

Chapmans and the Early History of Tolland, Connecticut

This series began in the Fall 2004 issue, page 56 which you should see for background and source information. It all comes through the courtesy of CFA Member #184, Leonard Chapman who sent the reprint for the CFA data collection. The first segment was an address made by Loren P. Waldo in 1861 before the Tolland County Historical Society. It mentioned Henry Chapman, Samuel Chapman and Simon Chapman. Part two was in the Winter 2005 issue, page 37 and the main subject of that one was "Meeting-houses." It mentioned Gen. Chapman and Simon Chapman. This part covers "Ministers" and mentions many more Chapmans: Capt. Samuel, Hannah, Elijah, Ruth, Col. Ashbel, Reuben, Daniel and Elijah S. and others by inference. We know that some of these are from the Edward b. ca 1619 England branch. The next segment will be on "Military" and begins with the election of Samuel Chapman as their Captain.

MINISTERS.

THE first vote on record in Tolland, respecting ministers, is under date of June 15, 1719, and is in the following words, to wit: "At a meeting of the inhabitants of Tolland, they did choose Joseph Benton to go to see if he can get a minister to be amongst us, to preach the gospel amongst us." From sundry votes of the town, passed in the months of January and February, 1719-20, it is certain that Rev. Stephen Steel was then officiating as a clergyman in this town. On the 17th day of said February the town voted "to give the minister sixty pounds a year, and not to build him a house," and also, "that John Yeomans and Joseph Benton shall go to Mr. Stephen Steel to see if he will accept of what they have agreed to do for him." On the 22d of September, 1720, "it was voted, that Mr. West, Mr. Yeomans, Mr. Eaton and Joseph Benton shall be a committee to wait or call on Mr. Steel for a longer time to be with us; and to see whether he will settle with us." On the 7th of November "it was voted, that they will give to Mr. Steel, if he will settle amongst us, the sum of seventy-five pounds, to be paid in money or provisions, at the market price, and a lot and allotment amongst us; he settling himself in the work of the ministry amongst us." It does not distinctly appear from the records whether Mr. Steel accepted this call; but that he was the minister of the town from the year 1719, under a contract to render services, there can be no doubt. January 31, 1721, the town voted, "they would not agree with Mr. Steel no otherwise but as it was last voted, to wit: seventy-five pounds and he to build his house." They also voted, "that his salary should begin when he began to preach with us, except the time when he was wanting." In September following, a committee was appointed "to reckon with Mr. Steel to see what was paid to him, and what was behind of his due." The committee were Joseph Benton, William Eaton, Joshua Willes and Joseph Pack. It appears that there was no organized church in Tolland before the year 1722. When, or under what circumstances, the first church was gathered, can not be learned from any records of its own, nor are there any traces of its separate action to be found until the settlement of Rev. Ansel Nash as its pastor in the year 1813. But in the town records, under date of 1722, (the month being torn off,) we find the following vote: "Voted, that Joseph Benton should get a prayer put into the General Assembly for gathering a church and ordaining a minister in Tolland." I can have no doubt that this vote was passed early in the year 1722, for there is now on file in the records of this State at Hartford, a document in the words and figures following, to wit:

"To the Honorable the Governor, Council and Representatives in General Court assembled, in Hartford, May 10, 1722. The prayer of Joseph Benton, of Tolland, humbly showeth: that under the conduct of Divine Providence, and by the favor of this honorable assembly, the aforementioned town of Tolland is settled with a competent number of inhabitants; and having obtained a suitable person to preach the gospel amongst us to the good satisfaction of the inhabitants, we are desirous to enjoy the benefits of all gospel ordinances amongst us, to which end, we, as our law directs, apply ourselves to this honorable assembly for their approbation therein; and by a vote of said town, your petitioner is empowered to make his application to this honorable assembly; and your good countenance herein will be a further obligation to your petitioner ever to pray, as in duty bound.

JOSEPH BENTON.

