preached in our own church, Father Taylor of unique fame and reputation, preached in the First Congregational Church, and at the evening service the revered Stephen Olin, President of

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Wesleyan University was the speaker. Father Taylor and Dr. Davis must have become quite well acquainted, for not only did he preach for him, but he delivered a temperance lecture in his church, also.

A mere incident of this Conference session, but one of interest to Westfield, was the ordination of Daniel Richards, pastor here in 1865. Father Taylor was the special feature of the Conference as he was of any gathering of which he was a part. Rough, impassioned, vehement, tearful, and far from consistent, he always had an interested group of listeners.

This Conference sent Mark Trafton to be pastor of the church and he remained for a year, and with a year's absence returned again for another year. In 1854 was again appointed to the Westfield church. Wherever Mark Trafton was, things were "doing." He was tall, straight as an ash, witty, full of wise sayings, a natural leader, and above all things very interesting, although filled with self-assurance. He loved a joke and was mirth-provoking. With Billy Hibbard, and Jefferson Hascall, he stands out as the most prominent of the men assigned to our church in its earlier days. It was my fortune as a boy, to have seen him in his mature years. I recall his witty sayings, his tall, lithe figure, and what impressed me, the close resemblance there was to the characteristic figure of Uncle Sam, as we all have come to know it. He was a towering figure at the anniversary exercises of twenty-five years ago, and the humor of his extended remarks,—rather too extended in fact,—I recall with interest and pleasure even now.—We are now at the period of the intense prejudice against secret societies. It seems that Mark Trafton was a member of perhaps the leading society of that time, but in Westfield he was never active at all. However, he stirred up the dislike of the so-called "rich man" of the church, who, strange as it may seem, was renting a hall to this very society. The influence of this man was strong enough to prevent Dr. Trafton's return the second year, and he went to Cambridgeport. The year of his absence was a lively time in Westfield, and at the next Conference session Dr. Trafton and the Presiding Elder had combat of words on the conference floor, but Trafton vigorously defended himself and his character was passed. Bishop Waugh sent Dr. Trafton back to Westfield, and he returned.

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The "rich-man" as Dr. Trafton, in his writing calls him, was mightily stirred, although most of the people received Trafton gladly. He went to Boston and engaged a company of men who were going about giving exposes of the inside of lodge rooms, and for six nights this company exhibited to crowded houses in the Town Hall. The exhibitions were free and the attendance was accordingly large. Now came the opportunity of the aroused church member, as he was able to go about among the people, saying, "Do you want a preacher, who goes into such stuff as that?" The more ignorant crowd in town were greatly affected and Dr. Trafton reports that he was hooted at from shop windows, and it got so, his wife disliked to have him go on the street at night. He reports that his patience was sorely tried, and while the mass of the people supported him, he certainly suffered agony of heart, during that memorable year. His published autobiography goes into the details of this matter with much interest, and it is all an interesting side-light of that period, very difficult to appreciate at the present.

When next the Conference met in Westfield in 1854, Dr. Trafton was again returned to this charge, and the public so appreciated his return, that in the fall of that year, with no personal effort he was elected to Congress. Although it was his ability, his eloquence and his wit that elected him, it was as a Know-Nothing that he was chosen by other Know-Nothings, who in this case certainly seem to have belied their popular nickname. The Congress in which he served contained eleven ministers and was the beginning of the end of slavery

Miner Raymond, lofty in thought, effective in elocution, fertile in mental resource, was called higher from his local pastorate and in his second year became Principal of the Academy at Wilbraham, where he remained for some twenty years, and afterwards was prominent as a Theological Professor in the Northwest.

