"Octor 1: 1750 Monday: Mr. Japhet Chapin proceeded on his journey to Boston to urge ye grant of Chickapee's Petition."

22

Petition sent to Boston in 1750 by the Inhabitants of Chicopee:-

To the Honrble Spencer Phipps, Esq., Lieut Govr & Commder in Chief of his Majesties Prov. of the Massachusetts Bay in New-England. The Honrble His Majests Council & House of Representatives In Genl Court Assembled at Boston the 30th Day of May AD. 1750.

The Petition of us, the Subscribers, Inhabitants of the North Part of Springfld in the County of Hampshire, Humbly Showeth That your Petitioners, for the greatest part of us Dwell full six, some Eight Miles & the nearest of us four miles from the Respective Places of Publick Worship we now belong to. Some on the East & some on the west Side of the Conetticutt River, & as we are now Situated 'tis utterly Impossible for us & our families in any Suitable manner to attend the Publick Worship of God in the assemblies we now belong to. The Legislature has obliged us by Law to attend, but we are absolutely obliged, as the case now stands to neglect it. We can't, near half of us, attend in Ordinary & not a Quarter of us in Extraordinary Seasons. We have many of us dwelt under these Circumstances for 60 years past & with all our Struggles & Difficulties not had one third part of the privileges which our fellow Parishioners have had for the Same Sum Expended. The labour & fatigue we & the bruit Creatures we use, undergo on the Sabbath farr Exceeds that of any other day in the week. Our numbers are greatly encreased & we Esteem ourselves able to build a House for the publick Worship & give Sufficient Encouragement to a Minister of the Gospell to Settle Among us, & indeed we Suppose by the best Computation we can make that it would not Cost us so much accompting Ten years together, as it does in the Posture we are now in, & with great Submission we Esteem it Extream hard that our fellow Parishoners Should make so much opposition as they do & have done to our being a Distinct Parish when they know all that is Said above to be true, only to make their Taxes a little lighter. We cannot think our Selves justly treated by them, when they take so much pains to keep us under Such Disadvantages in our Souls Concern only to save themselves a little worldly interest. 'Tis not long Since we paid our proportion towards the Settlement of a Minister in the midst of them, & we have for many years past hired Winter preaching among ourselves while we paid our full proportion for it amongst them & we can't get it Reinbursed. we have likewise done our full proportion with them in paying for a new & Magnificent Meeting House for them (principally) to Worship in, for when it's done we can't have the benefit of it because we can't come at it. & we have lately requested the Respective Parishes we belong to, to Consent we Should be Sett off & they Refuse it; We therefore most Humbly move we may be Invested with Parish Powers & Privileges & that the bounds may be as follows (viz.) beginning at the muth of Chequabee River & run on the bank of Connetticutt River to the top of the Hill South of Samll Terry's House. Thence East to the brook called Hog-pen-dingle & thence by Sd Brook at Chequabee River & thence by Sd River to the Outward Commons & thence North by sd Commons to Hadley Line & thence West in Hadley Line to Connetticutt River & thence Cross Connetticutt River to Northampton bounds; & thence to the West Side of Springfield bounds in the line between Sd Towns & thence Beginning by Connetticutt River at Ryley's brooks mouth & then Run a West line from that to the West Side of the bounds of Springfield aforesaid. We beg leave further Humbly to Request that the old Parish in Springfield on the East Side of the River, that still Continues So after we are Sett off, may be obliged to pay us on the East Side of the River what we have been taxed to the new Meeting House lately Set up amongst them, which we Seasonably requested them to be excused from that they might not build it too big for themselves.* We also further humbly request that those of us Petitioners that Dwell on the East Side of Connetticutt River may be Obliged if your Honble & Honors Please To build the House for publick worship & Settle the first Ordained Minister at our own cost. &

Chicopee Street

^{*}This "humble request" was afterwards granted by "the old Parish in Springfield."

that after that all of us may be Enjoyned as in Common Cases to do our Equal Proportion towards the Minister's Support. & with great submission we humbly apprehend that there is not now, nor ever has been, an Instance of this nature, where So many People at So greate a Distance from this Publick Worship have ever been Denyed the Liberty of Setting it up near to them, that all may attend with Convenience & not one half or three Quarters live in Such Miserable and Uncomfortable Circumstances for so long & tedious a Season as we have done. We therefore Most Humbly move we may be Sett off as aforesd & that the Court would oblige the Inhabitants on the East Side of the River to do as they have agreed with their neighbors, petitioning with them, (viz.) be at the whole Cost of building the first Meeting House & Settling the first Minister & other Petitioners to pay an Equal proportion with them for the Minister's Support afterwards & Enjoy Equal rights in the Meeting House, in proportion as in other Parishes, and as in Duty bound shall ever pray &c.

