



**THE REVEREND JOHN NEWTON MARS (1804-1884):  
NEW ENGLAND CLERIC AND CELEBRATED STANDARD  
BEARER IN THE WESLEYAN TRADITION**

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AND DAVID WHITE (1938-2012)<sup>1</sup>**

This paper is focused upon the history of the Reverend John Newton Mars, a Methodist cleric and standard-bearer in mid-nineteenth century New England. Excerpts of his biography have appeared in official church records, in his personal journal, in newspaper clippings, in one unpublished paper, and in archival records at Drew, Dillard, and Tulane Universities. His amazing story deserves a more complete telling than has heretofore been afforded; hence, this entry into the still-unfolding historical record.<sup>2</sup>

The Reverend John Newton Mars was born in Norfolk, Connecticut, on

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<sup>1</sup> The major substance of this paper, which focused on John N. Mars' ministry and anti-slavery activities, was originally written by Bishop Martin McLee with research assistance by Rev. Patricia Thompson, Historian of the New England Annual Conference, and David White, who at the time of his sudden death in 2013 was the Chair of the New England Conference Commission on Archives and History. At the time of his unexpected death in 2014 Bishop McLee was planning to make a presentation to the 2015 Northeastern Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History Annual Meeting. Rev. Patricia Thompson made the presentation, weaving into Bishop McLee's paper additional factual information about Mars' early life, his family, and some of his appointments, which were not included in the original paper. All comments in the following footnotes are made by Thompson.

<sup>2</sup> When Martin McLee presented his paper before the New England Historical Association in 2011, he did not include footnotes—at least in the version which he sent to me. I have documented as much of the paper as I have been able, but have not been able to locate all of his sources. When he first became interested in writing about Mars, I sent him a lot of my own information without making copies and therefore, have not been able to recover some of the references.

June 22, 1804, to parents who had been enslaved by a Presbyterian clergyman. His father, Jupiter, served in the American Revolution. Despite his participation, after completing military service, he remained in bondage until he and his family escaped from their master about 1800—though they were forced to indenture two of their boys, James and Joseph, until age 21. Despite the hardship of slavery, Jupiter and his wife, Fanny, saw three of their children enter into ministerial service. Daughter Elizabeth would become an Episcopal missionary to Liberia,<sup>3</sup> living there for over thirty years. Son James was routinely referred to as Deacon in the Congregational Church, and his life story has been well-chronicled. John Mars rounds out this sibling trinity of religious workers. While John may have had two additional siblings, named Charlotte and Laura, corroborative documentation about them has not been verified.<sup>4</sup>

Mars' Memoir in the 1884 *New England Annual Conference Journal* reports:

When nineteen years old young Mars went to Ghent, N.Y., where he remained three years, and soon after was converted in the town of Hartright, N.Y., being overwhelmingly convicted of sin, and, after severe struggling and much prayer, received by the Holy Spirit a gracious assurance of pardon, that brought great peace and joy, which was especially characteristic of his religious experience to the close of life.<sup>5</sup>

Around this same time (1826), he married Silvia Gordon. They had three sons, James (born in 1828), John Sherman (born c. 1832) and George (born c. 1834-1835). In addition, according to a codicil to Mars' will, dated 1875, he also had an adopted daughter, who probably was named Henrietta (born c. 1845).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> D. Elwood Dunn, *A History of the Episcopal Church in Liberia 1821-1980* (Metuchen, NJ: American Theological Association and Scarecrow Press, 1992), 38-39.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Eldridge, Theron Wilmot Crissey, comp., *History of Norfolk, Litchfield County, Connecticut, 1744-1900* (Everett, MA: Massachusetts Publishing, 1900), 91, 370-371.

<sup>5</sup> "John N. Mars," 1885 *New England Conference Journal*, 81; hereafter referred to as 1885 *NEC Journal*.

