

The Georgetown Women's Benevolent Society of the First Congregational Church was organized on November 5, 1834, in the home of the Rev. Isaac Braman, with twenty-three members.

The objects for which this society was formed, as stated in its constitution, were to engage in acts of benevolence and charity and to promote social intercourse with each other.

During the earlier days of this society, it was customary for one of the members to read aloud from some instructive book, while the rest sewed. Liberal contributions were made to help the church and for home missionary work. After some years, the meetings, which often were held in different homes of the members, were held in the church vestry, in the evening instead of the afternoon, with the social interests of the church in view more than sewing. It is quite probable that this change of emphasis gave rise in 1878 to the formation of an auxiliary called The Woman's Missionary Society.

It was the women of the first church who raised the money to build the chapel. In 1849, it was voted to purchase the house known as the Josephus Adams house, now the show room of the Spaulding, Inc. and use it as a vestry. In 1852, it became the parsonage and the chapel was built the same year, money raised by the ladies of the society.

A majority of the members of the Benevolent Society were among those who decided to form a new church in 1864. This new Church, organized as the "Orthodox Congregational Church of Georgetown", held Saboath worship for four years in the wooden chapel which was built in 1852 and still stands at the corner of East Main St. and Elm St., used as a storehouse by Spaulding, Inc.

When George Peabody announced that he intended to build a church in Georgetown as a memorial to his mother, he invited the new church to occupy it as a house of worship, and their name was changed to read "Orthodox Memorial Church". Having a new house of worship, the new Church no longer needed the little wooden chapel. It was vacated in 1870 and the proceeds from its sale are still held today by the Benevolent Society. St. Mary's Catholic Parish purchased the chapel for a place of worship, using for that purpose until the completion of their building on Central



St. in 1907.

If the mention of money on this occasion can be excused it might well be said that the \$1000.00 in this fund, about eighty-six years old now, is our only mode of helping our Church today. Its very name "First Congregational Church Chapel Memorial Fund" suggests the historic reconciliation of 1908 of the First Congregational Church and the Memorial Church. The Benevolent Society, having been born in the First Church in the time of the "Old South" building, and having broken away with those who became the Memorial Church, came back into First Church, bringing with it this ~~Chapel~~ fund.

The Benevolent Society has held the Chapel Fund all these years, but the interest earned has always been used by the Church. In recent years, the Chapel Fund ~~itself~~ has been loaned a number of times to the Church, without interest, for major repair needs.

We are a very small group now, standing as we do at the end of a long line of women <sup>M</sup>committed to the work of the Church. We invite all women of this Church to join our ranks, on a basis of one meeting a year.

It is hoped that the Women's Benevolent Society is going through only a temporary period of comparative inactivity, and that we may gather a new impetus to carry on our fine heritage and do God's work in this Church

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."

We acknowledge our indebtedness to the "Historical Manuel of the Orthodox Memorial Church", printed in 1893, and to "The Story of One Hundred Years", written by the late Forrest P. Hull and printed in 1938, as sources of our information.

This article was written by Mrs. Marion Poor for an anniversary meeting of the First Congregational Church in 1956.



# Womans Benevolent Society Supplement to Marion's account.

May 13, 1964

At the annual the Georgetown Womans Benevolent Society of the First Congregational Church voted unanimously that the Chapel Memorial Fund of \$1000.00 be paid to the First Congregational Church, Georgetown, Mass., with the proviso:

that this sum be invested in the Mass Congregational Fund with these conditions:-

- 1 that the fund continue to be called the Chapel Fund
- 2 that the principle remain untouched
- 3 that the income be used for the maintenance of the organ.

The account was closed July 2, 1964 when the church treasurer had received notice that M. C. F. shares would go on sale the 15<sup>th</sup>.

1007.17 was paid in order to avoid buying a fraction of a share.

[was held in 1965

The W. B. S. has never disbanded but no meeting