



## A SHORT HISTORY OF THE MUSEUM NEW HAMPTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A 1941 publication of the inventory of the archives of the town of New Hampton indicates that at that time there were only two churches in the town, the Dana Church, which only held services during the

summer, and the Community Baptist Church. The Congregational Church had stopped meeting in the building it shared with the town in 1842, though the building remained use as New Hampton's Town House. There was a third church, however, that erected a building in the 1880's that was still being used off and on as a church into the 1950's, though it had stood idle from the early 1920's until the mid-1940's. That building was known as the Advent Christian Chapel which is now owned by the New Hampton Historical Society and serves as the town's Museum.

Advent Christian adherents organized a church in the 1880's and began the construction of the building which was to be their Chapel in late 1883 with a dedication ceremony taking place on Sunday, May 4, 1884. From what little information remains of that project it appears the cost of constructing the building was covered by the donations of materials, labor and money with a significant amount coming from Frank Dana Sanborn. Mr. Sanborn was a native of the town and one of its leading officials who operated a sawmill on Harper Brook. He donated the land for the church building as well as supplying lumber and labor for its construction, resulting in a simple rectangular building built for practical use rather than employing ornamental additions. Services were held until the early 1920's when the church was closed until it was reopened in 1947 for a short period of time. Chester Howe, who was the pastor at the Community Church, also served for a time as a part-time pastor for the Advent Christian Chapel. Robert Seaver, a New Hampton resident who studied at Gordon College, also held services for a time at the Chapel. The building was still heated by the wood stove in those days, though electricity replaced the more primitive lamps for light sometime after it became available on Dana Hill Road in 1906.

The Advent Chapel, no longer being used for church services, was donated to the New Hampton Historical Society in 1965. It has been used since then by the society as a Museum, teaching visitors through its exhibits about the people and events that have been a part of the history of the town of New Hampton. The building was renamed "The Chapel Museum" though today it is usually referred to just as "The Museum." Since being owned by NHHS the Museum building has undergone a number of repairs and improvements including a new roof in the year 2000 and a new ceiling in 2002. The most recent major improvement consisted of new roof shingles in 2019. The Museum is open to the public on Saturdays from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. During the months of July and August and can be visited by appointment at other times.