It was in 1851 that J. H. Twombly first came to Westfield, —a strong man, whom Westfield had good cause to remember and appreciate, in after years. He had a dignity of bearing with his height and size that was impressive, a full clear voice, and had that remarkable part of genius, the ability to make others



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work. The Sunday School increased greatly, the congregation grew, a mission school was organized in the Fox district, many of the pews received cushions and what was more important, his second year saw nearly all of them rented. Following Camp Meeting, in August, in his second year, there was almost uninterrupted religious interest. A brief item but of wonderful import,—In the first year of the pastorate a sewing society was formed. It was William Butler that succeeded Brother Twombly. A son of Erin, he prayed with true Irish fervor, and preached scriptural sermons. He removed from Westfield to Lynn and from that charge made his first pilgrimage to far India and laid the foundations of Methodist missions there, later also starting the work in Mexico, where his son now labors as the Superintendent in charge. Dr. Butler came to Westfield from Shelburne Falls, and is described as being not only mentally equipt, but extremely simple in his ways and with the goodness of an angel—naturally a pious, prayerful man.

The second Conference of the New England body assembled here April 19th, 1854, with Bishop Baker presiding. It is quite apparent that the position of the Westfield church was recognized throughout the Conference bounds or else there would not have been two sessions in this town so near together.—In those days, only a half century ago, people did not conceal their feelings as now. We read that when a minister addrest the Conference upon the death of Mrs. Butler, who died as a young woman during her husband's pastorate in Westfield, there were many weepers.

Mark Trafton was succeeded by one who was destined to become great in the history of our denomination, Gilbert Haven, and whose son, we are honored in having with us tonight. A scholarly man, genial, gentle and joy-loving, yet with the most intense convictions and the courage to make them known, he was here for the full two years term and then removed to Roxbury. His versatile pen was not idle while in Westfield and afterwards as writer, editor and bishop, he became widely known. It was the delight of Hon. Thomas Kneil, when a delegate at the General Conference of 1872 to cast his vote for his former pastor, Gilbert Haven, to become bishop.

The Reverend D. E. Chapin came to this charge in 1858 and he had the longest pastorate ever held, three years,—to quote

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his own statement, the last year better than the first. He was a man of real strength, not only in doing things himself, but in getting things done, which is rather better. The record of 32 baptisms shows a good degree of religious interest, while the re-papering of the church, the lowering of the organ and the choir seats, the removal of the doors from the pews and the placing of arms thereon, the painting and varnishing of the interior, show a condition of material prosperity that is gratifying. The location of the vestry was also changed and the stairs relocated, and an alteration made in the front entrance. It was fifteen years since the building of the structure and these improvements were advisable and desirable. Brother Chapin received a salary of \$900, and a donation, the latter making a real addition to the salary, and bringing the pastor's remuneration up to the dignity of the society he served.—Colonel Bowler was the preacher-in-charge of our church for only a year and one-half. He was a square-built man of massive forehead, and of real versatility. His pastorate was in the stirring times of war. Soon after he reached Westfield, he preached a sermon on the Text; "Let him that hath no sword, go and buy himself one." He was certainly true to his word, for he left his charge to go to the front as Colonel of the 46th Massachusetts Infantry, and Rev. C. D. Hills acted as supply. Although there are distinct advantages in enlisting as an officer, perhaps as chief officer, yet the Rev. Mr. Bowler could not have been satisfied or perhaps it took longer to finish the rebellion than he had thought, for he resigned his commission after a few months service and returned to become the pastor of the Second Congregational Church of Westfield, and was installed in April, 1863, almost exactly two years from his first coming to Westfield. Perhaps no other single thing is more complimentary to the class of the ministers sent by the Conference to Westfield, than to have one of our own men go directly from our church into that of a sister church in the same community, and after having been honored by high military office. The Conference of 1861, which had sent Colonel Bowler to Westfield, was made interesting by the combat raged against long beards and against tobacco. Father Taylor, the world renowned Seamen's Chaplain enlivened the sessions, with such remarks as these, after an eloquent flight by one of the brethren:—"If I was

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as eloquent as that doctor, I would sit on the clouds and lay my head on the moon.”

