

MUSICAL SOCIETIES (OCCASIONALLY = CHURCH CHOIRS) (MS)

(boldface on society names added by N. C.)

1762-1774: "In 1762 I learn from the 'History of Dorchester' that 'there was a singing meeting at Stoughton,' and two years later I have evidence that there was an organization in working order for the purpose of practising in vocal music. This was the year the small-pox visited Canton, and it was deemed expedient to send word to the Bridgewater singers who were wont to attend not to come over. Singing meetings were held at the houses of neighbors; sometimes it would appear that they had 'prodigious jangling.' ... [p. 307] ... In 1766 'our singers are at Mr. Adams's.' John Kenney, a fine bass singer, went with Elijah Dunbar to Boston to buy new books [Bayley's *New and Complete Introduction?* Flagg's *Sixteen Anthems?*] the same year; and they on March 19 'draw books and sing the old 50th the first time.' On Feb. 11, 1767, the Braintree singers came to Canton, but got into a religious discussion and had 'a remarkable time;' [punctuation *sic*] subsequently they met at the old May tavern on March 9, all the differences were made up, and 'there seems to be great love and harmony.' On August 4, they have in the old gambrel-roofed house still standing at Ponkapoag 'sweet singing at Elijah Crane's,' and on the 24th 'fine fiddling.' In 1770 new books [Billings's *New-England Psalm-Singer*, advertised in *Boston Gazette* on 10 December 1770?] were introduced; and on the 21st of December, they were used in the house of Samuel Capen for the first time. During the interval from the year 1764 to 1774, the principal persons belonging to this society, or the persons at whose houses they met, were: ... [22 men's or boys' names, including Elijah Dunbar, John Stickney, + Samuel Capen, as well as the above-mentioned John Kenney + Elijah Crane]" [MA/Canton; Huntoon 1893, pp. 306-307]

n.d. (probably late 18th c.-early 19th c.): "Singing classes and musical societies were organized for the purpose of imparting instruction, training uncultivated voices and raising the standard of church choirs. Under the direction of skillful teachers, psalm tunes and anthems sung in the meeting-house on Sundays were made specially attractive and acceptable. [new paragraph] At later dates, similar associations were formed to study and interpret the works of eminent European musical composers, but for many reasons they failed to receive cordial support and after a brief existence were dissolved." [MA/Newburyport; Currier 1909, p. 181]

n.d. (likely 1770s, 1780s, 1790s) + 1774, January: "...the familiar Canton names of Capen and Tilden and Tolman and French and Dickerman and Belcher appeared ninety years ago on the list of the singing-class of William Billings the composer, and were famous more or less in the old time, in the **Stoughton Musical Society or Old Club**. [new paragraph] The members of both the Canton choirs belonged, most of them, to the Old Club. It was an age of musical enthusiasm, when this church was young; and there were few in the town who could sing, that were not, or had not been, connected with the popular singing-school of Squire [Elijah] Dunbar, the 'king of singers.' [footnote: "The *old* singers' list, to which reference has been made, bears date 1774, the year before the battle of Lexington. The Stoughton Musical Society was formed on the 7th of November, 1786. Samuel Tolman was the first leader."] [MA/Canton; Brown 1865, p. 71]

1774, January – see n.d. (likely 1770s, 1780s, 1790s)

n.d. (ca. 1781-1881 and ca. 1831): “The **Stoughton [Musical] Society** and the **Choral Club** have kept up a lively interest in sacred music in the town, and have been of [p. 102] immense value to the service of song in the house of the Lord. For one hundred years there has been no lack of numbers and skillful voices and instruments. The choirs fifty years ago were *greater in number*, though of less art; and on Thanksgiving Day, especially, gave such a display of musical effort as to call out a full house, and receive themselves such an impulse by previous drill as to improve the singing for many months. May the good time return.” [MA/Randolph; Randolph 1881, pp. 101-102 (from “History of the Psalms and Hymns and Music of the First Church of Randolph” by Rev. Asa Mann)]

1786, 7 November, 22 November + 1787, 5 June, 3 September, 8 October: “In a small book covered with parchment, such as were the record books of the Parish and Town at that time, on the first page we find written in a clear, bold hand, as by a goose quill pen in the hand of a master, the words, to wit: ‘This Book belongs to the **Stoughton Musical Society** and contains the Rules and Regulations whereby the said Society are governed. [new line] Stoughton, Novem. 7th, 1786.’ [new paragraph] In the same clear, legible hand-writing follow on the next page, marked page 1st, the regulations of which we give a copy. [new paragraph] [‘]Regulations agreed upon and voted by the Stoughton Musical Society: [new paragraph] 1st That there shall be a President, Vice President and two Treasurers or more, as the Society shall order. [new paragraph] 2nd The President only shall beat the Time openly; and if the president be absent, the Vice President shall preside; and if they both be absent, the Society shall choose a President pro-tempore. [new paragraph] 3rd Every member shall behave with Decency, Politeness and Dignity; and whoever behaves disorderly shall be punished according to the nature of his offense, according as the Society shall order. [new paragraph] 4th There shall be a Register chosen, who shall Record all the Laws and Regulations of the Society, and also shall take account of all the Fines and other Monies belonging to the Society and shall transmit an account of the same to the Treasurer or Treasurers. [new paragraph] 5th The Treasurer shall keep a fair account of all the Monies belonging to the Society and shall expend the same from time to time as the Society shall order. [new paragraph] 6th There shall be a Committee chosen who shall examine all Persons who shall wish to join the Society, and no one shall be admitted without their approbation. [new paragraph] 7th In order to raise a fund to defray necessary expenses, every Member shall pay, or cause to be paid, to the Treasurer, two shillings, [p. 22] and no member shall be admitted unless he shall sign the Articles of Regulations, and also pay, or cause to be paid, the same sum of two shillings to the Treasurer. [new paragraph] 8th The Times and Places of meeting shall be as the Society shall order from time to time; and the Society shall be dismissed at nine o’clock in the evening. [new paragraph] 9th The Society may from time to time make further Regulations as, to them, shall be judged necessary or convenient.[‘] [followed by list of 25 men’s names, including “Elijah Dunbar, Esq.” (first name on the list) + “Samuel Capen, 2nd” (3rd name)] ... [new paragraph] This meeting and subsequent ones were held at the house of Robert Capen [Samuel Capen’s father] [new paragraph] In this house, William Billings taught his famous singing school in 1774. [new paragraph] The next entry in the book is as follows: [new paragraph] ‘The Society met at

