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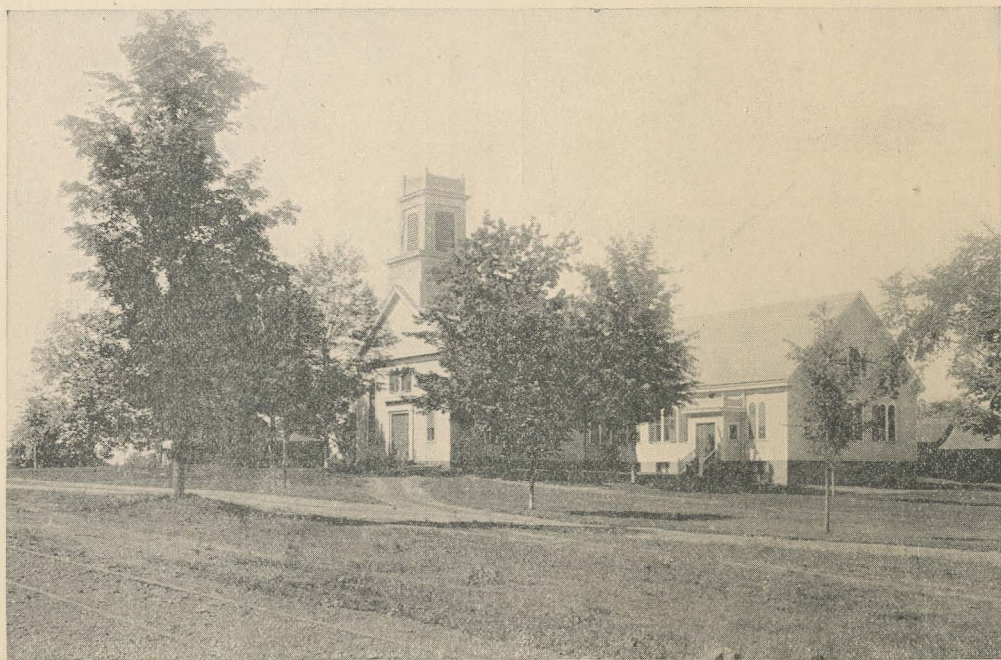
R

NEWINGTON
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
OF NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT



SOUVENIR, MAY 19, 1905

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NEWINGTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
NEWINGTON, CONN.
ERECTED SEPTEMBER, 1797.



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Staterooms 10 or 58 \$2.00 extra		Meals 50c. each or a la carte

SKETCH *of the* NEWINGTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

By EDWIN STANLEY WELLES

OUR CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN NEWINGTON has its roots in the old Wethersfield church as that ancient body derived its life from the church in Watertown, Mass. So we may properly regard the church in Wethersfield as our parent and the one in Watertown as our grandparent.

Assuming that there was a house or two at Newington Center as early as 1680 when a saw-mill was started by the mill pond, we may say that, for a generation, the few settlers over here toiled slowly across Cedar Mountain for divine worship. To make that rugged journey was a serious task in those days and a severe test of one's Christian loyalty.

By 1708, our people got anxious to be relieved of so irksome a situation, and to have a parish and a meeting house of their own. For half a dozen years the matter was agitated until the General Assembly granted their petition in 1715.

The first minister of the Newington church was the Rev. Elisha Williams, a Harvard graduate, who came here in 1720, when he was 26 years old. He was probably the most versatile minister our church has had. He was a preacher, a scholar and a teacher of scholars, a legislator and a military officer, having been after his retirement from the ministry a Speaker of the House of

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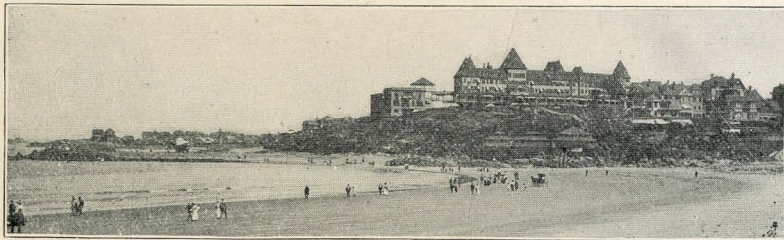
Representatives and a Colonel in the old French Wars. He was in Newington less than six years when he was called to the rectorship or presidency of Yale College.

