Basking Ridge Methodism

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FOREWORD

Essentially, this is the story of the first hundred years of Bishop Janes Church. But its beginning antedates the church by more than a century, providing a glimpse of the earliest stirrings of Methodism in our area, and the activities that preceded and led to the establishment of the church itself.

As the reader will have noted, the writing of this history has been a joint effort, though not a collaboration in the usual sense of the word. The two authors did not work on it together, at the same time; instead, the second took up, after the lapse of a good many years, where the first had left off.

It seems that, as a rule, most people tend to have little interest in local history until they are old enough to have grandchildren in college. Until then they are too busy to give it much thought; they are making their own history. Fortunately for us, Edward A. Schroeder III did not follow the usual pattern in this respect. He was not yet forty when, about 1957, he became greatly interested in the history of his church, and began to explore and record it. For some seven or eight years he worked at it, gathering information from many sources and compiling a most interesting and comprehensive record of the church's early days. Working nights and weekends year after year, with infinite patience and great skill, it was, for him, a labor of love. In the mid-1960's, due to the increasing demands of his position with the Mennen Co., his spare time became so limited that he had to lay aside, temporarily, his work on the church history. And before he could resume it, fate intervened. Edward Schroeder died quite unexpectedly, of a heart attack, in 1968, at the age of 48. But he left us an invaluable manuscript of some 180 pages which he had typed several years earlier. In it he had covered carefully and in great detail the story of our church's background and its history up to 1913.

Surprisingly, Ed Schroeder's fine work remained known to relatively few people. Our Historical Records Committee preserved a copy in its archives, but nothing was done to publicize it until ten years later when, on the occasion of our 125th anniversary the Committee

formally presented to the church several copies of the typed manuscript, bound in hard covers. It was then that I first saw it.

I borrowed one of the copies, read it, and found it most interesting. But the last page ended in the middle of a sentence! What a shame! Surely, I thought, such an interesting story, the product of so much painstaking work, should not lie ignored in some filing cabinet. It should at least be carried forward, extending the record. Being convinced of this, and finding no one else who seemed to be much concerned about it, I volunteered to undertake to continue, as best I could, the work that Ed Schroeder had begun some twenty years earlier. There appeared to be no objections to my taking a shot at it, so I set about gathering more information to add to the record. For the past four years I've worked at it off and on, as a spare time occupation, and have chronicled an additional forty years, to round out the first century. In my writing I have attempted to emulate the style and pattern set by my predecessor, so as to produce a reasonably consistent whole.

Along with his incomplete typed manuscript Schroeder left a typed Preface, in which he explained how he had come to undertake the history and his reasons for writing it. As the latter are still wholly valid today, we can do no better than to quote here verbatim and in full, that preface:

"Between 1953, the centennial year of Bishop Janes Methodist Church, and 1960, the bicentennial year of our community, many interesting stories about our church came to my attention, each one further whetting a natural interest. This led eventually to a study of the church, its triumphs and failures, its interesting and often unusual history.

"Apparently no one has written a comprehensive history. In fact, the most detailed studies seem to have been those of the Rev. C. A. Wombaugh in 1883 (now lost) and the Rev. Joseph Appley in 1899. Both were very short.

"If only for future reference all the scattered information — old records and files, reminiscenses, information at Drew and the Newark Conference, membership records — should be brought together into one chronological history. But there are other reasons for the project. First, our people do not seem aware of how many excellent and interesting men have filled the pulpit at Bishop Janes Church. This history will record their lives and their local contributions. I think that their

opinion had been deleted. With such deletions completed, it would be an ***objective*** *work, and I would approve its general distribution. If I were gone by then, I would desire that someone approved by Official Board make these deletions before publication. I also hope that in future years the Official Board will select someone every 10 or 15 years to keep this history up to date.*

"For the present, however, my statements of opinion remain part of the work — only because no one ever has studied our history before in such detail — not because my opinions as such are superior to those of others who pray for Bishop Janes Methodist Church".

E. A. Schroeder

In preparing this history for publication full consideration has been given to Ed Schroeder's expressed wishes. His writings have been carefully reviewed, updated and sparingly edited. A number of deletions have been made, in the interests of impartiality and objectivity. Such editorial comments as remain represent not only Schroeder's opinions but mine as well. And a consistent effort has been made to retain as far as possible the character and wording of his original writing. We no longer have an Official Board as such but, consistent with his expressed desire, the full manuscript has been carefully reviewed — and approved — by appointed members of our Administrative Council. Ed's widow, Mrs. Dorothy Schroeder, has also kindly reviewed the complete edited manuscript and has expressed the opinion that we have satisfied her late husband's concerns and that he would be pleased with the result of our endeavors. It is our sincere hope that the record as here presented may fulfill the purposes he envisioned and that "it also may prove interesting".

It might be said that history is of two kinds: the recorded and the unrecorded; that which is in tangible written form and that which, though equally important, is unrecorded and intangible. Unless it becomes recorded it fades and shrinks with the passage of time and may eventually be lost.

Our church's history, of course, marches on, and with vigor, but its recording in tangible form must, for obvious reasons, be done in stages. Not only is it a time-consuming process, but the perspective of a few years' time is essential in weighing the significance of past events. Thus, though the story continues to unfold, some cut-off point must be

chosen when a record is to be written and published. And for this first section of our tangible history our centennial date, 1953, has seemed to be a logical choice.

But this leaves more than thirty years, and three pastorates, unchronicled. It is my earnest hope that this first volume may serve to inspire others, younger and more capable than I, to begin without delay the recording of our second volume. The longer we wait to do this, the more difficult will the task become.

Wayne F. Koppes

Basking Ridge, New Jersey
June 1983

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Any work such as this is necessarily a team effort. We know that Ed Schroeder was greatly aided by the personal reminiscenses of his keen-witted neighbor, Jessie Appley, with whom, in her later years, he often conferred. And many an evening he spent discussing this history with other neighbors of his, Charles and Sophie Pitt, who contributed their suggestions. No doubt there were many others who helped him, too but we're not sure who they were.

I am greatly indebted to many persons for their valued assistance. Chief among these have been William Scheuerman, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Vausse, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Brush, Marion Dayton Turner and Ann Munger Forsman, all of whom have contributed generously of their time and, most importantly, their recollections of the earlier years. Orrin Lincoln, Robert Boak and Dorothy Schroeder have provided helpful suggestions as well as advice in respect to technical and administrative matters. I'm grateful, too, to Pastor Will Thomas for his continuing interest, counsel and encouragement, and to Alice, my wife, for her occasional prodding and ever-present help.

W.F.K.

This book, the story of the background and the first hundred years of our church's history, is dedicated to the three men whose untiring and devoted efforts over nearly three decades have made it possible.

EDWARD A. SCHROEDER III

From the latter 1950's until his death in 1968, Ed searched old records, wrote letters, interviewed members, wrote the history up to 1913, and collected some of the data concerning later years.

WILLIAM L. SCHEUERMAN, JR.

Bill worked with Wayne Koppes in collecting and organizing our historical records, and, before his death in 1983, wrote the capsule history of the Pleasant Plains Methodist Episcopal Church. He also provided the display case in the narthex of our church, and he arranged and maintained the various collections of historical objects and documents exhibited in it.

WAYNE F. KOPPES

Wayne spent countless hours reviewing church and conference records and forty years of issues of the Bernardsville News, wrote the remaining chapters, and updated and edited the entire work. He typed the manuscript, worked with the printer on layout and design, and handled all of the details involved in getting the book published.

For their invaluable contributions we are forever indebted to these men.

Rev. Wilbur A. Thomas
Pastor

CHAPTER I

THE SHADOWY CONGREGATION

1740 - 1840

ON SUNDAY, May 24, 1959, one hundred and thirty people from Bishop Janes Methodist Church in Basking Ridge journeyed to Barratt's Chapel (called the "Cradle of Methodism") near Frederica, Delaware, and in the unused chapel held their own heritage-weighted service. The trip was scheduled during the 175th anniversary year of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the founding of which was begun at this same Barratt's Chapel and was completed one month later in Baltimore, at the Christmas Conference of 1784. The service was augmented by communion at the altar where it was first served by a regularly-ordained Methodist minister. It was conducted by Professor Alfred B. Haas of Drew University, our own pastor, the Rev. Elmer W. Wilkins, and Mrs. Kingsbury Davis, our organist and choir director.

The pilgimage had been planned because, better than words, such a trip would effect upon our young people a consciousness of our heritage, while providing as well an inspiration to their elders. Impressed by the surroundings and the occasion, the congregation that day experienced very special worship, and most members were brought to weigh what specifically should be preserved or re-learned from who had gone before.

Yet it is doubtful if anyone there that day was aware that a congregation of Methodists almost certainly was functioning in Basking Ridge at the very time that these historic events were taking place in Delaware and Maryland 175 years earlier, or that the first introduction of Methodism into our colonial village took place almost fifty years before that.

It was nearly two and a half centuries ago that Methodism first came to Basking Ridge, and more than 130 years ago that our own church was established. Until now what records exist of our church's first hundred years never have been put together. Our history has been, for most of us, an untold tale.

George Whitefield

It all really started in 1740. In the spring of that year George Whitefield (pronounced Whit-field) preached to almost 3,000 people in Basking Ridge. The New

Jersey historian, John T. Cunningham, said, during the Bernards Township Bicentennial in 1960, that this must have included most of the population "for many, many miles around".

Whitefield was an amazing phenomenon in colonial America. He had been one of the original group, organized by the Wesleys at Oxford, which became known as the Methodist Society; had been, in fact, a leader of this group, with the Wesleys, from its founding. It had been Whitefield who first demonstrated to, then convinced, John Wesley that, to make effective his convictions of a social-conscious Christianity, they would have to move from the churches into the outdoors. For English cathedrals and country chapels welcomed only the sedate and established, after the fashion of many of our present suburban churches, and the lowly knew this. Whitefield convinced Wesley to preach out of doors, in fields, factories, mine pits. So Methodism survived its infancy.

Whitefield came to America in 1738 and moved like a whirlwind through the colonies. His highly charged, emotional sermons stirred up immense religious excitement.

> *"In the Colony and State of New Jersey the influence of the preaching of Whitefield long affected the current of religious thought. It breathed new life into Presbyterianism and paved the way for the establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church (almost fifty years later). To education it gave an impulse and led to the furtherance of a plan for a trained ministry. The subtle influences which exist between freedom of religion and political thought found expression and showed men that the meeting house must be vitalized as well as the state."* [1]

Above all, his evangelism stirred thousands of colonists to seek God. And at the height of this movement he was invited to speak at the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church (then about 25 years old) by the Rev. John Cross, its first full-time pastor. This he did, but not in the church. When the unheard-of 3,000 people showed up, they moved out under the great oak so that all could see and hear. We turn now to Whitefield's "Journal", for it gives an interesting picture of the event and of the extreme, emotional manner of preaching in that day:

> *"Wednesday, May 5, 1740. Basking Ridge, Mr. Cross's parish. As I went along, I told a friend my soul wept for them, and I was persuaded within myself that the Lord would that day make His power to be known among them. In prayer, I perceived my soul drawn out, and stirring of affections among the people. I had not discoursed long before the Holy Ghost displayed His power. In every part of the congregation somebody or other began to cry out, and almost all melted into tears. This abated for a few moments, till a little boy*

[1] Lee, F.B., *New Jersey as a Colony and as a State*, Vol. I, page 334. New York City, 1902.

about seven or eight years of age cried out exceedingly piteously indeed, and wept as though his little heart would break. Mr. Cross having compassion on him, took him up into the wagon, which so affected me that I broke from my discourse and told the people the little boy should preach to them, and that God, since the old professors would not cry after Christ, had displayed His sovereignty, and out of an infant's mouth was perfecting praise. God so blessed this that a universal concern fell upon the congregation again. Fresh persons dropped doen (sic) *here and there, and the cry increased more and more".*

Whitefield goes on to say that services continued into the next day, and sparked a strong revival of religion in the area. As night of the second day drew near, the revival was shifted to Mr. Cross's large barn which saw many conversions. The old Rev. Cross farm was situated on the south side of Liberty Corner Road[2] in the area of the present Mt. Airy Road Extension and its tributary streets. It was a large farm, and the barn referred to by Whitefield was well built, for it stood in good repair until destroyed by fire in 1920.

At the time of this revival, Whitefield was a Methodist, so his were the first Methodist sermons ever preached in our town. And this was almost fifty years before the Methodist Eposcopal Church was founded, and 113 years before our own first church building.

The following year Whitefield returned to England and, although relations with John Wesley were good for a time, the two soon disagreed over elements of Calvinism which Whitefield had adopted from the hospitable Presbyterians. The disagreement led to a doctrinal fall-out between them, and from this time Whitefield no longer was considered a Methodist. Nor did he become a Presbyterian, for his highly original mind prevented his accepting all of the beliefs of any denomination. Although his power and effectiveness continued, it would be limited to his lifetime, for from this time on he became a denominational maverick. Nevertheless, all students of the period agree that in 1740, when he preached in Basking Ridge, he was a Methodist. And the Whitefield movement remains the most stirring in the religious history of the colonies.

* * *

Early Methodist records show that in 1772 there were 19 Methodists in all of New Jersey. In 1773 there were 200; in 1775, 300; in 1781, 500 and in 1783, 1,000. One year later, with work beginning at Barratt's Chapel, the Methodist Episcopal Church was born in Baltimore. These figures reflect the earliest growth in our state. But once the church was established, Methodism surged like a great tide, sweeping through southern and western New Jersey and eastward from Staten Island, where Woodrow, founded 1771-1787, is the mother church of the Newark Conference.

[2] For easier identification this history will use present-day road and street names and, where possible, present street numbers.

By 1830 membership in the Methodist Society in New Jersey equaled that of the Presbyterians. There were then 7,000 members in the five southern counties; the East Jersey district (from Flemington to Belleville and Newark) had 4,000, and the rest of the state 4,500 — a total of 15,500 members.

Dr. W. W. Sweet, in his *Methodism in American History*, says that in the circuit rider system "the Methodist Church developed the best technique for following and ministering to a moving and restless population.[3] It alone was organized so as to be able to follow step-by-step this shifting population and carry the Gospel even to the most distant cabin. It alone could be present whenever a grave was opened, or an infant found in its cradle." The circuit rider's possessions were carried in his saddle bags, and the early circuits were vast. The tragedy of the system was that death from hardship overtook half of the riders before they reached thirty.

Ezekiel Cooper

The diary of Ezekiel Cooper, one of the giants of early Methodism, came to light in the 1950's. One of his entries in June, 1786, described the old East Jersey Circuit which covered Hunterdon, Somerset, Morris, Warren and Sussex Counties in New Jersey and Orange County in New York. He numbered 365 Methodists within these boundaries. He then listed the 29 preaching places that made up what must have been a six-week circuit. One of these 29 places, included with homes in such towns as Flanders, Clinton, Dover, Newton and Hackettstown, where "classes existed and preaching was conducted" was "Captain Hall's — Captain Thomas Hall of Baskinridge".[4]

* * *

Sometime between 1770 and 1786 (probably closer to the latter date) a Methodist congregation was organized in Basking Ridge. We know little about it or who served it, for, as Dr. Lambdin of Drew once said, "Most of them (the circuit riders) took readily to saddle and circuit but reluctantly to pen and paper". Undoubtedly Captain Hall's or subsequent meeting places knew the preaching of such famous early Methodists as Boardman, Pilmore and Captain Webb, or circuit riders like Freeborn Garretson, Benjamin Abbott, or the elder David Bartine. Just who came this way is not known; we have no records.

But this much we do know: sometime before 1786 a Methodist congregation was established in Basking Ridge, making our local society one of the earliest of the nearly 250 congregations comprising the present Northern New Jersey Conference. That it was a healthy society we can not claim, because the 55-year record between 1786 and 1841 is virtually blank.

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[3] The same could be said for the itinerant system a generation later. At the height of its effectiveness, circa 1850-1885, it too was unmatched.

[4] Another of the 29 places listed is "Mr. Mellick's". The Mellicks of Hunterdon County were forebears of Miss Josephine Melick, whose invaluable services to our church will appear later in our history.

The few brief and sketchy histories of Bishop Janes Church that have been written in the past have always begun with the great revivals of 1841-42, which suggests ignorance of the events we have covered so far. Given its early start, during Methodism's most relentless advance, it would seem that our local group should have blossomed. That it did not, however, is fairly clear. We may guess that this was due in part to the fact that ours was not virgin territory. A strong, vital Presbyterian Church had come almost with the earliest Scottish settlers and had played a leading role in the community, its government, its services and its education. In short, its very competence had "sewed things up" in Basking Ridge, and its dedicated, effective operation precluded any weak unraveling.

Then too, Methodist continuity during this half century might have been better preserved, and our church built earlier, were it not that the Apostle of the Long Road, Francis Asbury, during his seventy trips (1771-1816) through the area of our later Newark Conference, seems to have missed Basking Ridge. He must have been close, though, for on one trip he traveled through Rockaway to New Providence (then known as Turkey), and on another he went from New Providence[5] to Oldwick via the "high road" (Long Hill). Still, though he traveled all around us, it seems fairly certain that he did not preach in Basking Ridge. Surely the early establishment of Methodist churches in surrounding towns was helped by such visits by Asbury as those to Oldwick (several from 1782 on), Somerville and Flanders (1787), Chatham (from 1796) and New Providence (many from 1806 on).

As far as we now know, sometime after 1786 the original Basking Ridge Methodist Society must have dwindled and, unless the future turns up more information, the period between then and 1841 will remain shadowy.

[5] In New Providence Asbury stayed several times at the home of Stephen Day. Day became the father of a family that gave our area many good ministers. His sons were long remembered affectionately as the Brothers Day, and the youngest of these was to become our second pastor in Basking Ridge.

CHAPTER II

THE FLAME AND THE PRINCE

The Methodist Revivals of 1841 - 1842

DURING the summers of 1841 and 1842 Mr. Heman Childs[1] gave permission to those responsible for evangelism in the old New Jersey Conference to conduct outdoor Methodist revival meetings in a grove near his home. The grove has been located variously at different places along Madisonville Road east of its junction with Highway 202. The Childs home was on Childs Road, but maps of the period show a separate plot of some eight to ten acres, owned by him, on the north side of Madisonville Road and including part of what is now Highway 202. This is the likely location.

Considering the lasting effects of these revivals — among other results, the enduring church they spawned — it may seem strange that no contemporary accounts could be found beyond the fact that they did take place and where. We do know, however, the names of the two men who conducted these revivals. Checking these has proved fruitful, for their stories, virtually forgotten in our church, probably better explain the building of a congregation that would build a church than detailed records of these crucial revival weeks ever could. A study of their lives convinces us that here is the primary reason why a congregation was brought together *this* time that would endure[2], and would catch the eye of a great pastor and a greater bishop some ten years later, so that a church would be built and grow, not without its troubles, down to the present day. For this reason we shall examine their lives in as much detail as the lives of the Bishop Janes pastors who followed them.

The Flame of Fire

Caleb A. Lippincott was born July 26, 1803, in Burlington County. As a boy he seems to have received sound moral training, as attested by his later life. Yet, despite the Quaker descent of his parents, he was given no formal church experience. Caleb grew into manhood as a carefree, high-living vagabond, a natural leader with a large following of lively, devil-may-care friends.

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[1] Mr. Childs is buried in our own Evergreen Cemmetery.

[2] The congregation of 1786 had either withered away or had become too small for official recognition in circuit rolls. There is every possibility that a small group continued together and preserved continuity with the later growing congregation that was born at the outdoor meetings in 1841 and 1842.

One day in 1825 he and his cronies dropped in on a Methodist revival at the Pemberton church, chiefly to laugh at the yokels. Without warning he felt the call during the service to give his life to the Master. To the dismay of his friends, left milling in the gallery, he joined the preacher when the service ended, took up Bible study, and within days began to preach in the surrounding neighborhoods. One would guess that his first efforts would have been crude, but apparently they were not. Caleb, it seems, was a natural and his success immediate. He was blessed with a remarkable mind full of imagery and powerful illustrations, an excellent voice, and a gift of oratory which kept all who heard him at rapt attention. His effectiveness was aided by a natural wit, a sense of humor so outstanding that it was mentioned in conference records fifty years after his death.

By 1829 the Methodist authorities were sponsoring his work in the Tuckerton and Warren Circuits of the Philadelphia Conference. In 1832 he and a young man who had become his close friend, Edmund S. Janes, were ordained at the same service. Not only was this to prove a rewarding friendship for both, but for the church as well. Through the years their work would prove complementary. Lippincott, who would develop into one of the most successful of American Methodist revivalists, traveled about making thousands of converts; Janes followed up, organizing these into effective congregations and seeing that churches were built. Needless to say, our own church is primarily a result of just such activity.

As an ordained minister, Lippincott's revival work was always, of course, extracurricular. Primarily he was pastor for a year or two at a time at whatever church the Conference designated. In this capacity he served in Newton, Frankfort, New Germantown (now Oldwick), Philadelphia, Flemington and Bordentown during his early years. Revivals, because of their size, had to be held outdoors, making his summer schedule a busy one. In 1841 and 1842 he conducted those at Basking Ridge in partnership with the Rev. Bartine, and the pocket of Methodism which resulted soon would help to create Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church. In the same manner he inaugurated congregations at such other places as Columbia, Hainesburg, Swartswood and Succasunna.

From 1834 until 1855, when she died, Lippincott was married to Elizabeth Corwin, a dedicated and attractive farm girl. For four years (1846-50) they served the church in Morristown. There they met a woman who, after Elizabeth's death, would become Caleb's second wife.

On July 3, 1850, he joined leading Methodist laymen from the Succasunna plains at the home of Bishop Janes on Banker's Mountain in Bernardsville. When these two got together something like this usually happened: Bishop Janes put $500 on the table, Lippincott added a deed to one-and-a-half acres his wife owned in the center of Succasunna, and the laymen present made up the rest. The new Succasunna Methodist Episcopal Church soon was completed and dedicated as "Janes Chapel".[3] Its early pastor, William Day, was the first minister to serve our church.