Upon this petition the following entries are made. "Granted in the Upper House. Test, Hezekiah Wyllis, Secretary." "The prayer above granted in the Lower House. Test, Joseph Whiting, Clerk." This document establishes the following facts: First, that the vote of the town, directing Joseph Benton to get a prayer put into the general assembly for gathering a church, was passed before May 10, 1722. Second, that the town had then obtained a minister to the acceptance of the inhabitants of the town. Third, that there was then no organized church in town. Fourth, that it was the duty of the town to obtain leave of the general assembly to gather a church, so that they might enjoy gospel ordinances. Fifth, that the general assembly did grant leave to the town of Tolland to gather a church at its session in May, 1722. The next record in order I have been able to find is a town record under date of

June 19, 1728, and is as follows, to wit:

"Voted, That the church hath liberty to ordain Mr. Stephen Steel pastor of a church in Tolland. Voted, That the charge of Mr. Steel's ordination be done at the expense of the town. Voted, That Noah Grant shall be one to see that provision be made for the ordination of Mr. Steel."

"Voted, That Daniel Cook shall be one to take care that provision be made for Mr. Steel's ordination."

From the foregoing documents and records it is apparent that the church of the Congregational Society in Tolland was organized between the month of May, 1722, and the month of June, 1728, but at what precise date, or who were its first officers or members can not now be accurately ascertained. The Rev. Stephen Steel, was ordained as pastor of the church and society in Tolland in 1723, but the precise date is not known. He continued to be the pastor of the church until the 21st day of December, 1758, when the connection between him and the church and society was amicably dissolved by the parties, on account of his ill health. He died in Tolland on the 4th day of December, 1759, in the 68th year of his age.

George Steel came from England, and after a few years residence in Cambridge, Mass., was one of the earliest settlers of Hartford, Conn., and was one of the forty-two Hartford soldiers who served under Captain Mason in the Pequot war. He died in 1663 at an advanced age. His farm, now a portion of the city, of immense value, was situated around the present Washington and Lafayette streets; his house stood on the latter just out of Washington street. James Steel, his son, married for his first wife Anna Bishop, of Guilford, who died in the year 1675. He afterwards married Bethiah, widow of Samuel Stocking. James Steel, the son of James and Anna Steel, and the grandson of George Steel, was born about the year 1658, and died in 1712. He married Sarah Barnard, who died his widow in 1730. STEPHEN STEEL, the son of James and Sarah Steel, and the great grandson of George Steel, was born in Hartford in the year 1696, in the house, yet standing, on the spot where George Steel first settled. He was the first minister of Tolland.

He married Ruth Porter, of Hadley, Mass. Their children were as follows :

Ruth, their daughter, was born August 30, 1722, and died February 6, 1740-41.

Stephen, their son, was born September 29, 1724. Died October 23, 1802.

Eleazer, their son, was born August 3, 1726.

Elisha, their son, was born October 7, 1728.

Mehitabel, their daughter, was born June 6, 1733.

James, their son, was born February 6, 1737.

John, their son, was born November 26, 1738.

Aaron, their son, was born November 1, 1744.

Ruth, the widow of Rev. Stephen Steel, died May 14, 1792, aged ninety-one.

There was also Sarah, daughter of Rev. Stephen and Ruth Steel, who was born in Hadley about the year 1730—therefore not recorded in Tolland.

The sons of Rev. Stephen Steel, except James and Aaron, married and settled in Tolland. Stephen Steel, Jun., the eldest son married **Hannah Chapman**, the daughter of **Capt. Samuel Chapman**. Her brother **Elijah [Chapman]** was married on the same day, (May 28, 1747,) to Sarah, daughter of Rev. Stephen Steel.

The following is a record of the children of Stephen Steel, Jr., and his wife **Hannah [Chapman]**.

Stephen, their son, was born July 10, 1749, and died November 26 1750.

Hannah, their daughter, was born November 2, 1750.

Stephen, their son, was born August 31, 1752.

Ruth, their daughter, was born September 17, 1755, and died December 31, 1758.