<sup>6</sup> When I presented this paper at the Northeastern Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History annual meeting in May, 2015, I had only fully documented John Sherman Mars and partially documented George Mars. I was also aware of a young woman named Henrietta Mars, who appeared in the 1855 Massachusetts Census and the 1860 Federal census as living with John and Elizabeth Mars but born a year prior to their marriage and did not mention her in the presentation. In July, I was able to obtain a copy of John N. Mars' will, originally written in 1870 which contained a codicil added in 1875. The original will mentioned "my son, my sister, my adopted daughter and my grandchildren" (who would have been Horace and John Mars, sons of George Mars, as his son, John Sherman, had no children at the time. No names were specified, however for any of these persons). In 1875, Mars added a codicil to his will mentioning specifically, his sons, James and John Sherman, and the children of his deceased son George: Horace and John. An obituary for James Mars states that he went to sea very early in his life and then lived on the West Coast (San Francisco and then Victoria, Canada, before moving to Olympia, Washington), from 1849 until his death in 1891. It appears that John may have lost track of this son until sometime between 1870 and 1875, by which time James had settled in Olympia. According to the Find-a-grave-website, James had a son, Jesse, (among other children), who was the earliest known African American firefighter in Olympia. No mention is made in the codicil of his sister or Henrietta Mars Huggs (for whom no birth information has yet been located), who died in 1872.

According to Vital Records for Athol, Massachusetts, Mars' wife, Silvia Gordon, died in 1838. She is buried in Athol, Massachusetts, where Mars made his home for many years, in spite of the fact that he was concurrently serving churches in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Washington, D.C., and Upper Canada. It is not clear what happened to his boys at the time of their mother's death. While their father was itinerating, they were probably living with relatives. Nor is it ever clear why he chose the town of Athol to make his permanent home, as he was reported by the time of his death to be the only African American living there.

Sometime after his conversion (probably about 1829) Mars was licensed to preach. During the 1830s he was ordained a local deacon by the New York Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and served AMEZ congregations in Fishkill and Poughkeepsie, New York, and Newark, New Jersey, until about 1840.<sup>7</sup>

In 1840–41, Mars was sent to Salem, Massachusetts, to work with the Rev. Newell Spaulding, a white pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to serve the Black population connected with a church which was being organized by Spaulding in the area. The *1843 Minutes of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church* (p. 5) state that Mars was assigned to Salem, Massachusetts, with 103 members. A resolution voting to receive that Society as represented by Mars was passed.

In 1845, Mars withdrew from the AME Zion Church to become a missionary to fugitive slaves in Upper Canada with the Wesleyan Methodist Connection.<sup>8</sup> There he ministered to free men and women who had escaped bondage in the United States. Within a year Mars had developed five significant circuits with eight congregations, numerous Sabbath Day Schools, four other schools, and temperance associations.<sup>9</sup> During this time Mars connected with and employed the Reverend Josiah Henson. Henson was an abolitionist, AME minister and the author of *The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada, as Narrated by Himself*. In Canada Henson established an Afro-Canadian community and imparted practical knowledge to newly arrived fugitives from bondage. Henson became a well-known figure when Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, revealed him as the source of the title character of her novel.

The record is clear regarding the association between Mars and Henson. The following excerpt from a letter from Reverend Mars appeared in an 1845 edition of *The True Wesleyan*, the denominational publication of the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion:

I wish to inform you and the numerous readers of the *True Wesleyan* by this, that I am now in the Province of Upper Canada, and have commenced a Wesleyan Mission

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<sup>7</sup> Peter C. Ripley, *The Black Abolitionist Papers: Vol. III: The United States, 1830-1846* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1991), 435; hereafter referred to as Ripley.

<sup>8</sup> John Jamison Moore, D.D., *History of the A.M.E. Zion Church in America* (York, PA: Teachers' Journal Office, 1884), 112.

<sup>9</sup> Linda Brown-Kubisch, *Queen's Bush Settlement 1839-1865* (Toronto, CA: Natural Heritage/Natural History, 2004), 74.

Circuit . . . I have divided this into two districts, Eastern and Western, and have employed Br. Josiah Henson, that well tried friend and brother and given him the charge of the Western District for the time being and I shall travel over the other until we get more help.<sup>10</sup>

Another letter, published in 1846, a year after Mars arrived in Upper Canada, revealed the initial meeting of these two historical leaders. Mars writes: “I entered this province alone an entire stranger . . . I learned that the African M.E. Conference was to meet in St. Catherine’s in July . . . [O]n my way there, I fell in company with the Reverend Henson one of their Elders and went with him to St. Catherine’s.”