[3] Succasunna later gave up this name in favor of the older Janes Chapel in Tuckerton.

It remained a small country church for years, but in the late 1950's experienced a rebirth which led to a large expansion program. This shared early heritage may be the closest we have with any church in the area.

After Morristown, Lippincott served Flanders and Stanhope and then became Presiding Elder (District Superintendent today) of the Rahway district (1852-54). He made many friends, for he was not only loyal, but an intelligent and witty companion who never lost the spirit of his youth. It is said that he "confounded the unchurched" whom he sought, by an uncanny instinct to detect man's evil impulses and to offer loving understanding and upward escape from such impulses. A most powerful preacher, he affected both high and low. At his death in 1871 the Conference counted more than 3,000 converts directly credited to him. The last church he assisted reported 80 new members during the last two weeks of his busy life.

On September 9, 1857, he had married the wealthy, spirited, highly intelligent and cultured Miss Mary Louise Mann, and we must now devote a few paragraphs to this fascinating woman, though to do so diverts us briefly from the subject of our church's history.

The High Society Itinerant

Mary Mann was born in Morristown in 1803, into a wealthy and influential old colonial family. Her father, Jacob Mann, was one of New Jersey's first newspaper editors. She grew into a striking young girl, very bright and independent of mind. For example, having joined the Presbyterian Church as a child, she decided in her teens that she should subject its Westminster Confession to diligent study. The result was an open rebellion against Calvinist doctrine. So she withdrew and joined instead the "much despised" new Methodist church in Morristown, causing considerable dismay and even ostracism by her family and friends. She was to remain a loyal Methodist for seventy years.

While still a young lady she established and operated a select school for girls who came from all over the country. At the death of her father and as his only heir, she became head of the family and its mansion. Off and on she boarded select families such as those of Commodore Perry, August Belmont, Martin VanBuren and the southerners, Mason and Slidell.

Noted for her intellect, she was an invited guest at a surprising number of milestone events of 19th century progress. She was present when Samuel Morse sent the first telegraph message from his studio on Speedwell Avenue, rode as a passenger on the first train from New York to Philadelphia and on the trial trip of the first ocean steamer, "John Jay". She traveled regularly to New York on a stagecoach driven by young Cornelius Vanderbilt in the days before he made his fortune, and was present when the Morris Canal was planned in her father's parlor. In New York City she witnessed the first experimental use of coal as a fuel, and commented upon its unlikely prospects.

Morristown society was astounded when she married Caleb Lippincott. Unaware of his charm and intelligence, they knew only that he was an evangelist — poor, rustic — one of the "shoutin' Methodists" whose itinerant duties were little removed from those of the early circuit riders. But they soon stopped laughing. Mary abandoned her old exciting life, became a devoted and helpful parsonage wife, and moved with Caleb through the rest of his itineracy, — to Hackettstown, Hurdtown, Newark, Hope, Berkshire, Chester and Denville. When he died she did not return to Morristown but settled in his adopted home of Succasunna. She lived more than 94 years, one of the most admired and respected ladies in Methodism, proof that truth can be stranger than fiction.

Earlier in life Lippincott had lost his only son, a young man in the fourth year of his own ministry. On his death bed he had asked his father to "die in harness", a request which Caleb honored. Not quite 68, he was staying, in the spring of 1871, at a friend's home in Denville, where he was in the second week of revitalizing this congregation. On Saturday night, June 17, he was seized by a violent coughing spell which resisted all remedies. This resulted in a heart attack and a quick passing. The funeral and interment were at Succasunna, the services being conducted by the Rev. Jacob Fort, who years later would retire from the active ministry as pastor of our own church.

After the fashion of the times, Lippincott had been known as the "Flame of Fire". He had served Methodism for 41 years as one of its great preachers, and his flame attracted to the very end.

The Prince of Preachers

The other minister who shared with Caleb Lippincott responsibility for the fruitful Basking Ridge revivals in 1841-42 was David W. Bartine, another "very special" preacher in American Methodism. He was the son of the early New York-New Jersey-Pennsylvania circuit rider, David Bartine, to whom so many of our northern New Jersey churches credit their starts. The elder Bartine was circuit rider in charge when the Cokesbury Church was built in 1811, and he founded the Drakestown and Parsippany congregations. He must have had independent means, because from early life young David (born 1811) was provided an excellent academy education. Later, while attending medical school, he joined the Methodist Church in Trenton.

A natural delivery and keen intellect easily qualified him, in 1831, for a license to preach. This seemed to him a signal to give up medicine and enter the full ministry. He began preaching at the Middlesex Mission. In 1832 he was admitted to the Conference and, like Lippincott before him, was assigned the Tuckerton Circuit. His eloquence soon attracted large congregations. Particularly was his work effective along the coast and in the Quaker settlements, whose inhabitants dubbed him the "flaming herald of the Cross".

In 1833 he was promoted to the Camden Church, and in 1834 to the Mariners Church in Philadelphia, one of the eleven large churches then constituting the Methodist "big league". There he was thrown into competition (as some would have it) with ten of the best preachers in Methodism, including our own Edmund S. Janes. How he fared in this competition was evident the following year when the newspapers began referring to him as the "Prince of Preachers".

Next he served churches in Bristol, Pa. and in Newark, and he earned his Doctorate of Divinity at Dickinson college. In 1841 he was transferred for two years to the Morristown Church, so it was proximity as well as ability that led to his selection as the other preacher in charge of the Basking Ridge revivals. While he was pastor at Morristown he also found time to help organize a new congregation in Green Village, our then thriving neighbor.

A sketch of Bartine's life in the Conference Journal reveals that he was "six feet tall, strong, straight and vigorous, with bright dark eyes, black hair and a high forehead. He possessed a brilliant mind, excellent imagination, a voice of power and beauty, and perfect diction". One would guess that God's gifts to this young man did not escape notice by the young ladies of that day. "His zeal and piety", the sketch continues, "was matched by a deep knowledge of the scriptures". Truly he *was* a "Prince of Preachers", moving early to the front as a pulpit man and there to remain for fifty years. Outstanding in all aspects of the ministry, including evangelism, where intellectuals seldom fared well, he was drawn to a slight emphasis upon education, liberty, temperance and missions. He was sought at all times for dedications, revivals, conference affairs and camp meetings. He, too, was twice married; in 1835 to Amelia Stout of Toms River and, following her death, to Margaretta Johnson of Philadelphia in 1867.

After Morristown he served pulpits in Salem, Newark, Burlington, Philadelphia, Lancaster, Harrisburg and again Philadelphia, then became Presiding Elder of the Philadelphia District. His later assignments were at Trenton, Jersey City, Morristown again (1873-75), Orange (Calvary), Jersey City again, and Belleville (1880-81). There, on August 13, 1881, he died of Bright's disease, ending one of the most brilliant careers of the 19th century church.

CHAPTER III

A CHURCH IS BUILT

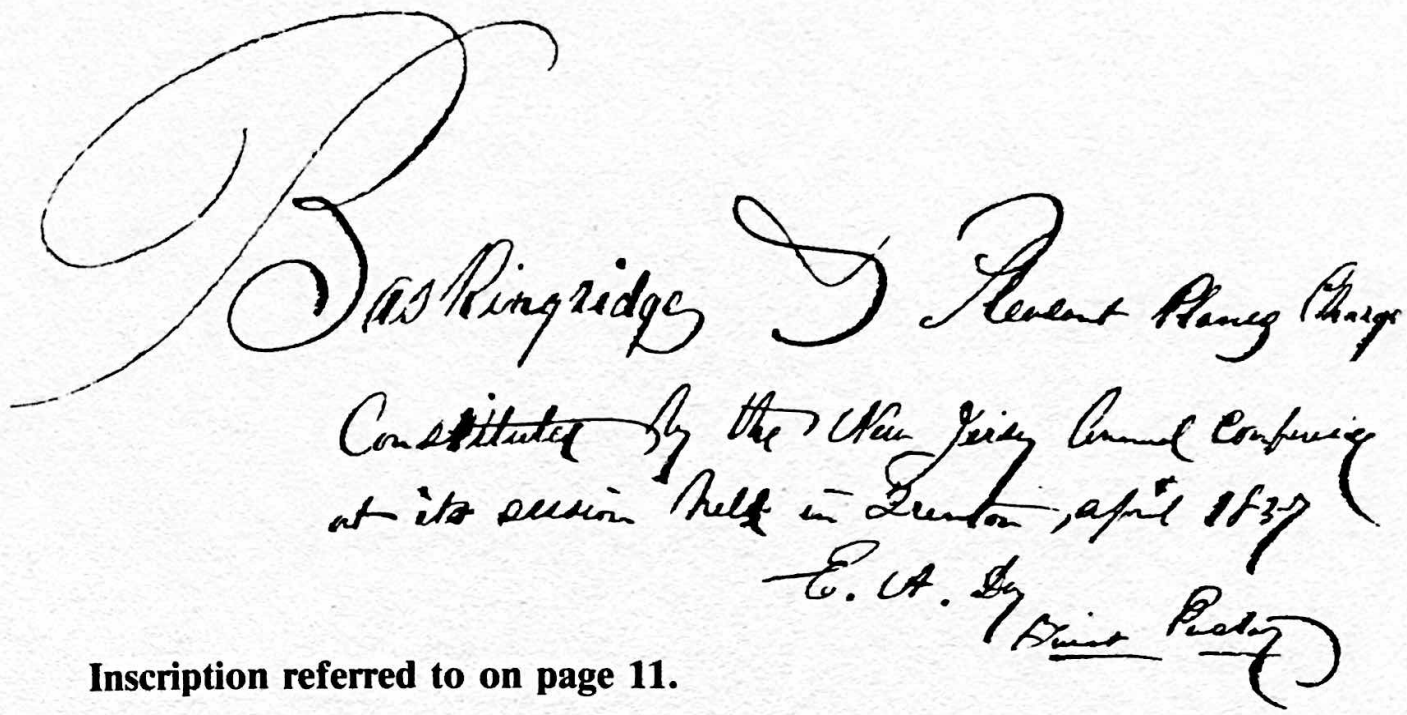
1843 - 1854

FOR OUR Bishop Janes Church the stage was set in the 1840's; the curtain would rise in the 1850's. Following the Lippincott - Bartine revivals Methodism began to grow in Basking Ridge. A nucleus of believers became a small but active congregation. They had no building, but they met regularly in each other's homes for prayer and class meetings. Whenever a preacher from Mendham, Morristown or Bernardsville could come out, they held worship services and received the sacraments.

Although the decade is obscure, we do know who some of their leaders were. One family was that of Isaac W. Keeler (no known relation to the Keelers now on our rolls) who lived in the house that is now No. 94 South Finley Avenue. Another was the Nathaniel Gillem family who lived on Long Hill, above Millington, forerunners of many Bishop Janes members from that area. Gillem headed most of the meetings when no preacher was available. Later he became our first official Class Leader after the church was built, and instructed many of our probationers. Another was the Bailey Breese (Brees, Breez, Breeze) family who lived in a house built by Bailey's father in Logansville, next to Osborne's Pond. The father had operated a stagecoach that passed through New Vernon and Logansville on the way to Elizabethtown (now Elizabeth).

Other probable meeting locations were the VanAllen house (now, in 1983, Carlson's) diagonally across from the firehouse on South Maple, and various Sanders, Wilson, Brown and Smith homes, as well as the Blazier (Blasure) home on South Maple.

Although the revivals in Childs' Grove are remembered chiefly for having developed, between 1841 and 1853, the congregation in Basking Ridge, they also had some effect upon the establishment of both the Mine Mount and Bernardsville congregations. They were even more effective in the Great Swamp area, where a smaller group gathered together following these revivals and another conducted in 1848 by the Rev. E. M. Griffith in the Logansville schoolhouse. This smaller congregation was strengthened by members of the Baker, Leonard and Baird families. It was centered in Pleasant Plains, a now vanished hamlet which flourished more than a century ago at the intersection of Lord Stirling Road and Pleasant Plains Road. On the next page is a copy of the inscription by Edwin A. Day, our second



Inscription referred to on page 11.

pastor, on the flyleaf of our church's official record book which he began in 1858. It clearly indicates that our ties to Pleasant "Planes" must have predated even the 1841 revivals. Just what was the significance of the ". . . charge constituted . . . in Trenton, April 1837" we have not as yet discovered. But we do know that the relationship between the Basking Ridge and Pleasant Plains Methodists would remain very close for many years, and that during much of our early history we *were* considered one charge.

The Methodist movement gained impetus all about us during the 1840's. Only one nearby Methodist church, Mount Horeb, had been started earlier. Had it been built across the road, it would have been within the southern boundary of our Township. Its congregation was established by local preachers Stephen Day and John Hancock in 1820. Both of these men were fathers of later pastors of our own church. The building was completed in 1824 and was replaced by a new structure in 1867. The Gladstone (then called Peapack) church was built in 1840 and the Green Village church in 1843. A congregation was formed at the Mine Mount schoolhouse in Bernardsville in 1842, by one of the Brothers Day (Peter D.), and the Bernardsville Methodist Episcopal Church was erected in 1846 with the help of the New Vernon Methodists, organized a few years before.

Local religious activity at this time was by no means confined to the Methodists. General religious dedication and effort bubbled during that period. In the 1850's the 135-year Presbyterian dominance in our town would be challenged not once, but three times. It began with the construction of Millington Baptist Church in 1852, but that drew almost exclusively from Millington and Liberty Corner. The breakthrough in Basking Ridge occurred in 1853 and 1854 when both Saint Mark's Episcopal and Bishop Janes Methodist churches were built. Then in 1859 the Roman Catholic congregation purchased an old carpenter shop, turned it 90 degrees and refashioned it into a church which stood, until the 1960's, on the west

side of South Maple Avenue just south of Henry Street. Thereafter no new denomination would enter the Township for more than a century, until the Missouri Synod Lutherans built their church on Lake Road.

* * *

Sometimes we discover in history a most unlikely number of great men grouped in one place at one time. Perhaps these groupings, which seem to defy the law of averages, are accidental. More likely, great potential undoubtedly rests in many men, dormant throughout the lives of most of them but always ready to surface under the right conditions. How else explain the unlikely and politically unequaled quality and quantity of America's founding fathers?

On a much smaller scale, to be sure, the history of Bishop Janes Methodist Church[1] reveals a like phenomenon. Not to discount the part played by the people, or the fact that the time was ripe, still, the birth of our church was the result primarily of the work of four unusual members of the ordained Methodist clergy: Lippincott and Bartine, who accomplished the groundwork, and two others whom we will now meet. One of these is still remembered, though perhaps vaguely; the other is almost completely forgotten.

"Our" Bishop

Edmund Storer Janes, M.D., LL.D., D.D.[2], was born in Sheffield, Massachusetts, on April 27, 1807, into an old New England family which had settled there in 1637. His story is almost unbelievable, particularly today, when some men spend a lifetime studying the static electricity in a field mouse.

He early mastered a first class English education and became a school teacher in Salisbury, Connecticut, when he was only 17. Within a year he took a better teaching job in Belleville, New Jersey. It is interesting to speculate how different the history of New Jersey Methodism might have been, were it not for this slightly better job offer. During the next five years he taught school, studying law at the same time and briefly practicing it, joined the Methodist Church in Belleville, decided for the ministry, and was licensed to preach in 1829.

His first pastorate was Elizabethtown (1830-31), followed by Orange (1832-34). He founded the Orange Church, supervised its construction, and was its first pastor. But to keep busy while handling such relatively minor tasks he buggied regularly to Irvington and established the Methodist Church there. In 1834-35 he became a teacher and agent of Dickinson College, for which he raised a large endowment, while himself pursuing a thorough study of theology and becoming a

[1] From 1854 until 1899 our church was known as the Basking Ridge Methodist Episcopal Church. When the second church was built, in 1900, it was dedicated as the Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church. Memories had persisted through the years to make this naming inevitable. Though the name was not official until the latter date, the liberty will be taken throughout this work to refer to our church as the Bishop Janes Church.

[2] Yes, he was a Doctor of Medicine, a Doctor of Laws and a Doctor of Divinity.

Doctor of Divinity long before that degree was awarded to him.

In 1835 he married Miss Charlotte Thibou and accepted one of the "big league" pulpits in Philadelphia, where he soon became known as one of our great preachers. Seeing around him the country's finest medical schools and feeling that a minister of God should be able to minister to man's physical as well as spiritual needs, Janes took up the study of medicine while serving the Philadelphia church. Though he completed his studies, his busy life allowed him to practice medicine only occasionally. After five years in Philadelphia he was appointed secretary of the American Bible Society. While serving in this office he became the father of two girls and a boy. In 1844 he was elected a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church (one of four). This would seem an appropiate culmination of a full life of service. But not yet; he was only 37 years of age.

In 1851 he bought a small farm and summer home on Banker's Mountain, just inside the Bernardsville line, on the Bernardsville - Mendham Road. The property may be located on the 1873 map in our Township's 1960 Bicentennial booklet. Now began the period of intense church building to which he devoted so much time and energy. The establishment of churches in Orange and Irvington had been but a beginning. The list is long; we shall identify only a few at random. The bishop was largely responsible for founding the Bound Brook and the Johnsonburg churches and, of course, our Basking Ridge church. He aided the earlier-built Bernardsville and Mendham churches. In 1854 he paid the entire cost of the new Cross Roads Methodist Church in what is now Bedminster. At one time his building efforts resulted in "Janes Chapels" dotting the Methodist map. Summit Avenue Church in Jersey City was so named, as was the Succasunna church and one near Vienna. Today only the earliest, Janes Chapel in Townsbury, still carries his name. Of course Janes Church in Brooklyn and Bishop Janes Church in Basking Ridge also still honor his name.

Lost in the shuffle are the ministries of his son, Lewis T. Janes, who served several churches in the Newark Conference and is buried in our cemetery in Basking Ridge. And the bishop's twin brother, Edwin L. Janes, is remembered chiefly as the first pastor of Hilton Church in Maplewood.

What was he like, this man who is remembered with awe, and even today is regarded with affection by the Northern New Jersey Conference as "our" bishop? He was a handsome man, though short and thin-framed. Though he had a high, piping voice he became world-renowned as a thrilling and eloquent preacher, no more hindered by his voice than a contemporary of his, President Lincoln. His associates credited him with a deep grasp of "church polity, theology, ministry and missions", and an exemplary personal life.

One clue to his vast accomplishments after entering the ministry was a singleness of purpose revealed, for example, by his traveling past Niagara Falls twelve times without stopping to see it. Friends warned that, although his beardless appearance was "meek and mild", inside he was "all energy and holy ambition". Bishops in Janes' day were not assigned specific geographic areas of responsibility

as they are today. He and his three fellow bishops had to preside at every conference session in this country, and they had foreign responsibilities as well. As bishop, Janes traveled more miles than either Wesley or Asbury. His diocese was the entire United States, with notable popularity in California, and in all of the Wesleyan Societies of Europe too. The poor health of two of his associates often doubled his work.

Through the years he gave the church more than $50,000 of an inherited personal fortune, leaving only a few thousand each for his children. We are one of the beneficiaries of this and his more important gifts, and probably no name could be more appropriate than his for our church. His last sermon was preached in the Morrow Memorial Church in Maplewood. The next day he became ill. Near the end he told his friends, "The church of the Lord Jesus Christ will sustain the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ" — a perfect goal for any church. Later, after whispering, "I am not disappointed", he died, on September 18, 1876, at the age of 69. His daughter[3] led friends and associates to his private study, telling them, "There he spent two hours every night on his knees".

Edmund Janes' whole life seems a miracle. If Methodists canonized, he would undoubtedly be one of its special saints.

The Perfect Minister

WILLIAM DAY 1853 - 56

Our bishop, as they would say in the theater, was "a tough act to follow". But the first pastor of our church could meet the challenge, for he too was exceptional. It is strange that he should have been all but forgotten at Bishop Janes Church. What little has been remembered about him borders on the charming instead of the vital, and often is mistakenly attributed to his successor who had the same last name.

William Day was born in Larkfield, Kent, England, on November 10, 1827. He joined the Methodist Church in 1844 and later completed studies at Richmond Theological Institute. He then decided to perform his ministry in the United States, where he landed in March of 1850. At the start of the first conference year following he was admitted to the New Jersey Conference and assigned the church at Milford, Pennsylvania. Very quickly he demonstrated superior ability to preach and a talent for getting a church on its feet. The smooth touch of Bishop Janes seems evident when we discover that Day was transferred to the new Lippincott-Bartine-inspired church at Succasunna in 1852, then on to Bernardsville and the newly "stated charge" at Basking Ridge.

Although the itineracy provided that pastors would serve successively churches

[3] The Conference Journal here reads "his wife". However, Charlotte Janes had died some years before. The bishop's capacity for work had been undiminished into his sixties. However, her death seemed to pull away the props from both his health and his spirit, and he failed rapidly in the last few years.

both large and small, city and rural, healthy and sick, Day's broad abilities probably are the clue to his later assignments being almost exclusively to large, important churches. More will be said in the following chapter about his ministry with us. Our intent at this point is to present only a broad-brush sketch of the life history of this remarkable man.

From Basking Ridge he was moved, in 1856, to the Broad Street Church pulpit in Newark, and then to a large Jersey City church (1857-58), and it was while serving this church that he was married. In the next few years he became the father of a son and a daughter. His next pastorates were in Rahway, Halsey Street Newark, Jersey City and Washington. In 1868-70 he was pastor of Plainfield Methodist Church and at that time missionized a congregation and supervised the building of its new church in Scotch Plains. Then in 1871-73, while pastor of the Orange church which Bishop Janes had founded, he helped organize the Watsessing Church in Bloomfield and preached its first sermons. Next he served Passaic, Jersey City and Plainfield again, Nyack, Hoboken, Elizabeth, Trinity in Newark, Dover, and finally Rutherford (1894-95).

