

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH
ABOUT THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WOOLWICH, ME

Days Ferry Congregational Church
Woolwich, ME
September 17, 2023

Rev. Dr. Alan Baughcum

The Glory Days ... 1765-1850

Hard Times ... 1850-1950

Renewal ... post 1950

The Glory Days, 1765-1850

To establish a town in old New England, first there had to be a church ... the First Congregational Church of Woolwich was established in 1765 to make the Town of Woolwich possible. The original building still stands across from the Woolwich Town Hall. [PICTURES OF CHURCH ... NEQUASSET]

The period was one of some religious ferment. The Congregational Church was the established church, supported by tax revenues, but not everyone was happily a Congregationalist or wished to pay taxes to support the church.

That ferment in the region was also reflected in politics. Woolwich tended to be Federalist in its sympathies and was troubled by the influx of Jeffersonians following the end of the Revolution. Many poor soldiers came to the Kennebec valley seeking land. Squatters were not universally accepted.

The ferment also showed up in Woolwich in a heresy trial for the first minister, Josiah Winship, for whom I have no portrait. We have few records of the dispute(s) that led up to the trial but it may simply have reflected the times. It preceded the Great Awakening of the early 1800s in America that led to the formation of Baptist and Methodist and Unitarian and other denominations. Those differing beliefs were forming under the service. We do know that various Congregational clergy in the region assembled for a two-week trial, that they ate and drank copiously during the trial, and that the trial ended with Rev. Winship still in the pulpit and the concluding sermon of the tribunal entitled, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

After many refusals, the Baptists were finally allowed in 1811 to hold a meeting in the Nequasset church. That meeting resulted in a letter to the Governor urging the establishment of a school for the training of clergy. And, so, Colby College was established two years later, in 1813.

Baptists later split and formed their own church. That congregation split into what are now the First Baptist Church of Woolwich and the Woolwich-Wiscasset Baptist Church.

Rev. Winship led the church during the American Revolution. The town of Woolwich was solidly on the side of the Revolution. Rev. Winship was physically attacked by one Loyalist. Eventually all Loyalists were literally chased out of town. Many of the citizens signed up to fight in the war.

The War of 1812 did not seem to have attracted many soldiers from the town, although the town and all New England was economically shut down by President Madison's shutdown of trade. That was a heavy blow in a region devoted to building ships for that seaborne trade.

In some ways this period was the economic high point for the region that later became the state of Maine. Maine was a leader in the timber industry, in fishing, shipbuilding and the supply of granite. Times were sufficiently prosperous in “West Woolwich” as Days Ferry was termed that the Congregational Church established a second campus on this site. The two churches shared pastors until the demise of the original church in the 1950s.

The good economic times came to an end. Federal fishing subsidies were ended. Shipbuilding went into a nosedive when ships began to be made of steel rather than wood and when wind power for sailing vessels was displaced by steam power. Maine had no comparative advantage in either steel or steam.

I’ve chosen just a few pastors to illustrate what I am saying. Josiah Winship was the first pastor of the Congregational Church, coming to Woolwich in 1765 and holding the pulpit for the next 59 years. He survived the heresy trial and the development of competing congregations.

Winship also illustrates the good economic times. He had the advantage of being the pastor of the established church, supported by the law that required attendance and the payment of taxes to provide him with a annual income. That income was not large but most everybody else lived by agriculture where there might be occasional good years but also years where there little or no income, or even economic losses.

Winship ran a farm with the help of his very strong and able second wife. (For example, she was said to be able to simultaneously operate two butter churns, one with each arm.) He also loaned out money, albeit being attentive to charging only the legal interest rate. He was sufficiently successful to be able to provide his three sons with their own farms and he left a substantial estate at his death.

Note: During the entire time of Winship’s ministry, the church was unheated. A stove was installed the year after his death. Think about sitting through Sunday morning worship services that lasted several hours in January and February!

Let me introduce you to another successful and powerful son of the Woolwich church from this period: Peleg [pronounced Pay leg] Tallman. [SILHOUETTES OF PELEG AND ELEANOR TALLMAN] Abandoned by his family at the age of 12 in 1776, Peleg made his way to American ships fighting in the Revolutionary War. He was put in charge of two after guns on the gun deck when the officer in charge was wounded and disabled. He fought on additional ships, escaped British captivity and was finally wounded by British grapeshot on the U. S. Trumbull. His shoulder-blade was shattered and amputation of his arm and shoulder was necessary. And yet he came back to sail and fight again, finally being captured by the British and taken to a prison in Ireland. After the 1783 peace treaty ending the war, he was able to make his way back to Boston.

Dr. Joseph Gardner was a Boston friend who had a farm in Woolwich. Peleg was sent to oversee the farm and take charge of potash works here. Gardner built a brig and put Peleg in as master. Peleg was able to buy a half interest after three years and continued to sail. He was married to Eleanor Tallman by Rev. Winship in 1790. Peleg continued to command ships going to the West Indies, Europe, Cape Verde Islands, India, and Mauritius until 1799.

After his sailing days ended, Peleg served as Woolwich's and then Bath's representative in the Massachusetts legislature. He served in Congress in 1811-1813 where he opposed the War of 1812. Later he served in the Maine Senate in 1822-1823.

