

was known by the quaint name of "Granny Deacon"—not a term of ridicule, but of affection, for she was very much beloved. She was a sweet singer, and, in her visits among the neighbors, used to carry her hymn book in a bag, and sing to the children, some of whom never forgot her clear voice and pleasant ways. Their house, built in 1751, was burned in 1871.

A very practical church unity existed at this time, for among those who often preached here with acceptance was "Father Rand," so long the useful and well-beloved pastor of the Baptist Church of Ireland Parish. In 1804 it was "Voted, that the people of the denomination of the Baptists, have a right to use the Meeting House for one year, in proportion as they pay their taxes." This vote was repeated in subsequent years, probably until the Baptists were strong enough to organize for themselves. In 1816 they were holding services of their own in Willimansett.

Wagons and carriages were not seen in Chicopee Street until after 1800, as every one rode on horseback. We do not read, however, that they frightened the horses, as was the case in Blandford, where a town meeting was called to forbid their use on this ground. Happily the effort was unsuccessful. Capt. Phineas was one of the first to own a chaise, and Dr. Skeele had one about the same time. Mr. Ruel Vanhorn of Lower Chicopee owned the first double carriage and drove a pair of handsome white horses.

Every able-bodied man between the ages of 18 and 45 was required to train, and Training Day became a

regular, though not a legal, holiday. Twice a year the drums and fifes sounded the call to duty. The Spring training was near home, a Company training. In the fall the whole regiment trained together. Much enthusiasm was manifested, and many titles were won in this service.

Col. Silas greatly enjoyed military practice, and gave time and money to it. It is remembered of him, that on the last day on which he rode as colonel at the head of his regiment, he spent one hundred silver dollars, in entertaining his officers and soldiers.

Col. Levi C. Skeele was the last man in Chicopee to receive a commission, under the old laws. This commission is dated March 5, 1835, and is given by "His Honor, Samuel T. Armstrong, Lieutenant Governor and Commander in Chief of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts." Soon after this changes were made in the statutes, and he was "honorably discharged at his own request in 1837."

One familiar feature of those old days, the later, not the earlier ones, was the Post Rider, or, as he was commonly called, "The Post." Every Wednesday morning brought Mr. Alfred Judd from South Hadley on his way to Springfield. On Tuesday, he rode to Northampton, bringing from there the Northampton Courier and Hampshire Gazette, which he distributed to subscribers along his route. There were a few in Chicopee Street who preferred the Northampton papers. Wednesday P. M. saw him returning with the Springfield Republican, Springfield Ga-

zette, and Hampden Post. How eagerly we used to watch and listen for the blowing of the horn which announced his approach! His wagon was usually well loaded with boxes and bundles, for express companies were not yet. Sometimes he carried letters and occasionally passengers. Winter's cold or summer's heat rarely kept him from his weekly round, and the memory of his regular visits is among the pleasant things of childhood.

We must not forget the stage, which twice a day, for many years, rumbled through our Street. After 1823 it brought and carried the mail. The yellow coach, with its four horses, was the most elegant conveyance imaginable, and how we children envied the people who found it convenient or necessary to travel in that luxurious manner. At first one coach was sufficient for the needs of travel, but in the years just before the building of the Connecticut River Railroad three and four crowded stages passed daily.

The years passed on. One by one the old men, good and true, and the women, gracious and faithful, were gathered to their fathers. In 1804 there were but seven male members in the church. This year Dr. Amos Skeele moved into the place; and a little before this a young man, Joseph Pease, had married Bethiah Chapin, and opened the first store in Chicopee Street. Mr. Pease's life was unique in the number of offices and positions he was called to fill. He was first Mr. Pease, then Ensign, Captain, 'Squire, and Deacon. As a young man he taught school, was



HOUSE BUILT BY CORPORAL ROSWELL CHAPIN IN 1793.
The house-warming was on July 4, when the dinner was lamb and green peas. The house was bought by Dr. Amos Skeele in 1804, and remained in the family until it was burned in 1894.

a farmer, merchant, lumber dealer, and manufacturer. He was Representative to the Legislature. As Justice of the Peace he was often called to settle estates, sometimes to act as Judge, and occasionally to marry people. As a singer he had a fine tenor voice, and he often taught singing school, played the bass viol, and led the choir. Everywhere he was an esteemed and useful citizen.

