

HISTORY  
OF THE  
ABOVE BAR  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

SOUTHAMPTON,

FROM 1662 TO 1908.

BY  
S. STAINER.

CHURCH  
A.D.

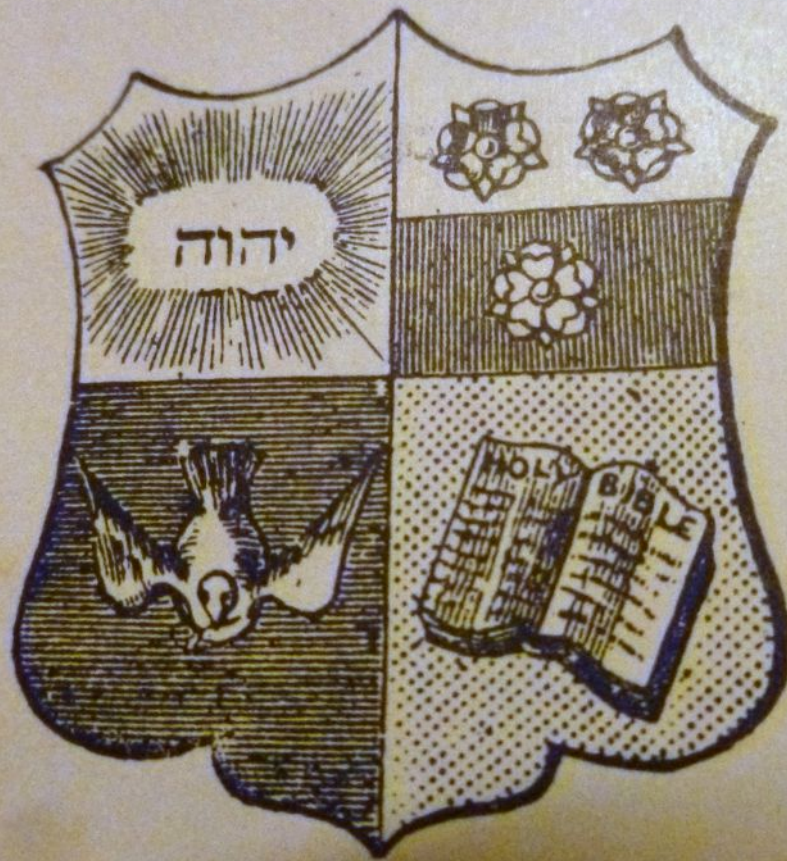


FOUNDED  
1662.

1908.

SOUTHAMPTON :

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INTERPRETATION OF THE EMBLEMATIC  
SHIELD ON THE TITLE PAGE.

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3	4

1. The Southampton Arms.
2. The Hebrew for Jehovah.
3. The Peace loving Dove.
4. The open Bible.

1. The Symbolic Arms of Southampton, where the Above Bar is situated.
2. Under the Divine Presence of Jehovah.
3. From whom the Peace loving Dove descends.
4. Spreading this Holy Balm over the lands, where the open Bible guides to exalted bliss.

# Historic Chain.

BIRD'S EYE VIEW  
OF THE  
ABOVE BAR CHURCH.

**1662.** Above Bar Congregational Church established, and first presided over by the Rev. Nathaniel Robinson, who, at the passing of the Act of Uniformity, was the ejected Rector of All Saints Church. He continued Pastor for 34 years, till his decease, 1696. It is probable that a Congregational Church had existed in this Town anterior to 1662, but no precise information is preserved.

**1665.** The Rev. N. Robinson imprisoned under the Conventicle Act of 1664. At this time a plague nearly depopulated the Town. Plague raged from June, 1665, till November, 1666—supposed to have carried off from 1,000 to 1,600. The Town did not recover the shock for 150 years.

**1674.** Isaac Watts (who became the celebrated Dr.) is the first name recorded on the Baptismal Register,\* born July 17, 1674.

