

**Independent Spirit: The Life of Ellen Chase  
& St. Paul's Church Brookline**



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Ellen Chase  
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Church  
Brookline**

Ellen Chase and  
Patricia Dunbar,  
Parish Historian





## Preface

**A**S PARISH HISTORIAN of St. Paul's Church in Brookline, Massachusetts, I have had the privilege to go through countless church papers and photographs over the last three years. The Chase name kept appearing so I read the three volumes of Ellen Chase's "Materials for the History of St. Paul's Church in Brookline." These binders contain a wealth of information about parish membership and about those who were in some way connected to the church. The work is also a history of much of Brookline.

Since St. Paul's was the first Episcopal church in Brookline, founded in 1849, many notables were associated with the church. The other two Episcopal churches, Church of Our Savior and All Saints, were organized in 1868 and 1894, respectively. There was much information on Ellen's father Henry, and brother, William, both of whom were very active in the church. Women were rarely mentioned in any of documents, and, when they were, they were identified by their husband's names; i.e. Mrs. James F. Smith. Since I could find no information about Ellen, I researched her life.



Sarah Leverett Chase

**E**LLEN CHASE, born in Brookline, March 26, 1863, was a member of a prominent family and a very active member of St. Paul's.

Her parents were Henry Savage Chase and Sarah Leverett Chase. Henry ran a company that made bags and imported the materials for making them. Ellen wrote that her father moved to Brookline to "sit under Dr. Stone." Dr. John Seeley Stone was the second rector of St. Paul's (1852-1862). Henry moved to Brookline in 1859 and the next year the family built a home on a lot at the corner of Alton Place and St. Paul's Street. The house was located nearest to St. Paul's so that Mrs. Chase, who was somewhat of an invalid, might walk to church. The house was torn down in 1946 and is the location of a parking lot and an adjacent apartment building.

Ellen had a younger sister, Sarah "Sally" Chase Cummings, born April 17, 1866, and an older brother, William Leverett Chase, born December 4, 1853. William married Mary Frances Elizabeth Greenough, September 1876. They had four children. Sarah married Lincoln Clifford Cummings, December 14, 1892 and had four children.

Most of the immediate family were christened, confirmed, married, and buried from St. Paul's. William, Ellen, and Sarah were Sunday School teachers. Soon after moving to Brookline, Henry became a member of St. Paul's vestry; was the Sunday School Superintendent for a number of years; and was for many years its treasurer and one of its wardens. At the time of his death, he was senior warden.

In 1883 Henry's wife, Sarah, died and he donated the chancel in his wife's memory that same year.



Henry Savage Chase



Chase home at Alton Place  
and St. Paul Street

Henry Savage Chase, died February 19, 1885. Ellen, William, and Sarah, gave \$10,000 toward building the Rectory in memory of their father.

“Many additions were placed in the Church in our time. Father placed the brass communion rail in memory of mother; my sister gave the new organ in memory of brother. The cloister I believe he gave in memory of his Little May and we three children gave the Rectory in Father’s memory. More recently my nephew, W. H. Chase gave the carved tracery before the East window to soften the light, in memory of his mother.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1886, when she was 23, Ellen worked in London as a collector of rents in tenement housing, with Octavia Hill. She did this work for several years and wrote a book about her experiences, *Tenant Friends*

*of Old Depford*. In the foreword of the book, Octavia said, “Her deep human sympathy enabled her to see all that lay below the squalor and violence of the inhabitants, and to realize how much family love redeemed even the most degraded.”<sup>2</sup> Ellen returned to Brookline March 10, 1888.

In the early 1890s Ellen cofounded, with Charles Bolton, librarian of the Brookline Public Library, and Daniel S. Sanford, the Brookline Historical Publication Society. This society would “collect and print in a uniform series such manuscripts as shall seem worthy of permanent preservation.”<sup>3</sup>

Ellen was the founder of first regent of the Hannah Goddard Chapter, D.A.R.; a member of the board and at one time, secretary of the Massachusetts Society of Colonial Dames; and a member of the board of the Boys’ City History Club. She also belonged to the Society of Mayflower Descendants.