Robert Capen's, Stoughton, Nov. 22, 1786, agreeable to aforesaid articles. Mr. Enoch Leonard being Moderator [p. 23] and Lieut. Samuel Capen Register.... [new paragraph] Agreeable to 6th Article, an examining committee were chosen, to wit:-- [7 names listed, including Elijah Dunbar, "Lieut. S. Capen," + Samuel Capen's brother Andrew Capen]...and it was voted that the book called the Worcester Collection [1st printed that year] be purchased by the Society for further practice.' [new paragraph] The next meeting of the Society was held at Robert Capen's, Stoughton, the fifth day of June, 1787, and it was there voted to [p. 24] choose a committee to correct and amend the articles of the Society, and also to choose a committee of three to examine the Treasurer's account. [new paragraph] The committee chosen were Lieut. Samuel Capen,... [new paragraph] It was also voted that the Register be directed to purchase a book to keep the Records of the Society. It was then voted to adjourn to the first Monday in September next. [new paragraph] Met Monday, Sept. 3, 1787, at Robert Capen's and adjourned to the 8th day of October at Robert Capen's to hear the report of the committee chosen in June to correct and amend the rules, and for the purpose of choosing officers for the year ensuing. [new paragraph] The next entry is as follows: [new paragraph] 'Stoughton, Oct. 8, 1787, at Robert Capen's, and proceeded to business according to the order, and the following officers were chosen: [indented list:] Elijah Dunbar, Esq., President. / ... / Lieut. Samuel Capen, 2nd, Secretary. / ... and it was voted to accept the following articles as Rules and Regulations and Constitution of the Stoughton Musical Society, to wit: [new paragraph] As a design of the institution and the end of all Societies ought to be the good of the community at large, and the members in particular, they should therefore be established on solid and lasting foundations and be governed by good, wholesome and prudent laws, and as singing or vocal music is a divine institution and the noble talent of performing it most certainly was given for improvement by Him, who made us of that elevated rank of beings that we are capable of sounding forth His praise. And as the powers of harmonious music are most admirably calculated to humanize the ferocious passions, to increase the various emotions of the mind, the different degrees of sensibility [p. 25] and all the feelings of the heart, that not only the sense of hearing receives the highest gratification from sounds the most congenial to the organs of man, but we are made partakers at one and the same time of instruction and delight in viewing the noblest work of the Almighty, put in motion to answer the noblest ends, the exciting and cementing [of] brotherly love. [new paragraph] We, therefore, esteem it our duty to study to promote that harmony [both musical and personal/emotional? --see preceding sentence] which is pleasing to our Maker and so delightful to ourselves. Stimulated with these salutary [*sic*] and laudable motives, we, whose names are underwritten, form ourselves in a society by the name of Stoughton Musical Society, for the above implied purpose of practicing vocal music, do voluntarily and of our own free will and accord, jointly and severally, covenant and engage and bind ourselves to be governed by the following rules and regulations. [new paragraph] Rule 1st That there shall be a President, whose business shall be to Regulate the meetings, Direct the Music, Beat ye time and see that everything be conducted with propriety, Politeness, Honor, Dignity. [new paragraph] Rule 2nd That there be a Vice President, who shall, in the President's absence, supply the vacancy. [new paragraph] Rule 3rd That there shall be one Secretary, who shall record all Rules and Regulations of the Society, take account of all fines and other Monies, and keep an exact Register in which each member's name shall be inserted, with columns prefixed in which shall be carefully Minuted their attendance and

non-attendance, in order that each member's conduct, respecting attendance, may be fairly and clearly ascertained. [new paragraph] Rule 4th That there shall be two Treasurers, who shall collect all the monies that shall be due to the Society, and shall expend the same from time to time as the Society shall order, and transmit a fair account of both money and expense when requested. [new paragraph] Rule 5th That there shall annually be one meeting in the Month of October, at which all officers (Places of Vacancy excepted) shall be chosen by ballot. [new paragraph] Rule 6th That there shall be a committee of examination and approbation, who shall examine all candidates, who shall wish and offer to join the Society, and no one shall be admitted without their approbation. [p. 26] [new paragraph] Rule 7th That no person shall be admitted as a member without first subscribing to the Rules and Regulations of this Society and paying the sum of two shillings. [new paragraph] Rule 8th That the Treasurer shall be supplied with money from time to time to defray Necessary Charges, and each Member shall pay his proportionate part thereof. [new paragraph] Rule 9th That if any Member of said Society shall absent himself two meetings successively, he, at the next meeting he attends, [shall] be accountable to the Society for a reasonable and satisfactory excuse for his non-attendance, and every Member so offending shall freely and voluntarily give such satisfaction, either by apology or a fine, or by any other means to the acceptance of the Society; otherwise [he] shall be considered destitute of that politeness which is the true mark and characteristic of the Gentleman. As also an open violation of the Rules and Regulations of this Society and shall be treated accordingly. [new paragraph] Rule 10th The Society may from time to time make further regulations as shall be judged Necessary or Convenient. [new paragraph] The foregoing Rules and Regulations agreed to and subscribed this eighth day of October, An. Dom. 1787. [list of SUBSCRIBERS, including Elijah Dunbar, Esq. (first name) + Samuel Capen (3rd name)] ... [new paragraph] Attest: Samuel Capen (Secretary)." [MA/Stoughton; Standish 1929, pp. 21-26]

1786-1818: "MEETINGS AND MEETING PLACES OF THE **OLD STOUGHTON MUSICAL SOCIETY**" lists, for the years 1786-1818, 2 meetings in 1786; 4 meetings in 1787; 4 meetings in 1788; 8 meetings in 1789; 11 meetings in 1790; 7 meetings in 1791; 2 meetings in 1792 (likely an incomplete list); [9-year gap in records]; 3 meetings in 1801; 6 meetings in 1802; 5 meetings in 1803; 7 meetings in 1804; 6 meetings in 1805; 6 meetings in 1806; 4 meetings in 1807; 2 meetings in 1808; 1 meeting in 1809 (likely an incomplete list); [9-year gap in records]; 1 meeting in 1818 (likely an incomplete list); etc. [MA/Stoughton; Standish 1929, pp. 162-163]

1786, 7 November, 22 November, 8 December + ca. 1790 + early 19th c. + 1828: "On the 7th of November, 1786, about twenty-five persons, who were fond of music and of having a good social time, met together for the purpose of consultation in regard to organizing a musical society. A committee was appointed to draw up a constitution which was accepted on the 22d, and [p. 309] adopted, with some amendments, on the 8th of December. The original members were residents of what is now Canton and Stoughton. The organizations in the Stoughton and Canton precincts uniting, they made choice of Hon. Elijah Dunbar for their first president, and for twenty-two years he was re-elected. He was passionately fond of music, and had one of the finest collections of books on this subject then in the country. [footnote: "See Appendix XVIII" (p. 615), which reads "XVIII. / LIST OF BOOKS BELONGING TO THE HON. ELIJAH DUNBAR, RELATING TO MUSIC. / Holyoke [Columbian] Repository [[1803]],

Massachusetts Compiler [Gram, Holyoke, Holden, 1795], Royal Harmony [Williams, 1766?], [American?] Musical Magazine [Doolittle + Read, 1786-87?], Holden's Union Harmony [eds. in 1793, 1796, 1801], Harmony of Maine [Belcher, 1794], Harmony of Harmony [French, 1802], Harmonia Americana [Holyoke, 1791], Royal Melody [Tans'ur, probably as reprinted by Bayley, 1767-68], Anthems [Flagg, *Sixteen Anthems*, 1766?], Evangelical Harmony [Belknap, 1800], William Billings' [Psalm-]Singers' Amusement [1781], Sacred Minstrels [Minstrel? Hill, 1806?], Robertson's Anthems [Robert Rogerson, AN ANTHEM..., 1793?], Funeral Elegy [?], Norfolk Harmony [Capen, 1805], [Farmer's?] Evening's [Evening?] Entertainment, [Howe, 1804?] Oriental Harmony [Maxim, 1802], Dirge [Holden, [1800]?], West Boston Music [probably Boston, West Church, *Collection*, 1810], Brattle Street Music [Boston, Brattle Street Church, *LXXX Psalm and Hymn Tunes*, 1810], Select Music in Manuscript Songs, Instrumental Assistant [probably Holyoke, 1800 and/or 1807]."] He had a voice like that of many waters, and rendered the old Continental music to perfection. The first singing-book used by the society was 'The Worcester Collection.' In 1828 the society published 'The Stoughton Collection;' [punctuation *sic*; *recte* 1829] but 'Ancient Harmony Revived' [published in various editions, ca. 1847-59] was subsequently adopted. From the beginning to the present day the '**Old Stoughton Musical Society**' has had among its members some of the finest singers in the State. Its meetings have always been attended with interest, the favorite times of meeting being artillery election days on the first Monday in June, and at Christmas-time. 'It was,' says John S. Dwight in the 'Atlantic Monthly,' 1882, 'the earliest [musical society] in New England, and the harbinger of the Boston Handel and Haydn Society.' ... [new paragraph] At the beginning of this [19th] century the hall in Carroll's tavern, Canton, resounded to the sounds of the old Continental music, and the following ladies and gentlemen were then members of the Old Stoughton Musical Society:— ... [24 names: 18 males (including Samuel Capen and Thomas Dunbar [see "n.d. (early 1800s)" below]; 2 pairs, a trio, + a quartet of brothers) + 6 females; pp. 309-310] [new paragraph] In the Stoughton Musical Society's Centennial Collection, published in 1878, appears the following reminiscence: [new paragraph, smaller type:] 'In the year 1790 or thereabouts,--so the tradition runneth,--the art of singing was so well developed in Stoughton that the singing in church attracted the attention of the ministers who indulged in the neighborly acts of exchanges. With the best intention to increase the efficiency of their own church service, these ministers reported that they heard better music at Stoughton than at any other place. Reports then took to themselves wings, as they do now, and they soon reached the good people of Dorchester, even to the singers of the old First Parish, from whose broad limits have sprung so many other churches to bless the land. These well-trained singers of the old town so near the "Bay," from whose shores emanated then, as now from "the Hub," excellence in art, grace in scholarship, and refinement in living, could ill brook the judgment that Dorchester did not wear the honors in the art of singing as in many other accomplishments. Confident in their ability, and ready to test it, they challenged the Stoughton singers to a trial. The challenge was accepted; a meeting arranged. It was held in a large hall in Dorchester, and, says the narrator, who was one of the singers, "the hall was filled with prominent singers far and near, including many notables from Boston." The Dorchester contestants had a bass viol and female singers. The Stoughton party consisted of twenty selected male voices, without instruments, and led by Squire Elijah Dunbar, the President of the Stoughton Musical Society, who was not only one of the most accomplished singers of his day, but distinguished for his commanding

