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Forever Green - Part II



The Green After the 1938 Hurricane

Toward the latter part of the 18th century the green was dotted with a number of small buildings scattered about in front of the Church. These small houses were called Sabbath Day houses. The first meeting houses were unheated and drafty in winter and doubtless hot and uncomfortable in summer. Families built these small, one room buildings on the green to serve as warming places in winter and as a brief respite from the morning sermon while the noon meal was eaten.

In 1765 Simeon Munger of the East River area wrote in his journal that he had begun to go to Elias Grave's on Sabbath Days. 7 years later in 1772 he wrote that he left off going to Mr. Graves. This coincides with another 1772 entry in which he refers to spending a day framing at the Sabbath Day house. Apparently Mr. Munger tired of renting and built a Sabbath Day house of his own.

Renting a room a house close to the meeting house must have been common practice as John Grave III recorded that Benjamin Hand owed him for one year's rent for house room on Sabbath Days.

At one time it was reported that there were as many as seventeen Sabbath Day houses on green. There was also a small red school house that stood in the northeast corner.

In 1857 a large flagpole was erected in the center of the green. It was a mast from the schooner "Emperor", 60 feet high, with a gilt ball at the top and an eight foot weathervane. A circle of spruces was planted around the flagpole.

Some years later a new pole was installed to replace the old one which had blown down in a storm. In 1892 the second was struck by lightening and replaced. By 1920 the spruces had grown so high they hid the flagpole and it was removed.

In 1938 after many days of heavy rains, a disastrous hurricane descended on New England. It turned many of the stately elms and spruces on the green to kindling wood changing the character of the green forever.

In 1962 a dispute arose over whether the green was taxable property. As a property of the church it has always been thought of as tax-exempt. The assessor thought otherwise. After 7 years of study lawyers determined that the green was indeed tax exempt!

Directions: Almost everybody knows where the green is. Just ask.