Peleg contributed to the churches in Woolwich and Bath. He liked to attend church not in good weather but in bad weather to increase the size of the audience. Peleg was however somewhat suspicious of clergy. His will empowered his wife to bequeath her legacies to blood descendants only and "not to any other person or persons or associations of people or body corporate." At that time there were lots of missionary and religious organizations seeking contributions to which Mrs. Tallman was more sympathetic than Peleg.

He had homes in Bath (on the riverside site that is now a city park), in Woolwich (the Gardner farm purchased by Peleg in 1796), and in Vassalborough. His prosperity increased as he acquired property in shipping, banking and real estate.

In addition to owning property in Maine, Tallman owned real estate in Massachusetts, what is now Atlantic Avenue in Boston ... in Newburyport, MA ... in Portsmouth, NH ... in Rhode Island.

When Peleg died, he left an estate worth more than \$20M in today's dollars. He was allegedly the richest man in the state of Maine. And, despite his restrictions on his bequest to his wife, Eleanor had inherited money from her family. At her death in 1857 she left \$500 for the construction of a parsonage for the church in Woolwich where she was a member. (\$500 in 1857 is worth nearly \$18K in today's dollars.) The parsonage lasted until 1940 when it burned. [PICTURES OF ELEANOR TALLMAN AND PARSONAGE]

Just a couple of notes about the second pastor, Rev. Jonathan Adams. [PICTURE OF ADAMS] He served as Assistant Pastor to Winship, then as Pastor from 1817 to 1829. He was the father of a very great minister, Rev. Jonathan E. Adams, about whom I will say more later in this presentation. He was also the son-in-law of a Wiscasset ship captain who outfitted his ship and sailed to France to try to save Queen Marie Antoinette. The trip was a failure but the house he built for the Queen and her clothes and furnishings still stands near the Edgecomb Congregational Church and is known to this day as the House of Marie Antoinette. Let's leave Rev. Adams with a description written by his grandson of the typical worship service of that time ...

“The church services were unduly long in the early part of the nineteenth century, a long prayer, and a longer sermon, at least an hour long by the hour-glass. After a short intermission for refreshment and warmth by the great log-fire in the fireplace of the “Noon-House” or “Sabbath-day House,” or whatever this place of refuge was called, came the afternoon service, which was nearly as lengthy as the morning service. Attendants, who lived any distance, were fortunate to get home before dark, at least in the fall and winter months. ... [It was] the custom ... of the minister wearing black gloves [and a white neck scarf] in the pulpit.... It was a custom ... for the Sexton to bring the Minister a small glass of wine just before he entered the pulpit. My grandfather wrote his sermon all in one day, on a Tuesday, with only a cup of tea for refreshment at midday.”

It was during the tenure of the church’s fourth pastor, Rev. Jacob Goss (1832-1843) ... I have no portrait/photo of him ... that the church in Day’s Ferry (or West Woolwich as it was sometimes termed) was established in 1833. The reason was that, as I have described, the growth in population and commerce was such that a second campus was deemed desirable. [PICTURE OF DFCC ... CURRENT, OLDER, AND INTERIOR PRIOR TO RENOVATION IN 1890]

I cannot do this presentation without a brief mention of Joseph Garland, who pastored in Woolwich from 1844-1847. He had an on-again, off-again ministry over the years, interspersed with time spent farming. I can say more if you want to ask me but I think he suffered from significant mental illness. Towards the end of life he lived with his sister in New Hampshire and developed a hatred for his sister’s farmhand, Josiah Wasson. Garland would chase after Wasson, calling him the most wicked man in the region and preaching at him with Bible in hand. Upon returning to his sister’s home after a ministerial hiatus, he resumed his persecution of Wasson. Garland’s ire was especially fueled by the discovery that his sister had changed her will in the interim, bequeathing the \$10,000 formerly promised to Garland now promised to Wasson. (That is about a third of a million of today’s dollars.)

Wasson was found dead, floating in the river with a gash in his cheek . There was no water in his lungs, so he had not drowned. Blood was found on the floor of his sister’s barn and he was interviewed by the coroner’s jury but they returned a verdict of “death by manner and means unknown.”

So far as I can tell, none of the other pastors of the Woolwich Congregational Church had a similarly close call with the legal authorities.

I close my description of this period in the church’s history with Rev. Jotham Sewall, Jr. (1847-1851). [PICTURE OF JOTHAM SEWALL, JR.] His ministry was undistinguished but I include him because of his father, Jotham Sewall, Sr. The son wrote an interesting biography of the father. Jotham Sewall, Sr. was a famous evangelist and minister of the time, known lovingly as Father Sewall. He was one of the founders of the Bangor Theological Seminary. He preached, by the son’s account, 12,677 sermons in more than 400 locales, ranging from South Carolina to

New Brunswick. The father filled in for the son during times of the son's illnesses at Woolwich 119 times. Father Sewall averaged preaching more than a sermon a day for decades.