Perez, their son, was born May 1, 1758.

Ruth, their daughter, was born April 29, 1762, married Samuel E. Kingsbury, August 13, 1779.

Mary, their daughter, was born July 25, 1765, mar. Asa Howard, died November 28, 1843, aged 78.

Daniel, their son, was born June 24, 1769.

Hannah, the wife of Stephen, died August 27, 1801.

This Stephen Steel was an officer of the militia and captain of the company in Tolland; and was selectman of the town for five years.

Perez Steel, tho son of Stephen and Hannah Steel, married Hannall Simons, of Tolland, June 7, 1781. The following is the record of their children.

Lusalla, their daughter, was born May 1, 1782, and died June 14, 1782.

Aaron, their son, was born April 16, 1783.

Lusalla, their daughter, was born February 23, 1785.

Perez, their son, was born April 10, 1787.

Clarissa, their daughter, was born August 29, 1789.

Orrsada, their daughter, was born April 4, 1792.

Juliana, their daughter, was born August 23, 1794.

Eleazer Steel, son of Rev. Stephen Steel and his wife Ruth, married Mn. Ann White, of Bolton, December 28, 1749. She died February 22, 1750. Eleazer Steel married, for his second wife, **Ruth Chapman**, daughter of **Capt. Samuel Chapman**, of Tolland, November 7, 1751.

The following is their family record, to wit :

Eleazer, their son, was born August 20, 1753.

Ann, their daughter, was born April 10, 1755.

Samuel, their son, was born May 7, 1757, died in revolutionary service, 1780.

Ruth, their daughter, was born April 27, 1760, died April 23, 1775.

Joel, their son, was born July 24, 1762, died March 18, 1778.

Ashbel, their son, was born March 15, 1765.

David, their son, was born June 29, 1767.

Jeduthan, their son, was born February 8, 1772, died September 25, 1775.

Abigail, their daughter, was born May 5, 1774.

Mrs. Ruth Steel, wife of Eleazer Steel, died December 6, 1776, aged 43.

Eleazer Steel, of Tolland, and Lois Fenton, of Willington, were married May 7, 1778. He died February 26, 1799, in the 73d year of his age. He was town clerk of Tolland for nine years, from 1776 to 1784 inclusive, and was twice a representative in the General Assembly.

Ashbel Steel, the son of Eleazer and Ruth Steel, married Elizabeth, daughter of Col. Solomon Wills, of Tolland, March 26, 1789.

The following is their family record, to wit:

Melicent Wills, their daughter, born August 9, 1790, married S. Kent, March 3, 1812.

Salmon, their son, born October 6, 1792, died August 22, 1823.

Seth Dwight, their son, born March 14, 1796, died at Windsor, Ohio, September 1, 1834.

Roxey Chapman, their daughter, born March 23, 1796, (sic) married Solo L. Griggs, December 6, 1821.

Florilla, their daughter, born September 24, 1800, died October 25, 1802.

Ashbel Smith, their son, born December 7, 1804, died August 30, 1811.

Ashbel Steel died May 30, 1830, aged 66 years.

Elizabeth Steel died January 26, 1832.

Ashbel Steel was captain of one of the militia companies in Tolland, and was two years a selectman. He resided near the south end of Tolland street, at the corner of the road running to the western part of the town, in the house where his father lived and kept a tavern for many years. He was a kind, obliging neighbor and most excellent citizen.

Melicent Wills Steel, his daughter, married Samuel Kent, of Suffield. They had two children, viz.: Elizabeth

Sophronia Kent, now a resident of this village, and James S. Kent, a resident of Richmond, Virginia.

Eleazer Steel, Jr., son of Eleazer and Ruth Steel, married Rebecca Lathrop, daughter of Hope Lathrop, December 16, 1779.

The following is their family record, to wit :

Joel, their son, was born August 14, 1782.

Eleazer, their son, was born August 22, 1784.

Jeduthan, their son, was born February 25, 1787.