Dr. Skeele was an earnest Christian, a man of indomitable energy, with the courage of his convictions and of a mighty faith. When his wife, a woman of rare loveliness of character, objected to moving to Chicopee because there was no minister, his reply was: "If we go to Chicopee, we will have a minister." At this time the Sabbath services were irregular, perhaps unattractive. For three or four months in each year, preaching was hired; at other times "Deacon's Meetings" were held, when a sermon was read.

After Dr. Skeele came he took charge of these meetings. Mr. Pease led the singing,—they always had good singing,—and Mr. Caleb Pendleton read the sermon. Mr. Pendleton writes in his Diary: "From the year 1800 in April to the present year (1824), I have for the most part assisted in Meetings on the Sabbath & at other times in the Parish, having read 456 Sermons, and many other pieces on Divinity in Meetings." Occasionally Mr. Osgood, the young minister from Springfield, or Mr. Storrs from Longmeadow, or Dr. Lathrop from West Springfield came

for a Sunday and administered the Lord's Supper to the few disciples left, Dr. Skeele carrying on his heart continually his desire for a settled pastor.

Two helpers in his prayers and efforts might be styled, as the Apostle John styled his friends, "Elect Ladies,"—"Widow Lucy" and "Widow Mary," as they were called. "Widow Lucy" lived in the house which, until recently, stood in the corner opposite the church, once owned and occupied by Levi Stedman. She had been a faithful friend to Mr. McKinstry, and her house was open for service when the old Meeting House had been forcibly closed. Her faith in the future of the church was strong, and her prayers for its prosperity unceasing. The 2d Part of Watts's version of the 102d Psalm was her delight, especially the 1st, 2d, 5th, and 6th verses, which she often repeated, emphasizing the lines:—

"This shall be told, when we are dead
And left on long record."

And

"It shan't be said that praying breath
Was ever spent in vain."

Her faith was rewarded. A pastor was settled in May, 1824, and she lived until September of the same year.

"Widow Mary" was a younger woman, of deep piety and unusual executive ability. She was the widow of "Young Capt. Ephraim," as he was called to distinguish him from his father. She lived in the

house now owned and occupied by Mrs. Marshall Pease. It might be said of her, as of the beloved Persis, "She labored much in the Lord." Always ready for every good work, she was a blessing to the church and community, and died in a good old age.

Two young men joined the church during these days of darkness and depression, men of influence in the church and community—Orange Chapin and Giles S. Chapin. Both served the church as Deacons. Dea. Orange taught school for a while, afterwards he was farmer and surveyor, or civil engineer. He was Assessor and Selectman, and Representative to the Legislature. He was Captain of a military company, and was for more than thirty years Justice of the Peace. He was Clerk of the Parish for forty years, and Deacon for twenty-seven years.

Giles S. Chapin was Deacon for twenty-eight years. He, too, was Selectman and Representative. He was farmer and manufacturer, and a very successful business man. Both were men of earnest and sincere piety.

Dr. Skeele's courage never faltered. His faith never grew weak. Financial embarrassment and hard times followed the war of 1812. But the country rallied, and the farmers were again prosperous. Wherever there was a ministers' meeting of any kind in the vicinity, association or ordination, Dr. Skeele was there with his question, "Do you know of any minister we can get to settle among us?"

"Doctor, your church cannot support a minister."

"We are going to have a settled minister," was his invariable reply.

"Father, you are crazy," said his eldest son to him one day. "We cannot support a minister."

"Otis, I shall live to see a settled minister."

As physician he rode up and down the Street, across the plains to Ludlow, up the River to South Hadley, to Lower Chicopee, sometimes to West Springfield, always planning and praying for a settled minister.

Brighter days came at last. The Home Missionary Society was willing to help, and a call was given to the Rev. Mr. Ripley. Ireland Parish was looking towards re-union with us. But this project failed, and Mr. Ripley declined the call. About this time word came to Dr. Skeele that the Rev. Alexander Phoenix, a man in middle life, just entering the ministry, was looking for a country parish in the Connecticut Valley. He had been a merchant in New York, where bereavement and pecuniary losses had turned his attention to a life of increased usefulness. This he hoped to find in the ministry. Having some income, salary was a secondary consideration.