It seems almost like the present to state that the next pastor of this church was the Reverend Henry W Warren, now the respected and revered and active bishop of the denomination, resident in Colorado. A remarkable man at this day and a remarkable man when pastor of the Westfield church, nearly one-half century ago. A fine presence, and excellent voice, the ways of an orator, a scientific mind and a confidence in himself, he has ever been a credit to the church and himself. The respect in which I observed he was held at the General Conference of 1904, is of personal interest to me, now.

During his first year here, the galleries were installed and the pulpit was changed. In the autumn of 1864, the pastor went to the Army as a delegate of the Christian Commission and was absent nearly two months. Brother Warren came here from Lynn and he moved to Cambridgeport. Today, over eighty years of age, his voice and mind are clear and active, and he still travels through the connection, holding conferences and doing other service. His facile pen is ever near him, when he is at home.

Reverend Henry W Warren was followed by a modest man, Daniel Richards, who had been in Lynn for six years. He was not a great preacher but he had a talent for records and spared no pains to make them of some service to the church he served. He grieved over the carelessness of other men before him, but he did not let that alter his own determination to do his own part well. He had been an itinerant for twenty-four years before coming to Westfield. His historical sermon preached March 24, 1867, and carefully preserved is the best record we have of the early history of this church. He took pains to ascertain the facts and to give his own impressions of the men and the times, and these are valuable at the present and will become increasingly valuable as the years roll on. Of course some of it is a mere catalogue, but such a catalogue is very necessary, which the elapsing years make it harder and harder to construct. I pay this tribute to Brother Richards for he richly deserves it. The membership of the church, he gives as 330.

We now approach into the realms of the living. John

## *METHODISM IN WESTFIELD*

H. Mansfield, retired from active ministry, in 1909, after a service extending over a period of nearly sixty years. I remember so well meeting him at Wesleyan University at the time of his fiftieth anniversary of graduation and his showing me some large elms there, that his class had been interested in setting out.

It was during the pastorate of Brother Mansfield that there occurred the greatest revival within the history of our church. Beginning within the official board, it worked out, and continued, until it had touched the lives of about four hundred and fifty different individuals. The officials of the church were especially active while the assistance of the famous Troy Praying Band, will ever be remembered by those who were fortunate participants in this great awakening. Services were held both day and night, and continued for weeks.

George Whitaker, so well remembered by the people of this parish, both as pastor and then as Presiding Elder, and who is to assist us in making this anniversary the success that we anticipate, both by his personal presence and by his contribution thereto, comes next. His resonant voice and his wonderful vocabulary are not forgotten and will not be, for a long time to come. His services in preserving the history of the New England Conference, are worthy of mention, for he is at this day the custodian of the archives of the Conference, and one of the best informed men therein. I must not pass without also calling attention to the valuable service he rendered in the days when Laurel Park Camp-Ground was established, and to the further fact that he resided in Westfield, as District Superintendent.

In the pastorate of Dr. Whitaker, valuable extension work was undertaken. A strong group of resolute, pious and energetic men was formed, which was known as the Praying Band, and held services in the neighboring communities. Southwick, North Blandford and Feeding Hills were among the sections which they touched. Most interesting are the reminiscences of those active days. In fact, it is said that the Band saved one church to our denomination. Of course such aggressive service could not but react most splendidly upon the inner life of the local communion. It is quite possible that the echoes from the great

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revival, and the success of the Troy Praying Band, were somewhat responsible for this missionary band of laymen.

Between the first pastorate of Dr. Twombly and his coming again to this church, he had served as President of the Wisconsin State University. To him must be given much of the credit for the erection and completion of this edifice in which we are gathered tonight. The lot on which it stands, so splendidly situated, bears testimony to the wisdom of those who selected it. The house which stood on the lot is now located just to the rear. It was the residence of the late Doctor James Holland, and the adjoining avenue is most appropriately called Holland Avenue. The corner stone of the new church was laid by Dr. Twombly June 3rd, 1875 at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. The following former pastors participated in the exercises:—Devotional service, Messrs. Richards and Barrows; Addresses, Messrs. Hascall, Trafton and Whitaker.—The box was placed in position by Hon. Thomas Kneil, and the benediction pronounced by Rev. C. H. Vinton. The audience sung three hymns and the Sunday School gave a Victory song. The church was completed and dedicated Tuesday, April 4th, 1876. That was a really great occasion for Westfield Methodism, for not only was the spacious and beautiful edifice completed and ready for use, but the renowned preacher and orator, Bishop Matthew Simpson, had been secured for the sermon of the occasion. There was the singing of that magnificent hymn, Coronation, both at the corner stone laying and at the dedication—a worthy coincidence.