Mars received significant support from Methodist churches all over the United States for his missionary work in Upper Canada. In 1845, the Reverend C. C. Mason, a Boston cleric, raised funds for the Canada mission and wrote this glowing report:

On Sunday, Dec. 8th, brother Mars presented the claims of the Canada Mission to my church and congregation. We raised for that mission . . . the sum of \$135. Every child in the Sabbath School rose spontaneously after a short address to them by brother Mars and pledged a cent a week for the mission . . . I am bold to assert that brother M[ar]’s missionary field is the most interesting on the planet, and that brother M[ar]’s is the man for the work.<sup>11</sup>

How long Mars remained in Canada is unclear. However, on October 27, 1846, John N. Mars was married in Salem, Massachusetts, to Elizabeth J. Holt, a white woman from Salem. Mars subsequently returned to New England and joined once again with the AMEZ Church. During the period of approximately 1849 until 1851, he served Zion’s (AMEZ) church in Springfield, Massachusetts, then just beginning as a mission church.

Mars was an articulate, thoughtful visionary leader in the Wesleyan tradition. His approach to ministry was Spirit-led, heartfelt, and combined the informed and impassioned approach central to Wesleyan theology. As was the case with John Wesley, Mars centered his preaching on Biblical Scripture and used an approach filled with passion and fervor. Like the Wesleys, Mars wrote hymns. This verse of a hymn, sung during Mars’ Civil War army chaplaincy, bears witness to the core message of his theology:

All men are equal in God’s sight,  
the bond, the free, the Black, the White,  
He made them all, then freedom gave,  
he made the man—man made the slave.

Newspaper accounts of Mars’ revival and camp meeting participation paint a glowing picture of his abilities. An 1869 edition of the *Boston*

<sup>10</sup> J. N. Mars, “Letter to Brother Lee,” dated July 30, 1845, London, Ontario, to *The True Wesleyan*, published as “Canada Missions: Fugitives,” 32.32 (August 9, 1845): 32, 126.

<sup>11</sup> J. N. Mars, “Letter to Mr. Lee” (forwarded from M. Bates, Albany, New York on July 14, 1845), to *The True Wesleyan*, published as “Rev. Mr. Mars: Missionary to Canada,” 3.30 (July 26, 1845): 117; J. N. Mars, “Letter to *The True Wesleyan*,” July 10, 1846, published as “Canada Missions,” 4.32 (August 8, 1846): 126; C. C. Mason, Letter to *True Wesleyan*, December 10, 1845, Boston, published as “Wesleyanism in Boston,” 3.51 (December 20, 1845): 202.

*Daily Advertiser* provides this portrait of a camp meeting held at Asbury Campground in Hamilton, Massachusetts: “The many prayer meetings in the tents last evening were marked by a deep and earnest spirituality. The sermon was by the Rev. J. Mars, pastor of the Revere Street MEC, Boston [now Union United Methodist Church in the South End of Boston]. The sermon closed with the vast congregation in tears, and the altar was soon crowded with seekers and the people by personal effort showed their care for souls.”<sup>12</sup>

John Mars had an effect on listeners that extended well beyond the service. In an 1885 edition of *Zion’s Herald*, the Reverend J. Peterson recalled meeting Mars when he (Peterson) was 18 years of age,

I went to the meeting simply to hear a Negro preach, as I had never heard one speak in public, and I had seen only a few in my life. That . . . was the most powerful preaching I had ever heard; plain, practical, warning, persuasive, the memory of it stirs my soul. At the close of the meeting I spoke with Bro Mars and commenced an acquaintance which continued unbroken for more than 30 years.

While Mars was clearly at home as an exhorter and preacher, he was also adept as an organizer in the protest against the institution of slavery. Though never a slave himself, Mars was the child of parents born into slavery; moreover, his older brother James was enslaved for a time. In a series of autobiographical articles (of which only three have been located), Mars explained, “I was born free. But the freedom came from neither purchase nor emancipation. My mother and father had committed an ‘Exodus’ and New England provided . . . a way of escape.” It is no surprise then that Mars became an ardent abolitionist. Mars spoke openly against the terror of slavery. His approach was both forthright and radical. Writing in *The Black Abolitionist Papers*, Peter Ripley reports: “the itinerant nature of his ministry allowed Mars to bring his anti-slavery message to several New England communities.” Ripley continues, “He participated in local anti-slavery meetings and used his pulpit to urge militant resistance to the fugitive slave law.”<sup>13</sup> (This law would allow slave hunters access to states in the North as they sought to capture and return to the South those who had escaped from bondage.)