Miss Chase lived near the top of Aspinwall Hill

Left to right: Ellen Chase, William Leverett Chase, and Sarah Chase





on 133 Rawson Road in Brookline. In her eighties she walked to St. Paul's Church each Sunday, which must have been quite a walk since the hill is fairly steep. She died in September, 1949, in her eighty-sixth year and is buried in Forest Hills Cemetery in the Chase family plot along with her mother, father, brother, and four other relatives.

In 1950 "An extremely handsome seventeenth century English court cupboard which belonged to Miss Ellen Chase has been given to the parish in her memory. It is made of ancient bog oak, and it has been placed in the rector's office study opposite the large tile fireplace, where it is both useful and decorative. We are very grateful to Mr. and Mrs. William Leverett Cummings for this gift."<sup>4</sup>

## Ellen's Memories of St. Paul's Brookline

I AM PUTTING DOWN what I remember of Sundays when a child. I recall sitting with the other small children on the steps of the Chancel and being taught by Mrs. Wharton the hymn beginning: "There is a fountain filled with blood," an image very repugnant to me. Then during service, standing unsteadily on a cricket, and "sitting still" until drowsiness overtook me, when I leaned contentedly against mother. In the afternoon the play of lights, red and green and gold, from the west rose window, moving nearer and nearer to the organ fascinated me.

We were too young to follow the church year appreciatively, but we knew the Whartons, the Newtons, and the Storrs, and Mr. Fay as friends often coming to the house. We knew father moved to Brookline so he could sit under Dr. Stone, a young soldier by



Plaque to the memory of Ellen's father:

TO THE MEMORY OF  
 HENRY SAVAGE CHASE  
 A VESTRYMAN OF THIS PARISH FOR  
 MANY YEARS  
 AND AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH ITS  
 SENIOR WARDEN  
 JUNE 17, 1825 \* FEBRUARY 19, 1885  
 A GOOD MAN AND FULL OF  
 THE HOLY GHOST AND OF FAITH

the way in the War of 1812, marching to the defense of Boston. Our very house was built where mother could walk to church. Father wanted the grove lot from the first but feared the distance would overtax her strength. Then she succeeded in reaching the lower corner of the lot he desired and the house was placed accordingly. (Corner of Alton Place and St. Paul's Street)

One of the earliest memories dates from when I would be about five in the sixties [1860s]. I was daubing away with my paints and wearing a high-necked calico apron, full of ardor, when mother in the long camel's hair shawl appeared in the guest room doorway and asked in surprise why I was not ready for Church. St. Paul's bell was ringing. I

was entirely absorbed and answered I was painting; then father came in from the front hall and said, so gently I remembered his tones all these years, nearly seventy, now: "I hope the time will come when my little Nelly will love to go." Then they were off and the front door closed. The bell stopped, and I felt I had missed something.

The first pew I remember sitting in was on the south side about half way to the pulpit. Mr. Augustus Lowell and his family sat directly in front. Mr. Percy Lowell, later the astronomer; Mr. Laurie, the future president of Harvard, very handsome with bright

Pew deed for St. Paul's Church. Pew 41

Know all Men by these Presents, That **SAINT PAUL'S CHURCH,**  
 IN BROOKLINE, in consideration of *one* Dollars,  
 paid by *Henry S. Chase of Brookline*  
 do hereby grant, sell, assign and convey the said *Chase*  
 and his heirs and assigns, *Pew, numbered Nineteen (19)* in said  
 Church. *This deed is given to perfect the title of said*  
*granted in and to this Pew.*  
 To Have and to Hold the same, to the said *Henry S. Chase*  
*and his heirs and assigns forever.*

In Testimony Whereof, the said Corporation has caused this instrument to  
 be sealed with its common seal, and to be signed by its Wardens, this *fifteenth*  
 day of *July*, A. D. *1875*

EXECUTED AND DELIVERED;  
 IN PRESENCE OF

*J. M. Durrallott* }  
*James L. Amory* } Wardens.  
*Henry S. Phore* }

Recorded with Deeds of Pews in St.  
 Paul's Church, Brookline, fol. *41*  
 this *15<sup>th</sup>* day of *November* 1875.