**1683.** Mr. Isaac Watts† persecuted and imprisoned for Nonconformity six months; and afterwards forced to live in exile from his family for two years.

**1688.** Organized as a distinctive Church (at the passing of the Toleration Act) for the observance of Christian ordinances. Two Elders and four Deacons were appointed. The Elders and two Deacons represented the members residing in Southampton, and two

\* Still in the possession of this Church.

† Father of Dr. Isaac Watts.

Deacons the members residing at Romsey and other adjacent places. Church thus formed consisted of 74\* members, including:—

The Pastor	Rev. Nathaniel Robinson,		
Elders ...	{ Mr. Robert Thornert	...	} Officers for
	{ Mr. John Lee ...	...	
Deacons ...	{ Mr. Isaac Watts	...	} Officers for Romsey
	{ Mr. Abraham Johns ...	...	
Deacons ...	{ Mr. Arthur Fish	...	
	{ Mr. Peter Hollis	...	

Four resolutions were adopted, the first being:—  
 “That the Town of Southampton shall be the seat of this Gospel Church, as being the place of its first foundation.”

1690. Prior to this date, during the persecuting reign of Charles II., the services were held as best privately arranged till some buildings, rented on a lease, about 1688, from Isaac Watts, by Mr. Robert Thorner, were converted into a public place of worship, on the present site of the Chapel, which was afterwards designated the Meeting House. Mr. Thorner, at his death, July 17th, 1690, bequeathed to the Church the unexpired term of the lease.

1690. Thorner's Charity founded. Mr. Isaac Watts was appointed the first local Trustee. The Trusteeship continued in unbroken connexion with this Church until the decease, in 1868, of the Rev. T. Adkins, who held the appointment of Resident Trustee. Mr. Thorner, at his decease, bequeathed legacies to this Church, and had, during his lifetime, been its liberal patron in many ways.

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\* These are all recorded in the handwriting of Mr. Robinson.  
 † Founder by bequest of Thorner's Charity in this Town.

1694. The Rev. William Bolar appointed co-Pastor to the Rev. N. Robinson, and became the second Pastor for 40 years, till his decease, 1734.

1707. Dr. Isaac Watts devoted his poetical talents to composing hymns for the use of this Church. These appeared one by one until at this date a sufficient number was produced to form a volume, which was published, and afterwards regularly used in the services of this Church. He first composed the well-known hymn of six stanzas:—

Behold the glories of the Lamb  
Amidst His Father's throne;  
Prepare new honors for His Name,  
And songs before unknown.

His verses since then have been sung "Through every land, by every tongue."

1719. The Meeting House and land at back, with garden and well, were purchased by voluntary subscriptions from Isaac Watts, Senr., for the sum of £150.

1726. The Rev. Henry Francis appointed co-Pastor to the Rev. W. Bolar, and became the third Pastor for 20 years, till his decease, 1752.

1727. The old Meeting House pulled down and a more commodious structure erected in its place, which subsequently was altered and enlarged, but stood till 1819, and stood on area in front of present building.

1745. Minister's House (now 25, Above Bar), with garden and appurtenances thereto belonging, presented as a residence for the Minister for the time being. Measurements: West (Above Bar Street)

15ft. 3in.; East (Houndwell), about 19ft.; length, West to East, 280ft. Prior to 1717 there stood here a tenement, malthouse, and garden.

**1753.** The Rev. John Bertram appointed and became the fourth Pastor for ten years, till he resigned, 1763.

**1763.** Watts' Well leased for twenty-one years by "The New Commissioners of Water Works," Southampton, to supply, in part, the Town's people with water. There is still a crystal spring flowing from this well. Its water was used at the Baptismal Service here by the Rev. H. H. Carlisle in 1874, the Bi-centenary year of Dr. Isaac Watts.

**1764.** The Rev. William Kingsbury, A.M., in his 20th year, became the fifth Pastor for forty-five years, till 1809, when, through infirmity, he resigned. Died February 18th, 1818, aged seventy-three years. At commencement of his ministry the Church consisted of twenty-seven members only, but he left it comparatively large and flourishing. His memoirs by Mr. John Bullar were published in 1819, and still preserved.