Springfield, Massachusetts, had long been a bastion of abolitionist activity. While serving the Zion’s AMEZ church (which eventually evolved into the Sanford Street church), Mars became intensely involved in the anti-slavery movement. In 1850, Mars was part of a three-person team that organized a forum for the “Colored Citizens” of Springfield. This forum produced a document in response to the Fugitive Slave Bill that had recently passed both houses of Congress. The response read, in part:

We will repudiate all and every law that has for its object the oppression of any human being . . . . And whereas, we hold to the declaration of the poet, ‘that he who would be free, himself must strike the blow,’ and that resistance to tyrants is obedience to God, therefore, resolved, we do welcome to our doors . . . everyone who has broken from the southern house of bondage, and that we feel justified in using every

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<sup>12</sup> “Hamilton Camp Meeting,” *Boston Daily Advertiser* 43 (August 20, 1869), n.p.

<sup>13</sup> Ripley.

means which the God of love has placed in our power to sustain our liberty.

Mars also spoke forcefully against slavery from the pulpit. Wayne Phaneuf reports the following: "In a fiery sermon from the pulpit at the Sanford Street Church (in Springfield) the Reverend . . . Mars quoted from the book of Luke in the Bible when he told his predominately Black parishioners: 'And he that had no sword, let him sell his garments and buy one'."<sup>14</sup> One scholar of the history of Black Methodism concludes that this message actually invited the congregation to arm itself.

Whether in the pulpit or in the public square, it is clear Mars was not afraid to confront authority. The historical record reveals that his name appears as a signer of numerous petitions. Moreover, public records show his presence at a myriad of abolitionist gatherings and planning ventures. These were not the clandestine late night meetings that were typical in the struggle for liberation, but rather, were announced open forums.

One relationship of some importance to John Mars' ministry was that with Abolitionist John Brown: it is probable that Mars attended an event where John Brown of Harper's Ferry fame spoke. In Springfield in 1851, John Brown addressed a group that had gathered in opposition to the Fugitive Slave Law. As the Rev. Mars was serving as a pastor in the city at the time, and given his penchant for participating in anti-slavery gatherings, it is reasonable to assume that he attended the John Brown event. While there is no evidence of a roster of attendance for the meeting, records from the same year do reveal that Mars spoke to his Springfield congregants bemoaning the horror of slavery while calling for a response that would ensure freedom and liberation.

Further, it is possible that Mars and Brown may have actually met in the church where Mars was serving at the time, Zion's AMEZ church, because that was the same church that John Brown had attended when he had lived in Springfield in the late 1840s. Joseph Carvalho says in his book, *Black Families in Hampden County, [Massachusetts]*:

From the pulpit of the Sanford Street Church, Rev. John Mars enjoined his congregation that the time had come to "beat plowshares into swords" to defend their families and their freedom. It was at this moment that John Brown, with the help and influence of his Springfield friends in the black community, drafted the founding document of the League of Gileadites, an anti-slavery militia with the goal of self-defense against slave-catchers.<sup>15</sup>

Although the pastoral record is not totally clear, it appears that Mars left Zion's Church in Springfield in 1851 and served in Hartford, Connecticut, for one or two years, then went to Worcester, Massachusetts, where he

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<sup>14</sup> *Vermont Watchman and Journal* 47 (October 17, 1850).

<sup>15</sup> "St. John's Congregational," *Springfield Republican* (May 9, 1936), 3; Joseph Carvalho III, *Black Families in Hampden County 1650-1865* (Online database. *AmericanAncestors.org*. New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2013). Originally published *Black Families in Hampden County, Massachusetts, 1650-1865* (2nd edition), by Joseph Carvalho II (Boston: New England Historic Genealogy Society, 2011), 21-22.

served Zion's church there for at least four years and then returned again to the then Sanford Street Church in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Then, the *Springfield Republican* for April 23, 1859, reported that, "Rev. John Mars, a colored preacher, has been recognized as a local elder by the New England Methodist Conference." It is not clear, however, whether Mars then actually served a congregation in the MEC in New England or not. The only report of a church being served by Mars in the early 1860s is as an interim pastor at the First Independent Baptist in Boston.<sup>16</sup> Mars seemed to have an amazing ability to move back and forth between denominations, going where he was the most needed at the time.