In the spring of 1895 he was selected by the board of editors of the "Christian Advocate" (the "Together" magazine of those days) as the subject for a study they planned to publish, to be titled "The Perfect Minister". Presumably consideration was open to all Methodist ministers in the country, so the caliber of our first pastor becomes evident at once. This 1895 issue of the national Methodist publication pictures William Day as follows: " . . . His life is a religious example . . . (in line with our belief that) a man's real ministry is not what he says, but what he is" Of his preaching it says " . . . His sermons are carefully prepared and stress the affirmative moral principles of Christianity . . . He has a good voice and perfect speech. His delivery is entrancing rather than sparkling, combining the tenderness of woman and the robust, positive tones of man . . . His preaching both consoles and admonishes. He is a good counselor and especially effective with the sick and bereaved. Above all, he is a minister whose personal character is a potent factor in his pulpit effect".

William Day died July 21, 1895, in the Rutherford parsonage, during Sunday services in his adjacent church, — services he had himself conducted the week before. He had completed a brilliant 45-year ministry, and was buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Newark.

A Meeting House Provided, A Congregation Organized

By the spring of 1851 Bishop Edmund Janes already had recognized the need to "open up" Methodism in Basking Ridge. The congregation here had been growing slowly, but was intimidated by the old established and very effective Presbyterian Church. The Scottish forebears of its parishioners had founded our town generations earlier and they had made it a place to be proud of. Through the years their worship had achieved considerable dignity, and they saw no need in

Basking Ridge for a church of "shoutin' " Methodists with their reputation for primitive, emotional worship.

This attitude was, of course, resented by our first congregation and some of our early pastors, but it was perfectly natural. Similar doubts may have been entertained by some in our town a century later over the "need" for a Lutheran Church with its "different" emphases. But such attitudes are outgrown. Much of the resentment by our congregation in bygone days was undoubtedly caused by feelings of inferiority or envy. Actually, once our church was built and operating, the Presbyterians did more to foster good relations than we did. Since some jealousy and resentment did exist in times past, their evidence must crop up occasionally in any detailed history and we shall try neither to avoid them nor to emphasize them. Such feelings were natural and, from today's viewpoint, rather quaint. For many years, now, our relations with all of our neighboring churches have been ideal.

Because that small Methodist congregation of the early 1850's was intimidated, perhaps more subconsciously than otherwise, even its meetings were conducted somewhat privately. Its members had a sense of being upstarts. The first pastor later wrote, " . . . when we planned to build, there were but four male members of the congregation . . .". It is known, however, that there were many more than this. Clearly he was referring to "openly confessed" Methodists, which carries the implication that there were some who didn't wish to be so identified.

Obviously, Bishop Janes sensed this intimidation. How he found time for such relatively minor concerns is hard to imagine. Of course the winter of 1852-53 was not a particularly busy time for him. The records show that all he accomplished in those months was the setting up of the entire Methodist Episcopal Church organization in far-off India, and the establishment of the Church in New Mexico. So he had plenty of time to devote to the affairs of the Society in Basking Ridge.

After first trying unsuccessfully to borrow the use of the Academy building for the Methodists to meet in, he found another way to get things started. He had a stranger to town look for a home, as near as possible to the village green and the Presbyterian Church. This agent found one for sale on Front Street (now South Finley), almost directly across the street from our present church. Then the bishop, using the agent as a front, bought it, with his own money, from Isaac Bird, probably not disclosing his plans to have the Methodists use it as a meeting house[4]. Next he arranged for Basking Ridge (and Pleasant Plains) to be listed by the New Jersey Conference as a "separate" charge in a new Bernardsville circuit. And finally he used his influence to have William Day put in charge of this circuit.

Day moved into town early in 1853, either boarding with one of the Methodist families or living in the meeting house provided by Bishop Janes, where we do know he had a "study". And we can be sure that he was thoroughly briefed by the bishop concerning the situation in Basking Ridge and what was expected from him. So in the spring of that year the half-holed-up Methodists found themselves an of-

[4] A deed dated November 5, 1851, records the sale of the house to Edmund S. Janes for $725. It stood on the lot now (in 1983) occupied by I.D.S., at 11 South Finley Avenue.

ficial congregation, with all the privileges *and duties* that involved. They had a specially designated, centrally located meeting house, and they had a bright young pastor who was to concentrate largely upon them, and for whom the Conference expected them to provide a salary. Our people were drawn out into the open, and soon they were walking somewhat straighter in public. Now they had their regular class and prayer meetings, a Sunday School of sorts, and morning and evening Sunday services conducted by a first-rate pastor, all in a meeting house they could call their own.

It seems clear, however, that when Bishop Janes bought the house he had considered it only a temporary expedient, — an incentive to the speedy building of a church. And though its use as a meeting house was to be short-lived, it served its purpose well[5]. Not only did it bring that small, rather shy group into the open; it whetted an appetite for bigger and better things. Earlier sketches of our history all say, "It was quickly outgrown". Surely it was never intended to be otherwise.The bishop had known that, with a meeting place of its own, the membership of the congregation would increase.

It seems obvious, too, that the bishop's original instructions to Day, and his own intentions as well, were to plan the construction of a church at once. And he was impatient. He gave the people no time to get used to that meeting house as a permanent home. It was to be a stop-gap, pure and simple. He pressed the congregation to begin raising funds for a building, and he himself set the example by making a large contribution. The Rev. Day was a little impatient, too, when he found that it was going to take him weeks to get his congregation to agree to build. He later wrote, "There were some difficulties; men were not willing to identify themselves with the project".

Before a church could be built there was, of course, the matter of acquiring a suitable piece of property. And here again the fine hand of the bishop is evident when we read, "The lot (for the church) was secured only by a little device, the seller not knowing that it would be used for a Methodist church, or it never would have been sold"[6]. Roderick Mitchell, one of the original trustees, and his wife, "fronted" for the congregation in this purchase. The Mitchells lived in Bernardsville, and seem to have been among those members of the Bernardsville Methodist Church who wished to help with the mission project of starting a new church here. The lot thus acquired constituted somewhat less than the northern half of our present church property[7].

The next step was to organize a Board of Trustees, but it was June before Day was able to accomplish this. Fortunately the minutes of their first meetings, from June 1853 through July 1860, are in our church archives. These records begin as

[5] After the church was built, Bishop Janes sold the house, in April 1866, to Dr. Von Wagener for $1800. Fourteen years later it was destroyed by fire.

[6] Quoted in 1899 by Rev. Appley from an "early record" which seems to have been lost.

[7] Just when the lot was purchased by the Mitchells is not clear. The deed transferring it to the Trustees of the church (for $325) is dated Janusry 13, 1855, after the church was completed and dedicated.

follows (spelling and punctuation have not been changed):

"Basking Ridge, June 2, 1853

"Pursuant to a previous Notice a meeting was held at the home of Isaac W. Keeler for the purpose of Electing Trustees for a Methodist Episcopal Church to be located in Basking Ridge, Somerset County, New Jersey.

"The Meeting was opened with reading and a prayer by Rev. William Day, on Motion Rev. Day was appointed Chairman and Benjamin Smith secretary of the same meeting.

"The following persons was then duly elected Trustees of said Church:

Benjamin Smith	James V. Blazure
Roderick Mitchell	Bailey Breez
Isaac W. Keeler	James Barton
Daniel D. Craig	

"On motion the meeting Adjourned until Monday, June 6th at eight o'clock in the evening".

"Basking Ridge, June 6, 1853

"Agreeable to an adjournment the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church met at their usual place of meeting (I. W. Keeler) before Peter Irving, Esq., Justice of the piece and was duly sworn to fill the office of Trustees of the said church to the best of their abilities. Benjamin Smith was elected President and Daniel D. Craig Treasurer of the board for the insuing year".

Smith was a tireless church leader for seven years. He moved from town in 1860, but he and some of his descendents are buried in Evergreen Cemetery. Mitchell, as stated, had "fronted" for the purchase of our church property and will be mentioned again later. Keeler would serve our church for 35 years as trustee, steward and chairman of many committees. Although the office did not then exist, he was, in effect, our first Charge Lay Leader. Craig and his family lived in a large house on North Maple Avenue between Craig Street and Sunnybrook Road. He owned the building that is now Parks' Market and the small house on North Maple (long since removed) where Elizabeth Quincy stayed during the Revolution. It was her diary that was published by our Historical Society in the Township's Centennial year. Blazure, Breez(e) and Barton left within a few years, but they were helpful in getting the church started.

"it shall be 31 feet by 52 feet with 20-foot posts"

If we read further in the minutes of the Trustees' meetings, we find that the record continues as follows:

"The Trustees after taking their Oaths of Office proceded to getting plans and specifications for building a new Church. And on the 15th of August they concluded to let Mr. Henry Grimstead of Brooklyn draw the plans and specifications for the same for which they agreed to pay him fifty dollars when completed.

"About the 15th of September the Trustees received the plans drawn by Mr. Grimstead and adopted them. The size of the Building to be 31 feet front and rear by 52 feet deep, length of the posts to be 20 feet.

"The Trustees then contracted with William P. Totten to build the Cellar Wall for which they agreed to give him the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars".

And now, with the plans in hand, Day's impatience only increased. For years thereafter the older members of the church would retell the story of how the Rev. William Day took up pick and shovel and began himself to dig the basement, in order to get the shy and doubting Methodists started. Some said that the tale was a myth, but there is some truth behind most myths. The story seems plausible.

Probably he didn't move much dirt, but this was not Day's real concern. The example he set, particularly as embellished in its prompt reporting by the women of the church, make his action quite logical. But there is a further reason for thinking that the story may be reliable. William Day was popular, and extremely successful as the first pastor of our church. He earned that wondrous extra loyalty from the people that made them, together, accomplish a difficult job, and he earned it quickly. But he was also a cultured intellectual, well educated in an excellent English seminary. Only three years in America, his faultless English accent must have been, at first, an obstacle to his acceptance by our small community congregation of poorly-educated shopkeepers, farmers and artisans. Would not a public turn with pick and shovel have been the perfect first step in winning their confidence and establishing the rapport and unity that we know existed in a very short time? It seems a story with not much dirt involved, but a lot of good psychology.

All six of the short historical sketches written between 1899 and 1957 substantially agree upon what happened next. This story, too, has been called apocryphal, and again the evidence should make us lean toward accepting its authenticity. For one thing, the same account appears in Ridgeway's biography of Bishop Edmund Janes, a book with no reputation for inaccuracy. We shall quote, though, from William Day's published description of what took place. Surely his story, had it been a fabrication, would have made him a laughing stock. And no one ever laughed at the Rev. Day, except perhaps those who watched him swing a pick. This is what he wrote:

"We had only four male members at the Ridge, not one with means, when it was proposed to build a church. The contract for building required that the stone for the foundation and the basement should be placed gratuitously on the site by friends of the enterprise.

The pastor found it impossible to create sufficient interest in the community to do this.

"The Bishop, returning after an absence at the Western Conference, heard the situation of the pastor and said, 'I will help tomorrow'. Early the next morning the pastor . . . saw Bishop Janes driving a double team of oxen drawing a large wagon loaded with stone he had gathered on top of the mountain . . . Three days we worked together in this way, carting stone. By Bishop Janes' example the stones were gathered . . ."

As ever, the ladies of the church played key roles in the clerical strategy. First, Mrs. Henry Prentice, Margaret VanAllen and Elizabeth Woodward[8] brought lunch and tea to the site. Others followed. What chance had the poor men? It must have been difficult enough for them, skilled with their hands, to stand by and watch the laboring ineptitude of the two scholars. But now they had to consider more than the preacher and the bishop; their women had "gone over".

We can guess that sufficient stone covered the lot before very long. Picking up again from the Trustees' minutes:

"On the 22nd day of December, 1853, the Corner stone was laid By the Rev. Bishop Janes, and the Rev. Dr. Foster of Brooklyn gave a very appropriate address for the occasion in the Academy at Basking Ridge.

"In January, 1854, the Trustees entered into a contract with Messrs. Lawrence and Powell of Jersey City to do the carpenter work and furnish the materials for the same for the sum of two thousand five hundred and sixty dollars, and the Building completed by the 20th of September following".

May 1854: "The Trustees of said church agreed with Ellis Parsolls of Green Village to do all the mason work and furnish the materials[9] for the same for the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars".

November 9, 1854: "The Church was dedicated to the worship of God. Dedicatory Sermon in the morning at half past ten o'clock by the Rev. Bishop Janes. Text, _____ chapter of _____.

"Preaching again in the evening by Rev. Dr. Foster of New York. His text was the _____.

"The amount subscribed previous to the dedication was about

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[8] Elizabeth Woodward, a charter member, died in 1899, the year this first church was removed to make way for the later stone building. She often told this story of the origin of our church.

[9] This entry has been pointed to as contradicting the story of the bishop's stone-hauling. However, the "materials" mentioned here more likely referred to mortar, sand, forms, etc. In those days contracts almost always specified that the necessary stone be on the building site, as William Day wrote concerning this agreement. The same was true of our second building; Mr. Appley and the men moved the stones to the project and the masons did the rest. Finally, the $250 figure could hardly have included the finding and hauling of the stone, even in those days.

two thousand four hundred dollars. The amount subscribed on the day of dedication was eight hundred and thirty-one dollars. The cost of the Building when dedicated was three thousand seven hundred dollars.

Benjamin Smith, President"

It is unfortunate that there is no further information about this important day. We could wish, too, that the texts had been filled in, or that the people present could have been named. It would seem likely that the Presiding Elder was present, for the office that year was held by Caleb Lippincott.

The new, almost debt-free church was a small but attractive wood frame structure.[10]. Its proportions, 2 (wall height) by 3 (width) by 5 (length), were considered classically "right". Its early American style was long-tested and is still considered good taste today. Its walls were faced with hand-hewn shingles painted white, and pierced with tall, small-paned clear glass windows. The symmetrical front facade featured a pleasing entrance and was surmounted by a dominating square steeple having an overhanging low-pitched roof. At each front corner were smaller towers which complemented the steeple. Inside were typical pews of the period, a balcony, a raised area for the pulpit and, eventually, a choir. Front Street was then, of course, a dirt road, and the building stood further forward than our present church, exactly in line with the neighboring houses.

Some of our older members can still remember their ancestors talking about the "beauty and loveliness" of that first church. Completed and standing there so clean and new, it must have caused deep feelings among the growing number of Methodists, deeper still among those still-loyal Lippincott-Bartine converts of a dozen years earlier, and deepest of all among those few who had been Methodists much longer. One or two of these might even have worshipped years before, as youngsters, in Captain Hall's house.

Those of us who have gone through the experience of building a new church can imagine what our little group must have felt. Surely they made extra trips to the village center just to admire it, stopping, looking up, and inwardly rejoicing that they had helped to build God's house.

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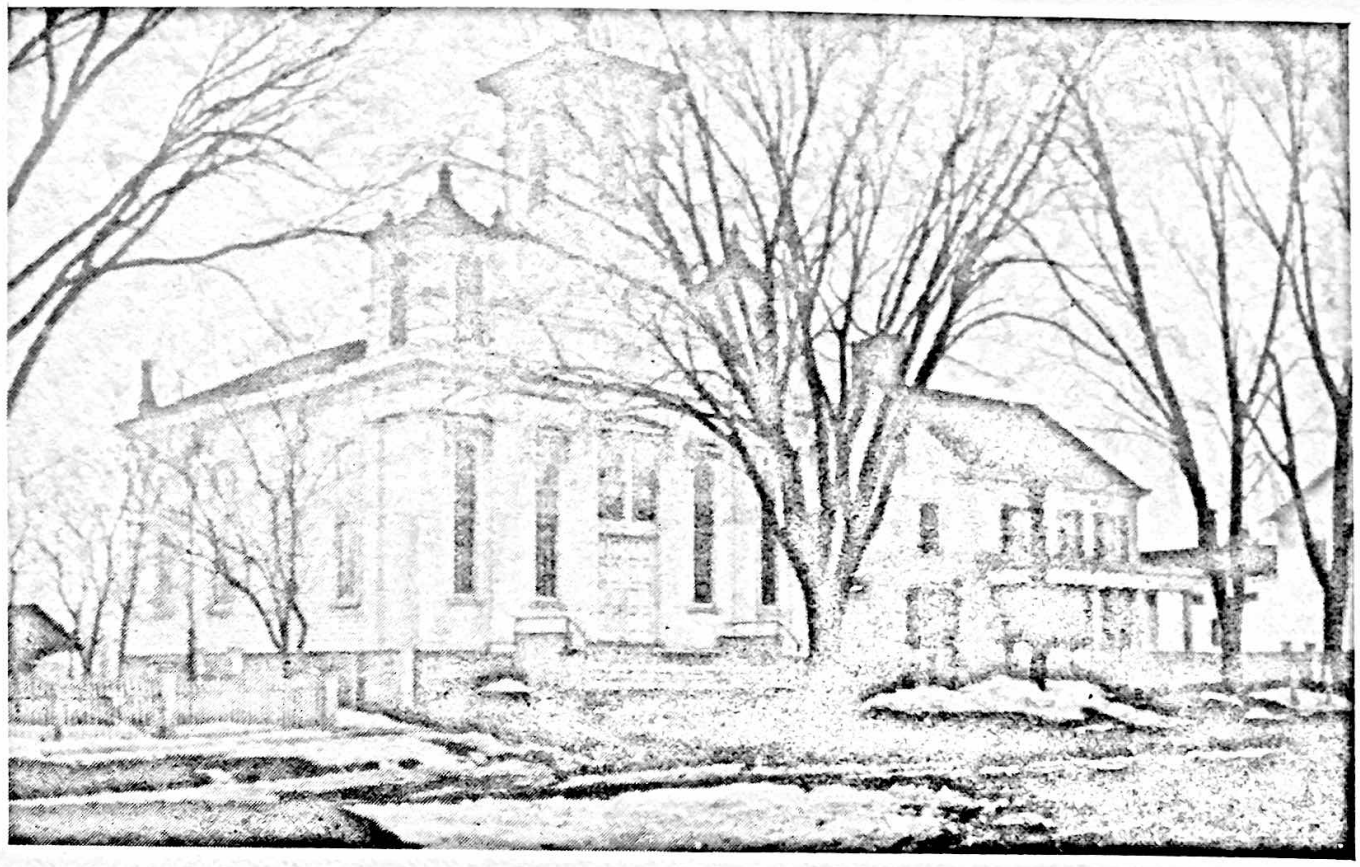
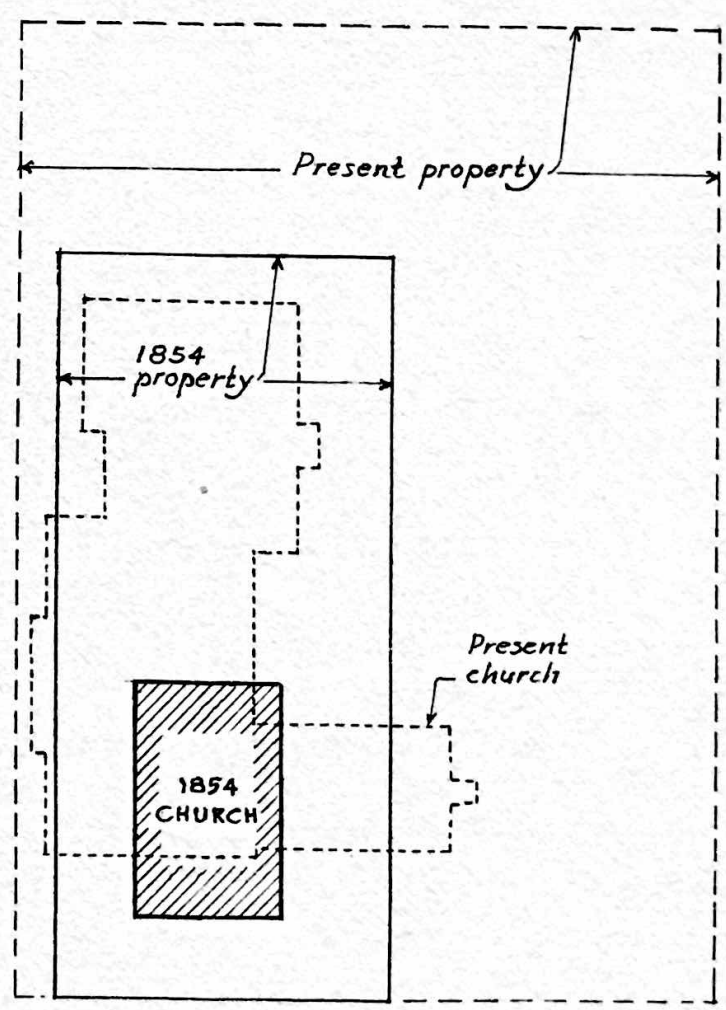
[10] It was only a little larger than the narthex wing of our present church.



OUR FIRST CHURCH

The pre-revolutionary house next door on the south was the boyhood home of William Lewis Dayton, the first Republican candidate for vice president in 1856. Nearly fifty years after the church was built it became our second parsonage, and it served as such for another seventy years.



PLOT PLANS

Showing comparative sizes of the original and present (1983) church buildings and grounds.

CHAPTER IV

THE INFANT YEARS

1854 - 1858

AS REV. APPLEY would learn in 1901, and our later members found during the depression years, our church would have its discouraging declines as well as its heartening advances. After a period of achievement and growth would often come a letdown. Through the years it has seemed that just when a boom, stimulated by the completion of a new building or other project would be most expected, interest waned and financial support declined. Membership remained static, or more likely declined. Perhaps some people unconsciously prefer "the little brown church in the wildwood" to a more dynamic Christianity. There are no facile answers to this paradox. That a group about-face should occur just after builders have tasted, in a sense, of the Kingdom is human nature to the realists, a mystery to the idealists. But this seems to have been one of the few consistent characteristics of our congregation during the first century, at least, of its history. No doubt the same experience has been shared by many churches, and we were fortunate that our first set-back was not very serious and did not last long.