presence and dignified bearing. The Dorchester party sang first an anthem recently published, executing it with grace and precision. The Stoughton party followed with Jacob French's new anthem, "The Heavenly Vision," rendered without book or notes. The applause was unbounded as they took their seats. Again the Dorchester choir sang [what piece? one wonders]; then to close the tournament, the Stoughton choir [*Centennial Collection*: "sang"] without book Handel's grand Hallelujah chorus, recently published in this country by Isaiah Thomas [in *The Worcester Collection of Sacred Harmony. Part Third*, 1786]. The Dorchester singers acknowledged defeat, and confirmed [*Centennial Collection*: instead of "confirmed," "endorsed the taste and"] judgment of the ministry. So endeth this incident of the olden time." [MA/Canton + Stoughton; Huntoon 1893, pp. 308-310, 615]

1787, 5 June, 3 September, 8 October – see 1786, 7 November, 22 November

ca. 1790 – see 1786, 7 November, 22 November, 8 December

"By 1791 a Singing Society had been organized and a chamber was rented for seven weeks from Benjamin Blake." [MA/Boston; Pierce 1961, vol. 39, p. xlv]

n.d. (late 1790s-1801) + 1801, 29 January + 1807 + 1808, 25 February + 1809 + 1810 + 1812 + 1815: "At the close of the last century, or at the very beginning of the present, the **Boscawen Musical Society** was formed. It was in existence in 1801, as we know from an order given on the treasurer, Mr. Jeremiah Gerrish: [new line, smaller type:] 'Boscawen, Jan. 29th, 1801. [new line] Mr. Jeremiah Gerrish, [new paragraph] Treasurer for Boscawen Musical Society. Please to pay Mr. Somersby Pearson two dollars & fifty-eight cents for Bass viol strings & Clarrinet Reed. ...' [regular type:] In 1807 the society appears to have been in a flourishing condition. Thomas Cox was employed to instruct the members in singing. [new line, smaller type:] 'Boscawen Feb. 25, 1808 [new paragraph] Lt Jeremiah Gerrish Treasurer for Boscawen Musical Society please [p. 297] to pay Thomas Cox Twenty Eight dollars for teaching a singing school and tax on Singing Books. ...' [Society reimburses members \$34 for purchase of bassoon in 1807, \$12 for purchase of clarinet in 1810] [new paragraph, regular type:] In 1809, Mr. Joseph S. Garman was employed to teach singing-school, and the society purchased of him a bass-viol, paying \$14. In 1812, John Kinney was instructor, and in 1815, Moses Wingate. The funds of the society were obtained by annual tax and subscription. [new paragraph] Under this organization singing greatly improved. The 'Village Harmony' was the book generally used." [NH/Boscawen; Coffin 1878, pp. 296-297]

1795, n.d., 18 November, 13 December + 1796, early, April: "[In planning the College church, built 1795]...the front seat in the south gallery and so much of the front seats in the side galleries as might be necessary, were appropriated for the use of music. ... The building was dedicated on Sunday[,] December 13, 1795, by public exercises... [p. 12] ... The proprietors arranged for music with the musical society of the College, giving the performers the front seats in the gallery, as has been said, and consulting 'as to the tunes which shall be sung and other matters' necessary in connection with music. The result was not wholly satisfactory and in April, 1796, they voted to 'request the inhabitants who can sing to meet at stated times for the purpose of improving in music till such time as some

measures for joining with the musical society in College are adopted.' ... [new paragraph] On the 18th of November [1795]...the proprietors voted to give to the Trustees for the accommodation of the students the west half of the gallery, except so much as might be necessary for music...." [NH/Hanover; Lord 1913, pp. 11-12]

1796, early, April – see 1795, n.d., 18 November, 13 December

n.d. (probably between 1797 + 1818): "Dr. Pierce [John Pierce pastor of First Church in Brookline, Mass., 1797-1849] and Dr. Bates of Dedham [Joshua Bates, pastor of First Church in Dedham, Mass., 1803-1818] called a meeting of the singers of Norfolk County, to improve church music, from the use of newly published books." [MA/Brookline; Woods 1874, p. 257]

1797 + 1814, October + 1817, 6 May, 7 May, 25 December + 1818, 1 May, 19 May, 22 May, 15 June + 1821 + 1825, 13 May + 1829, 20 November, 24 November, December:

"Considerable attention appears to have been paid to music in and near Salem previous to the year 1800, and a somewhat extensive musical organization, known as the **Essex Musical Association**, was formed in 1797. It was composed of the vocal musicians of Essex County, and held annual festivals or meetings for rehearsal, and probably for public performances in various parts of the county. Samuel Holyoke, of Boxford, the then distinguished composer of sacred music, was a prominent member of this association. There may have been other societies of similar character, but we find no account of them. ... [new paragraph] The earliest record of any musical organization in Salem dignified by the name of a *society* appears in October, 1814, when the **Essex South Musical Society** was formed. Its conductor was Isaac Flagg of Beverly. [new paragraph] It was composed of the ministers and gentlemen of the different congregational societies of the county, including the 'Salem Association.' The society was organized for the performance of sacred music and numbered about sixty members. It continued six years [or 15 years? --see below; the Society's last concert apparently given in Nov. 1829], giving ten public performances, at some of which were addresses on sacred music. [new paragraph] In the Salem gazette of May 6, 1817, there appears a notice of a quarterly meeting of the society, at 'Rev. Mr.[.] Walker[']s meeting house in Danvers.' The editor adds 'This body has done much towards the improvement of psalmody.' [new paragraph] In the Gazette of May 1, 1818: 'A quarterly meeting is announced to be held at Rev. Mr. Abbott's Meeting House at 2 o'clock P. M.' [new paragraph] May 19, 1818, a notice appears that 'the Soc'y will meet at the North Meeting House next Thursday as 2 P. M., and perform many select pieces of the first composers. The Rev. Mr. Carlisle will deliver an address, adapted to the occasion.' From an editorial notice in the Gazette of May 22, we quote the following: 'The singing was felt by all to be excellent, and Mr. [William?] Cooper's touches on the organ exceeded anything which we have [p. 74] words to describe. His *thunder* was an admirable imitation of the thunder of the heavens and astonished many of the auditors who were not prepared for the peal.' [new paragraph] This Society applied to the Legislature for an Act of Incorporation, to enable it to hold real estate, and build a music hall; but Gov. Lincoln vetoed the Act, passed by both houses, on the ground that it was not expedient to incorporate institutions of so limited a public benefit. [new paragraph] The last concert of the society was given November 20, 1829, in the Tabernacle church. The program was from Haydn, Handel,

