

One of the Earlier Basketball Teams to Represent Houlton High



This squad of court stars was the fifth basketball aggregation to defend the black and white colors of Houlton High School, representing the school in 1919. They are, kneeling, Guy Smith, Norman Whited, Billy O'Donnell (sitting in center), Leon "Shoggy" Niles, Jerome "Rupe" Ervin. Back row, Bernard McCluskey and Fred Webb.

When Football was a School Sport HHS Had Top Teams



Football was once a popular sport in Aroostook County and county titles were frequently captured by Houlton High School. This team conquered all comers in 1920. Sitting, left to right, Waldo O'Donnell, Donald McCluskey, Leland Hovey, Carl Dunphy, Zeke Bagnall. Second row, Warren Niles, Harold Fowler, Capt. Newt Churchill, Herschel Peabody, Donald Dunphy, Ira Bagnall. Back row, Forrest Tingley, manager, Lawrence Burleigh, Maurice "Elliott, coach, Jack Peabody, Leon "Shoggy" Niles, Harold Manuel, Bill Jenkins, coach.

ter, on March 27, that the first recorded meeting was held at which the project of building a church was discussed by the Congregationalists. This meeting took place in what was called "the centre school house" and there were 6 men present to talk over the idea of building a place of worship.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR CHURCH

Dr. Lyman Sprague presided at the meeting and Leonard Pierce acted as clerk. Both of these men were given considerable credit for carrying out the decision of the meeting to a successful conclusion. Mr. Pierce gave \$300 towards the church structure, as did Dr. Sprague. Others, including Capt. Sabbitt from the Garrison, also

had been fully extended, Rev. Beaman was authorized to visit other parts of the state in search of aid. He reportedly went to Bangor, Brunswick, Hallowell, Portland, Kennebunk and even as far as Boston, on his mission, and was able to secure \$500.

FRAME OF CHURCH RAISED

Rev. Beaman returned from his fund raising pilgrimage on July 10 and, ten days later, the frame of the church was raised. The spot selected was described as "a sightly one, on the high point of ledge where the main street unites with the Military Road opposite the Madigan estate. The property was owned by the Kendalls.

In October, 1838, possibly with

him to come to Houlton in the first place, Rev. Beaman was appointed as a chaplain of Hancock Barracks, it being understood that when the new church was completed it should be used as a place of worship for the officers and soldiers at the barracks, with their families, together with the citizens of the town. Rev. Beaman was then to occupy the position of pastor of the church as well as serving as chaplain of the garrison. There is no record of his having received double recompense for this dual ministry.

CHURCH COST \$4000

The church was built at a cost of \$4000. It was dedicated June 19, 1839 with Rev. Beaman preaching

pounds. He also took a prominent part in obtaining the charter for Houlton Academy, which opened its doors in 1848, the last year of his tenancy and he also is credited with the formation of an Auxiliary Bible Society in Aroostook County.

DESULTORY PASTORATES

Again the church fell a victim of desultory pastorates and long periods of a vacant pulpit. In August of 1848, Rev. Albert W. Fiske, under appointment by the Maine Missionary Society, was here for three months. The following year came Rev. Daniel Potter for three months and, in 1850, Rev. Charles P. Felch put in a nine months supply period in the Congregational parish.

the Maine Missionary Society and its friends finally reap an abundant harvest."

On this somewhat lugubrious note, Rev. Carpenter took his departure on Sept. 24, 1865. Yet he must have developed a deep affection for this community and it for him. The congregation asked him to come back the following year and he did, coming here from Wadoboro in October 1866. His health had begun to fail him and he was able to preach only once after he had come back to Houlton. He passed to his reward on April 3, 1867.

UNFORTUNATE TIMES AGAIN

two of whom were men, the church had been allowed to become so dilapidated and ill-kept that it was considered unfit to worship in. The services that had been held during this period took place in the vestry.

The condition of his new parish was a challenge to this young minister. He met it with a determination that wrought a great change in the short space of three years. He arrived in Houlton March 10, 1876 and, in the ensuing two years, 32 persons were added to the church rolls. After almost the end of that time, Rev. Crowell was given an official call to the pastorate, which he accepted. His ordination took place December 19

The combination of the growth of the church membership and the condition of the building it then occupied at the junction of Main and Military streets, soon demonstrated the need for more commodious quarters in which to worship. No sooner were the facts recognized than action to raise funds was quickly taken to move the old church to a better site and to put it in appropriate condition.

RAISED LOCALLY

The following persons were appointed to assume this important responsibility: Lewis B. Johnson, Almon H. Fogg, George A. Dickey, Herman Knight and the pastor,

the society with the critical assignment of securing funds with which to carry out the plans.

Within the town \$2000 was raised, principally from among the members of the parish. Rev. Crowell then went to other churches in the state in an effort to secure the balance. He was successful and, within six weeks, nearly \$1200 had been pledged from these outside sources.

The final cost of the land on

Compliments of SUSAN'S

Contributed liberally.
When the means of the parish had been instrumental in getting

the connivance of Dr. Sprague, who

the first sermon at the morning service and Rev. Gilman Bachelor of Calais occupying the pulpit in the evening. The following day, Rev. Beaman, having previously received a call to the pastorate, was ordained.

At this time there were eight companies of artillery stationed at Hancock Barracks and the period of 1839 was described as a time of "an extensive revival of religion and temperance, especially among the soldiers . . ." Rev. Beaman was an energetic worker for his church. Early in 1840 he organized a Sunday School and was instrumental in "winning a considerable number to Christ" before the termination of his pastorate in October of that year.