Two parishes sought him. He would come and preach in Chicopee, and look over the ground. He came. A call was given him, but he hesitated. On the Monday morning after the last Sunday of his preaching as a candidate, as his horse was brought to the door, Mr. Phoenix stood a few minutes before mounting. "Well, Doctor, I will let you know in

two or three weeks, but I do not think I shall come here. As things are now, I think I shall accept the call to Hatfield. But you will hear from me soon. Good morning." Mr. Phoenix rode away. The Doctor turned, went into the house, and calmly observed, "In less than a year, that man will be our settled minister."

It made no difference to him that Mr. Phoenix had just told him that he should probably settle elsewhere. He was sure that this was the man the Lord had chosen for this church. His faith triumphed. In a few days the letter came. Mr. Phoenix accepted the call, on a salary of "\$400, with a vacation of eight Sabbaths."

Mrs. Phoenix was a daughter of Gov. Caleb Strong of Northampton, and both were connected with other prominent families in New England. They brought with them to Chicopee culture and refinement. It must have been a great change from the atmosphere of city life to a country parish in those days, but there was no friction in the relation of pastor and people. The people accepted him as their leader and example, in temporal as well as spiritual affairs, and revered him as few churches reverence a pastor. The older people followed him as a wise guide, the younger ones loved him as a father.

It is difficult for one who did not live here during Mr. Phoenix's pastorate to understand his influence. It was not that he was a great man. But he accepted the opportunity which came to him, and in ways most

wise and discreet he helped the people in their everyday life, while he

"Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

For the sake of his oldest son, who was not a strong man, he bought a farm, brought new and improved breeds of cattle, and new methods of farming. His garden was an object lesson. Strawberries had been cultivated before. He brought finer kinds. He had beautiful flowers. He built the first picket fence. In his house he had a family school, which was open to the young women of the parish, who gladly availed themselves of the opportunity to attend it.

Mr. Phoenix was ordained and installed on Wednesday, April 28, 1824.

The following notice is copied from an old Church Record:—

"The day was solemn as well as interesting in the prospect before us, in the Ordination and Settlement of Mr. Alexander Phoenix at Chicopee, the 2d Parish in Springfield (Mass.) as a Pastor of the Church and People, and was performed in the following order, viz. Rev^d Mr. Wright of Ludlow to make the Report of the appointment of the Ordination, the setting of the Council, and the duties assigned to each Minister to act on the day. The Rev^d Mr. Knapp of Westfield made the Introductory Prayer. The Rev^d Doct. Romeyn of New York to Preach the Sermon, from 2^d Timothy 2 Chap. 15th v. The Rev^d Mr. Gould of Southampton made the Consecrating Prayer.

The Rev^d Mr. Williams of Northampton gave the Charge. The Rev^d Mr. Osgood of Springfield gave the Right Hand of Fellowship and the Rev^d Mr. Chapin of Granby, the East Society, made the concluding Prayer.

"All parts of duty were performed with Solemnity, and the Assembly appeared to have an attentive ear, and good order on the occasion.

"CALEB PENDLETON, JR., Clerk of the Ch."

One of the conditions of Mr. Phoenix's settlement was the repairing of the old Meeting House, or the building of a new one. It was decided to build; \$3000, in sixty shares of \$50 each, was raised by subscription, and the work was put into the hands of Shepherd & Whitmarsh, at that time a prominent building firm of Springfield. The building committee were Dea. Joseph Pease, Lewis Ferry, Jr., Orange Chapin, Joseph Chapin, Giles S. Chapin, Silas Stedman, and Stephen C. Bemis.

The lot of land on which the house was built was given by Eleazar and Mary Chapin Strong of Granville. Mrs. Strong was a granddaughter of Dea. David, and her home had been in the old house with the fortified door. Perhaps a few who read this will remember her as "Miss Polly." The Meeting House when finished "cost Four thousand, four hundred dollars, some odd cents." The beautiful mahogany pulpit, costing \$500, was given by friends of Mr. and Mrs. Phoenix.