Jackson and Stevenson. Webbe's 'When winds breathe soft' was sung. Tickets were 50 cents each. This performance was not well attended and embarrassments of a pecuniary nature seem to have brought this useful but poorly appreciated society to its end, as it was dissolved in December of the same year. A correspondent in a communication to the Salem Gazette, Nov. 24, 1829, refers to the performance as one of great excellence, and praises the very creditable organ playing by Miss Mallet. [new paragraph] In 1817, the **Handel Society** was formed. The first concert was given in Salem at the Universalist Meeting House, May 7, 1817. The program comprised duets, trios and choruses, mostly by Handel. ... [new paragraph] A second concert was given by this society, Dec. 25, of the same year, at the Baptist Meeting House. It was called an Oratorio concert. The music performed was by Handel, Mozart, Shaw, Avison, Luther and Haydn. ... [p. 75; new paragraph] Another concert was given June 15, 1818, at the Rev. Mr. Bolles' Meeting House, celebrating the first anniversary of the formation of the society. The program was similar in character to the one above mentioned. [new paragraph] This society continued about three years. [new paragraph] In 1821, the **Haydn Society** was formed. The only notice of this society we find in Felt's Annals, as follows: 'It exerted a beneficial influence on the singing of our religious congregations.' [new paragraph] In 1825, the **Mozart Association** was organized. The object of the society was stated to be 'The general improvement of the science of music, with an ultimate reference to the music of our churches.' [new paragraph] This society appears to have been thoroughly organized, and had, we judge, a substantial social following. We copy from the Salem Gazette of May 13, 1825, a list of officers as then published: [indented list] Hon. John Pickering, LL.D., President. / Mr. Henry K. Oliver, Vice President. ... [new paragraph] The society continued six years. ... [new paragraph] The greatest difficulty the society encountered, said the late H. K. Oliver, to whom I am indebted for a portion of the information regarding the Mozart Society, was the then scarcity of treble voices; there were very few [p. 76] in town. The alto part was sung by men [4 men's names listed]...." [MA/Salem; Whipple 1886, pp. 72-76]

1798, 3 September + 1806 + 1807: "The **Essex Musical Association** was an extensive organization in its day; and, as implied by the title, was composed of Essex-County vocal musicians. Several members belonged to Boxford, some of whose names, and perhaps all, follow: Deacon Parker Spofford, Ensign Joseph Symonds, jun., and Mr. Stephen Kimball. Samuel Holyoke, the distinguished composer, was prominent in this association; and it was probably through his influence that their annual festival was several times held here. Sept. 3, 1798, the First Parish voted that they 'may have the liberty of the galleries in the meeting house as may be convenient for them at their annual public exhibition.' In the falls of 1806 and 1807, we believe, the festivals were again held here. Shortly after this, the association died out. In their exhibitions, which continued through the day, the singers, numbering upwards of fifty, were arranged in the three galleries of the meeting-house, and the audience occupied the auditorium below. This was a gala-day to the people of Old Essex. Refreshment-booths were erected, wagons at whose tail-end refreshments of all kinds were sold were [p. 265] drawn up in order, and other things incident to such times were created; and the people came in teams, on horseback, and on foot, from all sections of the county. Those who remember these festivals declare that the musical talent here congregated has rendered to Boxford a name and a fame that will enliven the annals of those dull old times." [MA/Boxford; Perley 1880, pp. 264-265]

1799, 10 September, 7 October + 1799-1845 + 1801, 30 April: "Mr. Asa McFarland was first introduced to Concord as a teacher of music, about 1793, and after his settlement a musical society was formed, which obtained an act of incorporation. The society was duly organized September 10, 1799, at a meeting in the old town-hall, and the following officers chosen:...[president, clerk, treasurer, 3 trustees]; Jacob Abbot, Jr., chorister; Thomas Stickney, Jr., assistant chorister. [new paragraph] At an adjourned meeting, October 7, 11799, Nathan Ballard, Jr., was elected 2d assistant chorister;...[collector, librarian]; and a tax of twenty-five cents laid on each member. [new paragraph] To this society Dea. Joseph Hall made a donation of five hundred dollars, as a permanent fund,* [footnote, new paragraph, smaller type: "*Whereas I, Joseph Hall, of Concord,...gentleman, from a desire to encourage and promote the practice of sacred music in said town of Concord, have thought proper to make a donation to the 'Concord Musical Society' of the sum of five hundred dollars..., bearing at this time an interest of six per cent. Per annum. ... [new paragraph] 2d. The interest which shall arise upon the aforesaid donation shall always be subject to the disposal of the society in that way which they shall judge will best promote and encourage the use and practice of sacred music in said town. [new paragraph] In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this thirtieth day of April, Anno Domini one thousand eight hundred and one. / Joseph Hall. ..."] [regular type:] 'from a desire to encourage and promote the practice of sacred music in the town of Concord,' which fund, safely invested, has proved highly conducive to the proposed end; the interest annually accruing therefrom being devoted to the object. The following persons have [p. 533] been appointed choristers by the [Concord Musical] Society, who were also leaders of the choir in the old North meeting-house, viz: [2-column list:] 1799—Jacob Abbot, Jr. / 1800—Timothy Chandler. / 1801—George Hough [compiler of *Modern Harmony*, 1808, whose 31 compositions are probably all by Hough; music printed in original letter-notation]. / 1802—Thomas Stickney, Jr. / 1803 " " " / 1804—Timothy Chandler. / 1805—Dyer Abbot. / 1806-9—James Ayer. / 1810—George Hough. / 1811-15—James Ayer. / 1816-19—Samuel Fletcher. / 1820-1—George Stickney. / 1822-41—Samuel Fletcher. / 1842-45—James Ayer." [NH/Concord; Bouton 1856, pp. 532-533]

1799-1845 – see 1799, 10 September, 7 October

n.d. (early 19th c.): "Deacon Thomas Dunbar was a famous singer, and often led the concerts of the **Stoughton Musical Society**. He upheld the fame of his father [Elijah Dunbar] and his grandfather [Rev. Samuel Dunbar], and on his sons fell the duty of maintaining the singing in the old parish. Thomas Dunbar was born July 25, 1775, and died Dec. 8, 1855." [MA/Canton; Huntoon 1893, p. 313]

n.d. (probably early 19th c.): "He [Nathaniel Shaw] was a prominent singer in this part of the State; for when the **Neponset Musical Society**, embracing members from Abington, Weymouth, Randolph, Milton, Braintree, Quincy, and Dorchester, was formed, he was chosen leader." [MA/Randolph; Randolph 1881, p. 100 (from "History of the Psalms and Hymns and Music of the First Church of Randolph" by Rev. Asa Mann)]

early 19th c. – see 1786, 7 November, 22 November, 8 December

1801, 29 January – see n.d. (late 1790s-1801)

1801, 13 April – see 1799, 10 September, 7 October

1804: “The record book of the **Northwest Parish of Cambridge Singing Society** contains the Constitution of the Society, with this preamble; ‘As music constitutes one very essential part of public devotion, and as its spirit is become something languid, and its genius seems about to withdraw; we, the subscribers, being fully inspired with these ideas, do form ourselves into a Society for the purpose of reviving the spirit, and improving ourselves in the art of music. Justice our principle, Reason our guide and Honor our law.’ [new paragraph] The first article of the Constitution provides for an annual meeting of the Society on the first Monday in December. The second, for a president, secretary and treasurer; and to be chosen every six months, one chorister and four assistants, one for the tenor, two for the bass, and one for the treble, whose duty was to instruct in their respective parts of music, also to select the music, appoint meetings for practice, and purchase requisite materials. Article fifth imposes a fine for non-attendance of members, &c., and every member shall sit in the singing seat on Sundays when he is at meeting. The articles number eleven, and are dated June, 1804, when the names of the members were,-- [33 names, all males].... On Dec. 5, 1804, Artemas Kennedy was chosen president, Isaac Locke secretary, A. Kennedy chorister, Daniel Locke and John Perry bass assistants, Isaac Locke tenor assistant, Jason Kennedy treble assistant, James Hill treasurer.” [MA/Arlington; Cutter 1880, p. 111]