The same people who, during the 1853-54 church year, could raise $3,200 now had difficulty raising the church budget, which was little more than our share of the $350 pastor's annual salary. The original church debt of $500, instead of decreasing, grew larger[1]. Sometimes the pastor's salary was paid only in part. He and his successors were rewarded, it is true, with produce, but they could not buy a commentary with potatoes, or a harness with carrots. The low point came in 1855 when the congregation borrowed *back* $125 from the Rev. William Day, due to "present demands". He may have had his strategic reasons for making the loan, but he was left with only $225 to cover a year's living expenses. The Trustees recorded the circumstances as follows:

> "Basking Ridge, April 6, 1855
>
> "The Trustees of the Church met at the home of Daniel D. Craig in Basking Ridge for the purpose of examining their acts for the past year and found a deficiency in the hands of the treasurer to meet their present demands and on motion Resolved to hire the sum

[1] The debt had its ups and downs, but generally increased for the next 42 years. In 1897 it was to be wiped out in one quick drive by Rev. Appley.

of 125 dollars for the term of one year from the Rev. William Day for which sum the Trustees gave their notes, their being no other business before the meeting adjourned.

Benjamin Smith, Pres."

"Basking Ridge, October 13, 1855

"Agreeable to the wishes of our Pastor the Rev. William Day the Trustees of the Church met at the House of Daniel D. Craig the following trustees present, viz.

"Benjamin Smith, Roderick Mitchell, D. D. Craig, I. W. Keeler, and James V. Blazure.

"Brother Day then wishes to know the present indebtedness of the Church. The Treasurer then gave the following report:

Note held by Mr. Melick for the sum of		$350.00
Note held by Stuffola Barckalow for the sum of		200.00
Note held by Rev. William Day for the sum of		125.00
Interest on the above notes up to this date		36.75
		711.75
Cash in the hands of the Treasurer	13.17	
Subscriptions not paid and thought good	65.00	
		-78.17
Leaving the Church in debt the sum of		$633.58

"Brother Day then proposed that we should celebrate the 9th day of November next the Anniversary of the dedication of our Church by services in the church in the afternoon and evening and collection taking to liquidate the debt on the church which proposition was seconded and carried unanimously.

Benjamin Smith, Pres."

The services were held, but the debt was by no means liquidated. Yet Day was not discouraged. Before leaving us in the spring of 1856 he added many members to the church rolls. To determine the exact number would require missing Bernardsville records, or a breakdown in the combined Bernardsville-Basking Ridge report to the Conference of 120 total members. Because of his efforts he would be able to leave in confidence that the new church would survive. This confidence was bolstered by his complete faith in the itineracy, a system which he defended all of his life. As he moved from Basking Ridge to the big Broad Street Church in Newark, he held complete trust in his unknown ministerial successors. This trust was well founded, for, during our early years under the itineracy at least, we and most new Methodist churches survived the hard times and grew stronger during the good ones.

It appears that one of the things William Day did for Bishop Janes Church was the establishment, right from the start, of the proper place of worship music in our services. We have a record that he encouraged congregational singing and pressed for the purchase of sufficient copies of the "church hymnal" to let all participate. Possibly he formed our first choir, for there is a reference in the Bernardsville Library to the "Basking Ridge M.E. Choir" only three years later. Such a concept of the minister's role was not typical of the period.

Because much of the early material is missing, reconstructing William Day's three years with us has been difficult, and there may be some inaccuracies. Some supplementary material has been provided by Drew Library, but the only records in our church archives for this period are the trustees' minutes, from which we have quoted at some length. Our trustees, as property custodians, were a strictly local group, not part of the larger circuit group, and they kept their own records. All church business other than that of the trustees was conducted at the circuit Quarterly Conferences, held in Bernardsville. There were at least four of these meetings each year. The Bernardsville recording steward kept the minutes, and the circuit stewards received all financial and other reports, as well as membership, baptism and marriage records. Efforts to locate all of this material in Bernardsville have been unsuccessful, and we may assume that all of them applying to our church have been lost. However, when Basking Ridge graduated from the Bernardsville circuit in 1856, our church began keeping its own Quarterly Conference minutes. These are now part of our archives and have proven priceless in the compilation of our history.

Most of our charter members, of course, lived in Basking Ridge, but there were also those who had their homes in the neighboring villages of Madisonville, Logansville, Pleasant Plains and Long Hill (above Millington). In those days the village of Madisonville was centered at the intersection of North Maple Avenue and Madisonville Road. It was popularly known as "Coffee House", and we still sometimes hear it referred to as Coffee House Corner.[2] The area contained more homes at the time, and from its beginning was strongly Methodist. Among those who came from Long Hill were Nathaniel and Sarah Gillem. Nathaniel Gillem has been mentioned earlier as having conducted many of the local Methodist meetings before we had a church or regular pastor. He was for many years our most important charter member.

The annual Conference Journals in those years reported only the total membership for the Bernardsville Circuit, not that of the individual charges. This joint membership grew rapidly. For the four congregations of Bernardsville, Basking Ridge, Mine Mount and Pleasant Plains there was, in 1853, a total membership, including probationers, of 57. The first two congregations had their churches, the other two met in school houses. This membership increased to 68 in 1854, to 90 in

[2] The old Coffee House, on the northwest corner of the intersection, is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Turner, present-day members of our church. In those days coffee was mixed and prepared for market by the Albro family, who were among our charter members.

1855, and to 119 in 1856. In 1857 the circuit membership was reported as 147, but this included the small Cross Roads congregation in Bedminster.

This steady growth persuaded the old New Jersey Conference to approve the recommendations of Presiding Elder Caleb Lippincott that the congregations be regrouped and that additional ministers be assigned to our area. So in the spring of 1855 the Rev. S. W. Wood was assigned to the Bernardsville Church and the Mine Mount congregation, and William Day was reassigned to the Basking Ridge and New Vernon churches plus the Pleasant Plains congregation. From this time on about 90% of Day's duties centered in Basking Ridge, for the Conference also assigned to his charge an assistant preacher from New Providence who handled most of the duties in New Vernon. This arrangement lasted for one year, until the spring of 1856, when New Vernon was returned to the Green Village charge and William Day was transferred to Newark.

Earlier church histories state that Basking Ridge was removed from the Bernardsville Circuit and was designated a "separate" charge — the head of a new circuit with Pleasant Plains under its wing — in 1857, at the first session of the new Newark Conference.[3] This date is probably in error, due to the conference records continuing to list Bernardsville and Basking Ridge together that year. Actually, our separation took place in the spring of 1856, the last year that we were part of the old New Jersey Conference. That spring the Basking Ridge Church purchased a record book and began keeping minutes of the Quarterly Conference meetings of the "Basking Ridge and Pleasant Plains Charge". This book, for many years "mislaid" and feared lost, was fortunately found again in 1960. Historically of great value, it is the most detailed early record we have.

The Integrationist

EDWIN A. DAY 1856 - 58

New pastoral assignments in April. 1856, sent the Rev. H. J. Herter to the Bernardsville (plus Cross Roads and Mine Mount) charge. And the Rev. Edwin A. Day was assigned to the Basking Ridge (and Pleasant Plains) charge as our second pastor. Clearly, the new church was now on its own.

Edwin Day, who was no relation to William Day, belonged to one of the most illustrious families in 19th century Methodism. His father, Stephen Day, was converted at New Providence in 1798. New Providence (then called Turkey) was a substantial town in those days, years before Summit was founded, and it was one of the more important centers of early Methodism in north Jersey. Francis Asbury often visited there and became a close friend of Stephen Day, who thus was inspired to become a local preacher. Among other accomplishments, as mentioned earlier,

[3] In 1857 the New Jersey Conference, which included, besides New Jersey, small parts of New York and Pennsylvania, was split in two. The resulting "Newark" and "New Jersey" Conferences covered roughly the areas of North Jersey and South Jersey respectively.

the elder Day had helped found the Mount Horeb Church 37 years before his son took the pulpit at Basking Ridge.

Of greater significance is the fact that Stephen Day fathered four sons who became Methodist ministers in our Conference. The eldest, Mulford, was ordained in south Jersey but served most of his ministry in our part of the state.[4] Next came Benjamin, who preached in Mendham as early as 1835 and later served eight years as Presiding Elder. The third son, Peter, as stated earlier, organized Methodism in Bernardsville by setting up the class at Mine Mount school house in 1842. And the youngest of Stephen's minister sons was Edwin, our second pastor at Bishop Janes Church. As a group they were known affectionately as "the Brothers Day".

Edwin Day was born to Stephen and Betsy Wood Day at their home in New Providence on June 8, 1828. He joined the Methodist church at 14, during the ministry of his brother Mulford. Although he was not college or seminary trained, he seems to have been fairly well educated, judging by the records and the reputation that have come down to us. That poor health limited his ministry to eleven years proved a loss to the church, for he was a worthy and successful pastor, especially in rural charges. His work in Basking Ridge was particularly outstanding.

Beginning his ministry in 1851, Day had served churches at Parsippany, Bergen Station and (after a year's illness) Greenville before his assignment to our pulpit. Contemporary accounts picture him as "a good preacher, earnest student and faithful pastor". His preaching, they say, was intellectual and fervent, and often introduced elements of pathos. He was known as a man who, although modest and almost timid by nature, became bold and powerful in the pulpit. He was loved in all the churches he served.

At the peak of his brief powers during his two years with us, Day added 25 full members to the rolls, and many more probationers. When he left for Bound Brook in April, 1858, the combination had brought the total to 104.[5] This exceeded what the entire Bernardsville Circuit had reported only two years earlier. Many of those whom Day added were to become especially valuable members for years to come.

Our second pastor started our church early upon a system of unusually thorough records. One of these, mentioned earlier, was the book containing the minutes of our Quarterly Conferences from May 31, 1856, through February 19, 1887. For a long time most church business was conducted at four or more of these meetings each year. Later on, most of this function would be taken over by the monthly Official Board meetings. Later still, only the Fourth Quarterly Conference was convened each year and this, in turn, became our annual congregational meeting of today.

The first entry in these old minutes, dated May 31, 1856, states that the new Presiding Elder, J. M. Tuttle, was in the chair (the usual practice for many years). It

[4] Mulford Day, in turn, had a son, George B., who was for many years a minister in southern New Jersey.

[5] The church his father helped found at Mount Horeb would report at this time 204 members. This was one of its strongest years.

goes on to say that the Rev. E. A. Day, steward George Baker, and class leaders Nathaniel Gillem and Samuel Leonard elected the following additional men to the Board of Stewards: Isaac Keeler, Robert Ward, A. T. Williamson, E. A. Arnold and Benjamin Robinson. These men, therefore, made up our first Official Board. Prior to this we would have sent one or two men to the Bernardsville Quarterly Conference meetings, where they would have been elected stewards of the Bernardsville Circuit, not stewards of Bishop Janes Church. The minutes also note that "The Sabbath School was reported in flourishing condition".

Several later entries in the minutes during Day's ministry are of interest: The Third Quarterly Conference of 1856 "met at the close of the Love Feast in the M. E. Church in Basking Ridge". So we know that this acient ritual of the Wesleyan church was observed in the early days of local Methodism . . . Day's salary for 1856 was estimated at $300 . . . The meeting on November 27, 1856, appointed "E.A. Day and Isaac W. Keeler as an historical committee". Perhaps this is one of the reasons that pretty good records of those days remain . . . The Quarterly Conference meeting of February 21, 1858, was held "at the preacher's room at Mr. Charles Hill's". The Hill home seems to have been on the east side of South Maple Avenue between Henry and Lewis Streets. By that time Bishop Janes had sold our earlier meeting house.

The trustees also recorded, in 1857, their decision to excavate and finish the basement of the church for class rooms and social space. Brothers Keeler, Wilson and Smith were appointed as a committee for this project, and a 4th of July fair was planned to raise the necessary funds. But for some reason progress was slow. As with some projects since then, this one dragged on for three or four years.

In May, 1857, a long-time Methodist, Samuel W. Leonard[6], bought a farm nearby and joined the Pleasant Plains congregation. His previous training and experience caused his appointment as their class leader almost at once. Leonard conducted the weekly meetings and classes and, at times when mud or high water isolated the group, the Sunday worship as well. Poor road conditions and flooding forced the winter closing of the Pleasant Plains Sabbath School periodically throughout the history of that congregation. So by 1857 both the Basking Ridge Church with Nathaniel Gillem, and the Pleasant Plains group with Samuel Leonard, had acquired trained class leaders. Along with the minister, they were responsible for the religious instruction of the adult members and the probation classes.

It is of special interest today to note that during Edwin Day's pastorate the names of five negro men were added to the list of probationers. After a short time one of these men lost interest, and another moved away, but the other three faithfully worked through their probation classes, and in April of 1858 these three, Charles Bartlow, William Lawrence and Nathan Woodward were received as "full"members. It seems, though, that Basking Ridge was more integration-minded

[6] Samuel Leonard probably was related to the A. W. Leonard who had earlier founded Logansville Pottery, which was a thriving business for many years.

before the Civil War than after. The records reveal that our post-war pastor, Sylvester Bebout, demoted Bartlow and Woodward (Leonard having departed) from full members back to probationers, considering that to be a more appropriate status. During our long history only one other negro has been known to have been connected with our church.

In 1858 pastor Day bought another large official record book. It was designed for the accurate listing of the membership, baptisms and marriages. This is the book which carries the flyleaf inscription reproduced on page 12. How such records were kept from 1856 to 1858 we do not know; nothing has been found. The first three marriages of which we have a record took place in January, February and March of 1858. In February there were three baptisms of infants, and in the following two months, just prior to his leaving, Day baptized 35 adults, mostly probationers and young people.

One person who was "awakened" by Edwin Day was Julia Van Dorn. After hearing him preach, she confessed Christ, became a probationer in March, 1858, was baptized by him, and became a full member the following October. Shortly thereafter she would outdo all of her local sisters past and present by becoming the only one ever to "catch" one of the 48 pastors who have served Bishop Janes Church. More about her later.

During the early years a few people "transferred" to our church from the Presbyterian Church, and are so recorded. It is amusing to note, however, that when one of *his* probationers, Maria Ayers (pre-revolution family), flew the coop, Day could not call up the word "transferred". Instead, he recorded opposite her name, "Proselyted to the Presbyterians!"

In April of 1858 Edwin Day was assigned to the church in Bound Brook and, following that, served churches in Irvington, Phillipsburg, Piermont and Plainfield. There, in 1863, his health failed and he was forced to give up the ministry at the age of 35. Of all but the strongest the itineracy took its toll. He lived on for twenty years in poor health, eking out a living in a small business partnership in Jersey City.

Modern psychiatry would call it morbid that Day devoted much of his last decade of life to fervent prayers for death. This desire was not caused so much by suffering, although that certainly was present, as by a glorious vision of the heaven he anticipated. Our Conference once published a letter that he wrote late in life to his minister friends at the session of 1880. It is poignant and at times ethereal in its obsessive desire for a release from this world. Four years later, on November 9, 1884, his wish was granted.

The gradual strengthening of our infant church in those early years was the work of many people, and in the forefront of these was Edwin A. Day. With his effective preaching, his evangelical abilities and his organizational talent he must be counted as one of the outstanding clergymen who were our builders.

CHAPTER V

THE PRE-WAR YEARS

1858 - 1861

AS THE Civil War drew nearer, we would expect some indication of the rising passions to show up in our records. Yet there is nothing. Basking Ridge was off the beaten track, and its interests were provincial. There is a legend that the house which would later serve as our parsonage from 1891 to 1960 was a station on the underground railroad. This seems unlikely, however, for a check of all the documented routes shows none passing near here.

Examination of the broader field of Newark Conference records is a little more revealing. Here we find a definite interest in the slavery question and an active conference sentiment against the evil. Among the major Protestant denominations, Methodism's was one of the stronger anti-slavery voices. The stamp of Wesley's social responsibility still was present.

From April 1858 to April 1861, three different ministers occupied the Bishop Janes pulpit, each for one year only. The first of these easily filled the shoes of the first-rate ministers before him. The second was very interesting and popular, if not the congregation builder the earlier pastors had been. We may detect a falling off with the third, but the dedication and ability of our early leaders could hardly be expected to have continued indefinitely.

It may seem that our history up to this point has been painted with a whitewash brush. But this is not so. We simply happened to have been unusually fortunate at the start. Great pastors have served or assisted Bishop Janes Methodist Church, and this is one reason why its history is being written. The longest unbroken succession of them came, providentially, at the start. Lippincott, Bartine, Janes, William Day, Edwin Day, and now George Dickinson. There is reason to honor all six as the founders of our church.

He Got Caught!

GEORGE F. DICKINSON 1858 - 59

George F. Dickinson's story is elusive. Dozens of sources contain a phrase here, a sentence there, all of which add up to the picture of a great minister. Yet

nowhere could the whole story be found. At his death the young post-World War I ministry was too preoccupied to remember him as anything more than "a kindly old minister" who had accomplished "many things in his day". One of them wrote the sketchiest memoir for the Conference Journal ever accorded an outstanding minister. Thus we were deprived of a usually rich source of biographical material. But his story has been pieced together from other sources.

George Dickinson was born December 13, 1831, in Belvidere, New Jersey. Hoping as a boy to become a printer and publisher, he studied at the Classical Institute in that town. He continued his schooling through Pennington Seminary, and then began lay preaching. Quickly his call proved as clear as his early preaching proved successful. He studied for the ministry and entered the New Jersey Conference in 1854. His career began in rural charges, starting with the back-breaking Newton-Allamuchy-Tranquility Circuit of fifteen congregations. In 1856-57 he was pastor of the Harmony church, and in April, 1858, he was assigned to our pulpit.

When George Dickinson arrived in Basking Ridge he was the third consecutive eligible young bachelor to swim into the Bishop Janes pool. But *he* got caught. Surely our later local girls haven't been any less attractive, but such a catch hasn't happened since. Because of her unique place in our history, we should tell a little more about this daughter of our church who attracted him.

The Van Dorn gristmill, today the landmark "Old Mill" (on Route 202 across from the Old Mill Inn) was preceded by a small red frame mill, built in 1768 by Samuel Lewis. In time this was acquired by the Southard family, then later by Samuel Woodward. His daughter, Phoebe Woodward, married Ferdinand Van Dorn, who had become a master miller under his father in Peapack. In 1841 he and his wife bought both the mill and the farm from her mother and the other heirs and built the present structure. This historic landmark, with its twenty-foot depth of foundation and its massive walls, nine feet thick in places, has changed hands several times since then. In 1980-81 it was renovated and restored by its present owners, a firm of architects.

Ferdinand and Phoebe Van Dorn had a daughter, Julia, who, as mentioned before, was converted to Methodism by the Rev. Edwin Day in 1858. When George Dickinson arrived in April of that year, Julia was a newly-baptized probationer. Her class leader was old Nathaniel Gillem, but the new pastor conducted some of the instruction, and this Julia must have found more interesting, if we are to judge by the results. In October she became a full member of our church, and within a month or two she and the dynamic young preacher were married at a large local wedding. Her membership here ended six months later when she and George were transferred to Elizabeth.

Her friends said that she made a perfect itinerant's wife, serving him and the church faithfully at the twenty charges that made up the balance of his ministry. They said that she, her husband, and their children had "a beautiful home life". She seems to have been a particularly democratic woman. Everyone was welcome in her home, which became the religious and social center of whatever charge they

served. She had special evangelical drive and ability, which further strengthened Dickinson's unique talent to draw people to the church. They had two daughters, both of whom married into the well-known Blanchard family of Orange, and one son, George F., Jr., who settled in Morristown.

Dickinson's courting in Basking Ridge must have been quickly effective, for it is difficult to see where he found time for it. When he arrived, he found 104 names on the rolls. When he left, a year later, there were 121, including 19 more full members than our parent church in Bernardsville would report that year. To the Pleasant Plains congregation he added a number of probationers and two full members. Many of these new people would become very valuable members.

Bishop Janes' daughters, Lizzie and Charlotte, usually attended the Bernardsville Methodist Church while the family was living on Bankers' Mountain. The bishop himself worshipped most regularly at Bernardsville and Mendham and, upon occasion, at other neighboring churches. But while George Dickinson was pastor, daughter Charlotte seems to have attended the Basking Ridge church. There was a quaint practice in those days of publishing by name every mission's donation of 50¢ or more in the Conference Journal. Many were careful to give no less than this each year to assure their names being published. It was by consulting the list of givers for 1859 that we found the donations of Charlotte Janes credited to Bishop Janes Church.

Dickinson did not write many reports. And the Quarterly Conference minutes during his year reveal little beyond routine matters, so we have few details of his ministry. The best remembered and most enduring of his accomplishments was the establishment, in 1858, of our Evergreen Cemetery. Realizing the need for a burial ground, he won congregational support, negotiated all of the arrangements and supervised the purchase of the first lands for the cemetery on the high ground on West Oak Street. The original property bordered on Oak Street as it does now. However, it did not extend from the railroad to Washington Avenue, but was bounded on the east and west by two smaller strips owned by others. Later these sections were bought, and the depth of the property was extended northward several times.

The original family plots were approximately 1,000 square feet each and sold for $25 or the equivalent in labor at the cemetery. During the first year only six were bought; oddly enough, the first four by non-members. The first went to Solomon Gillespie, an old man who had founded the stagecoach line from Basking Ridge to Bound Brook, the second and third to Isaac Conkling and W. B. Alward, members of pre-revolutionary families in town, and the fourth to O. Woodward, a relative of our Elizabeth Woodward. Finally, church members William and John Allen bought plots Nos. 5 and 7.

As it had for the Days before him, and many young preachers after him, the Bishop Janes pulpit proved, for George Dickinson, a stepping stone to larger churches and greater responsibilities. From Basking Ridge he was moved to Elizabeth, and during the Civil War he served at Montclair and at Asbury Church on Staten

Island. In the next 40 years he held pastorates in five Newark churches and two more on Staten Island, then in Jersey City, Paterson, Port Jervis, Woodbridge, Phillipsburg, Pearl River, Perth Amboy and Allendale. His last full charge was the Hilton Church in Maplewood (1900-1902). In 1903 he was made assistant pastor at Central Church, Newark.