Hard Times, 1850-1950

The divisions I have made in this history or a little arbitrary. Obviously during these long periods, there were ups and downs. The reason for labelling this period one of hard times is that lands to the west opened up in the United States. Maine farmers heard that there was land out west that grew more than rocks and that the growing season was considerably longer there. There was a large population outflow to the west. Maine had 3% of the population of the colonies in the late 1700s. Maine's population is today about four-tenths of one population of the United States.

The number of people in Woolwich grew from 787 in 1790 to 1495 in 1830. For the next eighty years Woolwich's population fell by more than 50%. In 1930 the population in Woolwich was 671, less than it had been in 1790.

Part of the reason I am so impressed with the history of this church is that the church survived that huge population decline. What explains the survival of a small rural church in a region that underwent such large-scale and debilitating population and economic changes?

There were several such changes. The building of the Carlton bridge across the Kennebec in 1927 was no doubt a great development for the state. However, it largely ended economic reasons for people to travel through and engage in commerce in this part of Woolwich.

I mentioned the decline in shipbuilding. BIW went bankrupt in the 1920s and was taken over by Central Maine Power. It was not until the military buildup prior to and during WWII that the area's population began to increase and the local economy improved.

And yet the church adapted. The Congregational church joined with other area churches, although apparently not the Baptists, in holding revivals. Such displays of religious enthusiasm were a little unusual for normally sober and staid Congregationalists and yet the church took this unusual action to fulfill its mission to proclaim the gospel. One minister during this period, Rev. Henry Thayer, wrote a history of the Woolwich Congregational Church in which he remarked, "Yet often looking back upon the winter's religious upheaval, and acknowledging the positive gain by tests of human judgment, I seem to feel it was a shining nightmare, a perversion of true religious methods. I should recoil from the same again."

The 1920s marked an especially difficult time for Woolwich with the bankruptcy of BIW and the ending of ferry traffic because of the construction of the bridge. The Congregational and Methodist Churches (there were two: the North Woolwich and the South Woolwich Methodist Churches) formed the Woolwich Union for Church Services. That union lasted for perhaps 20

years, with a single pastor serving the Union. The Union coordinated worship services and the offering of communion and sponsored church suppers to supply financial needs.

The Methodists closed down in the 1940s. The Congregational Church turned over its assets to the Town of Woolwich in the 1950s by which time Days Ferry was down to 21 members. It is fascinating to me that this happened during a time of enormous religious renewal and activity in the U.S. at large.

I want to focus on just a few of the pastors during this period. One of the things that struck me as I studied this church's history was, despite its rural setting in Maine, its interconnectedness with events in the larger world. For example, Rev. Thomas N. Lord [PICTURE] was a pastor here during the Civil War. His son was a medical officer with the 7th Cavalry of the U. S. Army and died with Custer at the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

One of the most notable of Woolwich's pastors was Rev. Henry O. Thayer. [PICTURE OF THAYER] Born in Paris ... Maine ... he was of good Puritan and Pilgrim stock descending from Miles Standish and John Alden. He pastored from 1865 to 1889. He was a historian, active in both the Sagadahoc and Maine Historical Societies. He was Secretary and Librarian of the latter organization and published numerous papers and monographs about the people and the history of this part of Maine. He wrote an invaluable history of this church.

Rev. Thayer had three children. His two daughters became teachers in New York City. His son, Dr. Harvey Waterman Hewitt-Thayer became Chairman of the Department of Modern Languages at Princeton University, specializing in German literature. He was selected in 1905 by the then-President of Princeton, Woodrow Wilson, to be one of the first group of professors there to take part in the preceptor program at Princeton.

I mentioned the interconnectedness of this church with the larger world. Henry Martyn Perkins was born in Persia, son of the first Christian missionary to Persia. The father, Rev. Justin Perkins, was an internationally known figure in the Christian Church, with books recounting his experiences in Persia that were widely used in seminary and missionary circles. His minister there was devoted to the people we now know as the Kurds. The son pastored in Woolwich in 1897-1898 and is buried in Riverside Cemetery here. [PICTURES OF HENRY AND JUSTIN MARTIN]

Albeit not a pastor here, let me present a very important person ... Rev. Jonathan E. Adams, [PICTURE] the son of Woolwich's second Congregational minister, grew up in Woolwich, became a minister, and in the late 1800s became the Secretary of the Maine Missionary Society. He served for 19 years beginning in 1875. The Missionary Society was critical in raising funds for the support of pastors in Maine. Indeed, I have counted at least a dozen ministers who served the Congregational Church in Woolwich with salaries, in whole or in part, funded by the Missionary Society. It is not too much to say that many churches in Maine would never have

had a pastor were it not for the good work of this group, ably headed in the late 1800s by a son of Woolwich. Rev. Adams, the son, preached the sermon at the service marking the 100th anniversary of the Woolwich Church.

John Edward Newton [PICTURE WITH WIFE] pastored in Woolwich from 1903 and 1905 and was one of the most interesting of this church's pastors. He was born in England and studied at Bangor Theological Seminary and Bowdoin College. He followed up with a Master of Economics degree at Yale University. Newton served the church here from 1903 to 1905, going later to Connecticut where he pastored a very large church in New Haven.

John Newton was also a successful author. He wrote a historical novel, *The Rogue and the Witch*, in 1955. It became a Readers Digest selection. I have read the book and it is charming. It is set in Boston during Puritan times and is about religious life and the clergy in colonial New England.