**1781.** Mr. Kingsbury was one of the leaders, with two others, in the formation of the Hampshire Congregational Union, the nucleus of which was started at this date, but formally established in 1797 as the Hampshire Association. He was the first preacher at the first meeting held at Peole in 1781.

**1786.** Sunday School's first instituted in Southampton, in which the Rev. W. Kingsbury took a prominent part, preaching annually sermons (at which collections were made) on their behalf to the end of his ministry. The Above Bar Sunday School dates from this year.

**1795.** The Rev. W. Kingsbury elected first Chairman of the London Missionary Society, founded in 1795. The Above Bar contributed the largest (except London) of the first collections made in the kingdom towards this object. The amount here realised upwards of £287.

**1802.** The Rev. George Clayton, of Walworth, appointed Assistant co-Pastor to the Rev. W. Kingsbury, which position he resigned in 1804, but through his popular preaching the congregation so increased that the Chapel had to be enlarged—sitting capacity 500. Cost £1,400.

**1805.** The Rev. Henry Lacy became the second co-Pastor to the Rev. W. Kingsbury, till he resigned in 1807.

**1810.** The Rev. Thomas Adkins, at the age of twenty-three, preached his first sermon here, and became the sixth Pastor for fifty-eight years, till his decease in 1868, aged eighty-one years. Interred in the Southampton Cemetery. Members at commencement fifty-two; at close of his ministry upwards of 450. Population of Southampton at his appointment 9,500, but at his Jubilee in 1860 it had increased to upwards of 50,000.

**1816.** Earliest recorded interments in the Above Bar Burial Ground of this Church, upon which is now erected the Watts Memorial Hall—

Eliza Devenish, died November 6, 1816.

William Colborne, Deacon of this Church, departed this life January 31, 1821, aged 34 years.

In all there were one hundred recorded interments (including three Deacons), the latest being—

James Davies, Deacon of the Church, died June 28, 1851, aged 69 years.

Mary Hart, died May 3, 1855, aged 81 years.

1819. Foundation stone laid for an entire new Chapel by the Rev. T. Adkins, April 1st, which thus became the third edifice for Public Worship. This was built larger than the former, as the congregations had so greatly increased under his powerful ministry. Subsequently enlarged—sitting capacity 1,500.

1820. New Chapel opened April 26th. Built in the rear of the former building. Dimensions, 80ft. long and 56ft. wide, at a cost of nearly £7,000. Preachers at the opening—Morning, the Rev. W. Jay, of Bath; evening, the Rev. George Clayton. Vaults were built under this structure, intended as catacombs, but never used as such. The Sunday Schools were carried on in these chambers for many years.

1821. Mr. John Bullar, a Deacon, on the Rev. T. Adkins being relieved from preaching three times a day, as had been the custom, agreed to undertake the afternoon service, which he conducted for a series of nearly twenty-one years. Many of his Lay Lectures thus delivered appeared in a volume in 1844, which then was published from a sum presented to him by the Church—a presentation copy is preserved among the archives of this Church.

1836. Adkins' Records published at this date, under the title of "Brief Records of the Church of Christ, of the Independent Denomination, at Southampton, from its establishment to the present time:



accompanied with observations respecting the principles on which it is formed." A few copies are still extant.

1841. Mr. Adkins elected Chairman when upwards of 600 ministers of all sections of the Christian Church met at Manchester for conference on the Repeal of the Corn Laws. Southampton, with the eloquence of Mr. Adkins in the lead, took a foremost part in this burning question of the day.

1851. MANUAL, published at this date, containing Abstract of Reports of the Religious and Benevolent Societies instituted by this Church, thus enumerated:

SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY, established in 1811, for the promotion of Sabbath School Instruction in the Town and neighbourhood.

FEMALE SUNDAY SCHOOL WORKING SOCIETY AND SEWING CLUB, to encourage girls to deposit small sums.