Names of Petitioners on the East Side of the River

West Side of River

Ionathn Chapin Henry Chapin Japhet Chapin Toseph Chapin Eleazar Chapin Henry Wright Caleb Wright John Vanhorn Shem Chapin Elisha Wright Japhet Chapin Jun. Benjn Chapin Stephen Chapin Reuben Miller Benjn Chapin Jun. Abel Chapin William Chapin

Elisha Chapin Ionthn Chapin Jun. Benoni Chapin David Chapin Edwd Chapin Phinehas Chapin Benj Crofoot Jun Gad Chapin Thomas Chapin John Chapin Stephen Wright Seth Chapin Samll Chapin Aaron Ferry Abner Hitchcock Isaac Chapin

Ebenezer Jones John Miller Benjn Jones John Day 2nd Benin Ball Ebenezer Taylor Joseph Ely 3d Ebenezer Jones Jun. Gideon Jones John Day 3d Timy Miller Joseph Ely 2nd Joseph Day Benjn Jones Jun. Charles Ball Abei Stockwell

The First Parish was still so unwilling to let these people go, that for two years in succession a Committee, Josiah Dwight and Edward Pyncheon, was sent to Boston to oppose the petition. The General Court, however, "listened carefully, and responded favorably." They appointed a Committee, who, having "repaired to the Lands & heard the Parties. & considered all things touching the same," fixed the bounds of what was for many years known as the Fifth or North Parish of Springfield, "first giving notice to the First & Second Parishes of Springfield." The Second Parish was what is now the First Parish of West Springfield. There is no record of any objection made by them to this organization. The bounds of the Parish were fixed as desired by the petitioners, and included what is now (1898) known as Chicopee Street, Willimansett, Holyoke, and a part of Chicopee Center, then known as Lower Chicopee. Others, whose names do not appear on the petition, joined the Parish soon after: Born, Azariah & Abraham Vanhorn, Thomas Terry, and Moses Wright. This same year Joseph Morgan settled at the foot of Mt. Tom, in Ireland Parish, on a large farm, which he afterwards divided among his five sons, Joseph, Jr., Titus, Lucas, Judah, and Jesse. He joined the Parish, and, with his three sons, Joseph, Jr., Titus, and Lucas, was useful and prominent, in its affairs. The people across the river were exempted from building the first Meeting House, and settling the first minister, but they were to assist in

his support. This was probably for the reason, that they hoped to be able, before many years, to have a Meeting House and minister of their own.

No sooner were the petitioners assured of a favorable answer to their request, than they set to work. On the evening of January 2d, 1751, they met and "All with united voices declared for cutting timber for a Meeting House." "Dimensions 42 x 33." The next day "about 40 men advanced into the woods to cut said timber. All volunteers! clear, cold and still." Jan. 4, "About 20 men advanced to finish yesterday's work. The cold somewhat abated." On the 7th a tedious storm set in, but it furnished the snow for "sledding the M. H. timber." A thaw delayed the work, but in February "the timber was got home very successfully." Spring came on early this year:-

"Ducks, Blackbirds, Robbins, Larks, return & sing, Cheerful salute the approach of Spring."

Winds and storms followed the beautiful February weather, and it was not until April that Mr. Morris Smith began to hew the timber. This month they made the brick. And so the work went on until June 5, when the record is, "This day thro ye Indulgence of Heaven, we have our Meeting House raised with great safety and joy." At first the Meeting House was covered with "Ruff Boards," and a floor was laid. It was used in this way until December, 1752, when it was voted "to cover the outside of sd Meeting House with Quarter Boards, to Glaze all the windows, and to do the Plaistering overhead and to finish all the lower Part." From time to time, money was expended in different ways until it was finished in 1765.

