

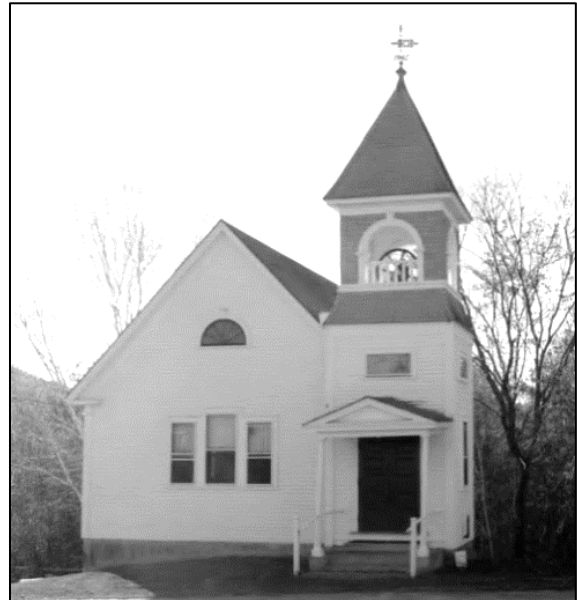
LISBON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MOMENTS IN HISTORY – DECEMBER 2018

CHURCHES AND ORGANIZED RELIGION IN OUR THREE TOWNS

One of the first things the settlers in Lisbon, Lyman and Landaff did was appoint a place for worship. In the late 1700s people congregated to worship in homes or barns. By 1800 Methodist ministers were supplied through the Landaff Circuit which covered most of northern New Hampshire and northeastern Vermont. One of the early riders was Jesse Lee who was so large a man he rode one horse and led another so he could alternate horses on his trips. He first came to Lisbon about 1798 and stopped at Young's Tavern, one mile from the center of today's Lisbon village. Landaff was the first of our three towns to build a church. Lisbon and Lyman followed with churches built in 1818-1820 and 1820 respectively.



1840 Landaff Methodist Episcopal Church



1923 Landaff Methodist Episcopal Church

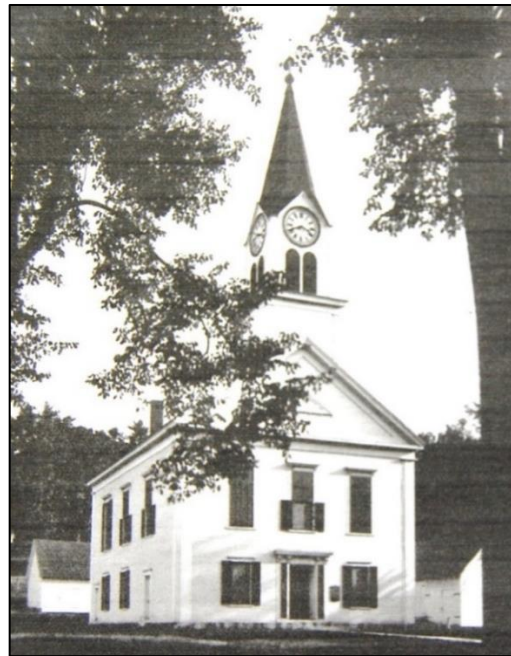
A Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in Landaff in 1800 with twelve members under Rev. John Broadhead. The first Methodist Church was built in Landaff Center in 1802 below today's Landaff Town Hall. The first preacher there was Elijah Sabin. In two years, there were over 160 members. In 1840 a new Landaff Methodist Church was built near the site of today's church. It replaced the 1802 church. In 1897 the Ladies' Aid Society of the Landaff Methodist Episcopal Church held a birthday party to raise funds to pay the pastor. The women's group continued its work over the years to help support the church. The 1840 church was torn down in 1923 and replaced with the present Landaff Methodist Church. There has not been a settled minister serving the church and living in Landaff for 100 years. Today the church is called the Landaff Church, part of the Lisbon-Landaff Shared Ministry*. Special events are held in the church, and The Shared Ministry holds services there during part of the summer months.

The Free Will Baptist church was built in Landaff c. 1833 on what was referred to as "Meetinghouse Field" near the top of Barrett Hill Road. In December of 1833, Jonathan Brunson (1776-1861) purchased pew number 28 on the floor of the church and pew number 29 in the gallery together with the privilege to and from the pews and around the meetinghouse in common with other pew holders. He paid \$50, and with the pews came the guarantee of benefit and use of his executors, administrators and assigns forever. A Report of the Building Committee from 1833 states that the church was to be built for \$1,000 in like manner as the (first Baptist) meetinghouse on Sugar Hill. The Free Will Baptist Church in Landaff was very well attended. The church is shown on the 1860 map of Landaff. It was later used as a town house before being torn down.