HOME MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION, formed in 1836, for carrying the Gospel into the villages surrounding the Town.

CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION SOCIETY, instituted in 1834, to circulate Tracts (on Loan) in Town and district.

FEMALE FRIENDLY SOCIETY, formed in 1808, to relieve cases of sickness and distress in the Town.

GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY, to visit and relieve cases of distress and affliction in the Town.

INFANTS' FRIEND SOCIETY, formed about 1820, to assist necessitous mothers.

FOOD AND FUEL SOCIETY, to supply coals and bread at half-price.

CHAPEL LIBRARY, formed 1825, to supply on loan the congregation with Literature.

ADULT WEEK AND EVENING CLASSES, instituted 1849, to impart, gratuitously, instruction in Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic.

READING AND WORKING SOCIETY, for assisting the poor in providing themselves with wearing apparel.

Raised and expended for these Societies in 1850, £348 10s. 6d.

**1851.** Census of attendances at Above Bar Chapel, Sunday, March 30th, including children:—Morning, 1,264; afternoon, 308; evening, 960. These were ordinary average attendances during the lengthened ministry of the Rev. T. Adkins.

**1858.** The Rev. Henry Hermann Carlisle, LL.B., B.A., at the age of twenty-three, appointed assistant and co-Pastor to the Rev. T. Adkins, and became the seventh Pastor for twenty-six years, till he resigned in 1885, and settled at Eccles, near Manchester. Died January 25th, 1896, and interred in the Southampton Cemetery, aged sixty years.

**1860.** Jubilee of the Rev. T. Adkins. Organ built to commemorate the event, and celebrated by a public dinner at the Victoria Rooms, and at the evening meeting in the Chapel about 2,000 were present of all denominations.

**1861.** Watts' Statue, inaugurated in Southampton, July 17th, by the Right Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury. Chairman of Committee, the Venerable Archdeacon Wigram; Vice-Chairman, the Rev. Thomas Adkins; Sculptor, R. C. Lucas, Esq., of Chilworth.

**1870.** First visit of the Mayor and Corporation of the Borough at the morning service, January 2nd; Sir Frederick Perkins, Mayor.

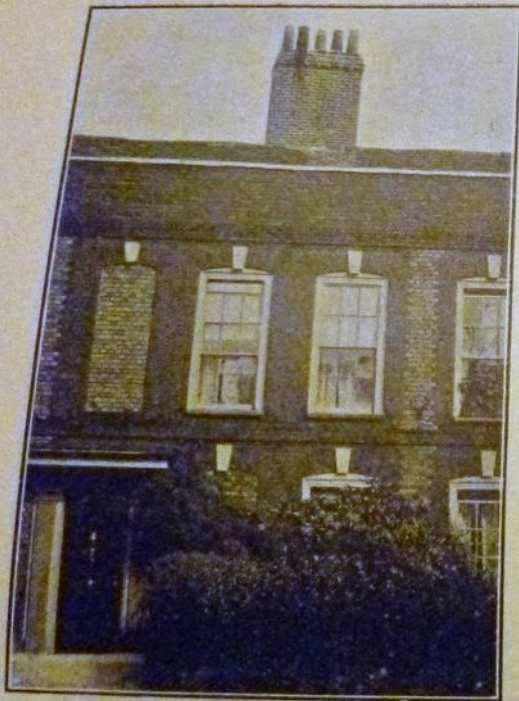
**1875.** Watts Memorial Hall and Class Rooms built—thus named in commemoration of the Bi-centenary of the birth of Dr. Watts; foundation stone laid by Samuel Morley, Esq., M.P.; cost nearly £7,000.

**1886.** The Rev. Thomas Nicholson appointed and became the eighth Pastor for nine years, till he resigned in 1895, having accepted an invitation to Bromley, Kent.

1889. Chapel re-constructed with New Western Elevation, and interior entirely re-arranged, with organ improvements; cost upwards of £6,000—sitting capacity 1,100.