At the outset of the Civil War in 1861, Mars spoke out strongly about people of color being unable to fight in the War. As soon as Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, not only granting freedom to all slaves but also giving the right to all American men regardless of color the right to enlist in the armed services, Mars himself enlisted, even though he was by then nearly fifty-nine years old. He was assigned to the 1st North Carolina Colored Volunteers as their Chaplain. Along with John V. DeGrasse, a black physician from Boston, he became one of the first two African Americans to receive a commission in the Civil War. Mars' son, George, also enlisted in the Army on December 26, 1863. He was given a disability discharge on October 21, 1865, and died of dysentery ten days later.<sup>17</sup>

Mars was located in Newbern, North Carolina. During this time he had the opportunity to participate in a service in which he and the Rev. W. C. Whitcomb, hospital chaplain, christened and baptized 105 children. According to the August 17, 1863, *Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco, California), this was the first time a black pastor had been allowed to participate in a service of baptism in the state.<sup>18</sup>

Unfortunately at his age Mars' health was not strong, and he was unable to endure harsh army life. He was assigned to the Army stores at Newbern for a number of months before being transferred to Norfolk and Portsmouth, Virginia, where his chronic rheumatism finally forced him to resign his commission.<sup>19</sup>

Mars was distinguished as the first Black pastor received on probation into what is now the United Methodist Church; this took place in 1864 and established the New England Conference as the pioneer Conference for the creation of an open door policy for Black clergy seeking conference membership.

According to the 1864 appointment list for the New England Conference, John N. Mars was appointed to the church in Clinton, Massachusetts, but he

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<sup>16</sup> Ripley.

<sup>17</sup> Online database on Ancestry.com: "U.S., Colored Troops Military Service Records 1863-1865; online database on the New England Genealogical Historical Society website: [http://www.newenglandancestors.org/research/database/mass\\_bmd/full\\_screen\\_plugin.asp?vol+v1...](http://www.newenglandancestors.org/research/database/mass_bmd/full_screen_plugin.asp?vol+v1...)

<sup>18</sup> "Negro Clergyman in North Carolina," *San Francisco Bulletin* 16.112: 2.

<sup>19</sup> From a biography which I wrote on Mars' for Oxford University Press's *African American National Biography* project.

never served there. Instead, he was sent to Portsmouth, Virginia, with the American Missionary Society to minister to the freed slaves who were living in the area. Peter Ripley reports in the *Black Abolitionist Papers*:

Mars organized congregations and Sabbath schools and taught classes to local freedmen. His reports to the AMA secretary George Whipple offer a poignant description of the condition of the freedmen in eastern Virginia. Although optimistic about the progress of his mission work, he complained of the insensitivity and racist behaviors of white missionaries. These criticisms alienated his white colleagues and undermined efforts to continue his mission work under the auspices of the MEC, which he had recently joined.<sup>20</sup>

Mars was there for only a short time, however, when he was transferred in October (1864) to the newly formed Washington Missionary Conference to serve the Sharpe Street Church in Baltimore until the 1865 annual conference, when he was received into full connection and appointed as Presiding Elder of the Chesapeake District.

Mars was called out of the New England Conference in order to provide much-needed leadership in the newly formed Washington Conference. It was not unusual at that time for the most qualified Black pastors to be received into full connection in one of the newly formed Black missionary conferences and then to be appointed Presiding Elder at the same conference.<sup>21</sup>

Interestingly, it seems that the leadership of the New England Conference was not at all happy with the request for Mars' transfer, as indicated by a resolution in the handwritten manuscript minutes of the 1865 Conference (but which was not included in the published journal):

Resolved that we deeply regret the removal of Rev. John N. Mars from this Conference, because it has interrupted the Missionary movement irrespective of color in the Southern States, which movement he was successfully prosecuting; and because it has prevented the cooperation of our own people with this Conference in sweeping away the unchristian [*sic*] distinction of color which they would soon have done had he been allowed to have remained with us, by inviting him to the charge of their churches; and though we appreciate the recognition of his abilities, which his appointment exhibits, still we are convinced that he would better serve the church in that greater sphere of Missionary labor in the South. We therefore respectfully request our presiding Bishop to secure, if consistent with the general work, his transfer to this Conference, and his appointment to the Missionary work of the South, in order that, in connection with our other Missionaries there, he may assist in organizing Churches and Conferences throughout the region.<sup>22</sup>

John N. Mars remained with the Washington Conference until 1869 when he was finally transferred back into the New England Conference. It is not known whether his transfer back to New England was a result of this resolution, or of his own desires, or possibly both, since his wife may have

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<sup>20</sup> Ripley, 435.