In Lisbon the first Lisbon Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1817, and its first church building erected c. 1818-1820 across from Henry Pond just north of Lisbon Village on Route 302 on land purchased from the Young family. A bill of sale dated April 16, 1818 from the trustees of the Methodist meetinghouse conveyed to early Lisbon settler Josiah Bishop (1750-1824) a pew for \$20 in the east side of the meetinghouse designated as "pew #20." Sunday School was organized at the same time, with classes for all ages. The c. 1818-1820 church was the site of the first New Hampshire Methodist Conference in June of 1827. Services were held in that church until a new church was built on Main Street in Lisbon Village. That first church also served as a town hall and stood until 1860 when it was torn down after a new town hall was built in Lisbon Square on the site of today's Parker Block.



**c. 1842 one-story Lisbon Methodist Episcopal Church, Main Street
(view from back of church)**



**c. 1842 Lisbon Methodist Episcopal Church,
Main Street, after 1887 renovation**

The 1842 one-story Methodist Episcopal Church built on Lisbon's Main Street is hardly recognizable today. In 1869 carriage sheds were built behind the church. In 1887 the church building was lifted up and a new addition was built underneath leaving the original church building and sanctuary on the second floor. A four-sided clock was added to the steeple in 1888 so townspeople and passengers on the train tracks behind the church could see the time of day, and a reopening and dedication was held.

More carriage sheds were built in 1906. The carriage sheds were torn down in 1942. At the beginning of the 1900s a Methodist women's club was formed to help support the church. This church was the site of a huge and very successful 2-week revival in January of 1895. From the beginning of the founding of the Lisbon Methodist Episcopal Church youth programs such as the Epworth League and Methodist Youth Fellowship and others along with women's and men's groups helped promote and support the church. The church building has been modernized and made handicap accessible and is called "The White Church" as part of The Lisbon-Landaff Shared Ministry*.



Lyman Meetinghouse late 1800s, Parker Hill

In 1828 a church was built in Lyman on Parker Hill, going towards the town center from the Parker Hill-Pettyboro Road intersection. It was at first named the “yellow meetinghouse” because of its color. It was built as a union house for all denominations but became primarily a Methodist meetinghouse, so Congregationalists and Universalists built their own Union Church just below the Parker Hill-Pettyboro Road Intersection. That church was torn down in the early 1860s. The yellow meetinghouse continued to grow. In 1888 a bell was given in memory of early Lyman settler David Locke, and the next year horse sheds were built behind the church. The sheds are now gone, and the church has been modernized over the years and is now known as the Lyman Bible Church.



Lisbon Advent Church c. 1930, Main Street

This church was originally built in 1874 as the Messiah’s Church at the corner of Main Street and Whitcher Street in Lisbon by Rev. Isaiah Shipman with money raised by going around the area selling pews. Shipman’s wife, Charlotte, had two years earlier started a Sunday School in the old town hall on today’s

Parker Block site. Shipman offered the building to the Congregational Church of Lisbon which was organized in 1878. At that time a group of women formed the Dorcas Society to help support the church. They raised money to erect a building on Main Street (later the site of Dexter's Garage), half of which was owned by the Dorcas Society and used as a dining room, kitchen, and Sunday School. The Congregationalists used the Messiah's Church for services, and after Rev. Shipman's death in 1882, the United Church of Christ purchased the church. In 1895 a winter revival was held with 67 people joining the membership totaling 127 at the end of the year. The Young People's Congregational Club began in 1912. The UCC continued using the church until selling it to the Advent Church in 1914 after building a new brick Congregational Church at the corner of Main Street and Depot Street. The Advent Church burned on July 14, 1941.



The United Congregational Church and Parish House, Main Street, Lisbon

In 1914 a new brick Congregational Church was built at the corner of Depot and Main Streets in Lisbon. It was designed by Lisbon-born architect Chase Roy Witcher and built by Lisbon contractor Lawrence Goudie. The parish house in back of the church was built by Lisbon architect Sylvanus D. Morgan. The first service was held in this church on May 23, 1915, and the parish house opened the next month, furnished by the Dorcas Society. The beautiful pipe organ in the brick church came from the old Messiah's church which the UCC had used. When the UCC sold that old church building, the organ was moved to the new brick church because it had been donated at a cost of \$1,050 specifically for the UCC by the Cummings family of Lisbon. In the early years that pipe organ was pumped by local youth, and many signed the boards where they sat in the room behind the pulpit. The parish house was a popular hangout for locals. There was a separate reading room and room for board games and ping pong. There was a big room with basketball hoops and a jukebox. On Saturday nights dances were held. There was also a one-lane bowling alley. The parish house was sold to the Assembly of God in 1952. It was sold and is now office space for White Mountain Footwear. The Congregational Church building is now known as "The Brick Church" and part of the Lisbon-Landaff Shared Ministry*. It was closed in 2005 to conserve resources, and there was a brief effort after that to work through the Sacred Places organization in Philadelphia in an attempt find a way to use the building in the community. The Shared Ministry holds services at The Brick Church twice a year.