Ralph, their son, was born May 8, 1789.

Ruth, their daughter, was born January 4, 1792.

Minerva, their daughter, was born September 10, 1794, married Jarvis Crandal, died February 25, 1831.

Marilla, their daughter, was born January 16, 1797.

Sanford, their son, was born February 27, 1799, now residing in Bolton.

George, their son, was born November 4, 1801.

Mr. Eleazer Steel died June 24, 1809. Mrs. Rebecca Steel died March 3, 1806.

James Steel, son of Rev. Stephen Steel, married Abigail Huntington, daughter of John Huntington, Esq., of Tolland, January 24, 1754.

The following is their family record, viz.:

Aaron, their son, was born October 19, 1754, died in the revolutionary army in New Jersey.

James, their son, was born October 30, 1756 died in Ellington, 1819.

Zadoc, their son, was born December 17, 1758 died in Stansted, Canada.

Samuel, their son, was born May 10, 1761.

Andrew, their son, was born December 25, 1763.

Abigail, their daughter, was born August 16, 1766.

Deborah, their daughter, was born December 31, 1768.

Abigail, wife of James Steel, died January, 1769. He married for his second wife, Dorothy Converse, of Stafford, September 14, 1769.

Their children were :

John, their son, was born November 8, 1770, died February 4, 1772.

John, their son, was born December 31, 1772, died January 8, 1773.

Dorothy, wife of James Steel, died March 10, 1778. He married for his third wife, Abigail Wakefield, of Weston, January 18, 1775.

Abigail, their daughter, was born November 18, 1775.

James Steel removed with his family to Ellington, in 1776, and having resided there several years, removed to Brookfield, Vermont, where his son Zadoc had commenced a settlement, and where he died at an advanced age. His second son, James, settled in Ellington, one family of whose descendants, (that of Oliver Wolcott Steel, Esq.,) continue in that town. Andrew, fifth son of James Steel, Sen., residing in Randolph, Vermont, married Elizabeth Lathrop, or Tolland, August 17, 1785.

Elisha Steel, the son of Rev. Stephen Steel, married Sarah Wolcott, or Windsor, April 26, 1758. He graduated at Yale College in 1750, was educated for the bar, located in the town of Tolland, and engaged in the practice of his profession. He was chosen a representative in the General Assembly in 1761, and was reelected five times. He was one of the two Justices of the Peace from 1761 to 1766 inclusive. He was the first lawyer ever located in the town of Tolland, and the only one while he lived. He died August 17, 1773.

The record of his children is as follows, to wit:

Sarah, his daughter, was born April 29, 1759.

Mara, his daughter, was born May 27, 1761.

Mary-ann, his daughter, was born April 28, 1763.

Elisha, his son, was born April 30, 1765.

Roger Wolcott, his son, was born January 19, 1768.

Mehitabel, his son, was born May 8, 1770, died August 21, 1772.

John Steel, the son of Rev. Stephen Steel, married Sarah Cobb, daughter of Dr. Samuel Cobb, December 15, 1763.

The following is the record of their children, to wit :

Eunice, their daughter, was born March 19, 1767.

Sarah, their daughter, was born February 25, 1769.

John, their son, was born June 11, 1771, died September 8, 1777.

Eleazer, their son, was born February 27, 1774, died September 14, 1777.

Mary, their daughter, was born June 11, 1776.

Ruth, their daughter, was born August 11, 1778.

Rachel, their daughter, was born June 19, 1780.

Lovine, their daughter, was born September 29, 1782.

Of the numerous descendants of the Rev. Stephen Steel, only a few now remain in Tolland, and no one bearing the name of Steel. They are to be found, however, in other families. The **Chapman** family furnishes several of these descendants. The widow and children of the late **Col. Ashbel Chapman**, the children of the late Mr. **Reuben Chapman**, Mr. **Daniel Chapman**, Mr. **Elijah S. Chapman** and their children, Mrs. George H. Kingsbury and her children; Miss Elizabeth S. Kent and Charles O. Benton; George M. Grant, Edwin L. Grant, Calvin Whiton and Stephen Whiton, and their children, are descendants of Rev. Stephen Steel. The family of Sanford Steel, Esq., of Bolton, and Oliver W. Steel, Esq., of Ellington, are also of the same descent.