The corner stone was laid on May 12, 1825, and the Meeting House was dedicated on Jan. 4, 1826. Mr. Phoenix preached the sermon from 2d Chron., 7th chap., 12-16th verses. The Rev. Messrs. Osgood, Sprague, and Gould assisted in the services. Dea. Asa Pease of Granby led the singing.

The committee to seat people on the day of dedication were Orange Chapin, Closson Pendleton, Dr. Rodolphus Perry, Chester W. Chapin, Stephen C. Bemis, Miletus Pendleton, and Joseph Griswold, Jr.

The slips were bought by individuals, and among the owners we find the names of Samuel Osgood, Edward Pyncheon, and Daniel Bontecue. The most valuable slips were the one set apart as the minister's pew, and the one on the opposite side of the house, bought by Joseph Pease for \$200. When the Meeting House was built, there was no other church between South Hadley and Springfield, though the same year a small Methodist church was built at what is now Chicopee Falls. The congregation here came from Willimansett, Chicopee Factory, and Lower Chicopee, and no one dreamed of the changes which a few years would make in the parish.

Mr. Phoenix's pastorate continued eleven years. His son-in-law says of him in his funeral sermon: "These years of pastoral labor in Chicopee were as full of peace and happiness as any man could hope for in this world." The wonderful revival which swept over the country, especially New England, in 1830 and 31, visited Chicopee, and large additions were

made to the church. But bereavement followed him here. Two sons, his namesake, a young man of twenty-five, and a bright boy were taken. In 1835 he left Chicopee and a sorrowing people to reside in New Haven. He died in Harlem, N. Y., Aug. 31, 1863.

His last thoughts, almost his last words, were of Chicopee. "Write — write to Brother Clark. Tell him,—tell them how much I love them." During twenty-eight years of separation, he had loved and remembered and prayed for his people, and here to-day there are grateful memories of him, and of the beautiful work God gave him to do.

Rev. E. B. Wright succeeded Mr. Phoenix in a short pastorate of four years. He was a good man, but easily depressed, and failure of health increased this depression. He was fond of singing and used to gather the children on Saturday afternoons. One half hour was spent in singing, and the other in reciting the Catechism.

The Rev. E. B. Clark came to us in the summer of 1839. He was acceptable from the first, and a call was given him, which was promptly accepted. He was ordained and installed Oct. 16, 1839. He was married to Miss Cornelia DeWitt of New Haven, Dec. 23, 1839, and the young people came at once to this, their first and only parish.

Mrs. Clark was a beautiful woman, lovely in person and character, and her influence in the parish was hardly secondary to that of her husband. How wisely and tenderly she sympathized, encouraged, and

comforted will never be forgotten by those to whom her gracious ministrations were given. Mrs. Clark died Jan. 17, 1880.

Mr. Clark was a good pastor and a good practical preacher. He was also a good citizen. His long life among us gave him the feeling that all these homes belonged to him, whether the inmates attended our church or some other. He knew every one, and every one knew him. The generation which grew up under his influence were largely indebted to him for the formation of their character.

For many years he was a member of the School Board, both in Springfield and Chicopee. He was a public spirited man. He planted shade trees. He cared for the parsonage. He was intensely patriotic, and served on the Christian Commission during the Civil War.

The needs of the soldiers found a ready response from the hearts and hands of our people. Soldiers' Aid Societies were organized. Lint and bandages were prepared. Apples dried, comfortable garments for the sick and wounded made ready; garrets and closets were ransacked, and beds and blankets sent to the army.

When the news of the fall of Richmond came to Chicopee, Marshall Pease was the first to hear it. He rushed to the church and rang out a peal of joy on the old bell. Mr. Clark came hurrying in to know the cause of this midday ringing.

"Richmond has fallen!" shouted Mr. Pease.

"Then let us sing the Doxology," said Mr. Clark, and there, alone in the old church, the two sang,—

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

They had sung the words together many times before, they sang them many times after, but never with deeper feeling or more thankful hearts.