Church of the Epiphany (Episcopal), School Street, Lisbon

As early as 1889 priests from All Saints' Church in Littleton were conducting occasional services in Lisbon, and in 1906 Rev. Frederick Cowper, priest-in-charge at Woodsville, began conducting regular services in Lisbon members' homes, at the Hotel Moulton, and in the "Guild Room" upstairs in the Boynton Block in Lisbon. In 1911 a lot was purchased on Lisbon's School Street where the Church of the Epiphany was built at a cost of \$3,420. It was designed by Boston architect Edmund Q. Sylvester. Opening services were held on Christmas Eve of 1911. Windows were donated by the Church of the Transfiguration in Bretton Woods, and a small organ was donated by St. Luke's in Woodsville. The church was consecrated on August 5, 1913. A church school operated in the church's upper room. In 1963 the church built a parish room which for some time was used for the Lisbon Development Center which provided services for developmentally disabled children during weekdays. The Church's women's group holds a popular annual rummage sale among other efforts and is part of the national Episcopal Church Women's organization.



**Saint Catherine of Siena Roman Catholic Church
Early 1900s - Highland Avenue, Lisbon**

A mission of St. Joseph's Parish in Woodsville, N.H., St. Catherine of Siena Roman Catholic Church was built from 1908-1909 on Highland Avenue in Lisbon and on August 9, 1909 dedicated and blessed by Bishop Guertin. The organ loft is notable as it is high above the floor and accessed by a very narrow, winding stairway at the back of the sanctuary. In 1958 the Church purchased an existing duplex built by

Lisbon architect Sylvanus D. Morgan for the founders of New England Electrical Works at the corner of Kelsea Avenue and Highland Avenue. It was used as a rectory until the late 1970s when it was exchanged with Lisbon Regional School for the building of a new rectory constructed by Lisbon and Littleton High School building trades classes on a lot behind the Church at the corner of Kelsea Avenue and School Street. The new rectory was sold in 1997 and is a private residence. The old rectory is known as the Lisbon Regional School Annex. The basement of the church is used for dinners, meetings, and other special community events.

There was other organized religion present in Lisbon, Lyman and Landaff over the years. As early as 1832 Mormon missionaries were in Lyman preaching. Meetings were held in West Lyman (now Monroe) and in Lyman in a home in the area that now bears the name Mormon Hill, a ridge between Perch Pond and Ogontz Lake. In 1832 one Mormon convert left West Lyman for Salt Lake City with only \$11 to his name. Other Lyman converts eventually went westward to Salt Lake City as well. Mormon leader Brigham Young stopped at Young's Tavern in Lisbon. The porch bench where he sat, having been named "Brigham Young's Bench," was once a relic of the old tavern.

In 1888 Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science stayed at the home of early students and practitioners of the faith, Ira O. and Flavia Stickney Knapp, off Quebec Road in Lyman. By 1900, the Knapps had moved to Boston to further their work in the church. Ira Knapp was one of the original directors of the church. The Knapps' son, Bliss, became a famous practitioner and lecturer of the church.

The Assembly of God first met in a tent in Lyman and later in the Pond Schoolhouse near Ogontz Lake. The congregation then met at a blacksmith shop in Landaff and later upstairs in the H. T. Andross Grocery building on School Street in Lisbon. In 1952 they finally purchased their own building for church services, the Lisbon UCC parish house at the top of Depot Street. That building is now owned by White Mountain Footwear, as previously mentioned.

The Lisbon Bible Church owns the former William and Alice Oliver mansion on the prominent hill at the corner of Woolson Avenue and Grafton Street. The property has been modernized over the years. The sanctuary, gymnasium and other church rooms are downstairs, and the upstairs is living space for the pastor and family.

The Lisbon Church of the Nazarene has held services in different places in Lisbon. It has property in Lisbon on Lyman Road where there is a foundation ready to build upon sometime in the future.

In the 1950s an Inter-Church Council was formed and included the UCC, Methodist, Catholic, Episcopal and Assembly of God churches. The Council sponsored services at Thanksgiving, Lent, and other special times. During the years when the Council was active, the ecumenical programs did much to bring about an understanding and appreciation of other denominations.

*Due to declining attendance and scarcity of ministers, The Lisbon-Landaff Shared Ministry was formed in April of 1967 comprising of the Lisbon United Congregational Church and the Lisbon and Landaff United Methodist Churches. Initially, each church belonged to a State conference, retained its own officers, treasuries, and governing body but shared a minister, and services were split during the year between the three church buildings. The separate treasuries and women's groups were eventually consolidated into one self-governing federated church with one congregation meeting mainly in The White Church on Main Street and at other services in The Landaff Church and The Brick Church on Main Street in Lisbon.