1896. The Rev. William Frederick Clarkson, B.A., appointed, and became the ninth Pastor, commencing his ministry on the 5th January. He continued here for seven years, until his resignation in 1902, when he accepted the invitation to become the Minister at High Wycombe, Bucks.

1904. The Rev. George Stephen Samuel Saunders, appointed and became the tenth Pastor. His ministry commenced on December 4th.



FRONT ELEVATION, LOOKING WEST.

BIRTHPLACE  
OF  
ISAAC WATTS D.D.  
1764.



BACK ELEVATION, LOOKING EAST.

\*THE WINDOW IN A LINE WITH THE ASTERISK INDICATES HIS REPUTED BIRTH-ROOM.



SOUTH CASTLE AND GOD'S HOUSE GATE, SOUTHAMPTON (OLD GAOL).  
MEDIEVAL BUILDINGS IN WHICH NATHANIEL ROBINSON, IN 1665, AND DR. WATTS' FATHER, IN 1683, WERE IMPRISONED.



ISAAC WATTS, D.D.  
1674—1748.



WILLIAM KINGSBURY, A.M.



THOMAS ADKINS.



ABOVE BAR CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.  
FRONT ELEVATION, 1819.



WATTS STATUE, SOUTHAMPTON.  
ERECTED, A.D., 1861.





HENRY HERMANN CARLISLE, LL.B., B A.