The rogue in the novel was a beautiful Quaker woman. Her religious beliefs were antithetical to the Puritan clergy, who were very much in charge of just about everything in those days. She was branded, yes, branded with a hot iron, with an "R" to mark her as a rogue.

The protagonist of the novel was a young Puritan clergy who gradually came to fall in love with the Quaker girl. That was heresy. His sympathy for her came to public light and he was jailed as a witch. He was designated a witch for reasons too complicated to explain here (involving a fire in the North End of Boston). He managed to escape, living rough on an isolated island in the middle of a lake in Connecticut. Spoiler alert: after a year or so on the island, the man (and his dog) made their way back to Boston where he located and rescued the young woman, leaving Boston forever. And they all lived happily ever after ... hey, it was the 1950s, ok?!!

The book recommends itself for its depiction of Puritan times, and the repression that came with that theocracy. Its depiction of romance and the libido is, in my opinion, rather good for a retired New England pastor nearly 80 years old!

A brief note on Rev. William Calder [PICTURE], serving Woolwich from 1913 through 1917. He was a Presbyterian born in Aberdeen, Scotland. Interestingly the *Bath Independent* of June 23, 1917 reported that Rev. Calder had tendered his resignation from the church. The newspaper article stated that the resignation was the result of Rev. Calder having "received an important engagement from the British Government." One can only speculate that the appointment had something to do with World War I.

OK, so James Bond was a Scot. Like Bond, Calder was a handsome man. My speculation, completely unfounded, is that Calder was a Scottish-born British secret agent under cover as a pastor in the U.S., and was then called into action in the latter part of World War I on England's behalf. Just saying ...

Charles T. Brown [TWO PICTURES] is one of my favorite Woolwich Congregational ministers. A shy man, he overcame that to be President of the student body at Bangor Theological Seminary in his senior year. He served from 1937 to 1941 and came back to speak at the 200th anniversary celebration of the church.

After leaving Woolwich, Rev. Brown served as Chaplain in the U. S. Air Corps during WWII. He returned from the war to the pulpit of the Elm St. Congregational Church in Bucksport from 1946 to 1954. That ministry was temporarily interrupted when he became Pastor of First Congregational Church in Stockbridge, MA.

The Stockbridge church was pastored by the famous Rev. Jonathan Edwards, given credit for initiating the First Great Religious Awakening in the U.S. Edwards and his predecessor, John Sergeant, devoted their Stockbridge ministries to the Mohican tribe in the region. Edwards left the church in Stockbridge to become President of Princeton University.

Our Rev. Brown became pastor of the Stockbridge Church in 1954 and led a capital campaign there to build the new John Sergeant and Jonathan Edwards Room. But the call of his family and Maine on him was too strong and he returned to the Bucksport church in 1957 where he remained until 1979.

Rev. Brown was an avid birder and environmentalist, a faithful alumnus of BTS for whom he raised money and where he was named Distinguished Alumnus in 1969. I like all of that but I especially like his protest to his alma mater, Bowdoin College, when they decided to divorce itself from its Congregational origins: ““Higher education must have a new sense of the association of an intellectual person with true religion if it is to honestly present the arts and sciences. Education and the law alone have never in the history of man built a good society of human beings. Religion in its most mature form must become a part of the philosophy of higher education or our way of life will become increasingly sick and evil through its secular falsehoods, regardless of how sophisticated its intellectualism and how legal its legalism.” To which I say, “Amen!”

Mabelle Eliza Webster Squiers Tracey [PICTURE] was Woolwich’s first woman pastor, serving from 1942 to 1945. She composed a pretty good song, “My Dear State of Maine” in 1913. Her musical career continued as soloist and choir director of the Union Church in Greenville as well as the public-school musical supervisor there and in Searsport.

Rev. Tracey is also something of a woman of mystery. The newspaper article announcing her death reported that she had been assistant pastor of the First Baptist Church of Rockland. However, I reviewed the records of that church held by the Rockland Historical Society and find no mention of her at all. I do not know what to make of that ... discrimination against women? Do not know ...

Renewal, post-1950

Another son of Woolwich, Frank Walker [PICTURE], was responsible for beginning the renewal of Woolwich's Methodist and Congregational Churches. Walker was born in Woolwich around 1880 and was educated in Woolwich. He became a hotel manager, in particular the Manager of the Mohican Hotel in New London, CT, beginning in 1916. In its heyday, the Mohican was the largest and perhaps the finest hotel between New York and Boston.

Frank Walker died in 1947 and left an estate valued at \$100-150K. That is about \$1M in today's dollars. The bulk of that estate was left in trust in equal shares to the North Woolwich Methodist Church and the Day's Ferry Congregational Church.

That blessed gift enabled the North Methodist Church to re-open and the Days Ferry congregation to restart, the congregation forming itself into its own legal entity. The two churches continue to this day to share in the endowment developed from that original bequest.

The two churches joined again in a union, the United Parish, in 1967. For twenty years the congregation alternated in worshiping in the two churches. In 1987 that partnership was amicably dissolved, and the two churches have walked separate paths since.