Chicopee Street

This old Meeting House was nearly square, without bell or steeple. It stood in the middle of our then wide street, a little north of where Mr. Rowley now lives. The "Quarter Boards" with which it was covered, seem to have been "split clapboards, beaded where they came together. It was built of heavy oak timbers. There was carved work over the windows." For those days it was a good looking building. The seats were at first benches, afterwards changed to pews. These were square, with seats on three sides. The partitions were high, and finished with an open railing. The seats were on hinges, and were raised or lowered according to convenience. As the custom was then to stand during prayer and to sit during singing, there was often a noisy clatter when the prayer began. The pew on the right of the pulpit was for the minister's family. The two in front were set apart, one for the deacons, and one for the elderly men. A broad aisle ran through the center from east to west. There were two doors, one on the east and one on the south side. The high pulpit was on the west side, with sounding board above it. It looked to some of the children as if the minister were shut up in a box, with a cover ready to fall on his head. The pulpit was painted pale green.

It had a velvet cushion, for which 3 pounds was paid. Behind the pulpit was a window with a curtain of green moreen. The Communion table was also painted pale green to correspond with the pulpit. It was suspended on hinges and raised or lowered at pleasure. There was a gallery on three sides of the house, well filled in later years with young men and maidens, who led the service of song. One corner was reserved as the "Negro's seat," for there were slaves in those days.

In describing the Meeting House, we have anticipated a number of years. It was raised on the 5th of June, 1751. On Sunday, July 21, the first religious service was held in it. The record is, "Met in our new Meeting House." The first Parish meeting was held "on the thirtieth Day of July." The business after choosing officers, was to "provide for the work of carrying on the Meeting House." Ensign Benjamin Chapin was chosen Moderator; David Chapin, Clerk; and Japhet Chapin, Treasurer.

At this time all money for church purposes and the support of the minister was raised by a tax upon "the Polls and Estates of the Freeholders and other inhabitants;" and at the second Parish meeting, on August 12, measures were taken to levy this tax "as the Law directs." In October, they began to talk of settling a minister; and Ensign Benjamin Chapin and Ebenezer Jones were chosen a Committee to apply to the Association for advice in regard to a candidate.

The Association recommended either Mr. John McKinstry or Mr. Judah Nash. Mr. Japhet Chapin was chosen "to engage the Worthy Mr. John Mc-Kinstry to Preach to us for a Ouarter of a Year." And a tax of thirty pounds was levied to defray the expenses for the winter. In January, Mr. McKinstry had proved himself so able, that it was unanimously voted to give him a call to settle. Some correspondence ensued in regard to the salary. On May 18th he signified his acceptance of the call "if the Concurrence, Advice & Mutual Agreement of the Neighboring Churches of Christ, and their Rev'd Pastors be obtained."

The Council called for his ordination met on June 5, 1752, with this result:-

These may certify that, after proper inquiry and examination, we are Satisfied of Mr. McKinstry's Ministerial Qualifications. and therefore consent to his Settlement with you.

Wishing therefore the Blessing of God on your proceedings. we subscribe

Stephen Williams Sam'll Hopkins Peter Raynolds

Chicopee Street

Robert Breck Noah Mirick Freegrace Leavitt

It was voted that the ordination be on the 9th of September, but the Style was changed that year from O. S. to N. S. There was no 9th of September, and the ordination did not take place until the 24th.

A day of fasting and prayer was appointed for the 27th of August, "to implore the Divine Blessing & Assistance in our proceeding to settle the Worthy Mr. McKinstry in the work of the Gospel Ministry."

The same ministers, with the exception of Rev. Freegrace Leavitt, were sent for to assist in the ordination; the neighboring churches were asked for "the help of their Revd Pastors with their Delegates"; and the Committee were "also to take care to provide a place for the Entertainment of the aforesaid Rev^d Pastors & Delegates."

There was "Voted & Granted to Eleazer Chapin the just Sum of one pound, fourteen shillings & eight pence, Lawful money, for Entertaining the Revd Pastors & their Delegates, att the time of the Ordination of the Rev^d Mr. John McKinstry; and

keeping their Horses."

Mr. McKinstry was the son of the Rev^d John McKinstry of Ellington. The father was a graduate of Edinburgh University, "a gentleman of good abilities, popular talents and unwavering integrity." The son was a graduate of Yale. Students' names then appeared in the Catalogue, according to the social position of the family. He was fourth in a class of twelve. His father, in his seventy-fifth year, preached the ordination sermon.