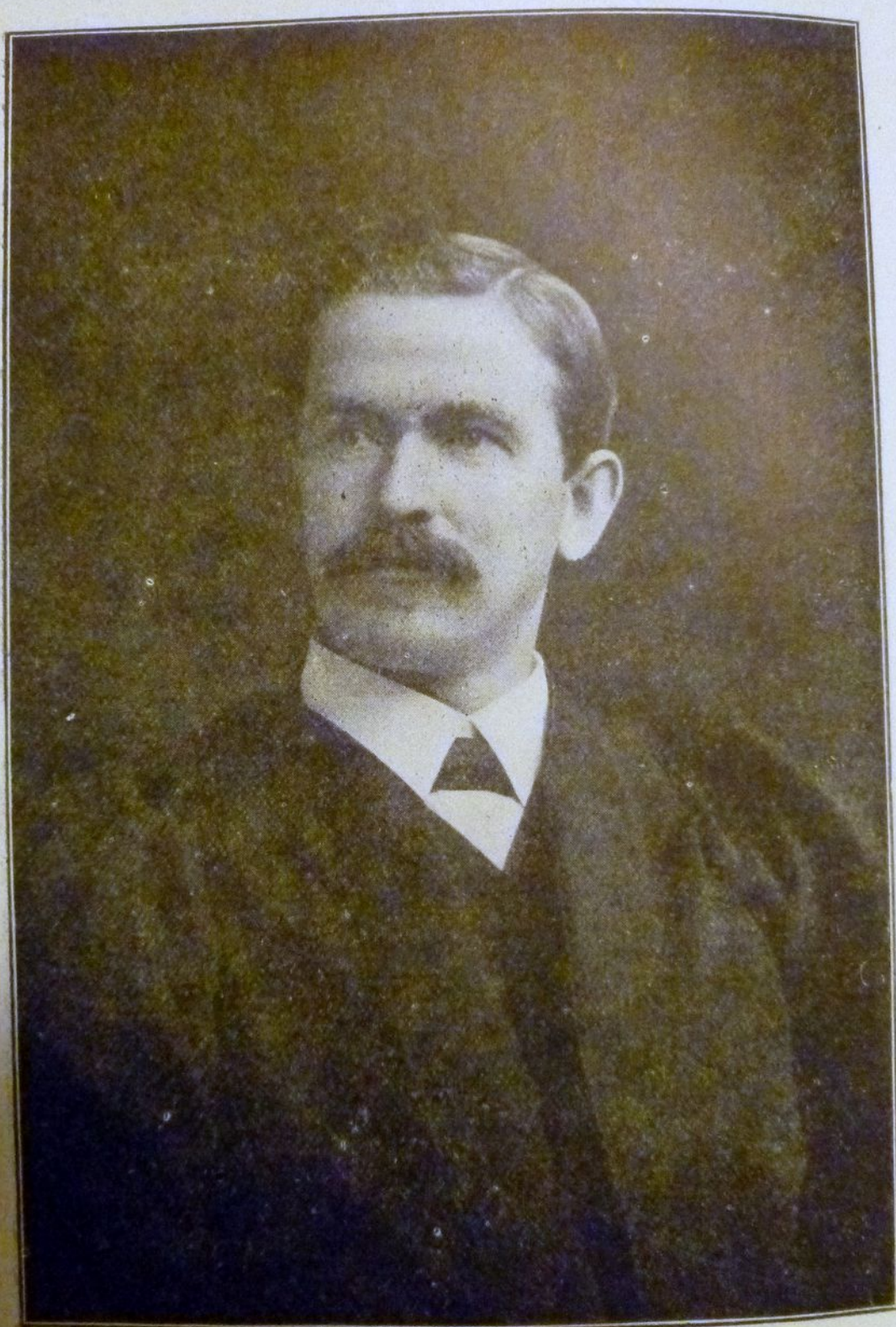
WATTS MEMORIAL HALL.  
ABOVE BAR SUNDAY SCHOOL BUILDINGS.  
ERECTED 1875



THOMAS NICHOLSON



WILLIAM FREDERICK CLARKSON, B.A.



GEORGE STEPHEN SAMUEL SAUNDERS.

# Line of Ministers.

1662—1908.

**S**PREADING over so lengthened a period, the number of Ministers who have occupied the pulpit has been comparatively few—this has reached only ten. The longest held the position for fifty-eight years, and the shortest seven—the average for each being nearly twenty-five years. In this respect the Above Bar holds a unique place in the history of all the Churches.

NATHANIEL ROBINSON	...	...	...	1662—1696
(The ejected Rector of All Saints Church.)				
WILLIAM BOLAR	...	...	...	1694—1734
HENRY FRANCIS	...	...	..	1726—1752
JOHN BERTRAM	..	...	...	1753—1763
WILLIAM KINGSBURY, A.M.	...	...	...	1764—1809
THOMAS ADKINS	..	...	...	1810—1868
HENRY HERMANN CARLISLE, LL B., B.A.	...	...	...	1858—1885
THOMAS NICHOLSON	...	...	...	1856—1895
WILLIAM FREDERICK CLARKSON, B.A.	...	...	...	1896—1902
GEORGE STEPHEN SAMUEL SAUNDERS	...	...	...	1904—

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“Sow in the morn thy seed,  
 At eve hold not thine hand;  
 To doubt and fear, give thou no heed,  
 Broadcast it o'er the land.”

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# Roll of Deacons.

SINCE the foundation of the Church in 1662 to the present date, 1908, there have been recorded in its annals the names of sixty-seven who have rendered service in the office of Deacon, of whom the following is a detailed list, giving the dates of the election of each, and when the service terminated, either by death, resignation, or otherwise, so far as can be ascertained from existing documents.

It may be interesting to state here that recently an effort has been made to gather together, as far as possible, the photographic portraits of our Ministers and Deacons, with a view of placing them with the archives of the Church, and thus to pass them on to posterity. In all there have been forty-seven collected by the author, going back to the period from the organisation of the Church in 1688.

“A CLOUD OF WITNESSES.”—*Hebrew xii. 1.*

				ELECTED.	ENDED	
ISAAC WATTS*	...	...	...	1688	...	1736
ARTHUR FISH	...	...	...	1688	...	* *
PETER HOLLIS	...	...	...	1688	...	* *
ABRAHAM JOHNS	...	...	...	1688	...	1726
JOHN LEE† ...	...	...	...	1688	...	* *
ROBERT THORNER†	...	...	...	1688	...	1690
JOHN FAY ...	...	...	...	1694	...	* *
THOMAS BOWER	.	...	...	* *	...	1751
ROBERT READE	...	...	...	* *	...	1759

\* Father of Dr. Isaac Watts.