TWO SUPPORTERS LOST

At about the same time the church lost two others of its loyal supporters in the persons of Dr. Sprague and his son-in-law, Capt. (later Col.) E. E. Babbitt, who were transferred from Houlton. Both had been devoted Christian gentlemen and both had been of great assistance to the church, financially as well as spiritually. The departure of all three of these stalwarts was a source of keen regret, not only to the parish but also to the entire community.

For the next few years the affairs of the First Congregational Church of Houlton were to lapse into a situation similar to that which prevailed in the early 1830's. Following the departure of Rev. Beaman, Rev. James Gooch supplied the pulpit occasionally. In 1841, a Samuel P. Abbott of Farmington, through a commission from the Maine Missionary Society, was on the local scene for three months. He accepted a call to the pastorate at the expiration of this period. He served only two years, being obliged to resign on account of ill health in October, 1843.

AN ACTIVE MINISTER

In December, 1843, Rev. W. T. Savage preached here and, on the 21st of that month, he was given a call to occupy the pastorate, which he accepted, remaining here until his resignation in 1848. He was an active minister, the reports of his tenure indicate, and his labors in the church were appreciated, not alone by his parishioners but by the entire community as well.

He left his mark on this community by some outstanding accomplishments. He was instrumental in securing the bell for the church, an instrument weighing over 100

The ensuing 11 years must have been dreary and discouraging ones indeed for the First Congregational Church of Houlton. It was found necessary to close the church altogether for a long time owing to conditions which enabled the pulpit to be supplied very irregularly by Revs. Potter, Marcus Keep of Ashland, R. M. Forbes of Patten, R. M. Knight of Fort Fairfield. Rev. Joshua Eaton supplied occasionally during these years as did Rev. R. W. Emerson.

RETURN TO NORMAL

It was in February, 1859 that the conduct of the affairs of the church returned to a more normal operation. In that month there came to Houlton Rev. E. G. Carpenter, who left a flourishing church in Newcastle because he felt the need of missionary service in Aroostook County. He remained here for six years, until Sept. 24, 1865.

Of the period of his stewardship over the affairs of this church, he had this to say at its termination: "This day my labors as a Missionary at Houlton and in Aroostook County are closed. Nearly seven years of toil, trial and sacrifice have I spent at this outpost of Zion. I have witnessed some progress in the tone of morals, in social and intellectual culture, and some conversions to the little church here. But almost as soon as converted, our friends have been taken from us by removal or death, other sects have come in and the element of the Congregational Church are few, and the prospects for a Congregational minister for many years to come seems not very promising. A few faithful friends I have also found whom I shall not forget, and who will not, I think, forget me.

REPAIR, IMPROVE CHURCH

"Through my feeble efforts the Congregational meeting house has been repaired — a neat and commodious vestry at an expense of \$600 has been built, \$200 contributed here at Houlton, the remainder furnished by myself and from friends abroad. The meeting house and vestry have been supplied with hymn books and the Sunday School with a good library.

"May the great Shepherd of Israel watch over this flock, purify it, strengthen it, and enlarge it, so that our labors shall not be in vain in the Lord, and may the other feeble hands of Israel in this country be kept and guarded and built up in the faith of the Pilgrims, and so the generous contributions of

In July of that same year the little church was again bereft by the loss of one of its faithful and devoted servants, Augustus Pierce, superintendent of the Sunday School.

Again the First Congregational Church of Houlton was visited by unfortunate times. Although difficult to envision, historians report that Mr. Pierce was "the last male member of the church".

It became necessary for the church fathers to select a woman to become superintendent of the Sunday School. For some reason the historian fails to reveal the name of the woman so designated but it is told that "a larger and more interesting school (as a missionary report has it) was not to be found in the town."

For a brief interlude between 1868 and 1870 the pulpit of this church was occupied by Rev. E. R. Osgood, who was commissioned here by the Maine Missionary Society. During that time the church membership was increased by four new members, two of whom were men.

SERVICES DISCONTINUED

The next six years saw another relapse to an empty pulpit. The church was without a pastor, or even a supply, excepting for one Sunday during the year when Rev. E. S. Thurston, secretary of the Maine Missionary Society, paid an official visit to the county.

Sunday services during this period were discontinued and the church building was closed. The organization of the church was kept alive by the maintenance of Sunday School and weekly prayer meetings which were conducted by the few faithful women, and four persons were received into the church on the profession of faith, and two by letter.

It is probably true that the turning point in the history of the First Congregational Church of Houlton came on the date of March 10, 1876 with the arrival here of Rev. Zenas Crowell, sent here, as most of his predecessors had been, by the Maine Missionary Society to minister to this little church, still far afield from the more easily traveled routes nearer the centers of population.

SPIRITS AT A LOW EBB

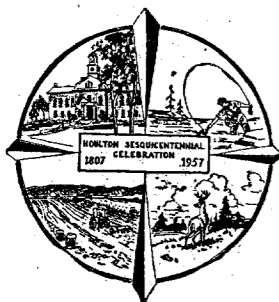
Having been without a minister for six years, it is not surprising that Rev. Crowell found the spirits of the members of the little church in Houlton at a low ebb. Their number then stood at 15, only

nation took place December 19, 1877.

Rev. Zenas Crowell. The latter was also appointed financial agent for

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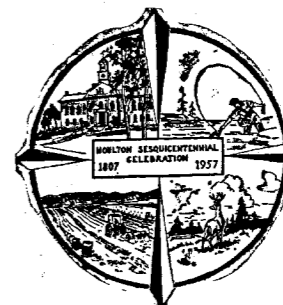
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