Miss Eliza McKinstry, who remembered her grandfather dressed for meeting, said that he wore a wig, three-cornered hat, breeches, long stockings, shoe and knee buckles. Probably the other ministers were dressed in a similar way, as well as many in the congregation, though, at this time, the wig was going out of fashion, and "the queue" was taking its place.

In those days, all ministers were settled for life. This, as well as the smallness of the population, made an ordination a rare and interesting occasion. Not only did the churches respond by pastor and delegate, but friends and relatives came to share in the joy. There was no Ordination Ball, as was often the case, but there was great gladness and genuine thanksgiving. The dinner was not a modern collation, but a genuine dinner. The big brick oven was heated again and again; and tradition tells us of pleasant words and good wishes, which passed between the cooks. As one remarked, when putting the chicken pie into the oven. "Good luck to it!" a bright girl replied, "Well, this is the first time I ever heard of asking a blessing on the oven."

Chicopee Street

There is no record of the organization of the Church. It is quite probable that there was no formal organization by Council, and that the Church grew out of the Parish, being recognized as a Church, when such action became necessary. Similar instances of irregularity are found in the early ecclesiastical history of New England. There is a list of 51 members of the church in 1753, one of whom is Pompey, the slave.

Benjamin and David Chapin were chosen deacons. Benjamin was the son of Henry; and David, the son of Taphet.

The Pastor's salary was at first £49 6s. 8d., gradually increasing for ten years at the rate of £1 8s. 8d. each year. £80 was voted for "a Settlement." The salary was to be paid, "one half in provisions, Wheat, Rie and Indian Corn, and one half in silver at six shilling and eight pence per ounce." The Settlement money was to be paid in installments for three years,—"£26 13s. 4d. each year." Mr. McKinstry desired to use his Settlement money to pay for land, which he bought; and it was stipulated that he should not be required to pay for that until he received his payments from the Parish. The provisions were to be paid, "I-6 in Wheat, I-5 in Rie, and the rest in Indian Corn," the value to be adjusted each year, by the market price of grain. It is interesting to know that in 1756 Wheat is 4s. per bushel, Rie 2s. 8d., and Indian Corn 2s. Mr. McKinstry was to have, also, "Twenty-Five Cords of Wood the first year, one cord to be added each year for Ten years." Later, it was voted to provide Mr. McKinstry with "a sufficiency of Fire wood, and also Candlewood." Candle-wood is an old name for pine knots. They were abundant and easily gathered from the pine trees on the plains. They were burned on the hearth, their light often taking the place of candle light.

The young minister closes his letter of acceptance with these words:-

"And so earnestly wishing that the Love of God, may be abundantly manifested towards you thro our Lord Jesus Christ, I earnestly desire the united interest in your Prayers for me, that all God's Dispensations may prove Merciful both to you and to me. And So Remain

Chicopee Street

Yours to serve, in Truth & Sincerity, JOHN McKINSTRY, JR."

The Settlement money was paid, and the Parsonage built by the young minister. It is still standing on McKinstry avenue, and is now owned by Richard DeGowan. In 1760 he brought his bride from Suffield to make the home, so long a center of influence to this community. She was Eunice Smith, a great granddaughter of Japhet Chapin, so she was coming to her own in coming to Chicopee. Her mother had been born here, and had lived here until her marriage; and it is probable that it was while Eunice was on a visit to her grandparents that the parson wooed and won her. Pieces of her wedding dress are still in the family. It was French cambric, and cost 4 shillings (one dollar) a yard. The old Button Ball tree, so long a landmark to the Street, was planted by her, soon after her marriage.

Eight children were born in the old Parsonage. Archibald, the second son, was the first physician in Chicopee, but died soon after entering upon his profession. Three of the children, "Mr. John," "Miss Dosia," and "Miss Candace," lived to old age. And it is to Mr. John's note books and records, that we are indebted for many interesting incidents of these early days. He owned the first thermometer in Chicopee Street. He was a great reader, and his Diary records

34

that at one time he took seven books from the Parish Library.