Not much is known of his successor, the Rev. Simon Backus, who was a cousin of Mr. Williams, a brother-in-law of the great Jonathan Edwards, and who was also 26 years old when he began his pastorate. For nearly 20 years he faithfully discharged his duties as shepherd of the small Newington flock. In 1745 he was appointed by Gov. Low chaplain of the Connecticut troops engaged in the siege of Louisburg, on the Isle of Cape Breton, "and after closing the eyes of many a son of Connecticut in death, he himself fell a victim to the prevailing sickness and died February 2, 1746."

The next pastorate is the connecting link between the remote past and the early days of the elderly people now living.

The Rev. Joshua Belden, a native of Wethersfield and a Yale graduate, who began his duties here in 1747 was but 23 years old at the time, and he lived in Newington until his death in 1813. For 56 years he served our fathers in the ministry. His was an eventful pastorate. There were vexatious divisions over the location of the site of the present church building which lasted for 15 years or more: there was all the sad suspense of the great war for independence, culminating in a victory so welcome to Mr. Belden, a vigorous champion of the people's liberties. He was a lover of books and of reading, a man of much prayer and a plain-spoken preacher of the Gospel.

With his successor, the Rev. Joab Brace, begins the comparatively modern history of the Newington church and parish. His impress on our people has doubtless been more permanent than that of any other in the long roll of ministers. A native of West Hartford and, like his predecessor, a graduate of Yale, he was also 23 years old when he began to preach in Newington. He was a venerable, wrinkled old man when he closed his labors in 1855. A remarkable man himself, his wife and loyal help-meet for 50 years—Lucy Collins Brace—was quite as remarkable. In a very



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true sense, they together were the founders and shapers of modern Newington. The rugged features of Dr. Brace as shown in his portrait reveal his moral and intellectual power. "The Father of his Parish," he was strong-willed, strong-minded, a student and a linguist, besides being a practical man of affairs. His love for Newington was unbounded and when he died in 1861, in Pittsfield, Mass., at the residence of his son-in-law, the famous John Todd, his remains were brought here and interred among those of the people with whom he had walked for 50 years.

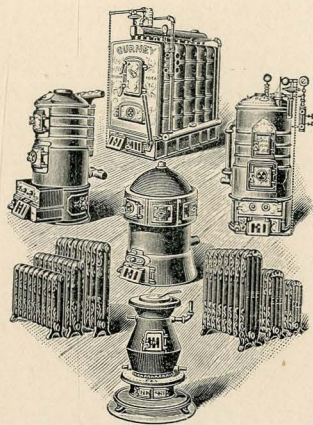
There is but time to mention his successors:—the brilliant Wm. P. Aiken, the scholarly Dr. Vermilye, the enthusiastic Mr. Martyn, the endeared Mr. Thomson, the energetic Mr. Elliott and the consecrated Mr. Barrows. The record of their pastorates is entered on the register of God. For 13 years the church has been under the ministrations of the Rev. Herbert Macy, whose power as a preacher of truth and righteousness is well established. Many public improvements, of which he has always been an earnest advocate, have taken place during his pastorate. Four at least should be mentioned:—the inauguration of our free public library and the building of our attractive chapel in 1895, the opening of the trolley line through the center in 1897, and the establishment of a grammar school with auxiliary graded primary schools. What incalculable blessings these have been! With the pure gospel still preached in the church and taught in the Sunday School, with wide opportunities for our children to receive a liberal education, with hallowed memories of noble men and women who have wrought here in faith, we of Newington look forward with high hopes to the future, confident that He who transplanted us will always sustain us.



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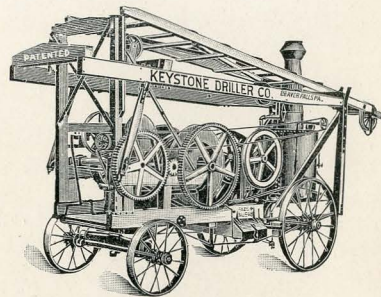
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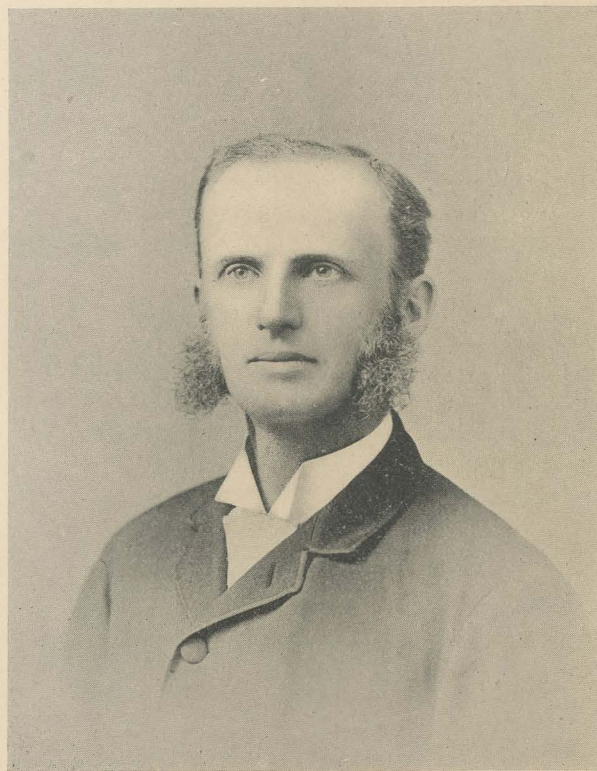
Hartford, Conn.