George Dickinson died at Orange in 1920, almost forgotten. Besides the family, only five people attended his funeral, and probably not all of them were members of the Newark Conference he had served so well. As the years had passed, home, in the heart of this constantly moving itinerant, had more and more come to mean Basking Ridge, the scene of his happiest pastorate. In accord with his request, he was buried inconspicuously in Evergreen Cemetery, which he had established 62 years earlier. He remembered better than he was remembered; no memorial service was held in our church.

His contemporaries described him as "stately and stalwart, kindly looking, big hearted and full of brotherly sympathy". Clearly he was a man of strong faith and unusual foresight, for he built churches and, wherever he served, had both parsonages and cemeteries purchased or built if they were lacking. Among the churches he started are the Oxford church (founded 1857), the Sparrowbush church, which he built while pastor at Port Jervis, and Long Neck church, the building of which he guided while serving the Asbury church in Staten Island. In gratitude, the Long Neck people renamed their charge "Dickinson Church", as it is known today. A conference survey at his death showed that he had increased the membership of every church he had ever served.

Unanswered Prayer

SOLOMON PARSONS 1859 - 60

In April, 1859, another young bachelor arrived to fill the Bishop Janes pulpit, but this one was engaged. His wedding in our church was to be one of the social highlights of the following year.

Solomon Parsons was an interesting man, who would become well known in our Conference. Born at Millbrook in Morris County August 10, 1832, he worked with his father on their farm in summers and attended district school in winters. One Sunday in his seventeenth year he visited a regular service at a Methodist church in Paterson; this proved to be his Aldersgate. Walking alone in the woods later, he determined to become a mininster.

He had not gotten along very well with his father, so he left home and took work in the area as a farmhand. He spent his earnings on what his biography calls a "select schooling" in Morristown. Soon he qualified as a teacher and worked as such in Succasunna, then Mendham. He was graduated from Pennington Seminary and entered Connecticut Wesleyan University, where he did outstanding work in

mathematics, English and philosophy. He supported himself and paid for his schooling by teaching and by serving as a local preacher in several Connecticut churches. He graduated from Wesleyan with high honors in 1858, aged 26.

As a hobby, he became expert in minerology and paleontology. When he died, years later, he left the city of New York a valuable collection of minerals and fossils from New Jersey and the Connecticut Valley. These became the core exhibits in this line at Central Park Museum.

Having become a master at English and literature (he was our first pastor to publish extensively), and possessing unusual intelligence and analytical powers, Parsons was one of the better pulpit men in our Conference throughout his ministry. This was recognized as soon as he entered the Conference after graduation, for he was assigned at once to a fairly important church — the one at Chatham. The following year he was sent to Basking Ridge.

In spite of his ability, Parsons' year at Bishop Janes Church seems to have been a poor one. He inherited 121 names on the rolls; he left a year later reporting 88. This was a new experience for the young church. The records reveal nothing of the cause, which might have had little to do with the minister. Yet, whatever it was, he did not control it. Several things could explain the sharp drop, but with our scant records we can only guess what may have happened. The illness known as "congregational split" could have occurred over some policy. It seems too early for the impending war to have had an effect. Possibly Parsons' courting and newlywed status caused him to neglect his probationers. Of the 30 enrolled probationers Dickinson had left, 25 dropped out. The other five were brought to full membership by the pastor. Quarterly Conference minutes state that on May 4, 1859, "the Stewards met with Solomon Parsons and asked for the list of members for solicitation". It is possible, but unlikely, that a resulting house-to-house canvas caused trouble. Prior to this funds were raised by pew rents and pulpit appeals at worship services, but now, with fewer attending the Sunday services, these sources of income were inadequate.

Unlike William and Edwin Day, both of whom were small and frail, and George Dickinson, who was muscular though rather short, Solomon Parsons was a physical giant. He stood well over six feet and had a blacksmith's build. In this connection there is a story in our conference records that we think bears repeating. It happened either at his first church, Chatham, or his second, Bishop Janes; which it was is not clear. One day he was attacked by a big "ruffian" who had taken exception to one of his comments. Although Solomon knew that he could easily crush his opponent, he "prayed fervently to the Lord for restraint" when the fellow cracked him with a horsewhip. And, to quote further, "It became evident with the second blow of the whip that Solomon's prayer had not been answered, for the bully suddenly found himself in such violent contact with a wall some distance away as not to know whether a torpedo or cyclone had carried him there." The account goes on to report that Parsons received no further trouble from this assailant and his followers.

We know that Parsons was strong for the use of music in public worship and had a particular interest in hymnology. It seems that the taste of this versatile man was above average for the period, for he wrote that his favorite hymns were "A Charge to Keep I Have", "Bless the Lord, O my Soul" and "The Lord's my Shepherd". The minutes of the June, 1859, Quarterly Conference tell that it was opened "with *singing* and prayer", — the first such reference to singing in our church records.

Good fortune sent us several early pastors who recognized the value of music in worship. So the tradition of music at Bishop Janes Church got a jump on many of our Methodist neighbors who objected strongly to church music and hymn singing in the mid 19th century. Many congregations fought over its introduction. In fact, for a long time after hymns were added to worship at the Tranquility Church, the church fathers stamped out of the sanctuary as soon as a hymn was begun. They stayed outside until that sacrilegious nonsense was over and the preaching resumed. We seem to have had no such trouble.

Whatever may have been the cause of the fall in membership, it is unlikely that Solomon Parsons was held responsible by the majority, for it is recorded that he was a popular pastor at our church. When he was transferred to Perth Amboy in April, 1860, a special parting hymn was composed and was sung to him at his last service in our church — a gesture never awarded to pastors who do not have the affections of the people. The record goes on to say that the hymn was sung to him by the "M. E. Choir". This is the first specific reference to a choir in our worship services. It may have been first organized by Parsons, but the evidence is stronger for dating its inception to the first pastorate, William Day's.

So Solomon and Martha Parsons left Basking Ridge with the people's affection. After serving at Perth Amboy he was transferred from there to Spring Valley, N.Y., then to Somerville, Staten Island, Newark, Summit, Belvidere, and finally to Paterson, where he was stationed for five years (until 1892) at the site of his conversion. In 1886, when temperance had become a popular cause at our church, and an obsession with Parsons, he returned to our pulpit to give a temperance address. Over two hundred persons packed the sanctuary that day. Among them were a few who remembered him with affection, maybe even a reformed "ruffian".

During Solomon's youth his father had operated an apple distillery on the farm, and the boy early was impressed with the results of excessive exposure to the famed "Jersey lightning". As he grew older, he fought the use of, and traffic in liquor increasingly. This occupied more and more of his time. He fought for a prohibition plank in both political parties and, finally giving up on both of them, he ran for governor of New Jersey in 1883 on the third party Prohibition ticket. His obsession became so strong that every year at each of his five sons' birthdays Solomon would buy a quart of whiskey, ceremoniously take the boy to the kitchen, smash the bottle and supervise the boy's pledge of eternal hatred of liquor. Although Parsons was admired by his fellow conference ministers for his strong convictions, it is recorded that most of them believed that his crusade hurt his

career. Had he spent more time in his best years upon the doctrines of Christianity than upon the dogmas of abstinence, they believed, he would have been elected bishop. Instead, he was appointed Conference Temperance Agent in 1892, and he served in that capacity until his death in Paterson in 1897.

The Abasement Builder

GEORGE W. SOVEREIGN 1860 - 61

In April, 1860, a young man applied to the Newark Conference and tentatively was accepted as a "trial" preacher. His trial would be assignment to the pulpit at Bishop Janes Church. Apparently George W. Sovereign was no ball of fire. He completed his year here, again appeared before the Newark Conference in April, 1861, there either lost or resigned his status as a trial preacher[1], and that was the end of his ministry. This is all that conference records tell us about our fifth pastor.

When he arrived, Bishop Janes Church was already in trouble. And George Sovereign was not the man to correct it. We can't be too critical of his ministry, for this was his first (and only) church, and he lacked the experience of our earlier pastors. We know nothing of his personal history, for conference records are almost blank regarding these rare short-termers. Our church history must accept him as one who came from a void and there returned. From the Trustees' records, however, we can learn a little about what happened during his year with us.

Although the church was having its problems, and although Sovereign was miscast, the situation became very little worse under him. Membership continued to slip, but not badly. It stood at about 85 when he left. Only two new members are known to have joined during his stay. Lacking ordainment, he could not baptize anyone, and the three recorded marriages were performed by other clergy, among whom was the Rev. William H. Dykeman. Rev. Dykeman, a retired Methodist minister, and his wife had moved to Basking Ridge a short time earlier. He either bought or built the house at 169 South Finley Avenue, one of the excellent old homes in our town. The Dykemans were for some years a vital part of our congregation, though surprisingly their names never appeared in our official membership. Rev. Dykeman headed many committees of the church, served as a trustee, offered the sacraments, and in general was a reserve minister who assisted in many ways. Our Dykeman Place was named in his memory.

During Sovereign's year the Board of Trustees virtually ran Bishop Janes Church, and the charge began to take on the look of a congregation of Quakers. Trustees operated as they never had before or have since. They did not have the disciplinary authority to do this, but someone had to take up the slack, and they decided to. Luckily they seem not to have married or baptized anyone.

[1] Before "removing" him from trial status, the Conference did "pass his character", which traditionally could mean that he did not beat his mother, but more likely in this instance it meant legitimate approval of him as a man.

Offered now, as the best history of this pastorate, are quotations from the last recorded minutes in the original Trustees' book of minutes. As before, the original spelling and punctuation have been retained. The business at hand at their first meeting was a building project that literally would disturb the very foundations of our church:

> "A Meeting of the Trustees of the M. E. Church at Baskenridge was held at the Church May 23, 1860 to elect New Trustees and to devise means for finishing the Abasement. The following number were elected Trustees, O. W. Brown, W. H. Dikeman, George Baker, Nathaniel Gillem, Edward A. Arnold. The Trustees present resolved to hold a fair on the 4th of July for the purpose of raising means to complete said abasement.
> Meeting adjourned.
>
> Signed — G. W. Sovereign, President"

They had started off with originality, at least, by electing the minister president of the Board. Within a week they discovered that this was not done, and elected Edward Arnold in his place.

On May 30th they met again and assigned by name every active member to either the collecting committee or the Committee on Arrangements. They were determined that the fair would be a success and that the church basement would be completed at last. On June 5th another meeting was held and they really got down to work. After reluctantly accepting charter-trustee Bailey Breeze's resignation, they elected William Allen to fill the vacancy. The next order of business was:

> "Resolved on Motion that the Males and Females Sit apart during Divine Service according to Disipline. Passed".

Possible background for this entry may be found in the Tranquility Church records, which state earlier that their board voted to institute "promiscuous seating". This may have caused conference officials to remind other churches of the desired propriety.

Next our trustees

> "Resolved on Motion of Brother Sovereign that if the Collectors can get enough to hold the fair all day that we Invite Dr. Perry of New York to deliver an Oration and M. E. Ellison of Morristown to read the Declaration of Independence and a Choir of Singers from New York to hold a concert in the Evening. Passed.
>
> "Resolved on Motion of O. W. Brown to finish the basement . . . (and) have a committee of three to act as a building committee. G. W. Sovereign, O. W. Brown, and John C. Stansbury compose that committee . . . (and) that we have the work done by the day. Passed.

"Resolved on Motion it was agreed that all who have lots in the Cemetery shall have their full number of feet without Restrictions by Deed and have the privilege of fencing the same. Passed."

Presumably the fair was a success. Work was started, but the Trustees had to meet again on July 6th; they had forgotten to provide for an exterior entrance to the basement.

"On Motion it was resolved that we have the Entrance to the basement and airway to go down under the stoop and that we build a new Stoop according to the plan . . . of W. H. Dikeman, one of the Trustees. After due consideration the Resolution was passed unanimous."

Shaky church finances required another meeting on July 14, 1860:

"On Motion it was resolved that we have a Finance Committee of three appointed and that E. A. Arnold, D. D. Craig, and O. W. Brown compose that committee. Passed.

(also) "that the Finance Committee report the Amount of the Indebtidness of the Church, to whom it is due, when payable, the Value of the Church property, how much Insurance on it, the finances of the church; that is Treasurers report, the No. of Lots Sold in the Cemetery, how much due on said lots, how many unsold and value. Passed."

And in the same minutes we find the first reference to ushers in our records:

Resolved that O. W. Brown, E. A. Arnold, set by the door to keep order and Seat Strangers for the balance of the month. Passed."

Only four days later they met again and transacted but one item of business:

"Resolved that a Committee of three be appointed to take charge of the singing and that I. W. Keeler, William Allen, and William A. Willson be that committee. Passed".

— And so was formed our first music committee, which soon reported progress follows:

The last minutes in this original Trustees' book read as follows:

"October 6, 1860: Henry C. Prentice and Bailey Breese (resigned) and Ashabel T. Williamson and Benjamin Smith (moved away) were taken from the rolls of the Board of Trustees. New board as follows: I. W. Keeler, Chairman, Wit Wilson, Secretary, W. H. Dykeman, William Allen, O. W. Brown, Nathaniel Gillem."

It appears from subsequent accounts that the basement was completed before

the start of the next pastorate. And that was pretty fast work! The church now had a good place for meetings, classes and suppers.

With George Sovereign's departure in April, 1861, we had had three consecutive one-year ministers. Already there were signs that longer pastorates accomplished more. During the Civil War the Conference would have to do its best under emergency conditions, but when that ended it would increasingly encourage longer assignments.

The new Bishop Janes congregation had now been sent four first-liners and one trial preacher. If the eight-year-old church were not firmly established by this time the people, not the Conference, would be responsible.

CHAPTER VI

THE CIVIL WAR AND FIRST POST-WAR YEARS

1861 - 1867

PRE-WAR tensions over slavery had split in two the Methodist Church in our country. The war itself would bring difficulties to almost every Methodist congregation. Churches of other denominations would, of course, have similar troubles. The trials which would confront all during these five years would strain the resources of even the healthiest and most firmly founded of them. And Bishop Janes Church was not one of these. By early 1861 we had lost one third of our earlier membership. And, due in part to a shortage of ministers caused by the war[1], another "trial" preacher was now assigned to our church. Our prospects were not very bright.

Yet once again the itineracy, then in its most effective era, came to our rescue, with a hearty assist from "our" bishop. His influence at critical points in our history would continue as long as he lived.

"William, come out!"

WILLIAM N. SEARLES 1861 - 63

In the 1830's, when giants like David Bartine and Edmund Janes were building Methodism in our area, a preacher named Isaac Searles was making his contribution, too, to the advance. In 1832 he founded the society in Chatham which would become one of our stronger Methodist churches. Several years later he was the pastor of one of the "big league" churches in Philadelphia, at the same general time that Janes, Bartine and Lippincott were so occupied. On July 29, 1840, in Philadelphia, his son, William N. Searles, was born.

In time the family returned to New Jersey, and William became a high school student in Newark. The boy's handsome appearance and gift for public speaking attracted local attention. The newspapers, which then covered such events as school debates and speaking contests, dubbed him "the boy orator".

Bishop Janes knew Isaac, but not his son. Hearing that young Searles was

[1] Conference ministers were, from the first, drawn into the service as chaplains. One such, the Rev. John Lenhart, was drowned March 8, 1862, when his ship, the U.S.S. Cumberland was sunk by the iron-clad Merrimac in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

talented but so far had shown no definite inclination toward the ministry, the bishop quietly attended one of the oratory contests and heard him speak. At the time, William was helping the family budget by working part time as a clerk in a drygoods store. We can imagine his surprise when Bishop Janes walked into the store the next morning, placed his hand on the boy's head and said, "William, you are called to preach the gospel. Come out!" With no further word he turned and walked out. A sense of the dramatic was yet another of the bishop's talents that he devoted to the work of the church.

So it was that William Searles' graduation from Pennington Seminary was followed, in 1860, by his acceptance in the Newark Conference as a trial preacher. His first assignment, like Sovereign's, was the Basking Ridge pulpit, in April, 1861. In this appointment a certain bishop no doubt had a hand. The assignment was for two years, and it was timely.

Since 1859 our church had been slipping. As noted, the impending war imposed hardships upon all Methodist churches; to the weakest it would prove a church-killer. But we find that under Searles our church actually reversed the trend and grew stronger during the first half of the Civil War. Tangibly, the membership was brought back to its previous highest level by a 50% increase; intangibly, it became a more effective institution than ever before, to both its members and the community. Again, we must not overlook the credit due the people. Probably the greater spiritual needs during a war caused members to work harder for their church. But once more the greater credit seems to belong to the pastor.

Young Searles was strong and handsome, kindly and gracious in manner. Later in life he would be called "courtly and dignified". He had a high sense of the importance of preaching, and his pulpit style was described as "hopeful, expectant and inspirational". As the years passed, he won a place with the great evangelists and church builders of two conferences. Many were brought to the church under his influence, the outstanding example occurring while he was pastor of a Paterson church. There he organized a revival which, we are told, added hundreds to the Methodist churches of that city. One minister attributed its great success to the "large personality" of William Searles.

When he arrived in Basking Ridge in the spring of 1861 he found a total membership of 85. One year later, in spite of the war, the rolls had grown to 126, the highest yet. This figure included a number of probationers, many of whom became part of a war-time population shift that slightly lowered the total by the end of Searles' two-year pastorate. But even then, the number of "full" members almost equalled the previous high water mark under George Dickinson.

It is easy to over-emphasize a minister's membership success, especially in a work like this where knowledge of other pertinent facts may be lacking. Rev. Appley, in his account of our church in 1899, considered the greatest effect of the Searles pastorate in Basking Ridge to be the fact that under him Methodism and its local followers at last won the respect of the whole community. The implication is that this position had not quite been reached earlier.

We can only guess some of the reasons. There may have been visible signs of deeper spiritual and social concerns. Also, a movement away from more primitive forms of worship may have helped. Increased service to the community should not be ruled out. After all, Searles stood apart from denominational narrowness.

Another possible reason is that anti-slavery sentiment in town might have rallied around a calm but firm stand by Searles against this evil. An overwhelming majority of ministers in the Newark Conference were strongly opposed to slavery, and Searles was one of them. On the other hand, there is a sermon, preserved in the archives of the New Vernon Presbyterian Church, which was preached at the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church by its longtime pastor, the Rev. Dr. John C. Rankin, on January 4, 1861, just after South Carolina seceded. President Lincoln had proclaimed a national fast day. It was observed at Dr. Rankin's church (as it was at our own), and his sermon was titled "Our Danger and Duty". Its theme was that New England was the mother of all our national troubles due to the flagrant over-statements and wicked war-mongering of their fanatical abolitionists. The sermon went on to oppose secession, which would render our government a "mere rope of sand", and predicted another Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre should the negro be emancipated. It then called New Jerseyans to a "sane, non-bigoted attitude" toward the issues and closed with, "The Union! It must and shall be preserved".

Pro-slavery sentiment was not rare in our neighborhood. Dr. Rankin may have represented more than a minority opinion. As our later history will show, there was an active Copperhead movement in New Vernon. In Methodism a slave-holding bishop had catalyzed the break-up of the formerly unified national body, and within our small Newark Conference ministers would be brought to trial for pro-slavery sentiments. Yet throughout the Civil War the pastors of Bishop Janes Church stood opposed to slavery. Local sentiment shifted toward their stand in post-war years; perhaps that contributed to our gaining respect.

It is interesting to note that on June 21, 1862, our Presiding Elder recorded eleven teachers and 104 pupils enrolled in the Sunday School. Clearly, the work of the church went on with little war-time interruption in 1861 and 1862. In fact, it is difficult to find references to the Civil War in any of the records of our church. We are reminded that Basking Ridge was a farm community, and life went on much as usual.

The war would come closest to our people in the spring of 1862. A young man named Timothy Bloomfield had become a full member by transfer of letter in June, 1860. He seems to have had no relatives in the area before or after. It is thought that he bought (or worked on) a farm off Lord Stirling Road, shortly before joining our congregation. Obviously he was at once liked and respected, for only a year later he was elected a steward on our Official Board. Shortly after war broke out he became our only early volunteer to the armed forces. Following brief training he was assigned to McClellan's army and joined it during the unsuccessful Peninsular Campaign. As the army advanced inland, Bloomfield's patrol ran into a short outpost skirmish

near Williamsburg. Our church records dignify it with the term "battle"; historians prefer "skirmish.". For one thing, hardly any men from either army became casualties; hardly any, that is, except Timothy Bloomfield. He was killed in action May 5, 1862.

Our records identify four others from the Bishop Janes Church who served in the Army of the Potomac. All of them served late in the war, presumably being drafted, and none were casualties. There may have been others, but there is no such indication on the church rolls.

One of the four was John Y. Bird. He was one of the large Bird (Burd) family, many of whom were very active in establishing Methodism in the Somerset Hills, particularly in Bernardsville. John lived in Liberty Corner and became one of the few from that village to associate himself with our church. Shortly after his marriage he was accepted as a probationer. Before completing his probation classes he was called to the Union Army, and his name was carried on our rolls for the rest of the war.

John B. Blazure, son of a charter trustee, was another. He had become a full member under Dickinson. Our records show him stationed at White Plains Camp, Virginia, in early 1865. Blazures (Blaziers, Blasures) were numerous in town and in our church membership. Today the name is perpetuated in old-timers' references to Blazure's Corners, the intersection of North Finley Avenue and Highway 202.

The third man was James L. Stevens, who had been elected a steward under George Sovereign. In those days there was a position in the Methodist Church known as "Exhorter", which required a conference license, much as local preachers are licensed today. Men so titled were laymen who were particularly talented in evangelistic preaching. Stevens exhorted locally, and probably in other places as well, for our Quarterly Conferences annually voted that the Conference renew his exhorter's license up to the time he entered the army. Apparently he was not too happy with the congregation. Twice he had resigned as steward and both times was returned to the board. Then, when he left for the army early in 1865, he took his letter with him — an unusual action. Whatever his dissatisfaction, our records show that after the war he "withdrew to join Baptists", and in stern disapproval our minister at that time marked after this transfer entry, "Not Sane!"