Soon after Mr. McKinstry's settlement, the war known as "The French & Indian War" broke out, bringing fear and anxiety to these homes. A number of the young men joined the army. Edward Chapin (afterwards Dea. Edward) was at Lake George in 1755 as clerk of Capt. Luke Hitchcock's company. Capt. Abel (afterwards Col.) was out with a company, but was obliged to return on account of illness. Ensign Moses was taken prisoner at Lake George in 1757. At first he fared badly; but, being able to converse a little in Latin, he interested in his behalf, a Catholic priest, who kindly assisted him in procuring some needed comforts. He was a surveyor, and his surveying books in Latin are still in the family. Caleb was killed at Lake George in 1755. Capt. Elisha, his brother, was cruelly massacred by the Indians, July 17, 1756, at Hoosack now Williamstown. His house was near the upper end of the Street, where Miss Harriet Chapin now lives. He had been Commander at Fort Massachusetts in 1754, and, becoming interested in that part of the country, removed his family there. A number of families were together in the fort. While most of the men were away in the fields, an attack was made by the Indians. They were repulsed by the women dressed in their husbands' clothes. Abandoning the attack upon the fort, the Indians succeeded in taking some of the men prisoners, among them Capt. Chapin. He

was brought to the walls and tortured to death in sight of his wife and children. She, Miriam Ely, of Ireland Parish, came back with her children to her early home. One of her sons, Sewall, was graduated at Dartmouth College, and entered the ministry, but died young. Another, Enoch, was a captain in the Revolutionary War.

Chicopee Street

By this time, the forest path had grown into a pleasant, well-shaded street with substantial houses and barns. Capt. Ephraim was living on the farm (where his grandson, Briant, afterwards lived), keeping tavern and fatting cattle for the Boston market. Mr. Jonathan Chapin was living on the Crehore farm; his brother Timothy, on land adjoining; Dea. David and his son Benoni, on the Rowley place; Landlord Abel, keeping tavern on the east side of the Street; and his brother Japhet, on the farm adjoining his on the south. Later his son, Simeon, built the house which stood for many years opposite the present church, and which was owned and occupied for nearly seventy years by Levi Stedman and his son Benjamin. About 1750 Edward (Dea.) built a house, on what is now the Hastings place. Samuel Clark lived at Clark or Schoolhouse Lane. Next south was the large farm of Phineas Chapin, afterwards divided between his two sons Phineas (Capt.) and Silas (Col). Dea. Benjamin lived next on land now owned by Mrs. Marshall Pease. William Chapin came next. He was known as "Mr. Billy," to distinguish him from the others of the same name; then Seth, whose land

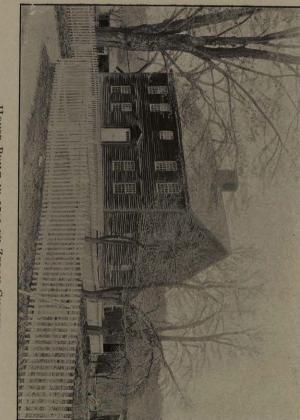
was inherited by his three sons, Seth, Zerah, and Zenas. Caleb Wright lived for a while on the west side of the Street, south of the Burying Ground; and there were others whose homes cannot be identified. South of Chickopee River lived Henry, George, William, Joseph, and Benjamin Chapin, and Benjamin Crowfoot. Mr. Japhet Chapin also kept tavern in Lower Chicopee. After his death his son Austin continued the business. It is said that the old "Toddy Road" took its name from the habit of the armorers on Springfield Hill, who used to come here for their refreshment, for the Temperance Reform was not yet. Willimansett was not settled till later.

In 1753 nine men were chosen to "seat the Meeting House," and it was "Voted, to seat men and women together," after the fashion lately introduced in the new Meeting House in Springfield. At first they had been seated separately, the men on the north, and the women on the south side. It was also "Voted, that one year in age be equivalent to Four Pounds of Estate." The next year "Voted, that one year in age is equivalent to Three Pounds of Estate."

"Voted, that the Pews left unseated, be for the use of girls under sixteen years of age."

(The last seating of the Meeting House was in 1809. There was sometimes jealousy and dissatisfaction; but, on the whole, it seems to have been a satisfactory arrangement.)

This same year, 1753, it was-



HOUSE BUILT IN 1793 BY ZERAH CHAPIN.