Ron Ashworth [PICTURE] is notable for his leave-taking from the church in Woolwich in 1960. His letter of resignation reported on the frustrations of pastoral ministry: "There is more political pressure in the church than in government. There is no chance for close fellowship with any family in the community. The minister to help any family has to piece together the backgrounds of all the families from information he picks up from one place and another. If there is a real family problem the minister becomes in the eyes of the family a threat instead of a friend. Also, if the minister is found visiting one house more than another even if it is outside of his calling hours he is looked at as favoring their religious opinions more than another. His wife is also under discussion. She is not allowed the close fellowship and friendship that others are allowed. She is separated because of her husbands(sic) position."

Ron went on to lead YMCA organizations, including Bath's, as well as the Maine Conference's Pilgrim Lodge. He must have overcome his reservations about pastoral ministry because he finally was ordained in 1999 pastored for the last ten years of his life.

Woolwich's second woman pastor was Rev. Evelyn Bignell [PICTURE], from 1967 to 1969, the first two years of the formal Union of Woolwich's Congregational and Methodist Churches. She later served in chaplaincy positions at the Tewksbury State Hospital in Massachusetts and the Bangor City Hospital in Maine.

During the remaining years of the Union Parish, the churches were led for most of that period by Peter Willard and Frank Hayward [PICTURES]. I had the pleasure of interviewing them ... absolutely delightful! Peter is a kind of spiritual entrepreneur, starting the camp and then the school at Chop Point here in Woolwich, with help from Frank. He became pastor at Woolwich because, says Peter, Carlton Reed, Sr., the head of a prominent Woolwich family, drove his fancy new car into the camp and asked Peter to be the pastor. (Neither Peter or Frank have formal theological training nor are either ordained.) That ministry lasted until Peter stood up in church one Sunday morning and announced, "You people are not listening to me. I am done!" Not angry, just recognizing reality ... and to Frank's surprise, Peter announced that Frank would be preaching the next Sunday.

One last pastor ... Rev. Stanley Johnson [PICTURE] ... the first pastor of Day's Ferry Congregational Church following the breakup of the United Parish in 1989. He had pastored in Falmouth MA where he was very active in the community's youth program, hospital, and Council on Aging. While in Falmouth he received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Piedmont College in my home state of Georgia. The citation that came with the degree stated: "In recognition of his proclamation of the Good News to all who seek the daily strength to follow the teachings of Jesus, in acknowledgement of his concern for strengthening the mission of Christian education for young people who strive to work hard for it, and in remembrance of his pastoral care of the elderly, the handicapped, and the faithful people of his parish ..."

Rev. Johnson was the pastor when Johnson Hall was built and named for him. He was a Trustee of Bangor Theological Seminary and received the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1880. He served as Chair of various important denominational communities in Massachusetts and Maine.

[CLOSE WITH PICTURES OF PASTORS FOLLOWING STAN JOHNSON]

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When Peleg died, he left an estate worth more than \$20M in today’s dollars. He was allegedly the richest man in the state of Maine. And, despite his restrictions on his bequest to his wife, Eleanor had inherited money from her family. At her death in 1857 she left \$500 for the construction of a parsonage for the church in Woolwich where she was a member. (\$500 in 1857 is worth nearly \$18K in today’s dollars.) The parsonage lasted until 1940 when it burned. [PICTURES OF ELEANOR TALLMAN AND PARSONAGE]

Put a brick in veterans’ memorial on mall in Brunswick

Just a couple of notes about the second pastor, Rev. Jonathan Adams. [PICTURE OF ADAMS] He served as Assistant Pastor to Winship, then as Pastor from 1817 to 1829. He was the father of a very great minister, Rev. Jonathan E. Adams, about whom I will say more later in this presentation. He was also the son-in-law of a Wiscasset ship captain who outfitted his ship and sailed to France to try to save Queen Marie Antoinette. The trip was a failure but the house he built for the Queen and her clothes and furnishings still stands near the Edgecomb Congregational Church and is known to this day as the House of Marie Antoinette. Let's leave Rev. Adams with a description written by his grandson of the typical worship service of that time ...

“The church services were unduly long in the early part of the nineteenth century, a long prayer, and a longer sermon, at least an hour long by the hour-glass. After a short intermission for refreshment and warmth by the great log-fire in the fireplace of the “Noon-House” or “Sabbath-day House,” or whatever this place of refuge was called, came the afternoon service, which was nearly as lengthy as the morning service. Attendants, who lived any distance, were fortunate to get home before dark, at least in the fall and winter months. ... [It was] the custom ...of the minister wearing black gloves [and a white neck scarf] in the pulpit.... It was a custom ... for the Sexton to bring the Minister a small glass of wine just before he entered the pulpit. My grandfather wrote his sermon all in one day, on a Tuesday, with only a cup of tea for refreshment at midday.”