I am unable to give any very distinct idea, of the person or character of the Rev. Stephen Steel. His death occurred one hundred and one years ago last December, and none of his contemporaries now survive. Unfortunately, he left no publication, nor does any manuscript exist from which his intellectual and literary attainments can be estimated. He once preached the annual election sermon at Hartford, but omitted to furnish a copy for publication. The fact that he was selected for this service, is evidence that he was a man of more than ordinary ability, for in his day none but clergymen of very respectable attainments were honored with this distinction. His correspondence with the town, and the satisfactory arrangements made with its agents, when his health became so much impaired as to disable him from performing the duties of his ministerial office, give unmistakable evidence of his conciliatory spirit, his disinterestedness and his unaffected piety. He had then been the sole minister of the town for nearly forty years, had commenced with it in its infancy, when it was nearly an unbroken wilderness, containing less than twenty-five families; had seen the population increase to near one thousand, and had the satisfaction of knowing there was not, at the time of his dismissal, a single dissenting worshiper in the whole number. The Rev. Dr. Williams, the immediate successor of Mr. Steel, told a friend of mine in 1827, that at the time of his settlement, and for several years thereafter, there was not a dissenter, nor the least want of unanimity on ecclesiastical affairs in the whole town. I could almost be willing to give in my adherence to the most rigid and antiquated puritanism, if I could once more see such unanimity among those who profess to be actuated by the same spirit.

The connection between the Rev. Stephen Steel and the church and society in Tolland, was dissolved by mutual consent on the 25th day of December, 1758. The town soon invited a Mr. Gideon Noble, and afterwards a Mr. Nehemiah Strong to preach as candidates for settlement. But the Rev. NATHAN WILLIAMS received a unanimous call from the town to settle in the work of the ministry in Tolland, on the 26th day of November, 1759,—they offering to pay him two hundred pounds, (six hundred sixty-six dollars and sixty-six cents) as a settlement, and eighty pounds, (two hundred sixty six dollars, sixty-six cents,) as a yearly salary. This proposition was accepted, and the Rev. Nathan Williams was ordained April 30, 1760. He continued the sole pastor of the church and society until January, 1813, a period of nearly fifty-three years, when the Rev. Ansel Nash was settled as his colleague. Doct. Williams continued to reside in Tolland until his decease, on the 15th of April, 1829, at the age of ninety-four years. He was born at Longmeadow, Mass., Nov. 8, 1735, was son of Rev. Stephen Williams, minister of that town, and grandson of Rev. John Williams, the celebrated minister of Deerfield.

The Rev. Nathan Williams, of Tolland, and Mary Hall, of Wallingford, were married October 20, 1760.

The following were their children:

Nathan, their son was born Nov. 17, 1761, died in Savannah, Georgia, Dec. 16, 1784.

Eliakim Hall, their son was born Jan. 16, 1764, died April 28, 1816.

William, their son was born April 28, 1766.

Mary, their daughter was born April 19, 1768, married Doct. Wm. Grosvenor, Oct. 4, 1787.

Ruth, their daughter was born Nov. 11, 1770, died October 2, 1788.

Abigail, their daughter was born Aug. 14, 1773, died Feb. 2, 1774.

Isaac, their son was born Sept. 24, 1776, died April 18, 1781.

Madam Mary Williams, relict of Doct. Williams, died March 9, 1838, aged ninety-five.