And finally there was Josephus Sanders, a close friend of Stevens. He, too, had served as a steward of our church, and the two men lived in adjacent houses on South Finley Avenue. Sanders' sister was one of our charter members, and he had become a full member under Dickinson. One of our later most valuable members, who will be appearing in our history, was a member of this family — Hannie Sanders, who became Mrs. David Y. Moore.

Two marriages took place while Searles was here. The second of these, in 1862, posed a pleasant, though unique problem. Richard Irving, who owned the rim, hub and spoke factory in Madisonville, and was a "good Presbyterian", had fallen in love with Susan Sanders, a "good Methodist". They were to be married, but in which church? The solution was not too difficult because of the good relations be-

tween William Searles and Dr. Rankin. The Presbyterian minister performed the ceremony in the Methodist church. However, Irving may have faced another problem. Under government contract his factory worked day and night making heavy mess-wagon wheels for the Union Army, so how were they to get away for a honeymoon?

Close study of our earliest cemetery records has revealed an interesting happening during Searles' second year. Bishop Janes had somehow discovered that Evergreen Cemetery was in trouble. Originally only six plots had been sold, and only two of these to church members. Since then only three additional sales had been recorded. One of these was to the Rev. Dykeman, and another to Solomon Parsons (acquired by "work in cemetery" and later resold). Obviously, this lack of interest put a financial burden on the church and possibly threatened the cemetery's very survival.

We find, though, that in 1863 Bishop Janes purchased two plots, and later Mrs. Janes also bought one. Certainly the $75 helped, but Janes' "money for the Lord" usually had a secondary purpose. The word got around that the famous bishop planned to be buried in this previously ignored resting place, and soon three more plots were sold. The tide had turned and starting in 1864, sales were brisk.

It is doubtful that the bishop had any intention of being buried in Evergreen. As soon as the cemetery became popular (if that's the right word), he sold his two lots to a member of our congregation. Oddly enough, Mrs. Janes' lot was not sold. When the bishop's only son, the Rev. Lewis Janes, died in Indianapolis in 1906, his body was brought back and buried on the north side of that lot. The other half was later sold to another family.

Our membership records show that Isaac Searles, the old circuit rider, and his wife, Elizabeth, joined Bishop Janes Church during their son's pastorate. Apparently they provided a home for him here until he left. In April, 1863, William Searles was appointed to our church in Bound Brook and there, in September of the following year, he married Susan A. Spalding of New York City. They became the parents of six children. After Bound Brook he served in Springfield, then Succasunna, and then Clinton. It was during the latter assignment (1869-71) that he founded the nearby churches at High Bridge and Lebanon. From there he moved on to the newly organized congregation in Phillipsburg and directed the construction of their first church (1872-74). Next came his highly productive 2-year pastorate at Paterson.

In 1878 William Searles transferred to the New York Conference, and his last 29 years of service alternated between four of the largest Methodist churches in Manhattan and several charges in the Hudson Valley. In 1907 he retired, having given 47 years in answer to Bishop Janes' "William, come out!" He and Susan celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1914, and just four months later, on January 16, 1915, he died. He was buried in Fairview Cemetery[2] in Newark.

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[2] Probably an error in Newark Conference records; undoubtedly "Fairmount" is intended.

Five Charges for Half Pay

WILLIAM C. NELSON 1863 - 64

When William Searles left us in April, 1863, Basking Ridge was one of the few really healthy rural churches in the Newark Conference. Conference leaders seem to have ascribed too much of the credit for this to the congregation and too little to Searles. Noting that surrounding congregations, possibly excepting Bernardsville, were suffering considerably from the war, the bishops then made Basking Ridge the head of a special war-time circuit. Four congregations were added to our charge: New Vernon, Green Village (both with church buildings), Pleasant Plains, and one other whose name could not be found in any records.[3] Actually, the Pleasant Plains congregation was dropped from Newark Conference records for two years at this time, but in practice it continued to be served.

Only two men were assigned to the expanded circuit because the Conference was short of ministers. A number had become chaplains, including one who would later serve Bishop Janes Church. To be sure of pulpits for these men at the war's end, no new men were being accepted. An experienced minister, William Nelson, was put in charge of the circuit and was quartered in Basking Ridge. Assisting him was a young "trial" preacher, Charles Barnes, who was housed in New Vernon.

William Charles Nelson was born in Elizabeth in 1829. His formal education ended with grammar school, so he had to study a long time before being ordained in 1853. His application was intense, for the ministry had been his one goal in life from boyhood. As a teenager he had conducted prayer meetings under Methodist sponsorship in an old schoolhouse outside Elizabeth, despite the fact that his family was Presbyterian. From 1853 to 1863 he served churches in Chatham, Rockaway, North Belleville, Boonton and Flanders. In April, 1863, he was appointed for one year to the Basking Ridge circuit.

The fact that Nelson was ablebodied proved helpful during his early ministry, with its endless muddy miles of travel. He seems to have gotten on well with the people, who welcomed his "hearty manner and warm greetings" of the period, always "simple, straight-forward, practical and Christ-centered", and he "stuck to the power and simplicity of the Gospel". These overworked expressions give a clear, if stereotyped picture of the man. The conference summary of his life called him "industrious and simple-hearted", and pointed to his performance of 238 marriages. It seems that they could find no special accomplishments, but rightly honored his long, faithful service.

This study of the history of Bishop Janes Church and its pastors has brought to light certain characteristics of our congregation. Most of these changed with the years and the shifting population, but a few, such as our efforts for above-average music and our tendency to go into a coma after a building project, seem to have

[3] Best guess would be Stirling, since a small Methodist congregation from that town was under our wing for several post-war years. Cross Roads is another possibility.

been constant during our first century. Another of our unchanging characteristics, doubtless shared by most congregations, is brought to mind by the Nelson pastorate. Time and again at Bishop Janes Church, when a new pastor has arrived, looked around, and did not care for what he saw, he has been unable to mask his distaste from the people. Subconsciously he may only have been hiding his own shortcomings but, feeling surrounded by weak Christians and hopeless conditions, he seldom received the support he hardly expected, and church progress ground to a halt. On the other hand, some ministers have arrived, blessed perhaps with a divine blindness, and have seen something else, — a group of God's people to love, despite their shortcomings. Such ministers saw in the people (or convinced them that they did) untouched potential waiting to be brought out, and latent desires to reach for the stars. Such pastors "liked" them, and it was with such pastors that the congregation made most of the advances in its long history. Certainly men with outstanding ability accomplished more than those less graced, but only if they belonged to this latter group. This will be evident many times throughout this history of Bishop Janes Church.

William Nelson was the first of our ministers to leave detailed pastoral reports for our church records. In December of 1863 he presented this one to the circuit quarterly meeting:

> *". . . The way the work is assigned, it has been supplied as well as could be expected. There have been Sabbaths when the appointments have been more numerous than the Preachers, and even when the brethren in the local ranks have been employed there has still been a deficiency, and some of the appointments have in consequence been disappointed, but sometimes it has happened that the Preachers have dragged through the mud five or six miles, and no congregation there . . . Prayer meetings are thinly attended and the class meetings almost totally neglected . . . There seems to prevail a dirth of spiritual things[4] at all the appointments the cause whereof is quite apparent in many instances. The pastor would suggest to the different churches constituting this charge the propriety of intermingling more with each other socially as well as in the means of grace. At present there prevails too much of a feeling of selfishness, which very naturally excites and engenders a kind of jealousy. . . . It may not be amiss to state that the finances of the charge are decidedly behind. This is the third quarterly meeting and neither of the preachers has received half the amount estimated for their support".*

In February of 1864 Nelson reported:

> *"During the winter only two schools have been kept open (viz) at Basking Ridge and Green Village. Average attendance Green*

[4] This is a key phrase. Often repeated in essence throughout our early history, it usually identifies a pastor under whom the church was static.

Village 50, and Basking Ridge 30. Schools at New Vernon and Pleasant Plains have suffered for want of an active superintendent, for the reason that heretofore the Preachers have acted in that capacity . . . Support for the quarter:

Receipts		Distribution	
Basking Ridge	$ 58.68	Presiding Elder	$ 15.75
Green Village	57.99	Charles Barnes	41.58
New Vernon	44.75	William Nelson	104.09
	$161.42		$161.42 ”

Nelson's report continued by pointing out that the substitution of afternoon for morning services at Basking Ridge[5] was hurting the strength of the church, and he reminded the meeting that he and Barnes had received only half their salaries for the year, now nearly ended. The meeting closed with a unanimous recommendation that Charles Barnes be admitted to the Newark Conference as soon as possible due to his excellent work, and that the following year Green Village and New Vernon constitute one charge (preferably with Barnes as pastor) and Basking Ridge another charge.

Following his one-year pastorate at Bishop Janes Church, William Nelson served fourteen other charges, all of them rural. Among the more important of these were Clinton, Bloomsbury, Stanhope, Denville, Mount Horeb and Gladstone. His last charge was East Millstone, after which he retired in 1897. He had married Miss Olive Clark in Massachusetts in 1858, and during retirement they joined the North Belleville (Nutley) Church and proved useful members of that church for many years. Both William and Olive Nelson died in 1912, one only two weeks after the other.

The Anti-Copperhead

CHARLES R. BARNES 1863 - 64

Charles R. Barnes was only the assistant pastor of our five-charge 1864 circuit, but duties were pretty evenly divided, and he deserves a place in our history. He was born in 1836 in New York City, directly opposite the rigging loft where the associate of John Wesley, Captain Webb of the English Army, had preached before and during the Revolution. His parents belonged to John Street Church, one of the first Methodist churches in America. Barnes' mother is credited at John Street with having started the first infant class in our country.

Wanting to be a minister, but terrified at standing before an audience, Barnes became a store clerk at fifteen, and worked at this for six years. Then he enrolled at Fort Edward Institute. Two years later he showed up at Troy University with $18

[5] The pastors must have preached at New Vernon and Green Village on Sunday mornings and at Basking Ridge and other charges in the afternoons.

and no prospect of funds from home. However, Dr. James Strong gave him work on the soon-to-be-published "Exhaustive Concordance". In 1861 he transferred to New York University, teaching and doing farmwork in summer to support himself. After graduation in 1863 he applied for admission to the Newark Conference, but was one of those refused because of the war-time ban on new members. However, he was given the assistantship on the Basking Ridge Circuit under William Nelson. Years later he gave the Semicentennial Address before the clergymen of our Conference and told of this period as follows:

> *"During that year I lived in New Vernon. The feeling was very strong against Union men. The Copperhead vigilants* (sic) *threatened me with a midnight raid, which never materialized, owing to the care of a loyal neighbor".*

Here we have further evidence that anti-slavery and opposition to states rights were not universally popular causes in our area, as well as further indication that Methodist ministers often stood courageously for these causes.

Under the Basking Ridge Circuit during the Nelson-Barnes pastorate the Bishop Janes Board of Stewards was disbanded temporarily and a new Circuit Board was organized. New Vernon and Green Village each named three stewards to the new board; Bishop Janes Church named Edward Arnold, George Brown and George Baker (representing Pleasant Plains).

Our own church membership is not reported for 1864, but the total membership for all five charges dropped to 152. By then everyone was in trouble. Our own rolls must have dropped far below the level under William Searles. Only one person seems to have joined under Nelson: Catherine Baird of Osborne's Mills, a village bordering Osborne's Pond.

Like several of our pastors before him, Charles Barnes married soon after leaving the Basking Ridge circuit. In 1865 he was admitted to the Conference, and for several decades was one of its outstanding members. As Conference Statistical Secretary (1871-73) he established the office of Conference Treasurer and instituted a check system on benevolence collections that eventually was used by all of our churches. Later he set up the Conference Board of Examiners and pioneered the provision of automatic annuities for retired ministers and their widows. Before this, their services had been honored by small monies from the "Worn-out Preachers' Fund", providing they could prove that they were eligible.

In 1870 he became a Bible professor at Drew, and in 1878 was assigned to the pulpit of the Madison church. He proved of great service to the school by organizing emergency funds when a financial crisis wiped out Daniel Drew's fortune and threatened to wipe out the school as well. Later, while serving as pastor of a Hoboken church when the Epworth League was established in 1889, he organized at that church the first Junior Epworth League chapter in the country.

Charles Barnes died in 1923, at the age of 87. Though only an "assistant" here, his later accomplishments had indeed been noteworthy.

The Canal Boat Captain

JOHN WESLEY YOUNG 1864 - 65

Unlike the parents of William Nelson, those of John Wesley Young were not, we can be sure, Presbyterians. Young was born in 1833, in Pennsylvania. The family had so many children that John had to support himself as a boy with a variety of jobs. After he grew up he went to work on a canal barge at the age of twelve, and by the time he was sixteen he was captain of his own boat. At the early age of seventeen he decided that he could not face impending old age uneducated, and he began studying Latin and Greek during his runs on the canal. He had invested his earnings in the barge transportation business, and when he "retired" at twenty-two he sold his interests. Banking the substantial return for future needs, he registered at Pennington Seminary. Knowing that he lacked ability as a public speaker, he joined the debating society, worked hard at it, and developed an excellent delivery. Two years later he transferred to Wesleyan University, where he was graduated in 1859, at the age of twenty-six.

In February, 1864, the circuit had asked to be broken up, New Vernon and Green Village going one way, Basking Ridge and Pleasant Plains another. Instead, Conference action two months later cut off Green Village as a separate charge and left Basking Ridge Circuit with New Vernon and Pleasant Plains. No provision was made this time for an assistant preacher. This made it harder for the next minister, John Wesley Young. "Captain" Young, as he was known throughout his ministry — seldom as Pastor or Reverend Young — had joined the Newark Conference in 1860, and in April, 1864, he arrived for a one-year term as our last Civil War pastor. Unlike his predecessor, never would he complain of muddy driving conditions or of missing congregations.

At the end of his year conference officials must have been shocked. From him they did not receive the usual optimistic account; instead his report read, "This has been a poor year for the church". As we often find with those who do not bask in self-satisfaction, he really had much to be proud of.

Though Searles had succeeded in warding it off, the effect of the war had caught up with the Basking Ridge Circuit with a vengeance during Nelson's pastorate. He seemed unable to prevent a sharp drop in membership, and the churches had retrogressed to a dangerous point. Under Captain Young the fall was broken. He and Barnes deserve credit for saving the New Vernon Church. Young himself revitalized the Pleasant Plains congregation and got it again recognized as an official Methodist body at the end of his term. And he stopped the drop in circuit membership with a hard core of 77 faithful, even adding a few new members. This figure is lower than that of the previous year because it does not include the now-separated Green Village congregation.

Partly because of his work here, and partly due to recognition of war-caused inflation, the pastor's salary was raised to $500. But Young never got it. The sup-

port paid by our church had never exceeded $300, and he was paid only $279. From this, as from all such figures, the estimated value of his lodging was deducted. No thought seems to have been given to the question: could the Conference continue to provide first-rate ministers under such tight financial benefits? As it would turn out, the policy would escape retribution as long as the itineracy remained strong. It would continue for years yet, but not indefinitely.

Why the people's allegiance to their church should falter during the trials of war is difficult to understand. But it did, especially during the second half of the war. In November, 1864, Captain Young wrote, in the Quarterly conference records:

> *"At the time appointed for the 3rd Quarterly Conference at New Vernon, Presiding Elder L. W. Hilliard was present. Also the pastor J. W. Young and J. Onderdonk, a steward* (from the New Vernon Church; no one showed up from Basking Ridge). *There being no money collected and no pressing business, all adjourned to Brother Onderdonk's hospitable home and passed a pleasant evening".*

Young stated the facts, but never complained.

At the following 4th Quarterly Conference, however, they did have a forum. Hilliard and Young were joined by two stewards from Basking Ridge, Brown and Keeler, and two from New Vernon, Onderdonk and Vanhorn. They reported no debts for the New Vernon Church, but a debt for the Basking Ridge Church, now grown to $1,000. They adopted a resolution to "request the Bishop arrange the work that Basking Ridge and Pleasant Plains may be placed together in one charge and New Vernon and Green Village in another, as was the case two years ago". This time their request would be heeded.

The nation's trial was drawing to a close, and along with it the lesser trials of Bishop Janes Church. The greatest credit for survival must go to our "builder" ministers, the early congregation, the faithful remnant still on the rolls in 1865 and, more immediately, to William Searles. Some credit belongs also to Captain Young, and even William Nelson's accomplishments should not be overlooked.

The war ended at Appomattox on April 9, 1865. Some days later the annual Conference session took place. Captain Young moved on. The Conference decided that Basking Ridge could go it alone once more, and they judged correctly. The faithful remnant, and the men who henceforth would fill longer pastorates, would gradually raise Basking Ridge Methodist Episcopal Church to new heights.

Young served the Newark Conference for 53 years, and he pleased church leaders by never missing a Conference session in all that time. They judged him a good minister and credited his spotless record. Yet, essentially he seems to have been an idea man, years ahead of his time. He tried repeatedly to interest the New York City fathers in under-river transportation. He developed a gold-control system to prevent panics — which, of course, was ignored. Still, he was no financial

crackpot. He was appointed financial agent of Centenary Collegiate Institute in 1871, and between 1891 and 1921 he was Secretary of the Committee of Appointments for our Missionary Society. The systems he introduced to this group brought large increases in missionary giving in our churches. His associates rated his sermons above average, but considered his "dignified, spiritual, reasonable and reverential prayers unsurpassed". He died on March 23, 1931, leaving his wife and four daughters.

The Acquitted

SYLVESTER N. BEBOUT 1865 - 67

The devastating Civil War era was now ended. In its wake was left a depleted membership. Many early members who had been important to the work of the church were gone. These included representatives from such families as the Arnolds, the Guerins, the Hills, the Hands, the Popes, the Posts, and the Reynolds, as well as Sophia Dayton, Job Prawl, John Sanders, Gilbert Van Dorn, William A. Wilson and Nancy Walden. In all, some fifty full members were lost, and there were almost no probationers. Much work awaited the immediate post-war pastors and those members who remained to help rebuild. The first of these ministers would point the church forward; the second would propel it rapidly along that course.

That first pastor after the war was Sylvester N. Bebout. He was born in Plainfield January 23, 1833. At fifteen he joined the Methodist church in Rahway, where his family had moved. He lacked the advantage of a college or seminary education but was not intellectually lazy; his self-acquired education matched that of many college men. In 1862 he entered the Newark Conference just before the war-time ban on new members went into effect. His first appointment, that same year, was to the Green Village Church for a one-year term just before it was made part of the emergency Basking Ridge Circuit. At Green Village he and a local miss, Louise Parcells, were attracted to each other, but two appointments intervened before anything came of it. He was assigned to a Staten Island church in 1863 and to an Elizabeth church in 1864.

During these years he began to get into trouble with his superiors. He was an outspoken young man, and it became increasingly clear that he believed the South had been betrayed by the New England radicals; that the question of slavery had been legally and morally protected by the laws of the land. He spoke against the irresponsibility which had driven the South to desperate measures, and he opposed any form of emancipation. In November, 1863, during his Staten Island appointment, he voted in New York while still registered in New Jersey. His enemies raised a cry of fraud. In April, 1865, he was brought to trial before the Newark Conference session. The specific charge was "illegal voting", but emotionally he was on trial for his pro-slavery sentiments. Actually, there was little chance of conviction. For one thing, the war had just ended. For another, the specific charge could not

stand up under proof that he had sought and received legitimate legal advice in advance to the effect that, as a minister, he could vote at the site of his current assignment. Although the advice was incorrect, it took him off the hook. These trials almost never convicted anyone. Instead they provided an imposing stage for a strong dressing down by the accused's superiors, — followed by automatic Christian forgiveness.

Bebout was acquitted, his "character passed", and his new assignment, for two years, was to Bishop Janes Church. Six months into this appointment he married his Green Village sweetheart at the Methodist church there.

It took him some years to rebuild the reputation that had won him a large pulpit in Elizabeth before his trial. Our own church's low estate at war's end classed it with Mount Harmon, Lafayette and Sparrowbush (his next charges) as a series of assignments to "the sticks".

It is difficult to find much about his pastorate in Basking Ridge. But we do have his pastoral reports, with their overtones of quiet desperation — their sense of failure — and we have evidence that the congregation thought highly of him. Our records reveal an upward movement by the church, not comparable to that under his successor, but considerable. At his first Quarterly Conference here he reported:

> *"The Sunday School has slipped. There are 11 teachers, 5 men and 6 women, all discouraged, and only 80 enrolled. Average attendance 40. There are three Bible classes, one Mondays and two Fridays. Fifteen attend the infant class. We hope to get the Sabbath School back where it was several years ago".*

With a post-war "full" membership in the vicinity of 60, one would expect a tone of pleasure instead of sorrow in this report. He continued:

> *"The Pleasant Plains School opened May 14th. It is small, for there are few children in the neighborhood,*[6] *but encouraging".*

His later reports included these:

> November 25, 1865:
>
> *"We greatly need a revival of religion in our midst, and for this a few faithful ones are daily praying.*[7] *May the Great Head of the Church be pleased to hear our prayers and send down upon us a rain of righteousness whereby the church may be quickened".*
>
> February 17, 1866:
>
> *"The repairs which the church has undergone have rendered it beautiful . . . and the indebtedness increased thereby has been liquidated".*

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[6] First sign in our records of a cloud on the horizon of our daughter church.

[7] It would appear that his prayer went unanswered, for at this time, with his left hand, Bebout was demoting our negro members to probationer status.

May 12, 1866:

"The children manifest but little interest in the study of the catechism (in what Utopia do they not?) . . . *We hope this year for a glorious revival of religion".*

But there was no glorious revival. By the Third Quarterly Conference of his final year Bebout had given up submitting reports. His Fourth and last Quarterly Conference, comparable to our annual meeting and therefore normally the most important of the year, was not even held.

