

# THE MAYNARD METHODIST CHURCH

(1867 - 1970)

by Doris Fardy

## PREFACE

To tell the historic evolution of the Maynard Methodist Church, one must relate also, the illustrious names and dramatic events pertinent to the historical data of the Town of Maynard - since both civilized structures developed simultaneously and through the efforts of the same leaders in each area.

With a difference of not quite four years between conception dates, many of the idealistic men and women who envisioned an established church, based on Methodism and its teachings of piety and moral behavior, were the same inspired souls who could perceive of the small village of Assabet, becoming an organized industrial and progressive town. Woven together with the golden threads of ideology, idealism, and influence, the Church and the Town burst forth from glorious seeds of hope - hope which was sown by the early men and women filled with courage and faith.

Together - Church and Town - they spread their gentle roots, growing sturdily and strengthening as the years swiftly passed. Then, came the time of the blossoming, with all its promise of bearing a fruitful crop. And now, at the end of a century rich with sowing, rooting, growing and blossoming, there is the gratifying harvest, rich in rewards. For both the Church and the Town, the harvest has been a bountiful one!

## History

In the year 1846, Assabet Village was a growing, thriving area. It was protected around its borders by the neighboring towns of Sudbury, Stow, and Acton. The villagers were satisfied with their fruitful lands which had come to them from the native Indians, directly or otherwise. From the Indians also, had come the name Assabet which the people gave, not only to their village, but to the winding river which conveniently flowed through the center of the village. The soil was rich and fertile, making farming easy. Industrial prospects were bright, what with a saw and grist mill successfully run by Asa Smith and a pro-



ductive paper mill established at the corner of Summer and Parker Streets. Most of the settlers were content with this - their little village.

Yet, there were others who longed for improvements. For one thing, there were no railroads. Freight had to be teamed to and from South Acton. Transportation was by means of stagecoach which travelled from Lowell to Framingham. Plans were already in the making for a Marlboro branch to extend through Assabet Village. Construction for this was scheduled for the year 1849.

Then, too, there were no religious organizations in the village. Many God-fearing citizens were disturbed by this fact. People who wished to worship had to travel either to Sudbury or Stow for worship service.

In 1852 a group of ambitious men met to remedy this situation. As a result, the Union Evangelical Church was established. The Church was later known as the Union Congregational Church. It was erected in 1853.

For fourteen years, worshippers found the Union Church sufficient. However, with the arrival of more and more Methodists making Assabet Village their place of residence, by 1867 a sentiment developed for the establishment of a Methodist Church. The men of the village gathered daily at Mr. Holden's Village Store to discuss the most important topic of the day - Methodism and the need for a Methodist Church.

On February 2, 1867, a meeting was held at the school house for the purpose of having Methodist preaching in the village of Assabet. Benjamin Conant was chosen chairman of the meeting and Benjamin Jones was the secretary. It was voted to choose a "committee of four to solicit subscriptions for the support of public worship." It was likewise voted that "Rev. Mr. Colburn of Hudson be invited to speak in Assabet on some religious subject."

Religious services were carried on faithfully at the Union Hall. Months passed, during which time a committee of seven "engaged ministers, hired the Hall, and made all other necessary arrangements for the ensuing year." Parsonage land was purchased, a choir formed, parsonage furniture selected, and an organ procured through rental from Boston.



On September 7, 1867, the Methodist Society met at the house of Samuel Evans according to appointment. Everything being in readiness for the signatures of the members, most of the persons present signed the Declaration and Pledge. Members of the Church included: Charles E. Watson, E.H. Tilton, E.F. Richardson, Emery Smith, T.C. Richardson, Samuel Evans, Jabez Thorp, Edward Henderson, J.A. DeForest, Mary F. Richardson, Francis H. Richardson, S.R. Taylor, Jessie D. Richardson, Samuel G. Brown, Henry Fowler, Charles May, Mary S. May, John Fuller.

And so was born an organized church. Rev. J.A. DeForest was voted on April 1, 1867 as the first official minister of the Methodist Society of Assabet. By 1868, there were 112 members in the Sunday School, with 14 teachers.