Only three of the children of Doct. Williams lived to be married. His son, Eliakim H. Williams, first married Mary Burt, daughter of David Burt, of Longmeadow, Mass., Jan. 18, 1792. She died January 22, 1793. He next married Damaris Cory, of Mansfield, February 1, 1797. She died September 20, 1801. He married for his third wife Aurelia Howard, of Tolland, January 9, 1803, with whom he lived until his death, April 28, 1816. By his last wife he had two sons and two daughters, viz.: Eliakim and Isaac;—and Emeline and Mary-Damaris-Aurelia. Mr. Eliakim H. Williams always resided in Tolland, and was town clerk at the time of his death. After his death his family removed to the State of New York, where they have since continued to reside.

William Williams, son of Doct. Nathan Williams, married Sarah Burt, of Longmeadow, Mass., September 4, 1713. They had seven sons, viz.: Nathan, William, David-Burt, Augustus-Davenport, Theodosicus-Dickerman, Charles-Albert, and Mortimer-Hall. Their daughters were Mary-Burt, and Sophia-Maria. This family lived in Tolland until the year 1833, when they removed into the western country.

Mary Williams, the daughter of Doct. Williams, married Doct. William Grosvenor, October 4, 1787. They lived in Tolland until Doct. Grosvenor's death, October 16, 1798. They had eight children, only three of whom survived infancy. The names of those were Mary-Williams, Ruth and Jacob. This family removed from Tolland after the decease of Doct. Grosvenor; and there has been no one of the lineal descendants of Doct. Williams, resident in the town since 1833.

The Rev. Doctor Williams holds a prominent place in the history of Tolland. He has done more than any other person to form the character of its inhabitants. He was their only minister for more than fifty years, and occupied a prominent and influential position for nearly seventy years of his life. In person he was about five feet nine inches in height; rather stout, with a body symmetrical and well proportioned. He was easy and graceful in his manners, social in his habits, and interesting and instructive in his conversation. He was punctilious in etiquette, careful in his personal appearance, precise and select in his language, and in every way a model gentleman of the old school. As a preacher he adhered to the tenets of the old divines, was strictly orthodox as the term was then understood, but was quite liberal for the age in which he lived. He was a good scholar, well educated, with a fair intellect, and good common-sense. His public performances were very creditable, and quite acceptable to his parishioners. Several of his sermons and other religious compositions were printed, and will compare favorably with similar productions of his associates. Several copies of them are now deposited in the library of the Connecticut Historical Society at Hartford. They were written and published as follows:

In 1780. The Annual Election Sermon at Hartford.

1788. On the Design and Importance of Christian Baptism.

1792. On Christian Baptism and Discipline. Two editions.

1793. Discourse on the Fourth of July, at Stafford.

1793. Fast Day Sermon at Tolland. Order and Harmony in the Churches agreeable to God's Law.

1794. Funeral Sermon at the Burial of Eliakim Hall.

1795. Sermon at the Funeral of Rev. Nathan Strong, of Coventry.

Mrs. Mary Williams was a perfect model for a minister's wife. Intelligent without vanity; complacent without sycophancy; devotedly pious without any forbidding pretensions, she exercised a salutary influence without any apparent effort. She taught by example as well as by precept; and the duties of a wife and a mother were not neglected nor forgotten in the pursuit of those that belong to the visionary philanthropist, or the chimerical moralist.

She attended to the duties of her own household, and cared for the wants of her dependants, feeling that her happiness was best promoted when she was contributing to the enjoyment of those around her. She was an economist, not for the purpose of acquiring wealth, but on account of the example to others. Doct. Williams possessed more of this world's goods, comparatively, than now ordinarily falls to the lot of country ministers, but it was never ostentatiously used. His house always exhibited comforts without extravagance, and great order and neatness without luxurious elegance. Mrs. Williams made it a matter of principle to live like her parishioners, although her means would have allowed her greater comforts. She was heard to say during the last years of her life, that her children when small, always went barefooted to meeting in summer, because some in the parish were unable to furnish their's with shoes at that season, so that no comparison could be instituted between her children and others in that respect. The principle that prompted this act, properly cultivated, would tend to restrain the practice now becoming a custom, of regarding the attire in which we are clad when in the sanctuary, as of more consequence than the services in which we are there engaged.