<sup>21</sup> 1885 *NEC Journal*, 81.

<sup>22</sup> "Resolution in relation to John N. Mars," [handwritten] *Journal of the Sixty Sixth Annual Session of the New England Conference*, 17-18; this resolution was not included in the published journal.

still been in Athol during all of these years. Mars apparently felt comfortable in New England, for he wrote in a letter to the annual conference, dated 1878: “. . . I am for the most part, confined at my home [that is, in Athol,] in infirmity and in much physical pain. Next to my family there are none, on earth, so dear to me as my brethren of the New England Conference. If it please, dear brethren, I should like to have my present relation to the conference continued.”

After his transfer to the New England Conference between 1869 and 1871, Mars settled into the pastorate of the Revere Street Church in Boston's Beacon Hill community, which was at that time the epicenter of Black Boston. During his ministry there, a noteworthy incident occurred. While conducting a revival meeting on the South Shore of Massachusetts, Mars encountered another evangelist, Maggie (Newton) Van Cott. Van Cott, a recent widow, was acknowledged as the first woman in the Methodist Episcopal Church to receive a preaching license. She had significant experience working with the poor in New York, some of whom were African American. Mars was impressed with her evangelical zeal and invited her to conduct a Revival at the Revere Street Church. The usual custom for revivals resulted in the visiting preacher boarding at the home of the host pastor. Despite that tradition, Mars received a communiqué from Mrs. Van Cott requesting that Mars “get board for her among her people.” Mars replied by telegram: “Dear Sister, I don't know who your people are. When the Lord Jesus comes to us he stops at my house, if you cannot accept like quarters I have no other to offer.”

Van Cott reports in her autobiography that she immediately replied that she would join him. She boarded with Mars for two weeks, and a successful revival resulted. She admits to being embarrassed at thinking she was superior to those of the darker hue. This is yet another example of the impact that Mars had on both Blacks and Whites and on his often brilliant approach to responding to the racism of the day.<sup>23</sup>

After serving for two years at the Revere Street Church in Boston, Mars then became conference missionary and a member of the Bromfield Street Quarterly Conference. Then, in 1872, he was appointed as a second pastor to the church in Malden, Massachusetts, before retiring in 1873 at age sixty-nine.

The Reverend John Mars remains a seminal figure in the history of Antebellum New England. He was a pioneer of the first order and joined the long line of clergy leaders serving in the Wesleyan tradition. Mars is buried in Athol, Massachusetts, where his grave is marked by one of the largest stones in the cemetery. Fittingly, it bears a grave marker placed by The United Methodist Church.

The announcement of his death in the *1884 New England Annual*

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<sup>23</sup> “Introduction,” Gilbert Haven in Maggie N. Van Cott, *The Harvest and the Reaper: Reminiscences of Revival Work of Mrs. Maggie N. Van Cott* (New York: George A. Sparks, 1883), xiii-xiv.

*Conference Journal* offers an appropriate tribute. It reads in part:

Brother Mars was extensively known as a consistent but very earnest abolitionist, but in the Methodist denomination he has achieved his greatest reputation as an eminent and successful evangelist. Of commanding presence, and musical voice of marvelous compass, intelligent, and endowed with a clear knowledge of human nature, shrewd sagacity and tact, and above all possessed of sterling integrity and deep, earnest, and most consistent piety. . . . A noble man, a saintly Christian, a faithful, earnest evangelical preacher of righteousness, professor and faithful exponent of the Wesleyan doctrine of holiness. Truly we may say—"Servant of God, well done! Thy glorious warfare's past. The battle's fought, the race is won, and thou art crowned at last."<sup>24</sup>

Although highly celebrated during his lifetime, the story of the life and ministry of the Reverend John Newton Mars has faded from the limelight with the passing years. He deserves a place among the other renowned abolitionists and great preachers of his day. This paper, whose genesis was sparked by the New England Historical Association, represents a step in that direction.

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<sup>24</sup> 1885 *NEC Journal*, 82.