*Clement K. Fay.* Clerk.

Plaque on the rectory porch:

SAINT PAUL'S RECTORY  
GIVEN A.D. 1885 IN MEMORY OF  
HENRY SAVAGE CHASE  
BY HIS CHILDREN  
EVERY HOUSE IS BUILT BY  
SOME MAN  
BUT HE THAT BUILT ALL THINGS  
IS GOD



color. Little Amy, the poet much later, and her elder sisters, the seven of them giving the name “Sevenells” to their Heath Street home. Then there was old Mr. Copley Green, further front, where he could hear better, I now suspect.

Across the aisle sat a group I always took notice of. Mrs. Dwight who had lost her two sons in the Civil War, and who used each May to sit on an iron chair in her lot at Forest Hills to greet their comrades. Mother had often told us of Wilder Dwight’s funeral [Major of the Second Massachusetts Regiment fatally wounded at Antietam, September, 1862]. The church was full of elderly men, members of the Bar paying respect to his high promise as a lawyer. Outside the South door could be heard the grounding of arms by the soldiers who at the close of the service formed an escort to Forest Hills. His war horse accompanying them with boots reversed. Close beside Mrs. Dwight sat Mrs. William Aspinwall, from the Hill, with her sons, Mr. Tom and Harry, and their older sister with her husband, Dr. Trull, who had gone to help the

TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
WILLIAM LEVERETT CHASE  
BORN DECEMBER IV MDCCLIII  
DIED OCTOBER VII MDCCXCXV  
AN OFFICER OF THIS PARISH FOR MANY  
YEARS  
AND ALWAYS ITS GENEROUS  
BENEFACTOR  
"BEAR WE ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS  
AND SO FULFIL THE LAW OF CHRIST"

wounded in the Franco-Prussian War. It was he who vaccinated us children.

Then further front toward the organ came Mr. Harrison Fay's pew and we used to watch Mr. Clem Fay step in and out when playing the chants. With the Fays sat Miss Anna Barlow, another object of interest, for her brother, we understood, had been their first Brookline man in the Civil War to leave home and die. He had gone with the First Massachusetts Regiment, June 1861, and was accidentally shot January 31, 1862, at Budd's Ferry, Virginia. On a sad Sunday in the following August, after the second battle of Bull Run, the services were adjourned so that the women in common with the rest of the town might prepare bandages for the wounded. Hal Stone, the





minister's son, fell at Gettysburg, July 1863. When the news came, his sister-in-law, Kent's wife, went forward and played something appropriate. I think this was in the Sunday school room. She was gifted musically and taught her brother Clement how to play the organ. He played so much better than most people you hear nowadays, giving his services for love of our little church. He composed a *Te Deum* we grew very fond of and the tune and the words lived in your mind. He knew Dykes, the English composer, of Durham I think, and others, going to England summer after summer.

Mr. Hoar, principal of the High School, and his family were among the friends. The Littells of the *Living Age* periodical and the Ferrises were close neighbors. The Williamses lived across the street from the church. Mr. James S. Amory and the Honorable Robert C. Winthrop (who stood out to our childish memory through wearing a cloak) both lived in the upper part of the town. So, too, did the Codmans with their long pewful of sons and one daughter.

When we came to sit on the North side of the church, Father being Junior Warden, took up the collection on our side. A treasurer he brought the greenbacks home in his big white handkerchief and we little girls used to help sort the paper tens and quarters, or lay in groups neat piles of cents showing a flying dove. My sister Sally sat next to Father, then I came, beside Mother, and Brother was on the side aisle. As we grew older, he followed the reading of the Second lesson in Greek, and I in German and Sally in French.