Yet, we have evidence on the other side of the coin. Conference Journals show that the salary ("estimated support") was increased during Bebout's ministry to $400, and that our church actually paid him $500 and $540 in those two years — not only more than they had ever paid before, but a significant excess over what was expected. Added to this, we find that membership grew larger, too. At the end of his first year a slight increase had brought our total to 67. During the following year he enrolled about 20 probationers, so the total, when he left, was 88.

One of the five new full members, Bridgit Corley of Basking Ridge, was special. Bebout wrote in proud Spencerian opposite her name, "A convert from Romanism!" She was our first member to come from the Roman Catholic church, but was not with us very long. Just two years later she moved away from town.

In 1866 our denomination celebrated the "centennial year" of American Methodism. This honored, not the establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church — that was still 18 years away — but the first preaching in New York City by Philip Embury. The Newark Conference, with Drew Seminary (for men) already within its borders, decided to establish a college for women as its way of honoring 100 years of American Methodism. It was to be named "Centenary College Institute", and each church was asked to appoint a fund-raising committee for the project. Oscar Brown, George Wyckoff, George Baker and Isaac Keeeler saw to it that our congregation did its small part. One year later the offer of land and assistance from Hackettstown was accepted over the offers of Morristown and Madison, and in 1872 the new college opened.

In April, 1867, Sylvester Bebout left Basking Ridge to serve at Mount Harmon, then other small churches, as mentioned earlier. Not until 1876 would he receive another important pulpit such as he had occupied in Elizabeth before his trial. It was in Jersey City. Following that, he was pastor in churches in Paterson, Newark, Perth Amboy, Phillipsburg, then Staten Island and Newark again, and finally (1899-1900) Little Falls. At this last charge he saw the need for a new church. Although his health was failing and doctors warned that it would kill him, he struggled with regular duties augmented by building plans and subscriptions for the new church. On June 30, 1900 he died, virtually at his desk. He was survived by his wife, four daughters and a son, and was buried with his wife's family in Madison.

A close friend wrote at the time of his death that, "Sylvester Bebout had above average ability as a preacher . . . His sermons employed no sensationalism, but

stuck to the power and beauty of the Gospel for themes. Lucid, logical, forceful . . . he preached topically, not expositorially . . . He was a genuine man . . . hated shams . . . a man of conviction and sincerity".

The Elm Street Parsonage

Early in 1867, as the pastorate of Bishop Janes Church's tenth minister[8] was drawing to a close, the trustees decided that the makeshift arrangement for pastoral living quarters should be improved. William Day had lived either with a Methodist family or in the Methodist meeting house provided by Edmund Janes, and Edwin Day had boarded with the Hills. But after the Dickinson-Van Dorn marriage a parsonage was needed, and it seems likely that a house or apartment was rented for this purpose by the trustees. A room would have been enough for Sovereign, but Parsons, Nelson, Young and Bebout, all married, and Searles, with his parents, needed a parsonage. References in our records show that they each, in fact, had a rented one. But the changing rental arrangements, different in each situation, created an annual problem for the trustees.

Accordingly, it was decided that the church should own a home of its own, even though the debt had by then risen to $1400, of which $400 was on Evergreen Cemetery. It is possible that the house selected had been the one rented for Sylvester Bebout. Be this as it may, there is a recorded warranty deed, dated March 30, 1867, transferring ownership of the house and property on the southwest corner of Lewis Street and Elm Street (now South Maple Avenue) from Thomas Lewis and his wife to the Basking Ridge Methodist Episcopal Church. This became the first of three parsonages our church has owned. It was bought for $1400, exactly doubling our debt.

The house is still (in 1983) a residence, No. 137 South Maple. Judging from our Quarterly Conference reports, it probably is in better condition today than it was at any time during the 25 years it served as the Methodist parsonage. Twelve pastoral families would live in the Elm Street home, three blocks from the church. It was small and in poor condition, but it was a wise purchase. In the long run church debts are unimportant; they survive only until a minister is appointed who will not tolerate them. And, without a parsonage, we might not have been assigned some of the family-men ministers who were to spark the coming brighter years.

[8] As in previous church histories, we count Assistant Charles Barnes in this number.

CHAPTER VII

THE EARLY GOLDEN ERA

1867 - 1887

IN THE spring of 1867 Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church was entering a period of vigorous health and accomplishment. The next twenty years would outstrip any period of that length in our first century. Membership would climb to a level that would not be seen again until the post-World War II population explosion. Sparked by a string of popular, successful, dedicated pastors, the congregation would reach hitherto unequalled peaks in its service to the local area and to Methodism. The itinerate system in the Newark Conference would flourish at top effectiveness during this period, and within the Conference our church would earn a relative importance in outreach not matched for decades.

Of course the church in those days had few of the present-day rivals for the members' allegiance. There was no radio, no television, no movies, not even a telephone to distract their attention. A man tilled the soil, raised a family, and occasionally visited his neighbors. The church was his contact with God and his chief contact with mankind. Often the fundamentalist nature of his beliefs may have been idolatrous if examined from the modern viewpoint of a Tillich, but he *committed* himself. His convictions may have been narrow — in fact our history will reveal many examples of this — but they were *alive*. And twenty golden years would result.

Immense Popularity

ELBERT CLEMENT 1867 - 70

The pastoral assignments of April, 1867, brought to Basking Ridge another of its great ministers. His appointment was for three years, and the good effects of longer terms such as this would cause the Conference to continue this policy, by and large, for the rest of the century. Ministers called it "the three-year rule".

Elbert Clement came from early New England settlers who were proud of their English ancestry. His father's side traced back to Saxon stock around the year 1000. His mother's family, Rogers, traced eight generations to John Rogers, minister of the Church of England, who had been burned at the stake by Bloody Queen Mary in 1554.

Elbert was born at Rockland Lake, N.Y., November 28, 1838, and was educated both in public schools and by private tutors. As a young man he worked as a sales clerk in New York City. Soon after joining a Methodist church there, he was attracted to the ministry and enrolled at the Biblical Institute in Concord, N.H. — the first Methodist theological school in the country. After graduation he entered the Newark Conference and was assigned to Denville for one year. Then came Franklin, Elizabeth and several country circuits, before his assignment to Basking Ridge.

Clement was rated an excellent preacher. Never prosaic, his ideas were strong and original. His contemporaries admired his independence and said that he never waited to hear from church leaders before taking his stand. Probably he got his directions on his knees. His sturdy morality was tempered by an inborn graciousness. His obituary says that "he treated a foeman better than some people treat a friend".

His record at Basking Ridge bespeaks immense popularity — popularity so general that it doubtless was not rivaled by that of more than three or four others of our 48 pastors. The people loved him; they named their children after him; they suffered through the illnesses of his pretty young wife as if she were their own daughter. So deep was this affection that today, more than a century later, there are still some who testify to the love he inspired.

Clement kept the church membership, baptism and marriage records remarkably well, but like several other excellent Bishop Janes ministers he practically ignored pastoral reports. We learn more of his Basking Ridge accomplishments from his Presiding Elder's conference reports than from records he himself left us. Yet the rolls alone tell much of the story. Clement inherited 88 members and probationers; he left 116. Although this looks like a simple increase of 28, it involved much more than that. Post-war population shifts took many from town between 1867 and 1870. He had to add 42 full members and 16 new probationers to net this increase.

The new members came not only from Basking Ridge but from the neighboring settlements of Oak Stump (the present Pill Hill area), Logansville, Long Hill, Bailey's Mills and New Vernon. Among the local residents joining the church were the Basking Ridge Allens, who stemmed from the Revolutionary war hero, Ethan Allen; Jonathan and Asenath Fisher, whose daughter, Mrs. Harrison Wright, and grand-daughter, Betty (Mrs. Walter Vausse) would years later have important roles in the life of our church; and the forebears of our present-day (1983) members, Mrs. Kenneth Turner and her son Kenneth and his family.

Another man who, with his wife and daughter, joined our rolls in 1870 deserves special mention. He was Nicholas Bowers, who had a farm on what is now the central part of the Lyons Hospital property. His farmhouse was in the exact center of the present buildings, and the lane to his house later became the route of the entrance drive to the hospital when it was built (1928-30). Later he moved to a home, still standing, on South Maple Avenue, near the Passaic River. Nicholas

Bowers was a licensed lay preacher who became right-hand man to a succession of Bishop Janes pastors. He assisted at our church, helped even more at Pleasant Plains, and upon occasion supplied pulpits throughout the area. From the time he became a member, he was one of the hardest working laymen in our midst.

Elbert Clement baptized 14 adults and 16 children. The latter included two Fisher youngsters, Lizzie H. and *Elbert Clement* Fisher, the older brother and sister of Mrs. Harrison Wright. And he performed 17 marriages (post-war booms in this category are nothing new) — eleven of them in the new parsonage and six in private homes; none in the church.

In 1862 Clement himself had married Sarah Fernhead. They already had one child, Edward, when they arrived in Basking Ridge, and another, Elbert, was born one month later. Sarah's sweet nature and frail beauty caused the people here to take her right into their hearts. A year after her second baby was born she suffered her first attack of tuberculosis and almost died. Her husband and various church members attended her constantly. Quarterly Conference meetings were cancelled — one in 1868, three in 1870 — because of her illness. That the church progressed greatly during these distractions draws credit to Clement's organizational talent, the love of the people for him and Sarah, and the congregation's ability to carry much of the load. Of course it should be remembered that the *popular* pastor need only ask, and a job is as good as done.

We learn from the Newark Conference minutes that the Presiding Elder thought very highly of Elbert Clement and his congregation. The reference to our church in 1868 reads, "Basking Ridge increased her mission support by 60%, rented all her pews and added 30 probationers". A further check of the first item in conference financial records showed that this 60% increase brought Bishop Janes Church to the top of the list of all churches in our district. It is doubtful that our church at any other time in its first century held first place in the district in giving to missions — testimony to the vitality of Bishop Janes Church under the popular Elbert Clement. In 1869 the Presiding Elder reported, "Basking Ridge raised and paid $500 on its parsonage and has a $1000 subscription (pledges, incidentally, that mostly were not honored) against its $2400 church debt".

Not all of the stewardship at this time was directed to benevolences and debt reduction. The board raised pastoral support by 50% to $600 during Clement's first year. This would be the "designated" salary figure for seven years. But conference records show that our people paid Clement $755 in 1868, $750 in 1869 and $840 in 1870. By early 1870 the Board of Stewards was back to effective strength. Serving on it were Isaac Keeler, Oscar Brown, Ezra Dayton, William Allen, Thomas White, George Baker, Nathaniel Gillem and Elemuel Lamereaux. These men were the core of the strong lay leadership so helpful to this pastorate.

In April 1870 Clement was assigned to a Jersey City church and the congregation sorrowfully bade farewell to the young couple they liked so well. Sarah improved temporarily after their move, but after a short while she again began to fail, and soon her remaining strength left her. She died in her husband's arms in the par-

sonage living room. A fragile sacrifice to the demanding itineracy, she was still in her twenties. Although two pastorates had since intervened, the Bishop Janes congregation took it as a personal loss. Few were so loved as Elbert Clement and his delicate bride. Three years later he married Harriet Brown, who proved a devoted wife and mother to his children.

After Jersey City, Clement served churches in Spring Valley, Rutherford, Nyack, Boonton, New Prospect, Jersey City again, Bernardsville (1887)[1], Bloomfield, Irvington, Andover, Nutley, and finally Arcola (1906-09). He had completed a fifty-year ministry, yet in semi-retirement he served as a supply preacher for five more years. He died in the Brooklyn Methodist Hospital July 15, 1914.

Under Elbert Clement Bishop Janes Church had moved into its early golden era, probably unaware of it. The combination of strong pastorate and strong congregation was developing Basking Ridge Methodism roots powerful enough to survive many rough years ahead. Three of our neighboring Methodist churches would fail, four survive[2], and Bishop Janes Church, too, would be a survivor largely because of what was to be accomplished in the next two decades.

The Ex - G. I.

BENJAMIN F. SIMPSON 1870

The pastorate of our twelfth preacher was cut short at four months, his ministry at ten years. His loss affected both our church and the Newark Conference, for he had given promise of becoming one of the best.

Benjamin F. Simpson was born in York, Maine, on December 30, 1835. In 1853, while a student at Wesleyan Academy in Massachusetts, he joined the Methodist Church. He early demonstrated teaching and administrative ability, and when only 19 he was appointed headmaster of the Academy at Rahway, New Jersey. In 1858 he joined the First M. E. Church in Rahway, and the following year was granted an exhorter's license. Shortly thereafter deciding for the ministry, he left for the Biblical Institute in Concord, N.H., and was graduated there in 1862.

His first assignment was the pulpit in Roseville for two years. Then in April, 1864, he was transferred to Passaic, and there something strange happened. Ordained ministers were exempted from the army draft, but a clerical error caused Simpson to receive a notice to report to the infantry. He chose to take this as a call; not a clerk's mistake, but as God's will. Already very popular in Passaic, he was urged by his congregation to reveal his profession to the draft officials. Failing in this, they raised money to hire a draft substitute in his place, a common practice during the Civil War. But he refused this plan even more strongly.

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[1] William Day was the only other of our ministers to serve both the Basking Ridge and Bernardsville churches; Clement was the only one to do it at different times.

[2] Failures were the New Vernon, Cross Roads (Bedminster) and Pleasant Plains Churches, as well as congregations at Mine Mount, Stirling and Liberty Corner. The survivors were Bernardsville, Green Village, Gladstone and Mount Horeb.

So he became an infantryman, received minimum training, and fought in what conference minutes call "one of the hardest battles of the war", presumably around Petersburg. By October, 1864, his officers discovered his background and he was commissioned a chaplain for the rest of the war. He returned from Virginia just in time to marry his fiancee on the last day of June, 1865.

He was appointed at once to Millburn, then served Rockaway (1866-67) and Rockland Lake (1868-69). Although he was only 34, his health began to fail at this time. He arrived at his new charge in Basking Ridge in April, 1870, a sick man. It soon was discovered that he had cancer, but he continued to serve to the limits of his strength.

At the first Quarterly Conference, in May, he reported, "The (Sunday) school is too thinly attended . . . I know of no class of baptized children".[3] and that "G. Baker and Ezra Dayton were appointed a committee to cooperate with the pastor in carrying out the Annual Conference Resolution relative to raising funds for a Conference Seminary". At the second Quarterly Conference two months later (his last) he reported, "There are two Sunday Schools dying for the want of interest on the part of the Adult members of the church". He concluded with the admission that "The pastoral work has received but little attention, sickness and absence being the excuse".

In spite of illness-shattered leadership the church carried on very well during these months. Momentum from the Clement pastorate, with a big assist from class leaders Gillem and Leonard, brought our membership back to the Dickinson-Searles level. Each of them brought eight of Clement's probationers into full membership.

By late summer Simpson no longer could continue. He and his wife moved to her father's home in Hanover. At this time of the year the Conference had no ordained ministers free, so the bishop assigned a local preacher to take over the charge. When they learned that a layman would occupy the pulpit, the Board of Stewards, which four months earlier had voted to increase pastoral support to $900, dropped the figure back to $600. Benjamin Simpson continued to lose strength, and died in Hanover, July 12, 1871. The funeral service was held in Orange, where he was buried in Rosedale Cemetery. In his few months in Basking Ridge he had won friends and respect. A memorial service for him was held in our church.

The Church Extender

CHARLES S. WOODRUFF 1870 - 73

Charles S. Woodruff came closest to being a local product. He was born (July 9, 1847) and raised in Mendham, where he joined the Methodist Church. He was educated at Pennington School and Wesleyan University. In 1858, when he was ten,

[3] We find throughout our history that it often happened, whenever an average or below average minister succeeded an outstanding one, one of his first acts was to look for something with which to find fault. In Simpson's case this should be forgiven; he was by no means a well man.

he had witnessed part of the very first session of the new Newark Conference, at Morristown. Thirteen years later, when it was next held in Morristown, he joined it. This was the start of 59 uninterrupted years of preaching. As a devoted conference member he must have set some kind of record by attending 69 consecutive Annual Conference sessions.

Like several of our pastors, Woodruff was a living disciple of John and Charles Wesley. Their teachings were reflected in almost every sermon he preached. A friend wrote that "the tradition, spirit and exposition of the Wesleys found expression in Charles Woodruff's evangelical preaching".

In August, 1870, Woodruff was completing his ministerial studies in preparation for his ordination at the conference session eight months later. When, at this time, Simpson had to give up the Basking Ridge pulpit, the Presiding Elder and Bishop Janes asked Woodruff to take over, and he and his bride of four months moved into the Elm Street parsonage at once. If there were fears about a local preacher, still a layman, taking charge, they were quickly allayed. Earlier Searles had started here before being ordained. It had worked amazingly well, and it would work well again.

Woodruff, not being the "I-sense-a-dearth-of-things-spiritual" type, saw real potential in the Basking Ridge situation. Happy with his new charge, he wrote within two months as follows:

> *"Since the last report* (referring to Simpson's 'There are two Sunday Schools dying for the want of interest . . .') *there has been a resurrection of interest. The average attendance has increased and all are becoming interested. The pastor talks to the children every Sabbath . . . (and has) tried to visit every member of the congregation . . . $250 has been expended in repairs and furniture for the parsonage . . . The general state of the charge is very encouraging. The people have kindly sustained me and we are expecting a great revival . . ."*

However, Woodruff was not one to *wait* for the expected revival; he organized it — the first of four or five that he conducted in Basking Ridge and Pleasant Plains. All were successful; not as successful as the professed conversions would indicate, but this was always true of revivals. Even today thousands weep before Billy Graham, but far fewer affiliate. Yet, when enough time passed after Woodruff's revivals for the chaff to drop out, some stuck, and our church grew steadily. At the Quarterly Conference meeting in December, 1870, Woodruff reported:

> *"Ten children have sought religion . . . God has prospered us. About 60 have been anxious; 40 professed conversion; have received 30 on probation. The brethren have been much quickened and have stood by me most faithfully and have been most kind to us and liberal in their support".*

At this time Newark Conference records show the full members and proba-

tioners at Basking Ridge totaling 133. This was a new high in our church's history. The minutes of the December meeting also reveal that the trustees reported that, in addition to the $250 spent on the parsonage, $200 was spent to reduce the cemetery debt and there was still $100 in the treasury. Our total debt was $2600, and the insurance carried on the chruch was $3000; on the parsonage, $1000. The meeting also recommended that C. S. Woodruff be admitted to the Newark Conference, and that his local preacher's license, as well as Stephen Haines' exhorter's license, be renewed.

At the end of his first year Woodruff reported:

> *"I found church finances all behind and no accounts regularly kept since 1865, and the parsonage in need of repair. I spent much time in straightening up the financial accounts, paying debts, etc. . . . Much work was spent on the Parsonage. The cellar drained and cemented, blinds put on all the windows, and the house improved with a coat of paint. During the winter we enjoyed a glorious revival in which there were over fifty conversions. The people contributed generously to the benevolent collections and gave the pastor a donation amounting to $350".*

Woodruff had further plans. Another local preacher, be it remembered, was now on the rolls, — Nicholas Bowers of Lyons. Woodruff wrote that, when he arrived in Basking Ridge,

> *"I found the Rev. N. Bowers preaching at the Pleasant Plains schoolhouse very acceptably to the people, and I allowed him to continue, I holding the oversight".*

Here we see that Woodruff quickly recognized what several pastors here would have to learn: Bowers was very useful, but exactly who was boss had to be established at once, or he would take over.

The Pleasant Plains congregation was stirring. One of their neighbors, Joseph Blake, gave them a choice piece of land on the southwest corner of the intersection of Pleasant Plains Road and Lord Stirling Road. The property was bounded on the south and west by an attractive wooded elbow of Black Brook. In the fall of 1870 Woodruff wrote, "We had a good revival there and I made efforts at once to induce the people to build a church". Early in 1871 the Basking Ridge congregation learned that it was to missionize a new church. George Baker, Silas Leonard and Joseph Blake were appointed as a building committee for the church.

In March, 1871, Woodruff was accepted by the Conference. He was ordained and returned "at the earnest request of the people" to Basking Ridge. He wrote at this time:

> *"I preached twice in Basking Ridge and once at Pleasant Plains on Sundays, besides occasionally during the week. The building of the church at Pleasant Plains involved much of my time and labor. I*

had to take entire oversight from the beginning to the end. The corner stone was laid May 23, 1871, and the house dedicated by Bishop Edmund Janes February 15, 1872."

The Pleasant Plains Methodist Episcopal Church was a traditional white wood frame country church, but, being 60 by 40 feet (compared to our 31 x 52), it was half again larger than Bishop Janes Church. In spite of this, and in spite of war-caused inflation since our 18-year old church had been built, it cost only $100 more, — $3800 to be exact. We may assume that the lumber mills of the Great Swamp provided much of the wood as a gift. The building was simpler and not as imposing as our church, however. No record can be found of how much of the $3800 was raised by the Pleasant Plains congregation or how much the parent church contributed. The Newark Conference Journal that year stated, "There will be no embarrassing debt upon it". This report continued in sort of a comedy of errors which we will correct parenthetically:

> "A new church has been dedicated on the Woodrow charge (no doubt 'Woodruff' is meant, or more properly 'Basking Ridge') by the exertions of their pastor, J. Cowins". (Jeremiah Cowins would not become the pastor at Basking Ridge for twenty years).

Woodruff and Bowers shared the pulpit, and great expectations were the order of the day for our daughter of the swamp. Woodruff later wrote:

> *"Because of the labor with* (the new church building project), *it was utterly impossible to satisfy my people with pastoral labor, but I never heard that they were dissatisfied with my pulpit labors, and I did not neglect the interests of the church. We had a good revival at Basking Ridge, but not so great as the previous year. We reduced the debt (by) $200 and built by gratis labor a barn, much needed, on the Parsonage lot. I had many funerals to attend . . . especially as a church was our loss great, five of its members dying. One of these, Stephen Haines, an exhorter, gave promise of usefulness as a minister of the gospel . . . There was peace throughout the borders of Zion. May the Lord continue to prosper Israel".*

Obviously, to Woodruff "peace in Zion" meant hard work in Basking Ridge.