It came about that as when the church at the corner of School street was erected, the New England Conference soon honored the structure with its presence, they did the same now, and it was in 1878, during the pastorate of Samuel L. Gracey that we entertained these welcome guests, in the handsome and worshipful new church building. Bishop Harris presided and wisely returned Dr. Gracey once more to our midst. Who will forget that genial pastor! We can almost hear him, as he used to delight to sing, "Hold the Fort." in the vestry services or at the temperance meetings in the Town Hall. His cordial greetings, his hearty manner, his delightful social qualities, we enjoyed then, and since. It has been such a privilege to entertain him. Only a year ago and he was here and spoke to us. How he would have

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enjoyed this occasion! But he would not have us mourn for him. He has simply gone on before; after his long service as American Consul at Foo Chow.

I hesitate to speak of the pastorates of these men, whom we know so well and many of whom will be our guests, but the record would be even more fragmentary than it is now, if I should omit them, and furthermore it would not be brought down to date. Dr. Frederick Woods, a member of a distinguished Newfoundland family, was our pastor for two terms, six years in all. His unusual sermons, with such a grasp and such diction, majestic in their sweep, typical of the mind of their creator, remain with us yet. He became pastor at Trinity Church, Springfield, following his first appointment with us, and after the second appointment, he went to Hyde Park. Several of the best of the New England Conference appointments have been his, and he numbers his friends in many places. It is now 52 years since he began his services with the South Hadley Falls parish. After Mr. Cass' year of service, came Rev. E. A. Titus for three years. I recall with what curiosity as a boy I used to greet these new pastors. It was so interesting,—the pondering as to whom they looked like, and then the first Sunday—who ever forgets it! Really, Methodist people do have their compensations, in the midst of the occasional changes. During Mr. Titus' pastorate came the famed Pratt revival, which resulted in the bringing into the fold of such an accession of new members. I well remember the great number standing at the altar to be received into the church. When Dr. Leonard first arrived in Westfield, following Brother Titus he was so impressed with this recent ingathering, the responsibility made him pause. The large numbers at the Communion table were beautiful to see.

Who can ever lose the charm of personal acquaintance with Brother Leonard? The conversations at the parsonage, the genial, cordial ways he had, the social side always so prominent. How interested in the young people! We thought it rather queer that he preferred to have the prayer meeting songs sung without accompaniment, but that was his way, and it proved not such a bad method after all, during his three years of residence with us. He always preached without notes which was quite in contrast to his predecessor. He left Westfield for Wesley

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Church, Salem, and then for Malden Center, Melrose and soon the Superintendency of the Lynn District, where his keen business sense had special opportunity for display. Perhaps we owe to him as much as to any single person, the coming of Dr. Frick to Westfield, and he deserves our sincere gratitude. It was Brother Leonard, who conducted the semi-centennial exercises of 1886, so successfully. Brother Young was in frail health and remained but a single year. After Dr. Woods' second assignment of four years, Rev. L. H. Dorchester came among us, being appointed to Westfield from St. Luke's, Springfield, where in his first charge he had served five years. A hard worker, social, systematic, and popular, he made his influence count in church, parish and community. The time limit removed him at the end of five years, but they were good years. He knew everybody and had a word for every occasion. His careful guarding of the resources of the church, his attention to details, made his pastorate wonderfully successful and pleasing. He has gone to some of the large churches of this conference and of all Methodism, and is now stationed at the Elm Park Church, Scranton, Penn.