It was during the tenure of the church's fourth pastor, Rev. Jacob Goss (1832-1843) ... I have no portrait/photo of him ... that the church in Day's Ferry (or West Woolwich as it was sometimes termed) was established in 1833. The reason was that, as I have described, the growth in population and commerce was such that a second campus was deemed desirable. [PICTURE OF DFCC ... CURRENT, OLDER, AND INTERIOR PRIOR TO RENOVATION IN 1890]

I cannot do this presentation without a brief mention of Joseph Garland, who pastored in Woolwich from 1844-1847. He had an on-again, off-again ministry over the years, interspersed with time spent farming. I can say more if you want to ask me but I think he suffered from significant mental illness. Towards the end of life he lived with his sister in New Hampshire and developed a hatred for his sister's farmhand, Josiah Wasson. Garland would chase after Wasson, calling him the most wicked man in the region and preaching at him with Bible in hand. Upon returning to his sister's home after a ministerial hiatus, he resumed his persecution of Wasson. Garland's ire was especially fueled by the discovery that his sister had changed her will in the interim, bequeathing the \$10,000 formerly promised to Garland now promised to Wasson. (That is about a third of a million of today's dollars.)

Wasson was found dead, floating in the river with a gash in his cheek . There was no water in his lungs, so he had not drowned. Blood was found on the floor of his sister's barn and he was interviewed by the coroner's jury but they returned a verdict of "death by manner and means unknown."

So far as I can tell, none of the other pastors of the Woolwich Congregational Church had a similarly close call with the legal authorities.

I close my description of this period in the church's history with Rev. Jotham Sewall, Jr. (1847-1851). [PICTURE OF JOTHAM SEWALL, JR.] His ministry was undistinguished but I include him because of his father, Jotham Sewall, Sr. The son wrote an interesting biography of the father. Jotham Sewall, Sr. was a famous evangelist and minister of the time, known lovingly as Father Sewall. He was one of the founders of the Bangor Theological Seminary. He preached, by the son's account, 12,677 sermons in more than 400 locales, ranging from South Carolina to New Brunswick. The father filled in for the son during times of the son's illnesses at Woolwich 119 times. Father Sewall averaged preaching more than a sermon a day for decades.

Hard Times, 1850-1950

The divisions I have made in this history or a little arbitrary. Obviously during these long periods, there were ups and downs. The reason for labelling this period one of hard times is that lands to the west opened up in the United States. Maine farmers heard that there was land out west that grew more than rocks and that the growing season was considerably longer there. There was a large population outflow to the west. Maine had 3% of the population of the colonies in the late 1700s. Maine's population is today about four-tenths of one population of the United States.

The number of people in Woolwich grew from 787 in 1790 to 1495 in 1830. For the next eighty years Woolwich's population fell by more

than 50%. In 1930 the population in Woolwich was 671, less than it had been in 1790.

Part of the reason I am so impressed with the history of this church is that the church survived that huge population decline. What explains the survival of a small rural church in a region that underwent such large-scale and debilitating population and economic changes?

There were several such changes. The building of the Carlton bridge across the Kennebec in 1927 was no doubt a great development for the state. However, it largely ended economic reasons for people to travel through and engage in commerce in this part of Woolwich.

I mentioned the decline in shipbuilding. BIW went bankrupt in the 1920s and was taken over by Central Maine Power. It was not until the military buildup prior to and during WWII that the area's population began to increase and the local economy improved.

And yet the church adapted. The Congregational church joined with other area churches, although apparently not the Baptists, in holding revivals. Such displays of religious enthusiasm were a little unusual for normally sober and staid Congregationalists and yet the church took this unusual action to fulfill its mission to proclaim the gospel. One minister during this period, Rev. Henry Thayer, wrote a history of the Woolwich Congregational Church in which he remarked, "Yet often looking back upon the winter's religious upheaval, and acknowledging the positive gain by tests of human judgment, I seem to feel it was a shining nightmare, a perversion of true religious methods. I should recoil from the same again."

The 1920s marked an especially difficult time for Woolwich with the bankruptcy of BIW and the ending of ferry traffic because of the construction of the bridge. The Congregational and Methodist Churches (there were two: the North Woolwich and the South Woolwich Methodist Churches) formed the Woolwich Union for Church Services. That union lasted for perhaps 20 years, with a single pastor serving the Union. The Union coordinated worship services and the offering of communion and sponsored church suppers to supply financial needs.

The Methodists closed down in the 1940s. The Congregational Church turned over its assets to the Town of Woolwich in the 1950s by which time Days Ferry was down to 21 members. It is fascinating to me that this happened during a time of enormous religious renewal and activity in the U.S. at large.

I want to focus on just a few of the pastors during this period. One of the things that struck me as I studied this church's history was, despite its rural setting in Maine, its interconnectedness with events in the larger world. For example, Rev. Thomas N. Lord [PICTURE] was a pastor here during the Civil War. His son was a medical officer with the 7th Cavalry of the U. S. Army and died with Custer at the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

One of the most notable of Woolwich's pastors was Rev. Henry O. Thayer. [PICTURE OF THAYER] Born in Paris ... Maine ... he was of good Puritan and Pilgrim stock descending from Miles Standish and John Alden. He pastored from 1865 to 1889. He was a historian, active in both the Sagadahoc and Maine Historical Societies. He was Secretary and Librarian of the latter organization and published numerous papers and monographs about the people and the history of this part of Maine. He wrote an invaluable history of this church. Rev. Thayer is the only pastor of the church to be given the honorific title, Pastor Emeritus.