It was during Mr. Clark's pastorate that the Underground Railroad ran through Chicopee Street, with stations at Otis Skeele's and A. G. Parker's. Mr. Clark was not unwilling to be of assistance on this line, and at one time kept in his family several weeks a bright and valuable colored man, who was in hiding from his master.

One of Mr. Clark's valued and trusted friends was Dea. Sidney Chapin, a man whom we all love to remember. He was a wise counselor, a generous giver, a faithful friend, a beloved officer in the church, a man of blessed memory.

Mr. Clark's only son is the Rev. Dr. Clark of the Tabernacle Church, Salem. The daughter, Cornelia, died in 1883.

Mr. Clark was pastor of this church for thirty-six years, being dismissed in October, 1875. The changes of these years are suggested by his farewell sermon. In this he says that only one person is present who was in active life in the parish when he was settled. In November, 1883, Mr. Clark married Miss Rosetta Wilcox of New Haven.

After his dismissal he remained in Chicopee Street

until 1888, when he removed to Springfield. Mr. Clark died April 23, 1889. He left with his people the benediction of a faithful and loving pastor, and an earnest and consecrated life.

It is quite impossible to record all the reforming and philanthropic influences of these later days. The Temperance Society with its 130 autograph signers to the Pledge; organized at first as the "Men's Association," it was afterwards "voted, to take in the Ladies." Nearly every family is represented. The Columbian Debating Society, the Pledge for keeping the Sabbath, the Maternal Association, the Moral Reform Society, the Colonization Society, the Anti-Slavery Society, the Monthly Concert of Prayer for the Conversion of the World, and the Weekly Prayer Meeting. The Monthly Concert was on the first Monday evening of every month, and the Prayer Meeting on Thursday evening of each week. The latter was called the Conference Meeting, and was held "at early candle light." All these meetings were in the school-house.

The faces and forms of the godly men of those days and the sound of their voices in prayer, are as distinct in memory as if it were only yesterday.

Six men were always there, and always in the same places: Dea. Simeon Stedman, Dea. Giles S. Chapin, Mr. Lewis Ferry, Mr. William Chapin, Dr. Skeele, and Dea. Joseph Pease. Others may have been as faithful, but they did not always sit in the same place, and so made less impression on the mind

of a child. After the death of Dea. Joseph Pease, Mr. William Chapin was chosen in his place, but declined the office. He was a good man and true, and worthy to be held in remembrance among the fathers of those days.

The story of the two hundred years is told. We began our existence as the 5th Parish of Springfield. After 1763, when Wilbraham was set off as a separate town, we became the 4th Parish. These changes remind us of the old days when scholars worked their way "up the class." In 1775 West Springfield was organized, and again, we "went up" and became the 3d Parish. In 1783 Longmeadow left the old town, and we were promoted to the second place, which we kept for more than sixty years, until in 1848 we "went to the head" as the First Parish of Chicopee.

The old Parish was at first a territory. Now it lies within the bounds of a single country street. While there has always been a steady drain upon the life of our community, Chicopee Street has from the first possessed a wonderful vitality. The men and women who have gone out from these homes have gone to build up other churches, to bless other communities, to brighten other lives. They have been a race of workers. They are artisans, mechanics, farmers and manufacturers, business men, lawyers and doctors, teachers, editors, and clergymen.

Rejoicing in our past, a few of us still keep the old home, and watch and wait with earnest longing for the coming of better days.

APPENDIX

REMINISCENCES BY JUDGE E. W. CHAPIN OF HOLYOKE

READ AT THE ANNUAL ROLL CALL MEETING OF THE FIRST CHURCH
IN CHICOPEE, SEPTEMBER 30, 1897

My Dear Friends:—

The occasion which calls us together awakens feelings of pleasure and of sadness; of pleasure, to meet old friends whom we have been accustomed to meet in this time honored place, of sadness as we miss the sight of familiar faces and fail to receive the cordial greetings of friends of Auld Lang Syne. As we think of different friends who have left us we long "for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still." But, if we have profited by the messages delivered from the sacred desk, and remembered the words of wisdom in Holy Writ, we cannot fail to recognize that our loss is our friends' gain; that absence from the body is presence with the Lord; that joys of immortality surpass those of time. For ourselves,—

" 'Tis sweet as year by year we lose
Friends out of sight, in faith to muse
How grows in Paradise our store."