Who will forget the sainted Fred Upham! His reputation had preceded him, and our acquaintance of the few months he remained, justified all that we had heard. A lovable type of man, poorly endowed physically, but richly endowed mentally and spiritually, an unusual master of pulpit utterance even with indifferent voice, he was taken ill with pneumonia while on a Thanksgiving trip to visit his father in New Jersey, and after two weeks, passed away. The funeral was held in this church and his body reposed in front of the altar, guarded by details continuously, until removed to Reading for burial.

Who could characterize the genial John D. Pickles! Generous to the limit; whole-hearted, naturally of the vigorous spiritual type, never sparing himself, an interesting preacher, the greatest caller the church has perhaps ever known, never so happy as when in the sick-room praying and singing with the afflicted, he gave us three splendid years, and went to the St. John's Church in South Boston, although we had anticipated his return. His sudden death two years ago, brought sadness to us all. It was during his pastorate that the debt of the church was reduced \$20,000. The labor that he and others put in on

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that worthy object can with difficulty be estimated. The sudden move of Dr. Pickles to supply the exigencies of St. John's Church, brought Rev. Charles E. Davis to this charge. We had heard him preach when he visited his friend, Joel Leonard, and of course his reputation had preceded him. Of mental depth, able to think out his own problems, deeply spiritual, of a sensitive nature, a genius for finance and material equipment, he was a blessing to our church, as he had been to others. It was under his encouragement, that the auditorium and vestry were re-decorated by the Trustees, and the auditorium re-furnished by the Ladies' Parsonage Society. And by no means least, he was the individual who got us into the way of raising the financial budget at the beginning of the year, rather than coming up to the close with a deficit—that bug-bear of many a church, and of ourselves for many a year. It is of interest to note the fact that Messrs. Pickles and Davis followed each other in four of the leading charges of the New England Conference. Dr. Davis has recently been Principal of the Academy at Wilbraham and is now a pastor in Lynn, at the Boston Street Church.

Shall I venture to mention our present pastor, now on his fourth year of splendid service? His status in the church and in the community are more eloquent than any words of mine. We like him, we appreciate him and we admire him! He is a worthy successor of most excellent predecessors. I have come nearly to the end of the recorded doings of this First Methodist Episcopal Church of Westfield. My survey must soon close. It has been so brief, almost fragmentary—but necessarily so. However, I must not conclude without a bare mention of some of the organizations of the church to which we owe so much. I have made reference to the Sunday School, incidentally. Its beginning was almost simultaneous with our existence as an independent society, and during its seventy years of existence it has given a good account of itself, and has been of immeasurable value to the church, itself.—The Young People's Society organized during the time of the civil war, re-organized in 1873 and later constituted a chapter of the Epworth League has imprinted itself indelibly upon the social and other activities of the church. Its money contributions, in paying for the Church organ, and other essential things in the church run into thousands of dol-



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lars. The Ladies' Missionary societies, with their honorable history extending over the years, the older branch, that of the Foreign society, dating back to 1870, deserve most honorable mention. The money that they have raised totals in the thousands, and has blest the recipients and honored the givers. The continual and successful activities of the Ladies' Parsonage Society and its predecessor, are well known to us all, but they warrant special notice. It may not be generally known that the labor of this organization dates back to 1853 when they engaged in carpeting the church and cushioning the pews. The purchase in 1863 of the former parsonage, on Washington street, its exchange for the present parsonage on Day avenue, the continual care of the parsonage property and furnishings, the carpeting and cushioning of the present church and the renewals thereof, the improvement below-stairs, all these many things have given them great and continual opportunity, and they have met it all in a gracious spirit and with a marked success. I would not attempt to estimate the amount of money they have raised and expended, but their work speaks for itself, and it has always been performed gracefully and has been a means of social up-lift to the church.

I am indebted to the material of Rev. Daniel Richards, to the History of the New England Conference by Rev. James Mudge, to the Historical Address of Hon. Thomas Kneil in 1886, to Louis Marinus Dewey and to others for aid in getting glimpses of the life and activity of this church, during the years of its history.