Twenty years later (1887) besides the Sabbath services, the Maynard Methodist Episcopal Church conducted Prayer meetings, held classes in the Sunday School, boasted of the Ladies' Benevolent Society (organized May 1, 1867) and sponsored church choir and musical programs for the public.

On February 18, 1902, Preacher in charge, Rev. W.F. Lawford made note in his sermon of the growth of Maynard and its industries. "This Spring and Summer will see a great addition to our Town. The mill is nearly done and the houses most completed. This large coming in of people will no doubt increase our attendance and we hope, our membership. We see many strangers every day and find them out and invite them to our Church house. I record my grateful appreciation of the favors this year and pray the Lord may richly bless the Church and make it a power for good and the salvation of man."

At the annual town meeting, March 7, 1921, it was voted to celebrate in an appropriate manner on April 19th, the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the town. Many of the names which appeared on the committees to formulate and create a working program for this affair were among those also on the Maynard Methodist Episcopal records. Names such as; Edwin Carlton, Frank Binks Mrs. Howard Wilson, Albert Batley, Howard Wilson, Rev. David M. Angell, Levi



## Maynard Methodist Church (cont.)

R. Cheney, Mary Naylor and others.

Interest in young people and scouting was most evident in 1951 when the Methodist Church sponsored a new Boy Scout Troop which included 32 members, with Auno Koskinen as volunteer Scout Master. In 1952, seventh and eighth grade Girl Scouts were allowed to use the Sunday School rooms for their meetings each Saturday morning.

With the good neighbor and big brother policy prevailing, in September of 1956, the Church held an auction, "the proceeds to benefit the Sudbury Methodist Church Building Fund."

A catered dinner was held on June 4, 1967 in the cafeteria of the Maynard High School to observe the one hundredth anniversary of the Church. Anniversary speaker was the Rev. R. Case, S.T.M. Minister of Belmont Methodist Church, Belmont and President of the Northeastern Jurisdictional Association of Historical Societies of the Methodist Church, 1964-1968. Benediction was given the Rev. Edgar F. Redfern, St. M., current pastor of the Maynard Methodist Church.

Following are the ministers who have served the Maynard Methodist Church, since it was organized, September 7, 1867.

J.A. DeForest.....	1867-1869
L.D. Frost.....	1869-1872
J.S. Day.....	1872-1874
M.H.A. Evans.....	1874-1876
A. Baylies.....	1876-1877
A.C. Godfrey.....	1877-1879
G.V. Bemt.....	1879-1880
L.D. Frost.....	1880-1881
G.W.H. Clark.....	1881-1882
I.B. Bigelow.....	1882-1885
W. Wignall.....	1885-1888
C.A. Merrill.....	1888-1891

## Maynard Methodist Church(cont.)

J.F. Mears.....1891-1895  
 J.A. Messler.....1895-1898  
 Edward Higgins.....1898-1900  
 J. Harris (Supply).....1900-1900  
 F.H. Ellis.....1900-1901  
 W.F. Lawford.....1901-1904  
 E. Bisbee.....1904-1908  
 T.J. Judge.....1908-1912  
 A.M. Osgood.....1912-1917  
 G.F. Parsons.....1917-1920  
 D.M. Angell.....1920-1923  
 C.M. Redstone.....1923-1926  
 O.S. Buell.....1927-1927  
 C.E. Carroll.....1927-1928  
 C.C. Garland.....1928-1930  
 E.L. Mills.....1930-1932  
 J.Rex Shepler.....1932-1934  
 E.B. Marshall.....1934-1940  
 H.F. Fulton.....1940-1947  
 H. Leach.....1947-1949  
 Robert K. Jones Jr. ....1949-1959  
 Lawrence N. O'Brien.....1959-1963  
 Richard Dean.....1963-1965  
 Edgar F. Redfern.....1965-1970

(At the present writing, Rev. Fred Pneuman is being considered  
 as a minister to serve 1970----)

Diligent research through the yellowed pages of countless orderly  
 well-kept record books, ably written by loftily inspired men and women of the



## Maynard Methodist Church (cont.)

Maynard Methodist Church, has produced fascinating contact with the Town's precious past. Selflessly dedicating their time and efforts toward the advancement of Goodness and Truth, the priceless marks left by these stalwart pioneers have bequeathed an eternal legacy of moral challenge and kindled hope for all future generations to come.