

Worthington Congregational Church To Observe Bicentennial July 11



THE PRESENT CHURCH, of unusual design for New England Congregational structures, faces Huntington Road.

By Lucie Mollison

WORTHINGTON — On July 11 the First Congregational Church of Worthington will celebrate its bicentennial.

The town of Worthington was incorporated in 1768 but the church was not organized until 1771. The present church building is the fourth to be erected in town. The first church, built near the corner of Sam Hill Rd. and West St., which in earliest days was the center of population, was a primitive building, never completely finished.

Near it was the first cemetery. There were 30 original members of this church. Nearby, on West St., the first pastor, the Rev. Jonathon Huntington, built his home. This is still standing and has been restored by the present owner, Mrs. Jerilee Bunce.

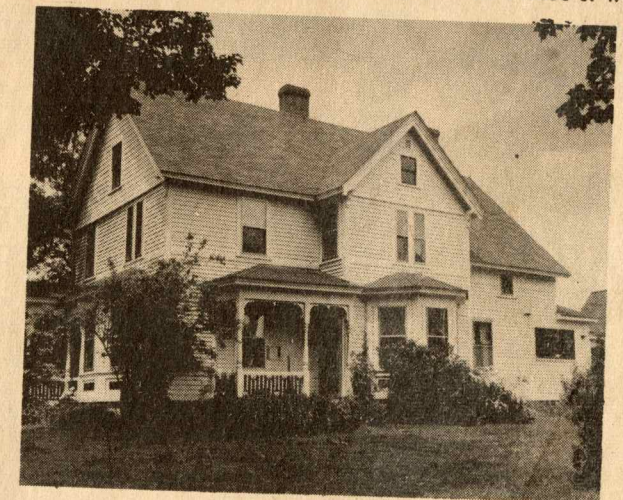
The early meetinghouse was used for about 20 years until the growth of membership and the change of the town's center of population called for a change. At that time, this church was torn down and the material incorporated in a new church in the rear of the village store near the present home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Q. Smith.

The church increased rapidly. The population of the town was between 1,100 and 1,200 people and in those days the majority of the inhabitants were church going. The meetinghouse was the center of religious, civic and social life.

New Meetinghouse

Early in 1818 plans for a new meetinghouse were started, but because of dissension as to the part of town in which it should be built, it was seven years before the question was settled. The argument between the north and south parts of town was bitter and it finally became clear that outside help would have to be called in to settle the argument.

Three committees worked on the problem before it was



THE PARSONAGE presently in use is this large house located on Huntington Rd.

finally settled. Elaborate calculations were made as to the exact center of town in regard to population, territory, value, and mileage, and the committee recommended that the new meetinghouse be built on the spot where the present church stands.

In 1825 construction was started on a colonial style church. This church...