

James Russell Wiggins, Speaking to the Rockbound Chapel Congregation  
Thursday, July 28, 1994, Brooklin, Maine

It is a privilege to be here today to pay tribute to the Rockbound Chapel Society and to Louisa Goodyear, who played a major role in revising and sustaining it over the last twenty years.

The Rockbound Chapel Society first met on March 31, 1900. At that meeting it was decided to build a chapel. A committee to plan the building was appointed. It included A. J. Carter, C. M. Carter, and Eugene Seavey. The committee reported promptly at a meeting on April 14, announcing its intention to build a building 30 feet by 40 feet, with 14-foot posts. This was all done with enormous promptness seldom exceeded in these days. Lumber was bought from A. J. Carter on September 8.

The Chapel began its long career as a host to Hymn Sings, preachers of different sects, weddings and funerals. It was more or less "an empty building" when Austin Goodyear installed a carillon in memory of his father, Charles W. Goodyear. He also frequently undertook repairs and maintenance of the building. He was supported in these endeavors by Lois Raymond, June Eaton, Celia Laughlin, Alice Eglund, and Mr. and Mrs. Winn Bowden.

Brooklin, at the turn of the century, was a bustling place. Varney's Gazeteer of Maine says it had a lobster canning factory, a barrel factory, a shoe factory, and nine general stores. The register of the town of Brooklin in 1910 said it had three barbers, a dentist, an Express office, two livery stables, a physician and a steamboat agency. It also had nine schoolhouses.

What it didn't have at the turn of the century was telephones, radios and television. It had a population of 960. Its present population is 1765. It notably didn't have automobiles. They were to change its daily life no end.

The chapel committee built a home where the local community could worship and provide related services. They had long felt the need for some such structure within walking distance of the community. The community changed greatly over the years. The automobile put institutions and agencies,

2--Rockbound Chapel Speech, July 28, 1994

once far beyond the reach of horse-drawn vehicles and walkers, closer to the customers.

But if the community has changed a lot, the Chapel has changed but a little. It stands today as a living monument to a very different age than the one it now serves. The revival of the Chapel in the last 20 years was much due to Louisa Goodyear. She was always present at the annual meetings and frequently attended the summer Hymn Sings. We, her neighbors, fondly remember her favorites:

"In The Garden," "Oh, God Our Help In Ages Past," "Beautiful River," "Wonderful Grace of Jesus," "And Now The Day Is Over."

She was often the president of the Society when no one else would serve. On occasion, she was janitor of the Chapel when no one else was available to take care of it. In fact, she did everything that she was asked to do or it was apparent she could do.

The officers of the Rockbound Chapel have asked me to contribute some verses to her memory. I undertook to do that with great pleasure, and I hope to fittingly pay tribute to her.

## To Louisa

We all gather in the chapel,  
Just to sing the grand old songs,  
Of the one "big tent" religion  
To which everyone belongs.

Our church has no "Hierarchy,"  
Not a Bishop, Canon, Pope,  
But it had our own Louisa,  
Who was our prop and hope.

It had no holy water,  
But the water from the sea,  
It had no tithes or pledges,  
The admission price was free.

It never in existence  
Published any warning bann,  
And its single, one commandment  
Was "to love your fellow man."

Louisa's lights were burning,  
And their gleam across the wave  
Reached a lot of struggling seamen  
She could rescue and could save.

Oh the little Rockbound chapel  
Now is old and somewhat bent:  
May it linger on forever as  
Louisa's monument.

*James Royal Higgins*