Mr. Joshua Belden, the Superintendent of our Sunday School, has held the office twenty-five years, and in response to the unanimous desire of the school consented last winter to retain the office a while longer. In gratification at his consent and in recognition of his faithful and long-continued services, the school adopted the following resolution :

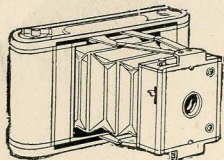
WHEREAS, Mr. Joshua Belden has served this Sunday School in the capacity of Superintendent for a period of twenty-five years, and whereas during his administration it has doubled in numbers and grown in interest and power, and whereas under him it has been imbued with a spirit of reverence and order,

Resolved, That we hereby express our grateful appreciation of his services and our deep thankfulness for his willingness to resume them, earnestly praying that God's constant blessing may rest on him and our beloved Sunday School.

Mr. Belden is the son of John Mason Belden and Mary Elizabeth Hale and great-grandson of Rev. Joshua Belden. He fitted for the Hartford High School at the Lewis Academy, Southington, and graduated in 1868. He was elected Superintendent of the Sunday School in 1880 and Deacon of the Church in 1903. He was treasurer of the Ecclesiastical Society for many years and is now chairman of the Society's committee.



MR. JOSHUA BELDEN.



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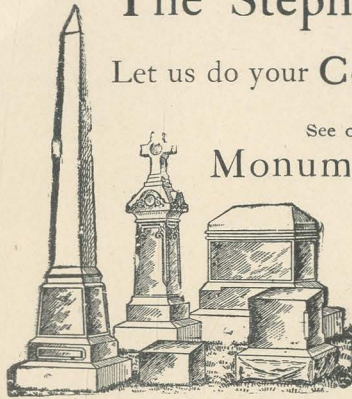
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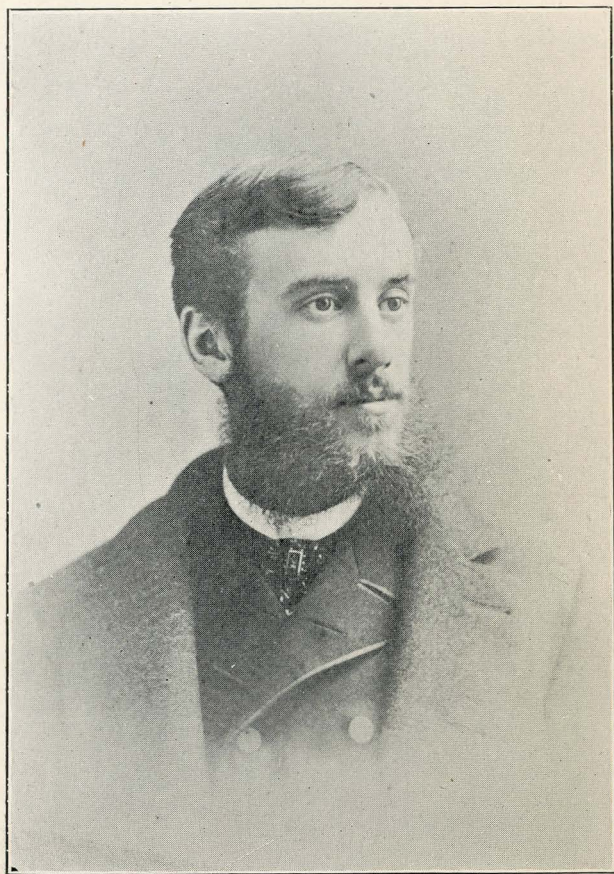
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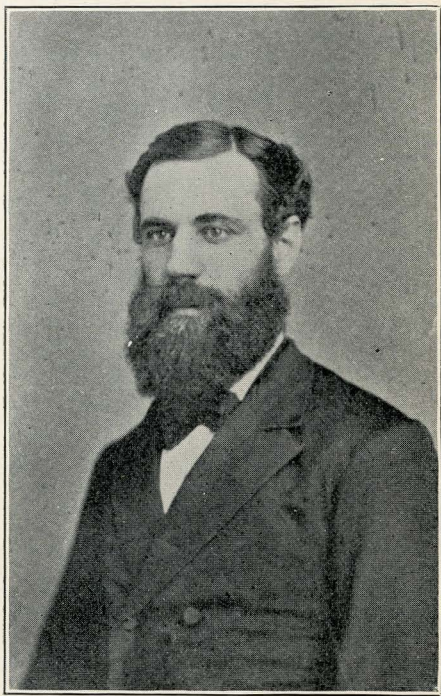
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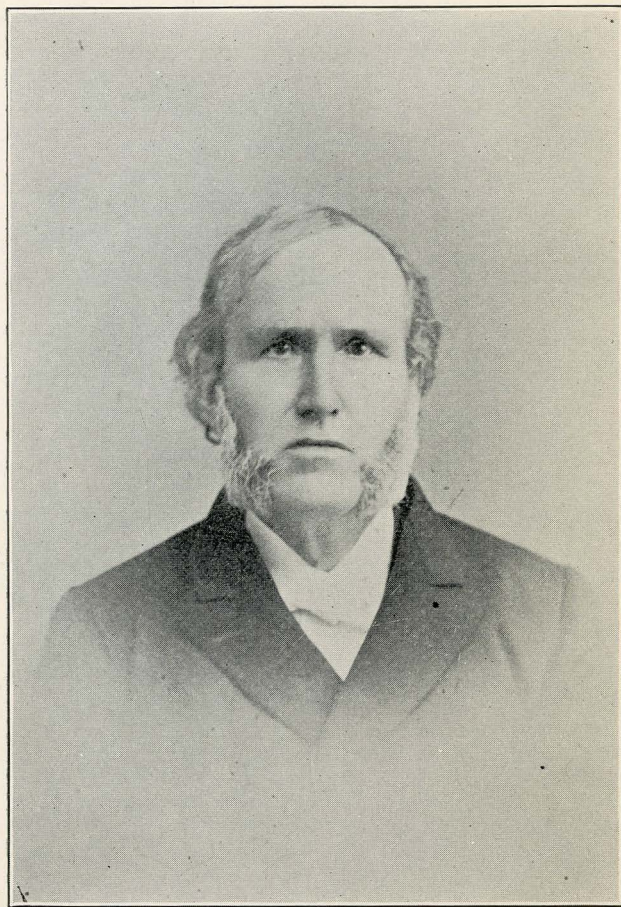
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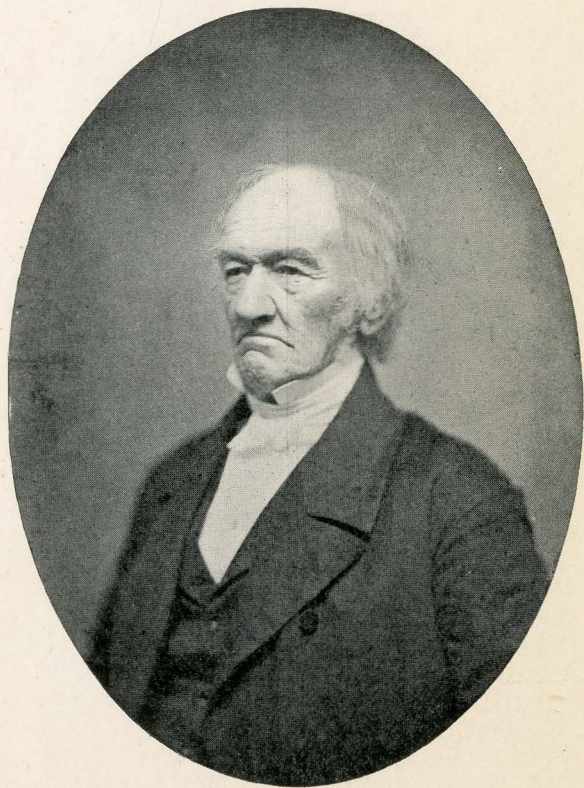
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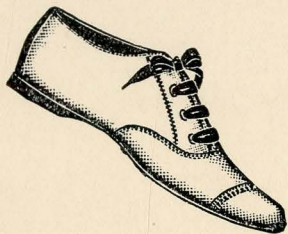
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