The Rev. ANSEL NASH was settled as the colleague of the Rev. Doctor Williams, in the month of January, 1813, and continued to be the active pastor of the church and society until the month of May, 1831, a period of a little more than eighteen years, when he was dismissed upon his own request, with the consent of a majority of the church and society.

Mr. Nash was born in Williamsburg, Hampshire County, Mass., on the 16th of January, 1788. He was the son of John Nash, of Williamsburg, and his wife, Martha Little, formerly of Granby, Conn. He graduated at Williams College in the year 1807, at the age of nineteen years. He pursued and finished his theological studies at Andover, Mass., and was licensed to preach in the year 1810. He came to Tolland in the latter part of the summer of 1812, received a call, and in January, 1813, was ordained as the colleague of Doctor Williams. His salary was six hundred dollars a year; one hundred of which, a few years later, he generously relinquished annually, in consideration of the pecuniary circumstances of the society. He was married to Eunice Jennings, of Windham, Conn., on the 24th of May, 1813, with whom he lived until his death. He left no children. After he was dismissed from Tolland he was settled in the ministry in Bloomfield, Hartford County, Conn., six years, when his relation with that people was dissolved, and he became the agent of the American Education Society awhile, and then the pastor of the first church in Rockville for about two years, when he was again dismissed. He was, at two different times, agent of the American Education Society, eight years, and supplied the pulpit in Colchester, Vermont, for about four years. While residing in Colchester, towards the close of his life, he became paralytic, and of unsound mind. In the vain hope that he could be benefited by the medical treatment and nursing at the insane hospital at Brattleborough, Vermont, he was sent to that institution in the summer of the year 1850, where, without receiving benefit, either in body or mind, from the change, he departed this life August 11, 1851, aged 63 years, 6 months, and 26 days.

Mr. Nash was a man of marked ability. To a mind naturally quick and active, was added the polish of a finished education; and aided by a memory that garnered the choicest treasures of both ancient and modern literature, he was prepared to acquit himself creditably on the theatre of life. His sermons were characterized rather for their logic than their rhetoric, and contained more of argument than imagination; still they were both attractive and instructive. He could not be said to be eloquent in their delivery, but was earnest, forcible and serious, and particularly successful in securing the attention of his hearers. In extemporary prayer he possessed peculiar gifts. He seemed to apprehend the secret desires of the most obscure worshiper present, and would present them at the mercy seat in language that raised the mind from earth to heaven, and imbued it with that fervency which makes prayer importunate and effectual.

Some of the productions of his pen have been published, among which are a Sermon on Christian Fellowship, printed in the National Preacher in the year 1831; a somewhat extended memoir of Mrs. Elizabeth Eldredge in the Panoplist in the year 1816; and other interesting articles in magazines and newspapers.

In social life, Mr. Nash was open, frank, and sometimes a little abrupt. He carefully noticed passing events, and was free to make them topics of general remark; and it was sometimes supposed these occupied too much of his time as a religious teacher. And yet he was never light nor trifling, and was always ready to defend the religion he professed, whenever and however assailed. His connection with secular matters, sometimes brought him in conflict with others engaged in similar pursuits, and was the cause of some uneasiness on the part of those who should have been his friends. He strenuously maintained the right of exercising his own judgment in matters personal to himself, and yet he would not obstinately pursue a course of conduct offensive to anyone, when he had

reason to believe such conduct was not required by other demands than his own interest. He was forward in all efforts for public improvement in the town in which he lived—particularly those which had for their object the education of the masses. He took especial interest in the establishment of an academy in Tolland; and was for a long time chairman of the board of trustees. It may not be invidious to remark, that the academy ceased to exist about the time of Mr. Nash's leaving the town, and there has been no special effort since to revive it. He was a valuable member of society; an intelligent and interesting preacher; a worthy and revered pastor; and a most constant and sincere friend.