1805: “The officers of the **Northwest Parish of Cambridge Singing Society**, on June 7, 1805, were Artemas Kennedy president, David Hill secretary, A. Kennedy chorister, Walter Russell and John Perry bass assistants, Isaac Lane tenor assistant, Jason Kennedy treble assistant, Ichabod Fessenden treasurer. At the meeting of the society in Dec. 1805, Artemas Kennedy was chosen president, Jason Kennedy secretary, A. Kennedy chorister, Walter Russell, John Perry, Isaac Locke and Jason Kennedy were re-chosen assistants, and Ichabod Fessenden treasurer.” [MA/Arlington; Cutter 1880, p. 113]

1805: “The **Uxbridge Musical Sodality** / The sodality organized with Wm. Bruce, president and Smith Capron, secretary. [new paragraph] ‘Preamble—To cultivate friendship, refine the heart and improve the understanding are the dignified employments of rational beings. . . . Sacred music, accompanied with no other incentive than its own, will decline as soon as the fervor of novelty subsides; hence its permanency can only be secured by the formation of a Society.’ Candidates for admission to this sodality had to pass an examination both as to character and to musical knowledge. Fines were imposed for absence (twelve and one half cents) and for tardiness (six and one half cents). ‘Any member for disorderly conduct, or for interruption of any member when speaking, shall be fined by the president six and a quarter cents for every offence.’ Unpaid fines led to expulsion. In spite of the rigidity of its rules the Sodality lived fourteen years.” [MA/Uxbridge; Sprague 1927, p. 30]

n.d. (ca. 1806): "About this time the **Middlesex Musical Society** was formed, embracing persons of cultivated taste, from many of the neighboring towns, whose object it was to meet for the performance of anthems, and to select and publish, as well as perform, psalmody of a higher style than was to be found in any American music books then in use. This Society was the first, or perhaps the second of the kind formed in America. From it the 'Middlesex Collection' resulted [eds. in 1807, 1808, + 1811], and good service was done for the cause of Church Music. It was at first under the guidance of Rev. Dr. [Daniel] Chaplin, of Groton [Mass.], who, with Mr. [Thomas] Beede of Wilton [N. H.], Mr. [David] Palmer of Townsend [Mass.], and most of the clergymen of the vicinity were associated in it. Mr. [Nathaniel D.] Gould conducted the performances several years." [NH/New Ipswich; Kidder 1852, p. 263]

1806 – see 1798, 3 September

1806, 2 June: "The officers of the **Northwest Parish of Cambridge Singing Society** on June 2, 1806, were Artemas Kennedy, president; Isaac Locke, secretary; Artemas Kennedy, chorister; Isaac Locke, tenor assistant, [← comma *sic*] John Perry, first bass assistant; Walter Russell, second bass assistant; Amos Davis, treble assistant; Ichabod Fessenden, treasurer; Messrs. James and William Hill, bass assistants *pro tem*." [MA/Arlington; Cutter 1880, p. 113]

1807: "In this year sixty dollars were appropriated by the Parish for the benefit of the singing society. [new paragraph] The proceedings of the **Northwest Parish of Cambridge Singing Society** on Oct. 27, 1807, made James Hill president and Artemas Kennedy secretary *pro tem*. It was 'Voted first, that all property belonging to the society shall be transferred to the society that shall be hereafter created in the month of Oct. 1807, if such a society shall then exist. Voted second, that the society be dissolved by a unanimous vote.' Signed by the president and secretary of the meeting. [new paragraph] **THE WEST CAMBRIDGE MUSICAL SOCIETY.**—This led to the formation of the West Cambridge Musical Society, instituted Oct. 1807, and similarly constituted, with the purpose of promoting 'the knowledge and practice of the musical art generally, but more especially that part which relates to the worship of our beneficent Creator and exalted Redeemer.' The names of subscribers to the Constitution were [38 names, all male, including "Ichabod Fessenden (with clarinet)" + "Walter Russell (bass viol)"].... One article of the constitution provided that 'every member shall sit in the singing seats when at meeting.' [new paragraph] At a meeting of the West Cambridge Musical Society, Oct. 13, 1807, James Hill was chosen moderator and Isaac Locke secretary. The fourth vote of the meeting appropriated unanimously a certain sum of money for the use of a new singing-school. Three persons were selected to take charge of said school, viz.: Artemas Kennedy to instruct the tenor and to be considered as chorister, Isaac Locke to instruct the treble, and Walter Russell for the bass. That the sum of [p. 115] eighteen dollars be appropriated to compensate the instructors, and the *Village Harmony* to have the preference to any other book. The instructors to receive the money of the Parish Treasurer, and to furnish wood, candles, and all other materials necessary for the use of the school. [new paragraph] At the meeting of the Singing Society on Dec. 24, 1807, James Hill was moderator, and the regular officers of the organization were chosen. Eighteen dollars were appropriated for the singing-school,

and the instructors to receive one dollar per evening, including room-rent." [MA/Arlington; Cutter 1880, pp. 114-115]

1807 – see n.d. (late 1790s-1801)

1807 – see 1798, 3 September

1807-1816: "The following officers of the **West Cambridge Musical Society**—instituted 1807—are mentioned in this book of records: [new paragraph] *Presidents*.—Artemas Kennedy, 1807; James Hill, 1808, '9, '10, '14; Amos Locke, 1816. ... *Choristers*.—Artemas Kennedy, 1807; Isaac Locke, 1808, '9, '10; William B. King, 1814; Amos Locke, 1816. *Assistants*.—Isaac Locke, 1807; Walter Russell, bass, 1807, '8, '9, '10, '14, '16; James Hill, bass, 1807, '8, '9, '10, '14; Amos Locke, tenor, 1807, '8, '9, '10, '14; Samuel Wilson, treble, 1808, '9; George Swan, treble, 1810; Samuel Ames, treble, 1814; William Frost, 1816; Ebenezer Hall, Jr., 1816; Philip B. Fessenden, treble, 1816." [MA/Arlington; Cutter 1880, p. 115]

"On Feb. 15, 1808, the instructors of the 'late singing-school' were authorized to contract with Major Whittemore for the use of his room, to accommodate 'the Musical Society to practise music in.' The expense to be paid out of the [parish] treasury. It was voted that there be a pitch-pipe purchased for the use of the singers, to be kept in the meeting-house. That Isaac Locke be authorized to purchase said pipe. Also that there be three persons chosen to apply to the Parish Committee for the use of the bass viol, to be granted to the Musical Society, to be made use of as they shall think proper. Isaac Locke, James Hill and Walter Russell were appointed for that purpose." [MA/Arlington; Cutter 1880, p. 115]

1808, 25 February – see n.d. (late 1790s-1801)

1809 – see n.d. (late 1790s-1801)

1809 + 1811 + 1820, 16 October: "A Society called the **South Parish Musical Society**, was in existence in 1809. A committee of this society petitioned the [p. 57] Parish for aid. Aid was promised, but, after adjourning five times, the Parish left the subject to a committee to make a report. What that report was, perhaps was never known. Another request was made for assistance in 1811: the Parish 'regret their inability at the present time to assist.' ... [p. 58, new paragraph] The singers' seats were at this time [early 1800s] filled with many persons who were not considered suitable members of a choir. As a remedy of this evil, the **Andover South Parish Union Singing Society** was formed, Oct. 16, 1820. This society, receiving its members by vote, soon became the only occupants of the seats, and has continued to be the choir to the present time. Its President for the time is the chorister. The following persons have been Presidents, from 1820 to 1859. [smaller type:] 1820-1825 A. J. Gould. / 1826 John Derby. / 1827 A. J. Gould. / 1828-1829 Hermon Griffin. / 1830-1831 Sylvester Abbott. / 1832-1839 A. J. Gould. / 1840-1842 Sylvester Abbot. / 1843-1859 Albert Abbott." [MA/Andover; Andover 1859, pp. 56-58]