We lived so near, only a few minutes' walk, we went all day. Sunday School at nine, Father the Superintendent. Morning Prayer at ten, all the chants,



Seventeenth century English court cupboard loaned to St. Paul's Church by Mr. and Mrs. William Leverett Cummings in memory of Ellen Chase. It currently resides in the rectory.

the Psalms of the Day, both lessons, the opening sentences, the offertory sentences, sometimes the litany, or all the Commandments, and throughout its session the Prayer for Congress, as well. It was infinitely better than the shortened services met with sometimes these days. As we grew older, and the afternoon service was discontinued, we had the great opportunity of hearing Phillips Brooks often in at Trinity, walking one way over the Mill Dam. As children, and bye and bye when we had become teachers, we gathered on Easter and practiced marching in, strung out in double file between the Sunday school and South Porch. And you always think when looking back of daffodils in the air and slush under foot. The beautiful flowers were all sent by parishioners from the upper part of the town and arranged with great taste by Madeline Williams and others, At Christmas the whole Church was fragrant with evergreen scent, and the tenor sang a solo we looked forward to, for in these days we had a quartette choir.

Once at St. Stephen's, Portland, dear Uncle Dalton, the rector, noticed I bowed my head in the Creed. When he asked why I had done so, I couldn't tell. He cautioned me to know why I did anything, and on reaching home I asked mother. Her ready reply seemed quite satisfactory. "Because you live in Unitarian Boston."

Once Father explained to the younger children of the Sunday School that "Advent" came from two Latin words, *Ad* to and *Venio* to come. As he left the Church he heard their teacher Mrs. George Stedman chirruping, "What a pretty word, children *Venio, venio*. It makes me think of Venus.

The site for St. Paul's, Brookline, was given on



1850 by Mr. Augustus Aspinwall. And he with Mr. Harrison Fay, was the largest contributor towards its erection. The tower was solely donated by them. The bell was given by Timothy Cory Leeds, and the flagstone walks by Theophilus Parsons Chandler. The corner stone was laid July 29, 1851, by Bishop Manton Eastburn. The clergy robing in the old Aspinwall house, which stood opposite the main door of the Church when erected. It had been built since 1660, nearly 200 years before. The clergy then crossed Aspinwall Avenue in procession. December 23, 1852, St. Paul's Church was consecrated, and the rectors to date have been:

Rev. William Horton, October 1849-May 1852

Rev. John Seeley Stone, D. D., September 1852-October 1862

Rev. Francis Wharton, April 1863-November 1869

Rev. William Wilberforce Newton, July 1870 March 1875

Rev. Leonard Kip Storrs, D. D., December 24, 1875-1910d. *emeriti*

Rev. Carroll Perry, March 1911-1916

Rev. William Lathrop Clark, 1917-1933, when he died.

Rev. Arthur C. Lichtenberger, 1933

The accompanying scattered notes may have a slight interest, at least they will show the succession of names call back real people and happening to us older folk.

St. Paul's is an especially perfect little church as to its proportions an early English design. The architect was Richard Upjohn, the elder. In his later years

he came on purpose to see it once more. He asked for a chair out on the Williams' lawn, and was not willing to leave it even for a bit of refreshment. "I am not likely to see it again," he said by way of apology. "It has been the work most after my heart some churches I have built with the vestry, this I built alone."

Father moved to Brookline so that he might be near the church where Dr. Stone preached. When asked once if he was happily placed in his church relations, he replied he could not wish for any improvement. "Then," said his friend, "you have a great responsibility."

As a boy, Father had Bishop William Lawrence in his Sunday School class, and we have some of his childish handwriting listing Bible names. One stormy Sunday Father gave a lift home in the sleigh to his Sister Suzy. After leaving her in Longwood he noticed on the floor a small purse the same type as his own. Slipping it in one of his pockets he used it freely taking out and putting in change until all at once he had occasion to open the inner compartment and was surprised to find a bunch of children's tin types. He finally recalled picking up a purse and returned it with much amusement.