Rev. Thayer had three children. His two daughters became teachers in New York City. His son, Dr. Harvey Waterman Hewitt-Thayer became Chairman of the Department of Modern Languages at Princeton University, specializing in German literature. He was selected in 1905 by the then-President of Princeton, Woodrow Wilson, to be one of the first group of professors there to take part in the preceptor program at Princeton.

I mentioned the interconnectedness of this church with the larger world. Henry Martyn Perkins was born in Persia, son of the first Christian missionary to Persia. The father, Rev. Justin Perkins, was an internationally known figure in the Christian Church, with books recounting his experiences in Persia that were widely used in seminary and missionary circles. His minister there was devoted to the people we now know as the Kurds. The son pastored in Woolwich in 1897-1898 and is buried in Riverside Cemetery here. [PICTURES OF HENRY AND JUSTIN MARTIN]

Albeit not a pastor here, let me present a very important person ... Rev. Jonathan E. Adams, [PICTURE] the son of Woolwich's second Congregational minister, grew up in Woolwich, became a minister, and in the late 1800s became the Secretary of the Maine Missionary Society. He served for 19 years beginning in 1875. The Missionary Society was critical in raising funds for the support of pastors in Maine. Indeed, I have counted at least a dozen ministers who served the Congregational Church in Woolwich with salaries, in whole or in part, funded by the Missionary Society. It is not too much to say that many churches in Maine would never have had a pastor were it not for the good work of this group, ably headed in the late 1800s by a son of Woolwich. Rev. Adams, the son, preached the sermon at the service marking the 100th anniversary of the Woolwich Church.

John Edward Newton [PICTURE WITH WIFE] pastored in Woolwich from 1903 and 1905 and was one of the most interesting of this church's pastors. He was born in England and studied at Bangor Theological Seminary and Bowdoin College. He followed up with a Master of Economics degree at Yale University. Newton served the church here from 1903 to 1905, going later to Connecticut where he pastored a very large church in New Haven.

John Newton was also a successful author. He wrote a historical novel, *The Rogue and the Witch*, in 1955. It became a Readers Digest selection. I have read the book and it is charming. It is set in Boston during Puritan times and is about religious life and the clergy in colonial New England.

The rogue in the novel was a beautiful Quaker woman. Her religious beliefs were antithetical to the Puritan clergy, who were very much in charge of just about everything in those days. She was branded, yes, branded with a hot iron, with an “R” to mark her as a rogue.

The protagonist of the novel was a young Puritan clergy who gradually came to fall in love with the Quaker girl. That was heresy. His sympathy for her came to public light and he was jailed as a witch. He was designated a witch for reasons too complicated to explain here (involving a fire in the North End of Boston). He managed to escape, living rough on an isolated island in the middle of a lake in Connecticut. Spoiler alert: after a year or so on the island, the man (and his dog) made their way back to Boston where he located and rescued the young woman, leaving Boston forever. And they all lived happily ever after ... hey, it was the 1950s, ok??!!

The book recommends itself for its depiction of Puritan times, and the repression that came with that theocracy. Its depiction of romance and the libido is, in my opinion, rather good for a retired New England pastor nearly 80 years old!

A brief note on Rev. William Calder [PICTURE], serving Woolwich from 1913 through 1917, about whom I actually know very little. He was a Presbyterian born in Aberdeen, Scotland. Interestingly the Bath Independent of June 23, 1917 reported that Rev. Calder had tendered his resignation from the church. The newspaper article stated that the resignation was the result of Rev. Calder having “received an important engagement from the British Government.” One can only speculate that the appointment had something to do with World War I.

OK, so James Bond was a Scot. Like Bond, Calder was a handsome man. My speculation, completely unfounded, is that Calder was a Scottish-born British secret agent under cover as a pastor in the U.S., and was then called into action in the latter part of World War I on England's behalf. Just saying ...

Charles T. Brown [TWO PICTURES] is one of my favorite Woolwich Congregational ministers. A shy man, he overcame that to be President of the student body at Bangor Theological Seminary in his senior year. He served from 1937 to 1941 and came back to speak at the 200th anniversary celebration of the church.

After leaving Woolwich, Rev. Brown served as Chaplain in the U. S. Air Corps during WWII. He returned from the war to the pulpit of the Elm St. Congregational Church in Bucksport from 1946 to 1954. That ministry was temporarily interrupted when he became Pastor of First Congregational Church in Stockbridge, MA.

The Stockbridge church was pastored by the famous Rev. Jonathan Edwards, given credit for initiating the First Great Religious Awakening in the U.S. Edwards and his predecessor, John Sergeant, devoted their Stockbridge ministries to the Mohican tribe in the region. Edwards left the church in Stockbridge to become President of Princeton University.

Our Rev. Brown became pastor of the Stockbridge Church in 1954 and led a capital campaign there to build the new John Sergeant and Jonathan Edwards Room. But the call of his family and Maine on him was too strong and he returned to the Bucksport church in 1957 where he remained until 1979.

