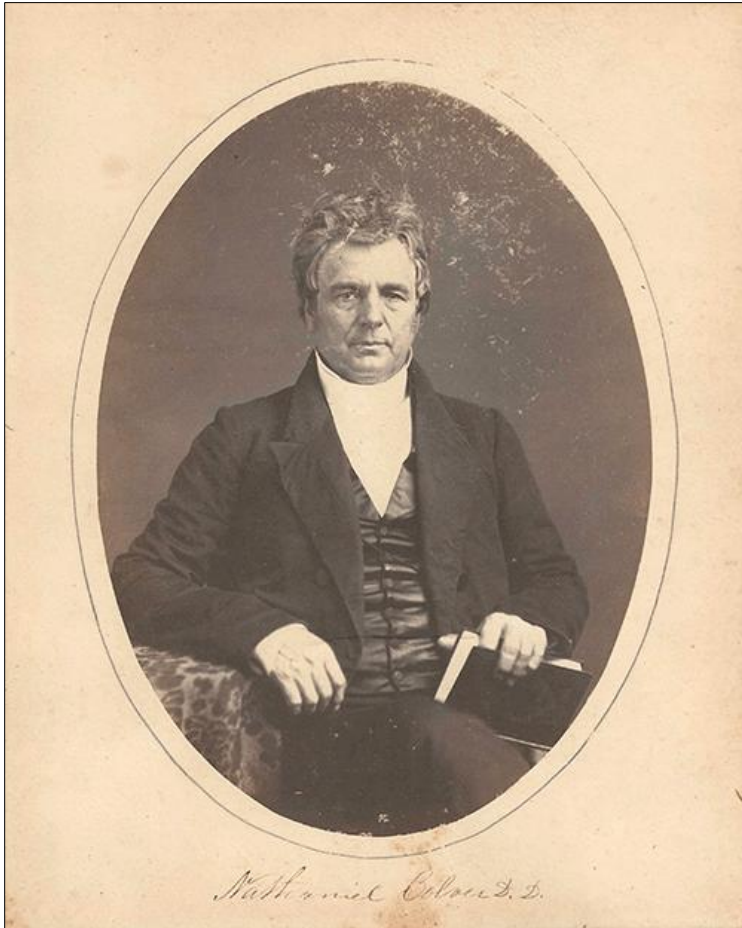


## Bottskill Baptist Church History Minute

### Church Historian Ken Perry

June 2025- Nathaniel Colver



(1) Nathaniel Colver portrait photograph. Collection of the Bottskill Baptist Church.

requested his leave, to serve at the Tremont Temple Baptist Church in Boston, which became a center the Abolitionist movement in that city. He was recalled from there, and continued here from 1834- 1838. He then returned to Tremont Temple, where he served until 1852.

After a year as pastor at the Baptist church in Attleboro, Massachusetts, which borders the northeast part of Rhode Island, he went to Ohio. While there, he obtained a divinity degree from Granville College, now known as Dennison University, and served in churches at Cincinnati and Detroit.

Nathaniel Colver is the subject of this month's History Minute, another photograph found in the church collection. He was born in Orwell, Vermont in 1794, the son of Nathaniel Colver and Esther Dean, who moved their family west into the northern Adirondacks. Nathaniel followed his father's path, first preaching at Fort Covington, New York, on the Canadian border.

His first appearance in our church records occurs in November 1830, when he conveyed his views. At the end of April 1831, he was requested from Kingsbury to serve part time for the remainder of the year. That request was renewed, and he served as an assistant to Elder Edward Barber from 1831-1834, during the waning years of Barber's role as our pastor. During that time, he became associated with Dr. Hiram Corliss in taking up Greenwich's role in the anti- slavery cause. That movement was later carried forward by the Congregational church, which stood on the south end of Main Street, its parsonage still standing across from the Post Office as a private home.

In 1834, Colver



Tremont Temple Baptist Church in Boston. 1851 depiction.

In 1861, he arrived in Chicago and was given the inaugural professorship of doctrinal theology there, thus founding the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. On the reverse of this photograph (1) is a dedication from that period: "J. O. Mason Union Village with much love. Sept. 31, 1862 N Colver." The label on this photograph was for J. W. Winder, of Cincinnati.



Continuing his Abolitionist interests, by 1865 the American Baptist Home Missionary Society founded the Freeman's Institute in Richmond, Virginia, which became the Richmond Theological Institute, for training African American ministers. To organize this program, Nathaniel Colver was tapped by the Missionary Society. This theological institute would later bear the name, Virginia Union University, one of the country's historic Black colleges, such as the Tuskegee Institute and Howard University. Virginia Union still has in its programs the Colver Institute, named in his honor.

In ill health, Colver returned to Chicago, where he died in 1870, buried in the city's Oak Woods Cemetery.



For his service to this church and to the anti-slavery cause, we remember Nathaniel Colver.

Monument for Nathaniel Colver located in the Oak Woods Cemetery, Chicago, IL

[ photo by Andy Gappa ]