Once when Dr. Stone had preached a series of sermons on the text: "Fear not, little Flock," a young student from Cambridge by coincidence followed, treating the same passage. Dr. Stone had remarked at the close he was aware he had not exhausted the subject, but hoped he had said enough to suggest some profitable reflections. The young Divinity student was quite content after his brief exposition. In his old age Dr. Stone, as was then



The Eagle lectern, made of polished brass, was given by Adele Thayer in 1884, and was made in London.

the custom, went as usual to change his surplice for a preacher's black gown. Not reappearing when expected, after conferring with Mrs. Stone, one of the Wardens went solemnly up the chancel steps to learn when was amiss and found the old man sitting on the outer door step, his hand on a dog's head, seemingly weary and unconscious of the flight of time.

I have an imperfect recollection of having heard that a lady, during the Civil War days, used to step outside by the small west door during the Prayer for the President of the United States, and then return again.

The Sunday School was added shortly after the Church was completed. Dr. Wharton had two little girls, Mamie and Dearie, that I was fond of and missed when he left. He used to refer in preaching to King Charles II as "the dissolute Charles," we were told, and wondered what he meant. I think it was in Dr. Wharton's time Mother was invited to meet Dean Howson of Chester Cathedral at lunch or some little gathering. And now when I am in England I like to stand in the cloisters at Chester where the Dean lies buried and look at the littler scrap of enclosed turf set thickly with tiny, short daisies, and feel it a link between our countries.

I think the Newtons came soon after they were married. As a little one I remember being taken with the neat way Mrs. Newton's bedroom slippers were placed together under the bed. They were pretty and small and side by side and altogether commendable. I aimed to be like her in this, as I aspired to a resemblance to Mary, Queen of Scots, by fondling my coral necklace. Mr. Newton was very much our friend and understandable. One week-day being in

the church with Sally and me, either by her desire of by his own prompting, he gave a little counsel from the pulpit, telling her, little girls should be patient about having their curls combed and brushed. When Brother came of age Mr. Newton was at the table with us and caused considerable amusement by presenting a bundle of fasces or stick as the Romans did to their youth on reaching manhood. He drew up a list of possible names for a dog to gratify me; and when father's factory was destroyed in the Chicago fire, in his absence, Mr. Newton ran in and took a look at the furnace one cold night, and saw to it, as he would to his own in a sudden change. Making a droll report to Father to cheer him while struggling to get his store rebuilt. I remember one season when some gipsies wintering in town occupied a pew by the pulpit. This is likely to have been his time also as I was still young. The gipsies that summered in tents on Newton Street and the turnpike were known as Stanleys.

Once when Mother took a class in Sunday School in someone's absence, she had Bobby Finney, the Grand Army man's little son, to interest. The lesson had to do with sealing the tomb, and to make sure the children understood she asked who knew what a seal was. Bobby's hand went up confidently; he had often seen one down the harbor. Father belonged to the Bunker Hill Monument Association and I remember he invited Mr. Storrs and took me along to be present at the unveiling of the statue of Colonel William Prescott, the work of W.W. Story, June 17, 1881, in Charleston. Miss Maria Storrs was my Sunday School teacher and among the class Barbette Sneider was remembered with pleasure for an Easter gift of highly

colored eggs, royal purple, and carmine. It always brought back one's early days to meet her and her sister on the way to church. Later I read they left a legacy to the parish. Among my own "Children" I numbered Amy Lowell; and Alice and Ethel Rogers whom it had been a pleasure to greet in these later years at All Saints. Anna Storrs, Mr. Storrs' daughter, was another member of my class. She later married an officer in the British Army. I think he took part in the Retreat from Mons. On Armistice Day he waited, watch in hand, to give the word for the salute near the same spot.

The Triennial Convention in 1877 brought many distinguished clergy to Boston and some to Brookline as well. In the English book, "Catherine and Crawford Tait" [wife and son of Bishop Tait, published 1879] the son is quoted as writing "October 7<sup>th</sup>, morning and evening service at Mr. Storrs' church, Bishop Kipp and I assisted. Bishop Williams preached in the morning on the manliness of Christianity (1) providing for body, mind, and soul; (2) exercising reason and faith; (3) guiding by great principles, not by minute regulations. In the afternoon Bishop Williams gave a missionary address. I remember just where young Mr. Tait, son of the Archbishop of Canterbury, stood when he spoke to us. Bishop Wipple made a lasting impression, and Sally and I were eager to help his work.