You will observe in the printed leaflet a list of the Presiding Elders who have visited us regularly for the seventy-five years. As a class they have been men, who have risen to their positions of importance and responsibility, because of work well done and talent displayed in the preceding years. Messrs. Whitaker, Thorndike, Richardson and Kennedy still survive. Thorndike, the rugged but cordial man, of the mental equipment, Richardson, the gracious, cultured, dignified gentleman, and Kennedy, the keen, business-like, popular official, are so well remembered as to require mere mention. Methodism will do well to look carefully to its District Superintendency, for no other

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single feature of the itinerant system has done more for the progress of the church throughout the country at large.

\*The list of young men who have more recently gone forth from our membership into the field of the pastorate is pleasant to recall. From California to Maine, five of the brethren have been holding forth each Sunday, giving a good account of themselves, and reflecting credit upon their original home church.

In conclusion:—

We have been first of all, a united church—faction has had no place in our councils; we have been an active church, aggressive and moving; we have been a loyal church—loyal to our own organization and loyal to the denomination of which we are a part—taking our ministers from the Conference of which we delight to call ourselves a member and congratulating ourselves upon the splendid men sent to us; and finally, we have been a spiritual church—content to accept some things we cannot understand and always realizing that we are simply a part of the church universal, “which is without fault before the throne of God.”

May our future be worthy of our past!

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\*(W. C. Hull, Pasadena, Cal.; M. L. Robinson, New York City; D. B. Aldrich, Whitinsville, Mass.; L. L. Harris, Greenland, N. H.; C. F. Beebe, Round Pond, Maine.)

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

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- 1771 Francis Asbury sent to America by John Wesley.
- 1784 Methodist Episcopal Church formed in Baltimore.
- 1790 Jesse Lee preaches on Boston Common.
- 1792 First Conference in New England held at Lynn.
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- 1794 Preaching in Westfield at Mundale (Hoop-pole) on the Granville Circuit of the Rhinebeck District of the New York Conference.
- 1812 Preaching in the center of the town of Westfield, corner of Elm and Main streets.
- 1829 Granville Circuit added to the New England Conference. First church building erected at Mundale (Hoop-pole).
- 1833 First church edifice dedicated in Westfield, at corner of Main street and Clinton avenue.
- 1836 Organized as an independent society, and separated from the Granville Circuit.
- 1843 Erection of the church building, corner of Elm and School streets.
- 1844 New England Conference met in Westfield.
- 1854 New England Conference met in Westfield.
- 1862 New England Conference met in Westfield.
- 1875 Erection of the present church building, corner of Court street and Holland avenue.
- 1878 New England Conference met in Westfield.
- 1910 New England Conference met in Westfield.

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### METHODIST PASTORS IN WESTFIELD

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- I. From 1794-1829. At this time Westfield was in the New York Conference and belonged to the "Granville Circuit."

*"Circuit Riders."*

1795, Lemuel Smith, Zebulon Kankey; 1796, Joseph Mitchell, Ralph Williston; 1797, Daniel Bromley, Ebenezer Mc. Lane; 1798, Daniel Webb, Ezekiel Canfield; 1799, Peter Jayne, Elias Batchelor; 1800, Billy Hibbard, Truman Bishop; 1801, Timothy Dewey, Alexander Mc. Lean; 1802, Ebenezer Washburn; 1803, Ebenezer Washburn, Nathan Felch; 1804, Joshua Crowell, Sumner Andrews; 1805, Eben Smith, Theophilus Smith, M. Curtis; 1806, Eben Smith, Theophilus Smith, M. Curtis; 1807, Nathan Emory, P. Rice; 1808, Laban Clarke, Jacob Bee-man; 1809, Gershon Pierce, Robt. Hibbard; 1810, Marvin Richardson, Gershon Pierce; 1811, Friend Draper, J. B. Stratton; 1812, Reuben Harris, Thos. Thorpe; 1813, Reuben Harris, Peter Bussing; 1814, Cyrus Culver, Buel Goodsel; 1815, Cyrus Culver, Aaron Pierce; 1816, Billy Hibbard, David Miller; 1817, Billy Hibbard, Smith Dayton; 1818, Cyrus Culver, Smith Dayton; 1819, Coles Carpenter, Theodosius Clarke; 1820, Coles Carpenter, Robert Seeney; 1821, Andrew McCain, Samuel Elghmey; 1822, Samuel Elghmey, Henry Hatfield, Cyrus Culver; 1823, Nathan Rice, Gershon Pierce; 1824, Gershon Pierce, Nathan Rice; 1825, Smith Dayton, P. C. Oarkley; 1826, David Miller, P. C. Oarkley, J. W. Allen; 1827, Elbert Osborne, C. F. Pelton; 1828, Elbert Osborne, L. Mead, Cyrus Culver.

