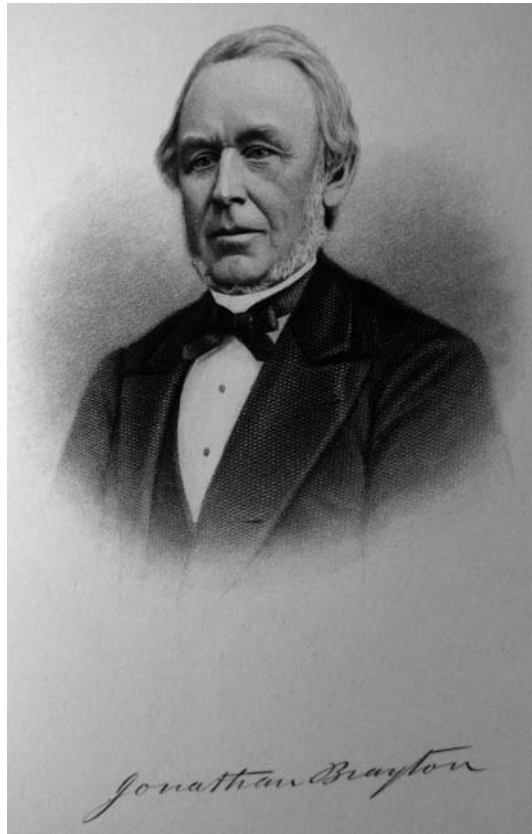


Rev. Jonathan Brayton

June 12, 1811-Jul. 24, 1884



Rev. Jonathan Brayton

¹The Centreville Bank was incorporated in June 1828 with, capital of only \$25,000. John Greene was its first President and Rev. Moses Fifield the first cashier. Mr. Greene, ___s has been mentioned, remained President until his death.

Cyrus Harris was then chosen President and held that position several years. The present Moses Fifield, who is cashier, is a son of the Rev. Moses Fifield, who took the cashiership a few years before the death of his father, which occurred April 19, 1859. Rev. Jonathan Brayton was chosen President

on the resignation of Mr. Harris. Pg.253

In 1843, Rev. Jonathan Brayton commenced his labors here in the Phenix School-house and the School-house at Natic, but his audience increased so that the School-house at Phenix could not hold them and they hired the Tatem Meeting house, then owned by Dea. Josiah Chapin, of Providence, for two weeks. Great religious awakening attended these meetings and many were converted, so there seemed to be a necessity of forming a Baptist church immediately. Therefore the brethren and sisters in Phenix and vicinity, 25 in number, formed themselves into a church and were publicly recognized as such Jan. 20, 1842. The church assumed the name of the "Lippitt and Phenix Baptist Church." The

¹ The Narragansett Historical Register: A Magazine Devoted to the Antiquities, Genealogy and Historical Matter Illustrating the History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations ..., Published by The Narragansett Historical Publishing Company, 1889

male members were; Rev. Jonathan Brayton, Thomas S. Wightman, William B. Spencer, Jeremiah Franklin, John B. Tanner, Benjamin Gardiner, Richard Gorton, Stephen Greene and Robert Card, and sixteen females. There were nineteen others excepted candidates, which increased the numbers to forty-four. On January 30, twenty-nine persons were baptized. From Jan. 30, to Mar. 6, seventy-seven were baptized and united with the church. Among them were some of the first and most substantial citizens of Phenix and vicinity, such as Lodowick and Samuel Brayton, brothers of the Rev. Jonathan Brayton. Necessity now compelled them to build a meeting-house, as the school-house was not large enough to hold the audience which attended the meetings. The Phenix Manufacturing Company, generously gave the lot. A house was built 48 by 36 feet, for \$1,800. The vestry was afterwards finished and the whole expense was only \$3,000. Rev. Jonathan Brayton, was the instrument in the hands of God in building up this church, and was its first pastor. After he resigned the church had several pastors. Rev. Christopher Rhodes was pastor nearly six years, and during his pastorate the congregation increased so that the house was not large enough to hold them. A committee was appointed to enlarge, or to build a new house. The old meeting-house was sold and a new one was built on the west side of the river. William B. Spencer gave the lot. The whole expense of the house was \$18,437.14. It has a handsome clock in the steeple and a good sounding bell that weighs 1609 pounds. As was said on a former occasion, it is one of the handsomest and most convenient meeting houses in the rural part of the State. pg. 263-264

A Meeting-house was built by the Society of Friends, in the town of Cranston, in the Shanticut brook valley about a half-mile west of the Railroad station now known as Oak Lawn, in 1732, and known as the Cranston Friend's Meetinghouse. Regular weekly and monthly Meetings were held here by them until about 1860. In 1866, the Friends having most all died, their Meetings were discontinued. For more than one hundred years previous, it had been a noted place. Mrs. Anna Jenkins, a celebrated preacher

of the Society, preached in this house, the sabbath before she was burnt to death, in her own house, with her oldest daughter, (November 20, 1849). It is said, that in this, her last sermon, she seemed to have a presentiment that this was to be her last appearance before the public.