I have often walked with Father as he looked up at the spire and roof of the church to note if all the slates were in place. This training in the care of buildings was a help when I came to live in London and went about Deptford with Miss Octavia Hill watching over the tenants' as a volunteer manager.

Many additions were placed in the Church in our



TO THE GLORY OF GOD  
AND THE MEMORY OF  
BRANTON HOLSTEIN KELLOGG  
CAPTAIN, CO H. 7TH INF. U.S.A

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KILLED IN ACTION IN THE  
ARGONNE FOREST  
OCT 12TH 1918 AGED 29 YEARS

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"CHRIST'S FAITHFUL SOLDIER AND  
SERVANT UNTO HIS LIFE'S END."

day. The lectern was a gift of Miss Adele Thayer. At the Customs Father was asked if it came "under the nature of regalia, was carried about?" "I could try," he said, "if that would pass it!" The corona of lights was hung in the chancel. Father put up the brass communion rail in memory of Mother. My sister-in-law gave the new organ in memory of Brother. The cloisters he gave in memory of his eldest daughter Mary Greenough Chase, "Little May." And we three children gave the Rectory in Father's memory. More recently my nephew gave the curved tracery before the East window to soften the light, in memory of his mother. An interesting tablet in memory of Louisa Rogers by R. Greenough, an early gift, has lately been transferred to the south wall from the Sunday School. I remember when the Kellogg memorials were given, and how Mr. Storrs felt the death of the young man in the World War. "Iv. Memoirs of the Harvard Dead" has the story of Captain Branton Kellogg's services and death in the Argonne fighting. It closes: "His fellow officers buried his body where he met his death. On November 23, 1918, a memorial service in his honor was held at Brookline in St. Paul's Church, of which he was a vestry man. On a wall of that church, beside a tablet placed there in memory of his father by the Loyal legion, his friend have a tablet in honor of the second Captain Kellogg. In the words, "Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end," it makes a true citation of one through all of whose life a genuinely religious motive was a dominating force.

Mr. Storrs was particularly level-headed in looking after those of the parish in temporary need of aid. While I was building my home I was told of



TO THE MEMORY OF  
 CHARLES WETMORE KELLOGG  
 1839-1909  
 CAPTAIN 29TH OHIO INFANTRY  
 FAITHFUL OFFICER IN THE WAR  
 WHICH PRESERVED THE UNION  
 AND DESTROYED SLAVERY  
 HIS COMPANION IN ARMS  
 OF THE COMMANDERY  
 OF THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS  
 OF THE  
 MILITARY ORDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION  
 OF THE UNITED STATES  
 HAVE HERE PLACED THIS TABLET  
 LEX RECIT ARMA TUENTUR

a man who wanted help, and meeting Mr. Storrs on the street asked him if he knew of the family. “Root and branch, Nelly,” he replied so emphatically, not another word was called for.

Mr. Storrs meant much to us in the Eighties and Nineties, years full of family events—my parents’ deaths, my sister Sally’s marriage and my brother’s death. As time went on two nieces married and the inevitable removals took place to more or less distant homes. But still at intervals a few of the 4th generation were brought back and welcomed into the “Congregation of Christ’s flock” and duly recorded on the old books here at St. Paul’s.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Chase, Ellen *Material for the History of St. Paul’s Church in Brookline*, Volume 3 p. 34.
- <sup>2</sup> Chase, Ellen *Tenant Friends in Old Depford* London: Williams & Norgate 1929.
- <sup>3</sup> *Proceedings of the Brookline Historical Society*, 1973, 113.
- <sup>4</sup> *Calendar of St. Paul’s*, March 19, 1950.

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liams & Norgate Ltd, London 1929.

Flint, Putnam Phillips (grandson of William Leverett Chase).  
Personal interview, April 25, 2010.

*Proceedings of the Brookline Historical Society*; 1973, 113.

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Ellen's grave in Forest Hills Cemetery, overgrown with hemlocks, is placed with many other family members.

