

# Congregational Church



**127 Winnacunnet Rd**

## **Dinah Burdoo**

### **A Freed Slave in Hampton**

Dinah Burdoo, a member of the Congregational Church, died poor and in the care of Hampton, but free.

Dinah was the wife of Philip Burdoo, thought to be a slave of General Jonathan Moulton. Dinah was the slave of William Godfrey of North Hampton.

Dinah Small and Philip Burdoo were married in 1783 by Reverend Ebenezer Thayer. Weddings were recorded with "Mr." preceding the groom's name and "Miss" or "Mrs." preceding the bride's name. Not so for Dinah and Philip. Their marriage was recorded as Philip Burdoo and Dinah Small.

Yet in 1790, Dinah and Philip lived in Hampton, as freed slaves. Phillip worked in a tavern in North Hampton. When Philip died in 1806, Dinah kept their house near Centre School, where she earned a living spinning and knitting.

Three years later the town determined that Dinah needed help. The town cared for Dinah until she died in 1825, at the age of 92, at Deacon John Lamprey's house.

## Church Treasures

Just as families have cherished heirlooms, so does the Congregational Church. Their antique silver pieces have been on display in exhibits at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston twice, the Currier Museum in Manchester and the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord.

The oldest of these treasures are eight coin silver Communion cups from 1713. John Coney, considered the most important Boston silversmith of his day, made the cups.

In 1744, the Church purchased four more coin silver Communion cups, made by Jacob Hurd of Boston. The American gentry came to think Hurd's work was as fine as any they could import from England.

According to Church records, 122 men and 31 women agreed to contribute to purchase these cups, "ranging from 2 pounds from Ward Cotton, Nathaniel Sargent and Edmund Rand to 1 shilling from Winthrop Sanborn." The cups cost 64 pounds 7 shillings.

Other treasures in the Church's collection are a pair of pewter tankards, four Communion pitchers and two pair of pewter communication plates.

## **Ringling a Revere Bell**

Paul Revere's company provided the bell for the Congregational Church's fifth meetinghouse (1797-1844).

The bell in front of today's Congregational Church was recast in 1861, but still contains the Revere bell metal.

A plaque tells the bell's function: "Townfolk to the church called."

## NH's Oldest Congregation

The Congregational Church, founded in 1638 by Reverend Stephen Bachiler, has a history of 377 years of continuous worship, making it the oldest congregation in New Hampshire, and the second oldest congregation in the United States.

The first meetinghouse was considered a temporary place of worship until a better one could be built. Work on the second meetinghouse started in 1640 and took ten years to complete.

In 1675 work on the third meetinghouse began. A town order stated: "Thatt all the Inhabitants of this town of Hampton, thatt are aboue the Age of 20 years shall Attend and Giue their assistance to Raise the new meeting house." The third meetinghouse took several years to build.

The steeple was added with the fourth meetinghouse, built in 1719-20.

Work on the fifth meetinghouse in 1797 was vigorous, and the meetinghouse was ready for use in less than six months.

The current church is the sixth meetinghouse, built in 1843 and dedicated in 1844, although renovations have been made to it.

The current minister, Reverend Deborah Knowlton, is the 40th pastor to serve the church that has welcomed so many people through its doors.

## Sundays, and Then Some

Like 21st century children, children in the 17th century had a difficult time sitting still for church services. Then children didn't sit with their families. Seating was arranged so that men sat together, women sat together, and children sat together – which resulted in some rambunctious behavior.

In 1664, a large number of children attended services, and they needed supervision. The town ordered "that two of the inhabitants of the town should sit in the gallery, to keep the youth in order...(and to see) that they keep their places and sit orderly and inoffensively." This job was to be passed through the town so that each Sunday two different "inhabitants" kept watch over the kids.

The minister was responsible for children's religious instruction. But so were their parents and guardians, by law, which required "that all masters of famylyes do once a week att least catechize theire children & servants in the grounds and principles of Religion."