

New Haven, March 4

1885

Carl Stockell Esq

Dear Sir

I have had in my library a  
book, entitled, *Things Ecclesiastical -  
tical law in N. England by Mass*  
by Edward Buck, in which the  
marriage laws of Mass. and per-  
haps of Connecticut are spoken  
of. But after looking  
through my library, especially  
where it ought to be, I find no  
trace of it and am inclined  
to think that some one has bor-  
rowed it without ~~to~~ returning  
it. Mr Buck, who was a Lawyer,  
died in 1876, and it must have  
been written as early as 1870,  
or possibly, 1860. I must be, I  
think in the L. J. Historical

Library.

As far as my memory goes, in Mass. and Conn., when they were colonies, no minister could unite a couple in marriage at all at first, - the reason being that the N. Engl. colonists had a keep recollection of what they endured in old England from the eccles. laws. A minister could pray over a couple united thus by an officer of the colony, a justice of the peace, perhaps or higher magistrate, performing the ceremony so far as the law allowed him to declare them man and wife.

Some after 1700 a minister could unite a couple as now, but a magistrate (Shaliam) was needed to be present.

There are other books which speak of their usages, but I have forgotten them. Dr Bacon, I think says something in the N. England on the subject, Some Mass. histories must speak of it. The Certificate of marriage come from the magistrate. Palfrey perhaps will help you. by J. D. Wood