1809, 28 March, 11 April + 1817 + 1822, August: "Apparently in the course of years considerable confusion developed among the singers. On the twenty-eighth of March, 1809, at a meeting at the ancestral home of Captain Washington Cushing..., the singers decided to overcome this confusion by forming themselves into an organized Singing Society with officers and by-laws. A committee of seven—[names listed, including Laban Tower (1751-1824), chorister for a time in the South Hingham church; see SL n.d. (late 1700s and/or early 1800s) + 1805-1809, and Deacon Seth Cushing, asked to keep the bass viol after its purchase in 1812—see I 1812 + 1819 + 1825]...—was entrusted with the task of organization. [new paragraph] On the eleventh of April the committee presented the results of their efforts, a document which their fellow singers accepted. After pointing out that order was an indispensable necessity for a well-regulated society, the document continued, 'We, the members of the Singing Society of the south parish of Hingham, do mutually agree to the following articles as our standing laws or regulations.' The regulations were eight in number. They called for the election by ballot of a chorister, an assistant chorister, two directors, and a clerk, chosen annually 'on Fast Day after divine service.' A treasurer was added in 1817, and not one but three librarians a number of years later. [p. 77, new paragraph] The chorister was 'to name the tune to be sung as soon as is convenient, to pitch said tune and beat the time.' The first director, and in his absence the second, was to act as moderator to keep order at meetings, and to act as chorister in the absence of both the chorister and his assistant. The clerk was to keep a record of all votes of the society. The seventh article reads: 'The chorister, assistant director, and clerk shall be a standing committee for the time being, whose duty it shall be to select and present to the society from time to time such tunes as they shall judge proper to be sung, for the acceptance or rejection of said society, that each member may have an opportunity of providing and acquainting him or her self with the notes of said tunes.' And Article Eight: 'No attempt shall be made to sing any tune in the time of public worship until it shall have first been well learnt and consented to by the society.' [new paragraph] The officers elected at this meeting were: Bela Tower [probably the Bela Tower (1760-1836) who had been a fifer in the Revolutionary War, and who for a time served as chorister in the South Hingham church; see SL n.d. (late 1700s and/or early 1800s) + 1805-1809], chorister; Laban Wilder, assistant chorister;.... The names of forty-eight men are listed as members in 1809. It was not until August 1822, when the regulations were revised to provide for the expulsion of uncooperative persons and a fine of six cents for non-attendance at rehearsals, that the ladies were listed. At that time the roster was thirty-five men and nine women." [MA/South Hingham; Robinson 1980, pp. 76-77]

1810 – see n.d. (late 1790s-1801)

"Dec. 18, 1810, the [Musical] Society chose a committee for the purpose of selecting tunes, viz.: Walter Russell, Isaac Locke, James Hill, Amos Locke, John Perry, George Swan, Benjamin Harrington, Jonas Locke, Thomas Fillebrown." [MA/Arlington; Cutter 1880, p. 115]

1810, autumn-1811: "In the autumn of 1810 a number of interested citizens, among whom were [Rev.] Amos J[ones] Cook, preceptor of the [Fryeburg] Academy, Samuel A. Bradley, and Stephen Chase, lawyers, and Timothy Osgood, formed a musical society, taking for its

name that of a native of Denmark, Hans Gram, who was born in Copenhagen, in 1756. He came to this country on business but was so pleased with the environment in which he found himself, that he became a resident. He was a competent musician, and was the composer of some superior pieces. [new paragraph] On the first anniversary of the **Hans Gram Musical Society**, there was special observance with an oration by Oliver Bray, an Honorary member, which was later printed by the society. The orator referred to the society as follows: [new paragraph, smaller type:] Although situated far in the interior, at a distance from those places where access to science is most easily obtained, to you is reserved the honor founding the first institution of this nature in the District of Maine . . . May we not hope that others stimulated by your laudable example, will form similar institutions in other places and present a barrier through which the follies and vanities of modern pretenders will never be able to penetrate. Should attempts be made in your vicinity again to defile the Altar, by substituting these sacrilegious effusions for anthems of praise, let the doors of the sacred Temple be closed, and its gates barred." [ME/Fryeburg; Barrows 1938, p. 203]

1810s + 1820s: "A new interest in sacred music was awakened soon after the settlement of Dr. [Amos Wood] Burnham [in 1821]. He possessed fine musical talents, and a sweet, melodious voice, and had made himself an efficient reader of this class of music, which he exceedingly enjoyed, during his connection with the Handel Society at Dartmouth [**Handel Society of Dartmouth College**, formed 1807; Burnham was class of 1815], and the Lockhart Society [formed 1812 at the Andover (Mass.) Theological Seminary, as Andover Musical Association; reorganized 1817 as **Lockhart Society for Improvement in Sacred Music**; Burnham graduated from Andover Theological Seminary in 1818] at the Seminary. [new paragraph] Of the latter society, which was widely known, he was one of the founders, and among the most active and proficient members, and was selected to purchase the instruments for its use. A few years since, an article which appeared in the 'Congregational Quarterly,' from the pen of Rev. E. W. Hooker, D. D., who was cotemporary [*sic*] with Dr. Burnham at the Seminary, refers to his connection with this society in these appropriate terms: 'Amos W. Burnham, additional to a rich tenor voice, brought with him from the Handel Society in Dartmouth a skill and taste for expressive reading of the music of the old composers, which rendered him an efficient helper from the outset of the society.'" [NH/Rindge; Stearns 1875, pp. 269]

1811 – see 1809

n.d. (at least 1811-1822) + 1820-1830: "Musical culture was advancing throughout the state. Rev. Dr. [Asa] McFarland [1769-1827], of Concord [pastor at First Congregational Church 1798-1824], took great interest in its advancement, and through his instrumentality the '**Central Musical Society**' was formed, composed of the best singers and instrumental performers in Concord, Boscawen, Hopkinton, Dunbarton, and adjoining towns. ... [p. 408] He [Enoch Little, 2nd, born 1804] was a prominent member of the Martin Luther Musical Society, a town organization, and also of the Central Musical Society, which flourished from 1820 to 1830...." [NH/Boscawen, Concord; Coffin 1878, pp. 298, 408]

1812 – see n.d. (late 1790s-1801)

“In 1813 an association was formed here named the ‘**St. David Musical Society,**’ comprising in its limits fifteen towns, [p. 239] of which Framingham was the central and largest. They were ‘Bolton, Stow, Sudbury, East Sudbury, Weston, Marlborough, Southborough, Framingham, Hopkinton, Holliston, Sherburne [Sherborn], Dover, Natick, Needham, and Newton.’ [new paragraph] Time has effaced all recollection of the Society and even of tradition there has not a shred come to us. The only knowledge of its former existence is derived from a printed leaflet of eight small pages, giving the constitution and having written upon it simply ‘Mary Rice, 1814.’ Its title page was ‘*Constitution of the St. David Musical Society, organized September 6, 1813. Cambridge : printed by Hilliard and Metcalf, 1813.*’ [new paragraph] From this Constitution and the articles of Association we can learn the high aims and purposes of the associates, and their personal refinement, good taste, both literary and musical, and devoted love of ‘genuine, classical Church Musick.’ [new paragraph] We give brief selections from the Constitution:-- [new paragraph] ‘Strongly impressed with a sense of the importance of sacred Musick as an interesting part of religious worship; deeply lamenting the want of musical taste and knowledge in most parts of our country; and anxious to contribute our best efforts towards a reformation so desirable both to the lovers of harmony and the friends of religion, we, whose names are subjoined, are induced to associate, under the name of the St. David Musical Society, for the cultivation and promotion of genuine, classical Church Musick; such as is calculated to move the heart, to exalt the affections and to answer the purposes of devotion. And in order to carry this design into effect, we adopt and hold ourselves subject to the following [new paragraph] ‘ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION. 1. The special and immediate object of this society is, to revive a taste for *ancient* psalmody, or musick of a correct, scientific, solemn and impressive style; of which the Middlesex and Lock Hospital Collections shall be the standards. No work which does not, in its general character, correspond with these, shall ever be introduced into the use of the society. [p. 240] [new paragraph] ‘2. No person shall become a member of the society, unless he possesses a just musical taste, and be able, at least, correctly to perform the simple airs in ordinary use in churches; except Clergymen, who shall be eligible, though they may be unacquainted with the art of singing. Nor shall any person be admitted, who does not sustain a good moral reputation.’ [new paragraph] The officers were a President, two Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer and a Standing Committee of five. The President was to ‘lead the singing,’ and the Standing Committee to ‘select suitable pieces of musick to be sung at the Anniversary of the Society: a list of which they shall cause to be transmitted to the members sixty days at least previous to that meeting.’ The Anniversary meeting was to be held in each town by rotation, upon thirty days['] notice in two Boston newspapers, and at such meeting the prescribed public exercises were ‘prayers, musical performances, and an oration, sermon or dissertation on musick.’ ‘There shall be three other stated meetings for ordinary exercise or practice in Musick,’ ‘at Framingham, on the first Mondays in December, February and June, at two o’clock in the afternoon.’ Special meetings may be called at Framingham, and no meeting shall be protracted to a later hour than six o’clock.’ [←punctuation sic] [new paragraph] ‘Females shall not become regular members of the Society, but those who have the moral and musical qualifications specified in the second article may be invited to attend the meetings and take part in the musical performances: and all so invited shall, for distinction[']s sake, be denominated *Assistant Members*, and shall be liable to be dismissed