- II. From 1829-1836. In 1829 a part of the Granville Circuit was set off from the New York Conference and assigned to the New England Conference. Westfield became head of the Circuit in 1832.

1829, John Nixon; 1830, Jefferson Hascall, Erastus Otis; 1831, Samuel Estlin, Winson Ward, David Leslie; 1832, Henry Mayo, Otis Wilder, David Leslie; 1833, G. W. Tucker, J. D. Bridge; 1834, J. D. Bridge, Ephraim Scott, Asa Niles; 1835, Samuel Palmer, Ephraim Scott.

- III. From 1836-1843. After Westfield had separated from the Granville Circuit, had become an independent society, and the society was worshipping in the original church, built 1833, corner Main St. and Clinton Ave.

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1836, Paul Townsend; 1838, William Smith; 1839, Benjamin McLouth; 1841, Ephraim Scott; 1842, Jefferson Hascall.

IV From 1843-1875. During which time the society worshipped in its second church edifice, erected 1843—the Post Office Building for 39 years.

1843, Jefferson Hascall; 1844, Mark Trafton; 1845, H. V. Degen; 1846, Mark Trafton; 1847, Miner Raymond; 1848, J. B. Husted; 1849, G. F. Cox; 1851, J. H. Twombly; 1853, William Butler (Founder of Methodist Missions in India and Mexico); 1854, Mark Trafton; 1855, Gilbert Haven (afterward Bishop); 1857, I. J. Collyer; 1858, D. E. Chapin; 1861, Geo. Bowler; 1863, H. W. Warren (afterward Bishop); 1865, Daniel Richards; 1867, W. G. Lewis; 1868, J. H. Mansfield; 1870, George Whitaker; 1872, J. S. Barrows; 1874, J. H. Twombly.

V From 1875 to 1913, or since the erection of our present church edifice, which was dedicated by Bishop Matthew Simpson in 1875.

1875, J. H. Twombly; 1877, S. L. Gracey; 1880, Frederick Woods; 1882, J. A. Cass; 1883, E. A. Titus; 1886, J. M. Leonard; 1889, Charles Young; 1890, Frederick Woods; 1894, L. H. Dorchester; 1899, F. N. Upham; 1900, J. D. Pickles; 1903, C. E. Davis; 1908, Philip L. Frick; 1912, Conrad Hooker.

VI. Presiding Elders from 1836 to 1913.

1836, Joseph A. Merrill; 1838, Daniel Dorchester; 1840, Reuben Ransom; 1844, A. D. Sargeant; 1846, Amos Binney; 1850, Charles Baker; 1854, Thomas Marcy; 1858, William Gordon; 1862, Ralph W. Allen; 1866, David Sherman; 1870, L. R. Thayer; 1874, George Whitaker; 1878, D. H. Ela; 1882, Nathaniel Fellows; 1886, G. F. Eaton; 1892, E. R. Thorndike; 1897, J. O. Knowles; 1903, W. G. Richardson; 1909, J. P. Kennedy.

VII. Presiding Bishops at Westfield.

1844, Janes and Hedding; 1854, Baker; 1862, Janes; 1878, Harris; 1910, Wilson.