This is a world of change, and yet as I compare the changes of Chicopee Street with those of Holyoke and other places about here it seems to me there are less here than in the crowded city. This beautiful street with its wide spreading elms standing in front of ancient dwellings looks as attractive as ever. The Connecticut River flows by with the same slow and steady current as in days of yore, but commerce has put it to new uses; freight that used to pass up and down this river and through the old

canal by the slow moving canal boats, is now carried on the swift moving cars. The poet of old time wrote in its praise,—

“Roll on, loved Connecticut, long hast thou ran,
Bringing shad to Northampton and pleasure to man.”

It brings no longer shad to Northampton. Fishermen no longer gather in nets at South Hadley Falls the shiny fish which each spring used to bring up the river. The fishermen now stand in vain upon its shores to lure the unwary fish with tempting bait. They have left the stream, which has not the purity of former days. When the first dam was built at Holyoke the Connecticut River rebelled against being stopped, and broke away from its restraint, carrying the dam with it in its course. As I stood by the river bank in Willimansett when a boy and saw the river filled with timber and logs sweeping past, I recall old Mr. Sikes, who was then a member of this congregation, always ready with some Bible quotation, repeating on this occasion a verse from Proverbs, as he watched the turbulent waters bearing away the timbers of the new dam. “Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away, as an eagle toward heaven.”

Chicopee takes its name from the Indian name of Chicopee River, which is said to mean the “River of Elms.” All in this vicinity at first attended church at Springfield, and forded the Chicopee River at what was called “the Indian wading place” back of the Dwight Mills. It was not until 1783 that a bridge was built across the Chicopee River. There is a story told of one of the early settlers who trafficked with the Indians for furs. Not finding him at home, the Indians went to Springfield and found him at church, but he would say little to them beyond letting them understand that he would trade with them the next day. One of the Indians inquired the cause of so many white men assembled together, and the man, with an eye to business, replied they were putting down the price of beaver skins.

The difficulty of attending church in Springfield led to the erection of a church in Chicopee Street in 1752; as there was no church in Holyoke then, the early settlers there were obliged to cross the Connecticut River to attend church here in Chicopee Street. Then no bell was here to call to church, and when the

first church of the valley was built, as the hour for worship on each Sabbath morning came around, the people were called together by the beating of a drum. Conveniences of light and heat were not present with our ancestors as with you. There was no fire in the first church, and if any attempt was made to carry any substitute it was done in the shape of a foot stove containing a pan of live coals, having a secure covering perforated with holes to let out the warmth within. I have seen in the attic of my old home such a foot stove, which was carried by my parents to church to warm the feet of the occupants of our family pew. Many of us remember the long box stove which formerly stood near the easterly end of the audience room of this church, having a long pipe extending across the church and turning upward towards the roof a short distance in front of the pulpit. It had, too, I recollect, a large pan attached to the knee of the pipe to catch any stray rivulets that might course down the pipe from the roof and fall otherwise on the heads of the listeners below. My mother told this story of the introduction of the first stove into the church. Some woman opposed the innovation, fearing the heat would be too oppressive. The stove, however, was put up, but for some reason no fire was built in it the first Sabbath. This, however, was not known by the woman, who was so overcome by anticipated heat that she was compelled to leave the church during the service.

The old choir gallery has ceased to be occupied by the choir but I cannot forget its associations. No stately organ was it our fortune to see there, but we were not without our music. The last bell had not ceased to ring before we used to see old Mr. Goodman, with his big bass viol, leave the little red house across the street a short distance above here, and with slow, dignified tread enter the church and climb the stairway to his elevated place, and immediately proceed to tune his instrument and awaken divers wondrous noises from its recesses, until at last the right sounds were evoked and all was in readiness to accompany the choir. As I had a side seat in the northwest corner of the church, I could see the different church members as they came in and took their places Sabbath after Sabbath with prompt regularity. I recall the time when a change was proposed in regard to the position to be occupied by the congrega-