for the same misdemeanors that require of expulsion of male or regular members.’ [new paragraph] The Constitution was signed by thirty-three members on the date of its adoption, and on December 6, next, ‘nineteen gentlemen were proposed for membership.’ [new paragraph] For the history of the Society after the adoption of its Constitution, we must rely upon imagination. Mr. Daniel Belknap was, doubtless, its originator and first President.” [But Daniel Belknap had—perhaps not coincidentally—moved to Pawtucket, R. I. in 1812—the year before the Society’s founding!] [MA/Framingham; Framingham ?1900, pp. 238-240]

1813: “There is now no record of meetings [of the **Old Stoughton Musical Society**] from Jan. 2, 1809, to Dec. 7, 1818, although the recorded vote passed by the Musical Society in Stoughton in 1813 to lend this Society [i.e., the OSMS] ‘all the books they may want, and a bass viol,’ shows conclusively that the [Old Stoughton Musical] Society held meetings during this period that were not recorded.” [MA/Stoughton; Standish 1929, p. 44]

“Jan. 31, 1814, voted that the treasurer purchase one dozen of singing-books of the *Middlesex Collection*, and half a dozen hymn-books of [Jeremy] *Belknap’s*, for the use of the [musical] society.” [MA/Arlington; Cutter 1880, p. 115]

1814, October – see 1797

1814 + 1818 + 1821 + ca. 1825 + 1839: “The **Essex South Musical Society**, formed 1814; the **Handel Society**, 1818, and the **Haydn Society** in 1821, exerted a beneficial influence on the singing of our religious congregations, through their members, who resided here. [new paragraph] 1825. About this date, the **Mozart Association** is formed. They had stated meetings to practice in vocal and instrumental music. Occasionally, they gave concerts. They continued six years. ... [p. 501] ... [new paragraph] 1839. There is a reorganization of persons, who take the name of **Union Social Singing Society**. Their main purpose is to advance in the art of sacred music. They are assisted with several of the orchestral instruments.” [MA/Salem; Felt 1845, pp. 500, 501]

ca. 1815: “The **HUBBARD SOCIETY**, about the year 1815, was formed in town, with similar objects [to those of the Middlesex Musical Society; see n.d. (ca. 1806) above]. [John Hubbard, after whom the Society was named, had died in 1810.] It was conducted for several [p. 264] years by Deacon [Nathaniel D.] Gould, and under the paternal solicitude of the venerable Judge Farrar as President, then 70 years old, and himself one of the performers, it was a most efficient and excellent society. It is not too much to say that the performances were in advance of the day, and that, with the exception of the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston, no other musical society in the country surpassed it. Two or three public concerts were given, at different times, one as early as 1817, and great numbers were attracted from the vicinity, to enjoy a performance so rare. It continued an active association for many years, and we believe still exists; and to many persons, some of the pleasantest remembrances of the town are connected with it.” [NH/New Ipswich; Kidder 1852, pp. 263-264]

1815: "The **Franklin County Musical Society** of which Reverend G[amaliel] S. Olds [pastor of First Church in Greenfield] is secretary, held meetings in the different towns." [MA/Greenfield; Thompson 1904, vol. I, p. 303]

1815 – see n.d. (late 1790s-1801)

1816: "**Milford Musical Society** incorporated." [NH/Milford; Ramsdell 1901, p. 177]

1816 + "previous to 1818": A musical society called the **St. David's Musical Society**, existed in Newton in 1816. A meeting of the Society was notified in the Boston *Columbian Centinel* of that year, to be held at Bacon's Hotel, formerly Wiswall's..., with an announcement of a rehearsal and concert at the First church, in the afternoon of the same day. ... [p. 757] ... [new paragraph] Previous to 1818 there was a Musical Society in Newton,--perhaps this was the St. David's Musical Society,--composed of singers belonging in Newton and neighboring towns, and which met from house to house among the members. This Society was led by Mr. Nathaniel Tucker.... ... The Society was well sustained, and gave many popular concerts in Newton and the neighboring towns." [MA/Newton; Smith 1880, pp. 756, 757]

1817 – see 1809, 28 March, 11 April

"April 7, 1817: 'Voted to grant seventy-five dollars to the "**Medford Amicable Singing Society**," to promote the objects of said society.'" [MA/Medford; Brooks 1855, p. 248]

1817, 6 May, 7 May, 25 December – see 1797

1817, 20 June: "'**The Francestown Musical Society**' was incorporated June 20, 1817, and consisted of... [p. 404; names of 10 men] This society was very popular for years, but ceased at the death of its original leaders. It did much, however, to elevate the musical standard and taste of the town, and its good impression still remains." [NH/Francestown; Cochrane 1895, pp. [403]-404]

1817, July + 1822 + 1840s: "The formation of the **Handel Society** in July 1817 reflected the growing interest in music in the community, particularly among women and the young. More than half of the ninety-eight subscribers to the constitution were women, although the society's officers were invariably men. The aims of the Handel Society were to provide concerts of sacred music and to offer 'regular and systematic instruction' in singing, composition, and the performance of instruments. Six months after it was organized, the Handel Society was invited by the psalmody committee to serve as a chorus in all church services. Dr. Eli Todd was the moving force behind the Handel Society, and although he was a good friend of Reverend Porter, Todd rarely attended church and was 'reported to be an infidel at that time.' Not only did the Handel Society accept the offer to serve as chorus, but to the delight of many, Todd took charge of the choir, which he led by means of his violin. The society continued to meet into the 1840s, though its formal role in church services ended in 1822; at that time, four choristers were named with Horace Cowles as head." [CT/Farmington; Bickford 1982, p. 285]

“previous to 1818” – see 1816

1818 – see 1814

1818, 1 May, 19 May, 22 May, 15 June – see 1797

1818 + 1822: “In 1818 the **Handel Society** was organized, under the leadership of the eminent Dr. Eli Todd, and was invited by the [religious] society to conduct the service of song, which it did with great acceptance. [note: “This society was very numerous, and the members occupied all the seats in front of the pulpit; Dr. Todd having drawn the long and straggling line into a compact mass in the center of which he stood, animating and swaying all by his eye and his instrument [a violin]. Dr. Todd was reported to be an infidel at that time and had rarely attended church although he was the beloved and trusted friend of the pastor. It was a matter of great rejoicing in this sensitive community when he pledged himself to conduct the singing, and the zeal for the Handel Society was in part inspired by the interest felt in this eminent and greatly beloved physician.”] Dr. Todd did not sing himself but led the choir by his violin, the use of which was then a novelty in a Puritan meeting house. [p. 50; new paragraph] ... In 1822 the Handel Society gave notice that it would no longer sustain the singing, when four choristers were appointed....” [CT/Farmington; Porter 1873, pp. 47-50]