Now owned and occupied by his grandson, Theodore L. Chapin

"Voted, that the Parish take care y^t a Drum be beat to call the People to meeting at Proper Seasons." The Drum was beaten up and down the Street. It was owned by Mr. Ebenezer Jones, and he was paid 5^s/4 in consequence of its being broken. After this 4^t/ is granted "to hire a Sign that may give notice of the meetings for the year ensuing." This sign was probably a conch shell.

"Voted, to agree with some person or persons to Sweep and Cleanse the Meeting House." Five shillings and four pence was at first paid for this service. Later more was given.

The Parish officers were all paid a small sum for their services. These items are for 1763:—

T. W. W.V.	£. s. d.
To Mr. McKinstry as a Sallary for the year pas	t, 61-6-8
To Benoni Chapin for sweeping the Meeting He	ouse, 0-8-0
To Mr. Jonathan Bement, for his services in	
apprizing Fire wood,	0-8-0
To Edward Chapin for his services as Parish C	lerk, 0-3-0
To Abel Chapin for his services as Treasurer,	0-3-0
To Defray Contingent Charges,	8-0-0

In 1758 "Voted, and Chosen Messrs. Abel Chapin, Benjamin Jones & Ebenezer Taylor to be a Commttee to apply to the Select Men for the town of Springfield, or to the Quarter Sessions (as the occasion may require) in order to have a Stated Ferry in this Parish for the more Convenient Crossing the Great River, and also for obtaining a Convenient Road for said purpose on the West Side of Said River." A road to the Landing on the east side had been laid

out in 1729. This Ferry Road was just south from the place where Col. Abel Chapin afterwards built his tavern. About 1836 or 7, it was moved to the upper end of the Street, north of Mr. Frederic Chapin's house. This ferry was known for many years as "Jones's Ferry."

By 1774 Springfield had begun to "take into Serious and Deliberate Consideration the present Dangerous condition of the Province." The situation was indeed trying, for most of these men and women were of English blood; and those who were not had found safety and protection under English government and law. They had brought to New England not only the English language, but English customs and habits. Their public officers were called by English names, as Perambulator, Sheriff, and others. The minister was the Parson. The nine o'clock evening bell, still common in many New England towns, is the Curfew of Old England. Following English custom, their farms were divided by ditches. Some of these still remain, marking boundaries laid out in the long ago days. The old home in the Mother Country was still dear to them. They mourned England's danger or defeat by solemn days of fasting and prayer; and, when in 1746 "the Duke of Cumberland obtained the remarkable victory against the Rebels (Charles Edward the Pretender) in North Britain," they kept glad thanksgiving.

But they could not allow even England to oppress them, and when the town appointed a Committee of

Public Safety, Ensign Phineas, Capt. Ephraim, and Dea. Edward Chapin were of the number. Money was voted "to teach soldiers the military art," and every able-bodied man was required to train, that he might be in readiness for any outbreak.

Chicopee Street

When the crisis came in 1775, Paul Revere was not the only messenger who rode to alarm the country. Scarcely had the first shot been fired at Concord Bridge, when Isaac Bissell armed with authority from Z. Palmer, one of the Committee of Public Safety in Boston, started in hot haste for the Connecticut Valley. He asked for men and horses. From Springfield sixty-two men responded. Among them, from Chicopee, - Jacob Chapin, Israel Chapin, Phinehas Chapin, Eleazar Chapin, Jr., Solomon Chapin, Joseph Chapin, Jr.; from Skipmuck,-Gad Horton, John Stedman, Phinehas Stedman.

Others who joined the army later were Capt. Abel Chapin, who marched with a company to Ticonderoga. In his company there were from Chicopee and Willimansett,-Moses Bliss, Zekiel Chapin, Benoni Chapin, Zerah Chapin, Ebenezer Burbank, Eleazar Wright, Thomas Frink, Collins Brown.

Captain Ephraim Chapin commanded a company belonging to the regiment of Col. Ruggles Woodbridge. In his company were,-Paul Chapin, Ebenezer Jones, Japhet Chapin, Seth Chapin, John Frink, David Chapin, Jacob Chapin, George Chapin.

Capt. Joseph Morgan's company belonged to Col. John Mosely's regiment, 3d Hampshire Co. They