Rev. Brown was an avid birder and environmentalist, a faithful alumnus of BTS for whom he raised money and where he was named Distinguished Alumnus in 1969. I like all of that but I especially like his protest to his alma mater, Bowdoin College, when they decided to divorce itself from its Congregational origins: “Higher education must have a new sense of the association of an intellectual person with true religion if it is to honestly present the arts and sciences. Education and the law alone have never in the history of man built a good society of human beings. Religion in its most mature form must become a part of the philosophy of higher education or our way of life will become increasingly sick and evil through its secular falsehoods, regardless of how sophisticated its intellectualism and how legal its legalism.” To which I say, “Amen!”

Mabelle Eliza Webster Squiers Tracey [PICTURE] was Woolwich’s first woman pastor, serving from 1942 to 1945. She composed a pretty good song, “My Dear State of Maine” in 1913. Her musical career continued as soloist and choir director of the Union Church in Greenville as well as the public-school musical supervisor there and in Searsport.

Rev. Tracey is also something of a woman of mystery. The newspaper article announcing her death reported that she had been assistant pastor of the First Baptist Church of Rockland. However, I reviewed the records of that church held by the Rockland Historical Society and find no mention of her at all. I do not know what to make of that ... discrimination against women? Do not know ...

Renewal, post-1950

Another son of Woolwich, Frank Walker [PICTURE], was responsible for beginning the renewal of Woolwich's Methodist and Congregational Churches. Walker was born in Woolwich around 1880 and was educated in Woolwich. He became a hotel manager, in particular the Manager of the Mohican Hotel in New London, CT, beginning in 1916. In its heyday, the Mohican was the largest and perhaps the finest hotel between New York and Boston.

Frank Walker died in 1947 and left an estate valued at \$100-150K. That is about \$1M in today's dollars. The bulk of that estate was left in trust in equal shares to the North Woolwich Methodist Church and the Day's Ferry Congregational Church.

That blessed gift enabled the North Methodist Church to re-open and the Days Ferry congregation to restart, the congregation forming itself into its own legal entity. The two churches continue to this day to share in the endowment developed from that original bequest.

The two churches joined again in a union, the United Parish, in 1967. For twenty years the congregation alternated in worshiping in the two churches. In 1987 that partnership was amicably dissolved, and the two churches have walked separate paths since.

Ron Ashworth [PICTURE] is notable for his leave-taking from the church in Woolwich in 1960. His letter of resignation reported on the frustrations of pastoral ministry: “There is more political pressure in the church than in government. There is no chance for close fellowship with any family in the community. The minister to help any family has to piece together the backgrounds of all the families from information he picks up from one place and another. If there is a real family problem the minister becomes in the eyes of the family a threat instead of a friend. Also, if the minister is found visiting one house more than another even if it is outside of his calling hours he is looked at as favoring their religious opinions more than another. His wife is also under discussion. She is not allowed the close fellowship and friendship that others are allowed. She is separated because of her husbands(sic) position.”

Ron went on to lead YMCA organizations, including Bath’s, as well as the Maine Conference’s Pilgrim Lodge. He must have overcome his reservations about pastoral ministry because he finally was ordained in 1999 pastored for the last ten years of his life.

Woolwich’s second woman pastor was Rev. Evelyn Bignell [PICTURE], from 1967 to 1969, the first two years of the formal Union of Woolwich’s Congregational and Methodist Churches. She later served in chaplaincy positions at the Tewksbury State Hospital in Massachusetts and the Bangor City Hospital in Maine.

During the remaining years of the Union Parish, the churches were led for most of that period by Peter Willard and Frank Hayward [PICTURES]. I had the pleasure of interviewing them ... absolutely delightful! Peter is a kind of spiritual entrepreneur, starting the camp and then the school at Chop Point here in Woolwich, with help from Frank. He became pastor at Woolwich because, says Peter, Carlton Reed, Sr., the head of a prominent Woolwich family, drove his fancy new car into the camp and asked Peter to be the pastor. (Neither Peter or Frank have formal theological training nor are either ordained.) That ministry lasted until Peter stood up in church one Sunday morning and announced, “You people are not listening to me. I am done!” Not angry, just recognizing reality ... and to Frank’s surprise, Peter announced that Frank would be preaching the next Sunday.

Peter is also responsible for a camp for kids in Nicaragua and home for widows and orphans and a school in Bangladesh.

One last pastor ... Rev. Stanley Johnson [PICTURE] ... the first pastor of Day’s Ferry Congregational Church following the breakup of the United Parish in 1989. He had pastored in Falmouth MA where he was very active in the community’s youth program, hospital, and Council on Aging. While in Falmouth he received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Piedmont College in my home state of Georgia. The citation that came with the degree stated: “In recognition of his proclamation of the Good News to all who seek the daily strength to follow the teachings of Jesus, in acknowledgement of his concern for strengthening the mission of Christian education for young people who sire to work hard for it, and in remembrance of his pastoral care of the elderly, the handicapped, and the faithful people of his parish ...”

Rev. Johnson was the pastor when Johnson Hall was built and later named for him. He was a Trustee of Bangor Theological Seminary and received the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1880. He served as Chair of various important denominational communities in Massachusetts and Maine.

[CLOSE WITH PICTURES OF PASTORS FOLLOWING STAN JOHNSON]

DRAFT