



The Story of the North Parish Footstools

by PHILA SLADE

In the late 1970's some women of the North Parish Church began a project to rejuvenate the footstools found in the sanctuary pews. Some of the footstools dated from the 1830's or earlier. One original stool was exactly the same as one found in an 1830 vintage painting found at the Museum of Fine Arts. The fabric covering most of the stools was worn and faded, and some of the stools were broken.



The organizers of this project suggested that individuals "adopt" a stool, repair it if needed, and decorate it in whatever way they wished. Some people chose to paint scenes or symbols on the wood. Caroline Stevens Rogers covered two stools with fabric she had woven herself. Several stools were covered with the red and pink flowered cloth from the old seat cushions.



Many women made needlepoint covers for the stools. Miss Ruth Puffer led the needlepoint efforts, encouraging all to do their best to produce beautiful work. Miss Puffer, who received her PhD. in Public Health from Harvard, was the first woman to ever walk in the Harvard graduation procession. Always gracious and determined, Miss Puffer established very high standards for the needlepoint covers. Hazel Hart created several original stool covers, and also did much of the work of putting the covers on the footstools.



The North Parish footstools, still today found in every pew, are an interesting and unique part of our church's past and present. Some stools now, in 2009, need repair and re-covering. Please contact the House and Grounds committee, if you are interested in carrying on the tradition and helping to preserve a North Parish footstool.