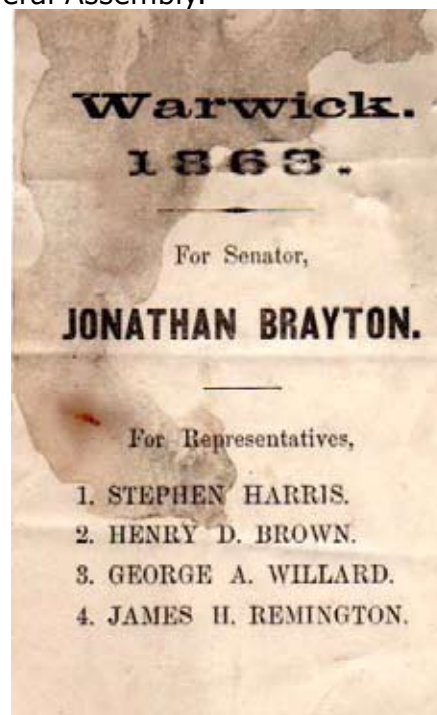
Lodowick Brayton bought the house and gave it to the Baptists, who have maintained meetings there ever since. They have recently built them a new and more commodious Meeting-house, and have an organized Baptist church there, which is somewhat flourishing. Pg.273

BRAYTON, REV. JONATHAN², son of Lodowick and Elizabeth (Knight) Brayton, was born in Cranston, Rhode Island, June 12, 1811. His ancestors were among the early settlers of the State. Francis Brayton, who was born, probably in England, in 1611 and died in 1692, was for some time a citizen of Portsmouth. His son, who bore the name of his father, Francis, was also a resident of Portsmouth. He died in 1718. His son Thomas 1st was born June 14, 1681, and lived in what is now known as East Greenwich. Thomas 2d, son of the preceding, was born in 1713. His residence was in Washington Village, town of Coventry, where he owned a large water-power, which he improved by the erection of what was known as "The Brayton Mills." The son of Thomas 2d, Jonathan 1st, who came into possession of a large part of his father's estate, was born at Washington, Rhode Island, October 9, 1745. The latter part of his life he lived with his son Samuel, at Nichols Corner, near Wickford, where he died in 1816, and was buried there on the farm of his son Samuel, now known as the Dr. Tillinghast estate. Lodowick 1st, son of the preceding, and father of the subject of this sketch, was born at Washington, Rhode Island, May 25, 1770, and died in 1838. Until early manhood he lived in Washington Village, and then took up his residence in Cranston, near what is now known as Oak Lawn, where the Rev. Jonathan Brayton, the subject of this sketch, the seventh child in the family, was born. The family of Lodowick

² The Biographical Cyclopeda of Representative Men of Rhode Island, Providence National Biographical Publishing Co.1881 pg 344-5

Brayton was a large one, consisting of fourteen sons and one daughter. The eldest child was William, born March 23, 1795, and died May 10, 1848. His mother was Hannah (Burton) Brayton, sister of Judge George Burton, of Cranston. The second wife of Lodowick Brayton was Elizabeth Knight, daughter of Deacon Stephen Knight, and sister of Rev. Richard Knight, of Scituate. Their children were Robert 1st, born May 5, 1800, and died October 19, 1802; Robert 2d, born July 27, 1802; Alfred K., born September 8, 1804, died in 1860; Hannah, the only daughter, born August 21, 1806, died in 1871; Philip F., born August 23, 1809, died 1850; Jonathan and Stephen (twins), born June 12, 1811, the latter dying in infancy; Stephen 2d, born November 6, 1813, died in 1833; Lodowick 2d, born September 28, 1815; Samuel H., born October 13, 1817; Nehemiah, born April 21, 1820; Edward 1st, born July 9, 1822, and died in infancy; Edward W. 2d, and Francis E. (twins), born December to, 1823. The latter died in 1843. The early life of Jonathan Brayton was spent on his father's farm at Cranston. When he was eighteen years of age he took up the trade of a carpenter, and worked at it for four years. An accident which happened to him while working on the steeple of the Roger Williams Free Baptist Church in Providence so disabled him that he could not engage in manual labor. For the purpose of obtaining a better education he became a student in the Kingstown Academy at South Kingstown, Rhode Island, then under the charge of Christopher Comstock. Subsequently he was a pupil in the Friends' School, Providence. He then taught about three years in the public schools of Fall River, Massachusetts. Having decided to enter the Christian ministry, he spent two years, 1839-41, in the Hamilton Theological Institution, New York. Having completed his term of study, he was ordained as a regular Baptist minister by the faculty under whose instruction he had pursued his theological studies. Declining two invitations to settle near Hamilton, he returned to his native State, and following an impression to go to Phenix, Rhode Island, where there was no church of his denomination, he held a series of revival meetings there in the winter of 1841-42, assisted by Rev. John H. Baker. During these meetings he baptized one hundred and

nineteen converts in that place and vicinity, most of whom became members of the Baptist church which he then organized, and of which he was pastor for six years. His other settlements in the ministry have been with the churches in Natick and Crompton, villages in Warwick; at Quidneck, in Coventry, where he organized a church; and in Pawtucket. The state of his health has prevented him from a continuous exercise of the pastoral office. He has occupied various posts of honor and trust to which he has been called by his fellows-citizens. Three times the town of Warwick elected him a senator in the General Assembly.



For three years he was a member of the Board of State Charities and Corrections he was for fifteen years President of the Centerville National Bank in Warwick, and for the same time a Director in the Warwick Institution for Savings. He married in September, 1841, Mary, daughter of Hon. Robert F. Noyes, of South Kingstown, by whom he had one daughter, Mary Noyes, who died at the age of six months. Mrs. Brayton died September 17, 1880. For many years Mr. Brayton has occupied a prominent position in the Baptist denomination in Rhode Island, and taken a deep interest in all matters pertaining to its prosperity. For about ten years he was President of the Rhode Island Baptist State Convention.