1820s – see 1810s

1820, 16 October – see 1809

1820s + 1821, 21 February: “In the 1820’s Keene had a choral body known variously as the **Keene Sacred Music Society**, **Keene Musical Society**, and the **Keene Harmonic Society**. Under whatever name, it gave concerts well patronized by the public. The object of the society was to perform classical music in the best style, using the newly published collection of music by the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston. Handel’s works usually took foremost consideration. The first performance of his ‘Messiah’ in Keene was given on February 21, 1821, at the Meetinghouse, admission 25¢.” [NH/Keene; Keene 1968, p. 614]

1820-1830 – see n.d. (at least 1811-1822)

1821: “About this time church music took quite an impetus. Much attention was paid to the singing of sacred music. Singing schools were much in fashion. The singing-seats of the old Congregational church were all the ground there was for display, and there were more musicians than room. There was no organ in the church then, but there were bass viols, violins, cornets and flutes, and they did not make bad [p. 216] music. All wanted to occupy the seats. Some wanted to crowd one out, some another, some families were too flat, some too sharp, some were too aristocratic, some were not enough so. This made a lively quarrel, in which there was more music than harmony; and about every family in the village had some one in it; and the female combatants were not in the minority. Two singing societies were formed, the **Haydn**, and the **Handel**. Their meetings were held

weekly. One occupied March's and the other Hunt's Hall. The Haydns finally got possession of the old seats, and the Handels were out. The *outs* had the sympathy of a large number. This [Handel] society had many of the oldest and best singers in town. At once an effort was made to get them a place in which to sing. A subscription was started to build a free meeting house, and it met with great success. Alexander McLellan, Esq., gave them a lot, where the town house now stands, and in 1821 the "Free Meeting House" was built. Here the Handels found a home, and occupied the singing-seats, whoever occupied the pulpit, whether Universalist, Methodist or Baptist." [ME/Gorham; McLellan 1903, pp. 215-216]

1821 – see 1797

1821 – see 1814

1821, 21 February – see 1820s

1821, 4 December + 1822, 3 July + 1822-1830 + 1837: "**MARTIN LUTHER SOCIETY.** [new paragraph] On Dec. 4, 1821, the prominent singers of the town met at the house of Benj. T. Kimball, on Water street, and organized a society for the cultivation of music of a higher order than had been attempted up to that time. The leading spirits in the enterprise were...[12 men's names; all but one from Boscawen]. They applied for an act of incorporation, which was granted July 3, 1822. Dr. John Rogers, a prominent physician, was elected president and leader. The society purchased the 'Old Colony Collection of Anthems,' the 'Handel and Haydn Collection,' and the 'Social Harmony,'—collections containing music of a high order from Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and an oratorio, 'The Intercession,' by King. The music required a much higher degree of culture than the music of by-gone days. Under the able leadership of Dr. Rogers the society made great progress, and soon brought about a revolution in the style of music used on the Sabbath. The fugues, that for a third of a century had been the delight of the people, gave place to [p. 299] compositions richer in harmony,—the productions of the masters whose compositions still have power to charm the human ear. [new paragraph] From 1822 to 1830 the society maintained its vigor. It numbered about fifty members, male and female. It was reorganized in 1837, at the house of Alonzo C. Chadwick, who was elected president, and who was succeeded by J. H. Coffin, now of Portland; but emigration was telling upon the community, and other forces were at work to disintegrate the society, and the members, after a while, ceased to meet." [NH/Boscawen; Coffin 1878, pp. 298-299]

1822: "One of the not already mentioned societies [in Alstead] was organized in 1822 for the 'Improvement of Sacred Musick' for singing both in this world and the one to come. The Reverend Seth S. Arnold [minister in Alstead 1816-1834] said: '... that we may not only shew his praises to the generation to come, but be admitted to sing them, with more exalted strains, in a better world. ... In consequence of that stability and conscientious attachment to the cause of sacred musick, which is always commendable and necessary in leading men, for persevering usefulness, the church and society have been highly favored. Perhaps no town in the vicinity has enjoyed a greater privilege in this respect.'" [NH/Alstead; Rawson 1942, p. 257]

1822, 3 July – see 1821, 4 December

1822, August – see 1809, 28 March, 11 April

1822-1830 – see 1821, 4 December

ca. 1825 – see 1814

1825, 13 May – see 1797

1828 – see 1786, 7 November, 22 November, 8 December

1829, 20 November, 24 November, December – see 1797

1832-1836: “It was at this period (1832), that the famous **Hallowell Harmonic Society** was founded. This society was organized and most successfully conducted under the leadership of Paul Stickney, a man eminently qualified for such an office. One of Mr. Stickney’s pupils once said of him: ‘What he did not know about music was not worth knowing.’ Mr. Stickney was a leader of stern temperament, and most exact in all his instructions. In the chorus he sang an *obligato*, or treble with the lady singers. At the recitals of the society, the organ was played by Miss Elizabeth Cheever.... [new paragraph] The singers were supported by an excellent orchestra. [names given of musicians playing first violin, violoncello, double bass, second violin, Eb “clarionet,” this last the instrument that “led the alto”] ... This society gave many ‘grand sacred concerts.’ ... At one of these concerts, in 1833 the ‘Harmonic’ rendered the ‘Chorus from Judas Maccabæus’ and [other] selections from Handel; in 1834, its programme [p. 261] included Beethoven’s ‘Hallelujah to the Father [from *Christ on the Mount of Olives*],’ ‘Awake the Harp,’ from Haydn’s ‘Creation,’ and *Gloria in Excelsis* by Pergolesi. In 1836, the Harmonic Society announced its sixth oratorio consisting of selections from Haydn’s ‘Creation.’ [new paragraph] It is sad to record, however, that even in music-loving Hallowell, the allurements of social life sometimes diminished the size of the audience at these classical concerts; and that ‘owing to the great number of balls and parties,’ the oratorio of the Hallowell Harmonic, in 1836, was not so well attended as was desirable, ‘although there were as many present, considering all the circumstances, as could have been expected.’ But notwithstanding this occasional lack of public appreciation, the Hallowell Harmonic Society exercised great influence in the musical circles of Maine, and, by the introduction of classical compositions and the famous oratorios, familiarized the people of the Kennebec valley with this class of music to an extent unknown elsewhere in Maine.” [ME/Hallowell; Nason 1909, pp. 260-261]

1837 – see 1821, 4 December

1838, 25 June, November: “In 1838, June 25th, again the choir was heard from, and **they were given permission to be a ‘Singing Society’ by themselves, apart from the parish or church.** The parish voted them ‘whatever pecuniary aid they needed.’ In accordance with

this permission, they came to a parish meeting in November of the same year, and asked for a 'Bass Viol.' This was bought [p. 46] (as one stated in meeting), by the parish, and was recorded as belonging to the parish; probably because all instruments for music used in public worship were considered sacred and should not be used for frivolous purposes. This was, undoubtedly, the first musical instrument owned by the parish." [MA/Byfield; Dummer 1888, pp. 45-46]

1839 – see 1814

1840: "The first musical society in the church or in town was formed in 1840 in Amos Buck's Hall.... The following officers were chosen:... [President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Executive Committee (3 men, including Rev. John Kelly, Deacon John Emerson)] [new paragraph] The following ladies were chosen to sing solos: Meribah H. Putnam, Mary P. Eastman. [p, 267, new paragraph] It was voted that a notice be sent to the Exeter News Letter for the purpose of incorporating the society according to law. Mary C. Smith was the first organist." [NH/Hampstead; Noyes 1899, vol. I, pp. 266-267]

1840, 7 December: "The Hampstead Sacred Musical Society was organized Dec. 7, 1840, in 'Amos Buck's Hall,'" [NH/Hampstead; Noyes 1903, p. 168]