† Designated Elders.

‡ Organised as a distinctive Church at this date.

\* \* Not recorded.

300 ABOVE BAR CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

			ELECTED.	ENDED.
JAMES JOHNS	...	...	1719	1731
JOSEPH TAYLOR	...	...	1765	1782
RICHARD TAYLOR	...	...	1765	1809
HUGH WEEKES	...	...	* *	1765
JOHN BANNING	...	...	1766	1794
PETER BERNARD	...	...	1766	1805
JOSEPH CONDER	...	...	1791	* *
JOSEPH MOUNCHER	...	...	1791	1797
WALTER TAYLOR	...	...	1791	1803
JOSEPH WHATMORE LOBB	...	..	1803	1806
ISAAC FLETCHER	...	...	1805	1842
WILLIAM RANDALL	...	...	1805	1809
EDWARD TOOMER	...	...	1805	1810
WILLIAM COLBORNE	...	...	1809	1821
THOMAS BERNARD	...	...	1810	* *
JOHN WEEKS	...	...	1811	* *
THOMAS WILLIAMS	...	..	1811	1815
JOHN BULLAR	...	...	1821	1864
EDWARD MAYOR RANDALL	...	...	1828	1857
ALFRED BARLING	...	...	1838	1844
JAMES DAVIES	...	...	1838	1851
ROBERT STRANGE FOWLER	...	...	1838	1881
SAMPSON PAYNE	...	...	1845	1856
HENRY BUCHAN	...	...	1846	1865
CHARLES YONGE	...	...	1851	1891
WILLIAM CHAMPNESS...	...	...	1857	1861
WILLIAM STURGESS	...	...	1857	1863
ROBERT SALE SMITH	...	...	1858	1885
HENRY COOPER	...	...	1865	1882
JOSEPH ROBINS	...	...	1865	1890
CHARLES REUBEN COSENS	...	...	1877	1888
CHARLES COX	...	...	1877	1901
SAMUEL BOSS FRYER	...	...	1877	1894
EBENEZER RICHARD ROBERTS...	...	...	1877	1902
HENRY HENDIN	...	...	1886	1905
WILLIAM HENRY LEWIS	...	...	1886	1892

\* \* Not recorded.



# ROLL OF DEACONS.

	ELECTED.	ENDED.
BENJAMIN WAKEFIELD ... ..	1886	1891
SAMUEL HENRY BOWER ... ..	1892	1894
JOHN ELLYETT MAFFEY ... ..	(1892 (1902	... ... 1895 1905
CHARLES FERGUSON CONSTABLE ..	1892	... 1898
JOHN JAMES CARTER ... ..	1895	... 1905
CHARLES RUSSELL GARCIA ... ..	1895	... 1908
CHARLES WELLESLEY PHIPPARD ...	1895	... 1902
PERCY MAYOR RANDALL ... ..	1895	... ***
HENRY COLYER ASHDOWN ... ..	1898	... 1908
CYRIL PERKINS NOBBS ... ..	1898	... 1905
FREDERICK PHILLIPS... ..	1898	... 1907
FREDERICK HARVEY ... ..	1902	... 1907
JAMES MCWHINNIE ... ..	1902	... ***
JOHN LEO MAFFEY ... ..	1905	... ***
HENRY RANSOM ... ..	1905	... 1907
SAMUEL CLARKE SEAWARD ... ..	1905	... ***
DANIEL WOODS ... ..	1907	... ***
EDWIN ROBERT BARTLETT ... ..	1907	... ***
JAMES DYMOTT ... ..	1907	... ***
WILLIAM CHARLES ROBERT NORMAN ...	1908	... ***
EDWARD JAMES CURTIS ... ..	1908	... ***
HENRY WILKINS ... ..		