After the dismissal of Mr. Nash, the Rev. ABRAM MARSH became the pastor of the Congregational church and society in Tolland, which position he continues to occupy. He was installed on the 30th day of November, 1831. Mr. Marsh was born in Hartford, Vermont, June 15, 1802. He was educated at Dartmouth College, where he graduated in 1825; pursued his theological studies at Andover, Mass., and was licensed to preach in 1828. He supplied a church in Redding, Vermont, about two years, a portion of which time he was the principal of an academy at Thetford. He married Miss Rhoda Short, of Vermont, January 25, 1829, who died in Tolland August 17, 1840, leaving two sons. Mr. Marsh married Miss Mary H. Cooley, of Norwich, Conn., his present wife, April 6, 1842.

As he is still the pastor of the church and society in Tolland, it is not proper for me to say more in this place; and may the day be distant when any pen will be employed in writing his biography.

From 1723 to the present time, a period of one hundred and thirty-eight years, the Congregational church and society have had but four settled ministers, and there has been but one year and two months vacation in the office during the whole time.

It has generally been supposed there were no differences of opinion on matters of religion among the inhabitants of Tolland before the year 1791, when the Methodists made their first location in this town. Although at the time of the settlement of Dr. Williams, and for thirty years thereafter, the people were of one fold and one shepherd, yet it is true that the inhabitants of Tolland, in common with the other towns in New England, were seriously affected by the preaching of Whitefield and his associates about the year 1745. The Rev. Wait Palmer, one of the preachers attached to that class of the followers of Mr. Whitefield that called themselves Separatists, labored in Tolland and its vicinity in the years 1750 and 1751, and received persons to his particular fellowship through the ordinance of baptism. This Mr. Palmer, and one Rev. Joshua Morse, administered the rite of ordination to one Shubael Stearns, Jr., of Tolland, of whom I shall speak more particularly in another place. Suffice it here to say, that Mr. Stearns was a most zealous leader of the Separatists, and held no fellowship with the church then under the charge of Rev. Mr. Steel. Mr. Stearns left the town, with his principal adherents, in the year 1754, after which there was no particular controversy by reason of this sect. Tradition informs us that the christian charity and sound judgment of Rev. Mr. Steel did very much to control the excited feeling of the people at this time, and continue their attachment to him, and to the church of which he was the pastor.

In the summer of 1791, the preachers of the Methodist denomination first visited the town of Tolland, and succeeded in establishing a Church. The names of their first preachers were Lee, Rayner and Hull. Their preaching was attended with very considerable success, and their followers became so numerous it was found necessary to have a house for public worship, and one was built in 1794. These preachers brought with them much of the zeal and many of the practices of the Separatists; and they attracted very great attention from the earnestness, and, what many supposed, the irregularities of their worship. This, doubtless, was the occasion of the fast-day sermon by the Rev. Dr. Williams, entitled, "Order and Harmony in the Churches agreeable to God's Will," in which he speaks of the confusion and disorder of some worshiping assemblies as being contrary to the will of God. The organization of the Methodist church and society has continued with but occasional interruptions, in a regular supply of preaches according to the usages of that denomination, to the present time.

The Baptist church was organized in June, 1807. Their first minister was the Rev. Augustus Bolles, who was ordained their pastor in the year 1814. The services at his ordination were held in the Congregational meeting-house. He continued their minister three years. The next settled minister in this society was Rev. Levi Walker, Jr., who was ordained in June, 1883, and was succeeded by Rev. Sylvester Barrows in the year 1836, who continued their minister until the year 1841. Since the departure of Mr. Barrows, the following named gentlemen have

supplied the Baptist church and society, viz.: Rev. John Hunt, one year; Rev. James Squier, three years; Rev. George Mixter, two years; Rev. Thomas Holman, one year; Rev. Percival Matthewson, one year; Rev. Homer Sears, three years; Rev. Thomas Dowling, four years; Rev. Joseph A. Tillinghast, a little more than a year, until his death August 7, 1859; and Rev. C. L. Baker, who is now their minister. They have also been supplied occasionally by other persons.