In July of 1871 Woodruff reported to the Quarterly Conference meeting that:

> *"Some new books for the library have been purchased*[4] *. . . I visited almost every family in both congregations . . . Pew rents of $131.65 received and applied to the pastor".*

The Fourth Quarterly Conference, in January 1872, was held at the "New

[4] It seems that nearly all of the books which our records show were bought for the church library have been subject, over the years, to "midnight requisition". If we still had all of the thousands of volumes reported to have been purchased or donated from time to time we would need another large room to contain them.

church in Pleasant Plains". This was the first year in the history of Methodism that lay delegates were admitted to the General (and Regional) Conference. Although called "the Reverend" Bowers locally, Nicholas Bowers was technically a layman. At this meeting he was elected our first lay representative to the Laymen's Electoral Conference.

In discussing ministerial support we have been, and for brevity will continue, using the term "salary". "Estimated support" was the term used then. Either way, it should be remembered that the dollars quoted did not represent cash received, but cash received *plus* the estimated value of the quarters provided. Woodruff's estimated support which the congregation pledged to raise was $600 per year; he actually received during his three years $840, $950 and $800.

Laura and May Woodruff

During her husband's term in Basking Ridge (they had been married but four months when they arrived), Laura Woodruff was a popular, useful member of the congregation. She always had possessed musical talent, and had a beautiful, natural singing voice. At Bishop Janes Church and many of their subsequent charges she organized an effective singing program in the Sunday Schools and was the soprano soloist in the choir. Her conference memoir called her "energetic, unselfish . . . vigorous in faith and devotion . . . her organizing ability and tactful spirit made her a leader and won the hearts of people everywhere". Her two daughters died, but several sons survived, including Dr. C. Clarence Woodruff, a minister in the Newark Conference for 41 years.

In 1883 Laura suffered a lung hemorrhage but lived on after it for ten years. Until 1892 she would not stop work. She suffered quietly, then, for another fifteen months, cheered by the conversion of her youngest son. It is said that her singing voice, lost for many months, came back to her on the last night in May, 1893, and she sang three full hymns. The next day she died.

Woodruff's second wife, though she played no part in our church's history, was important to Methodism, both because of her family and in her own right. Her father was for many years Methodism's Foreign Missionary Secretary. Bishop A. W. Leonard was her brother. Her son and daughter devoted their lives to the Board of Missions and Church Extension.

May Woodruff herself was an outstanding leader among women of the church both nationally and within the Conference. She worked for forty years developing the Home Missionary work of the church. In her conference memoir Dr. George Vogel wrote, "When one thinks of the outstanding personalities and leaders of the Women's Home Missions Society, the name of May Woodruff will surely come to mind. She was not only the national organizer in title, but in creative achievements, as is witnessed by the Methodist Institutions that are products of her devotion and work . . . She advocated the United Women's Mission Societies and union of the churches".

Woodruff conducted three revivals in Basking Ridge and at least two in Pleasant Plains. He reported 30 to 50 "conversions" at each, — a total of more than 200. Yet, by checking membership records, we find that he later brought 23 resulting probationers to full membership. This is notable because it was so many, not because it was so few. Near the end of his term here he cleared the rolls of all inactive members, set up separate records for the Pleasant Plains Church, and recommended to the Conference that that church now was strong enough to be made a separate charge, with Nicholas Bowers filling the pulpit. His recommendations were accepted.

Woodruff had increased total membership from 121 to 138. Then, overnight, the Basking Ridge membership total dropped to 100, as 38 members left our rolls for the new "separate" church at Pleasant Plains. This would be about the only *loss* of members by Bishop Janes Church of which the people could be proud. The shift from technical membership in the Basking Ridge Charge to membership exclusively at Pleasant Plains was led by Samuel Leonard and his clan, at this time numbering ten full members. In addition there were five Bairds, three Elstons, three Meekers, three Faulkners, two Benbrooks, two Crues, and Catherine Bender, Charles Collie, Silas Hinds, Aaron Haines, and John and Elizabeth Sanders. These people made up the first congregation at the new Pleasant Plains Church. Local preacher Nicholas Bowers became their first pastor. The records of this church have been lost, so we have little further information about the names of its later members.

A son, Alfred Degroot, was born to Charles and Laura Woodruff on February 10, 1872, and six months later he was baptized by Rev. Dykeman. During his three years here Woodruff performed eleven weddings, and it is interesting to note the recorded occupations of some of the grooms; three were farmers, two were carpenters, one was a mason and one was a baker, — a typical cross section of the occupations of our early congregation.

Leaving Basking Ridge in April, 1873, Woodruff was assigned to Glen Gardner, and following that, to Dunellen, Staten Island, Bayonne, Nyack, Montclair, Newark, Paterson, Dover, Bayonne again, and Bloomfield. Then he closed his ministry with two of the earliest "long" pastorates in our Conference: 5 years at Flemington and 13 years at Allendale, ending in 1925. Charles and May Woodruff retired in 1926, and some years later they moved to the Methodist Home for the Aged at Ocean Grove. There Charles died on January 6, 1940; May on February 16, 1948. Both were buried at Hilltop Cemetery in Mendham.

Charles S. Woodruff does not seem to have been a great preacher, but one would not suspect it by his work at Basking Ridge. What he may have lacked in inspiration he made up for by application. Through the years following his ministry here he worked on his doctorate and became one of our first ministers to win that degree. By missionizing a new church from Basking Ridge, he accomplished an important service which no other Bishop Janes pastor would match. With Clement before him and Lacey following him, Woodruff was bracketed between two of our finest ministers, yet his record fits comfortably between theirs.

Shades of the Early Greats

SAMUEL P. LACEY 1873 - 76

At this point (the spring of 1873) our history had moved twenty years beyond construction of our first church building and we were well into what has been called "The Early Golden Era". Twenty-five years later our turn-of-the-century pastor, Joseph E. Appley, would make a study of the first forty-five years of our church's history. In his resulting story of Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church he wrote that the pastorate which followed that of Charles S. Woodruff clearly "was the high water mark" of those forty-five years. We have today only rather sparse records of the period, so Mr. Appley's opinion is of particular import.

The new minister in 1873 was Samuel P. Lacey. Judging by Rev. Appley's account we would expect superlatives in his memoir in the Conference Journal the year he died. Instead we read, "While his ministry here (in the Newark Conference) was not marked with conspicuous achievements, it always was filled with wise and noble service". Anyone familiar with praise-suffused conference memoirs will recognize this as small praise indeed.

Who was right, Mr. Appley or conference opinion? What is the explanation for the difference?

The story, as it unfolds, will show that Mr. Appley was right. But there *is* an explanation for conference displeasure. It is threefold: First, Samuel Lacey, great minister that he surely was, three times quit the ministry to enter business. And moreover, he was very successful at it. Second, we find another clue in his memoir, "He was always at the forefront of new ideas and methods . . . He favored the 'forward look' and was never a stand-patter". No reminder is necessary that being 'at the forefront of new ideas' does not create popularity in a bureaucracy. Finally, he was unsuccessful in trying to keep his last charge alive. Off and on for eight years he worked to keep the Linden church open, but in 1896 it fell to seven members and services were discontinued. This, being the last, would be the best remembered impression.

Samuel P. Lacey was the second of our pastors to be born in England; he was born in Yorkshire, August 19, 1836. His father was a preacher in the Primitive Methodist Church. This splinter group had come about when Lorenzo Dow, a Methodist missionary to America, had returned to England and had set up large American-style camp meetings and revivals with Hugh Bourne and William Clowes. They were expelled, but enough discontented Methodist clergymen rallied 'round so that a new denomination, the Primitive Methodists, was formed. In 1829 a group of them migrated to the United States, in 1846 a smaller group to Canada. Those of us who would think that, with their reason for existence as a separate body having been removed by migration, they would have rejoined the regular Methodists, do not know Protestants. There were still, in 1960, more than eighty churches in this group.

Samuel was ten when the elder Lacey moved the family to Canada in the

migration of 1846. Intelligent and fluent, Samuel received a local preacher's license from the Primitive Methodists in 1858, but within two years he decided that the whole purpose of the splinter group was silly. He shifted to the regular Methodist Episcopal Church, was ordained in 1863, and served various churches in Canada until 1868. In March of that year, at the age of 32, he left home territory for reasons unknown and was admitted by transfer to the Newark Conference. After serving at Flanders for one year, and at Mechanicsville for three, he was assigned to our pulpit in the spring of 1873.

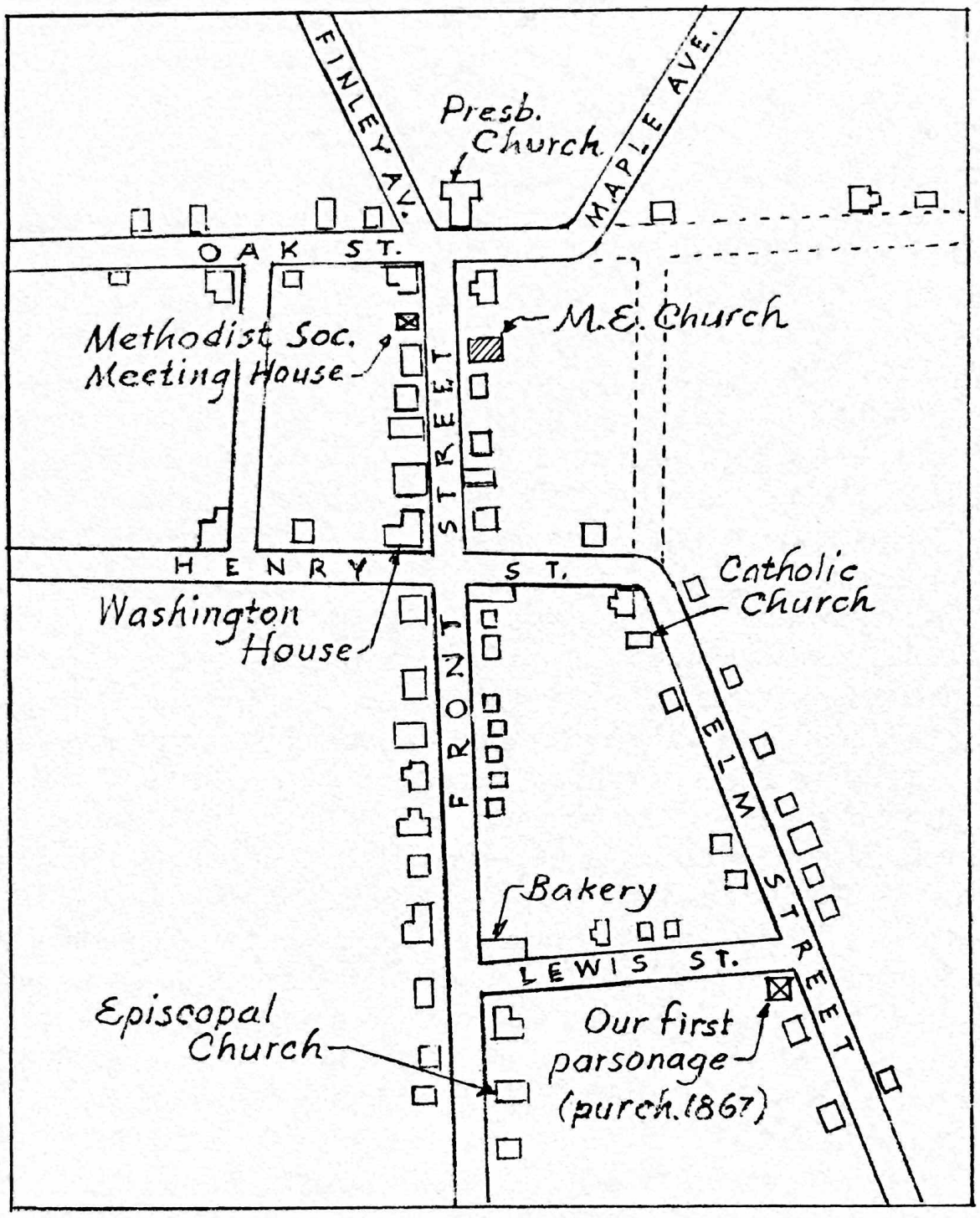
When he arrived there were only 100 on the rolls of our church, due to the recent weaning of the Pleasant Plains congregation. This was a smaller total than Edwin Day had left us fifteen years earlier. A poor pastor at this time would have been most unfortunate; instead, we received Lacey. Here again we have a minister of whose methods and particulars we can find little. He left us none of the detailed, revealing reports of Charles Woodruff. Instead, we have his undocumented *results* and a few scattered references. With these alone we must try to visualize the man and his pastorate.

Much of the first year was spent in feeling out the situation. There were no Dickinsonian achievements within the first twelve months. And no promise of things to come was evident in his report of October 18, 1873: "No Missionary Collections have been made". However, the Sunday School that year was reported, as ever, "in a healthy, growing condition", and Lacey wrote, "We have by great exertion added a new library of 127 volumes".

Then, unheralded, came one of the most successful years in the history of Bishop Janes Church, Lacey's second, April 1874 to April 1875. It began when he conducted possibly the largest Methodist revival of all time in Basking Ridge. About 75 names were added to the probationer rolls, and 30 of these were baptized, along with 5 infants. Before the year was out Lacey brought 28 to full membership, and during his third year he added 8 more. After removing the names of those probationers whose revival excitement had proved transient, there were still 16 left who would prove qualified early in the next pastorate. With all these additions, less the usual losses, our total, according to official conference figures, rose from 100 members when he came to 150 when he left — an impressive net gain.

Eight marriages are recorded during this pastorate, six involving local people. Opposite the record of the first one Lacey wrote, "A dark night . . . My first marriage on the charge . . . Oh for a shower". Opposite another he wrote, "Another dark night! Shower didn't come!" After still another non-local wedding, probably an elopement, he added, "A fifty-cent job".

Several items testify to Lacey's popularity with the congregation and the people's great satisfaction with his work. Two of these have been mentioned: Rev. Appley's later judgment and the great increase in membership. Added to this, conference records show that, although pastoral support at Bishop Janes Church was set at $600, $600 and $650 during his three years, he actually was paid $750, $800 and $900. This last figure would not be reached again during the lifetime of our first



BASKING RIDGE in 1873

Map of the village center twenty years after the first church was built. Note the locations of the early Methodist meeting house, our first parsonage (on Elm Street) and the Catholic church.

church building. Another item adds to the general impression: the Quarterly Conference minutes of August 4, 1875, read, "S. P. Lacey was given a vacation for three weeks" — the first pastoral vacation voted by the officials of our church. In 1874 the people raised $500 for parsonage improvements. And finally, we have Rev. Appley's account that before Lacey left, church and parsonage debts were nearly wiped out.

Samuel Lacey worked hard to improve the Sunday School. He considered it in good condition when he took over from Woodruff, and said so in his first pastoral report. Still, his efforts increased the rolls to 93 and average attendance to 70 one year later. These numbers increased to 130 and 80 in 1875, and to 134 and 80 early in 1876.

During the summer of 1874 Lacey called together the music committee, consisting of himself and William Allen, Samuel DeCoster, and Sarah Lamereaux. Through their efforts $160 was raised as down payment, and a new Estey organ was purchased for the sanctuary. Our records before this date tell nothing of instrumental music in our worship services, but probably a piano or small parlor organ had been used. The new Estey was a standard church model which, like the Model T Ford, won a world-wide reputation for ruggedness and durability. We have no record of a regular church organist until ten years later, but it would seem likely that the new Estey in 1874 was played by Sarah Lamereaux, as indicated by her presence on the music committee. Such a service at this time would, of course, have been voluntary.

The 4th Quarterly Conference, in January of 1876, was attended by Presiding Elder T. H. Smith, the pastor, Local Deacon Nicholas Bowers, seven stewards, and two trustees, William Van Dorn and Oscar Conkling, who were not members of the church. This group approved quarterly expenditures which are listed below as a typical Bishop Janes Church "budget" of the period:

"Expenses for October, November, December, 1875:

To the Pastor	$250	To Tracts (Methodist propaganda)	$3
To Missions	50	To Church Extension	2
To Presiding Elder	25	To Education	2
To Conference Claimants	20	To the Bishop	2
To Kansas Suffering (Apparently flood or cyclone disaster)	20	To Freedman's Aid (Help for former slaves)	2
		TOTAL	$376"

At Pleasant Plains pastoral support had been set, from the first, at $300. His first year there, however, (1873) Nicholas Bowers was paid nothing. His second year he received $250, and his third, $218. Under the "three-year rule" he was replaced in 1876 by supply preacher Thomas Sharp. Either receiving no new assignment or accepting none, Bowers at this time returned to the rolls of Bishop Janes Church. The original congregation at the Plains had risen in these three years from 38 to 58. However, this figure reflected the addition of about a dozen Methodists from Stirling. In March, 1875, the Newark Conference had recognized the little group in Stirling as a "stated" charge and had attached it to the Pleasant Plains Church. Thomas Sharp preached in Stirling Sunday afternoons in either a private home or the school house.

After Basking Ridge, Samuel Lacey was assigned to Newark for three years,

served at Springfield for another three years, and then another year (1882-83) in Newark. When he left us, in April 1876, Bishop Janes Church gave every indication that it would become one of the most vital rural churches in the Conference. Lacey's work had been tremendously fruitful. As a result local Methodism had acquired powerful momentum and our Early Golden Era had begun.

As a young man of twenty, Lacey had married Mary Searles[5] in Canada. She was a popular parsonage wife here, but toward the end of their stay her health failed. Only months after their moving to Newark she died, after twenty years of marriage. Five years later Lacey married Laura Meeker of Newark and, although the retread groom was 42, they proceeded to raise five strapping youngsters. In them we find the reason why their father's ministry covered only 35, instead of 41 years. His six years in business provided their support and funds for their education.

In 1883 Samuel Lacey requested "supernumerary" status. This term referred to a sometimes permanent, sometimes temporary semi-retirement. Actually, anyone granted this status no longer gave full time to the ministry, often because of poor health, but usually they were offered part-time service. Lacey, then 47, moved to Cranford and entered into business there. There had been little Methodist activity in that town, so he proceeded to organize a congregation and promoted the building of the first Methodist church there in 1884. The following year the Newark Conference appointed him as its first regular pastor. But two years later he again applied for supernumerary status and spent another two years as a successful businessman. Still, God and the Conference would not let him alone. In 1889 he was once again recalled to the ministry and for the next nine years served as pastor at Linden, then Newark, and again at Linden. In 1898 he shifted, for the third time, from the ministry to business, then in 1901, at the age of 65, he retired from both fields.

In his later years Lacey grew nostalgic over the attractive little town where his ministry had been so effective. In retirement he visited it often, and finally bought a plot in Evergreen Cemetery. When he died, April 30, 1926, he was buried there, like Dickinson, in an unmarked grave. Only one stone stands in the family plot today, that of a grandson, killed in World War II. It seems strange that the mortal remains of both the founder of our cemetery (Dickinson) and one of our finest pastors (Lacey) lie forgotten and unmarked in the burial ground of the church they loved so much and served so well.

We have titled the Lacey pastorate "Shades of the Early Greats". This was done because, like William Day, he was born in England; like Elbert Clement, he was extremely popular here; like William Searles, he won respect for Methodism in Basking Ridge; like Day and Parsons, he added to the musical tradition of our church; like William Day and Searles, he increased the rolls by about 50 members and probationers, and like Dickinson and Clement, he brought over 40 to "full" membership.

As we mentioned earlier, Lacey seems to have been rated "run-of-the-mill" by the Newark Conference. Possibly the records of the Springfield Church say "No"

[5] No relation to William Searles, our sixth pastor.

to this. Certainly the ghostly churches of Newark have forgotten and would have nothing to say on the subject, and Cranford, only if it remembers its history, would contradict conference judgment. So we at Bishop Janes must do so! It may have fallen to our church alone to keep alive the memory of a great minister, Samuel P. Lacey.

The Railroad

In January, 1872, the New Jersey West Line Railroad (later absorbed by the Lackawanna) was completed from Summit to Bernardsville, and the first train ran on the 29th of the month. The railroad was to have tremendous impact upon our area, but the changes would not happen over night.

The first such change, affecting our congregation, occurred when Oscar Conkling, one of our church trustees, opened a lumber and coal yard directly southeast of the depot. The original yard next to the Basking Ridge station is now the site of several homes. The second occurred when one of our stewards, Ezra Dayton, arranged for special peach trains to transport the fruit from his 25,000 bearing trees. His orchard was located northwest of the Mount Airy - Pill Hill Road intersection, and was one of the most productive peach orchards in New Jersey.

At first the new railroad was used chiefly in this way, carrying freight and goods to the community and transporting our local farm products. Then for a while around the turn of the century it became a big factor in the development of Basking Ridge as a summer resort. But its greatest and most enduring effect, consolidated after World War II and assisted by the automobile, was to transform Basking Ridge from a farm community into a suburb of the metropolitan area. After World War II, due in large measure to the railroad, Bishop Janes Church would lose its rural characteristics.

Man of Distinction

JOSEPH W. DALLY 1876 - 79

Our 15th pastor was Joseph W. Dally. Conference records list his birth date, March 22, 1843, but they neither locate his birthplace, describe his early years, nor tell of his schooling. Instead, they skip to his 23rd year, 1866, when four milestones had been passed: he had been accepted into the Newarrk Conference, was ordained, was married to Martha Lockwood of Paterson, and was assigned to his first charge, Tappan and Middletown. There is every reason to assume that he was native to the northern New Jersey-southern New York area. His ministry continued as follows: Readington-Allerton 1867-69, "located" (temporarily furloughed from preaching) from 1870 through 1872, Bloomsbury 1873-75, and assigned to Basking Ridge in 1876.

Dally was perhaps the most distinguished minister to serve our church. His photograph reveals perfect grooming, set off by carefully trimmed mustache and

goatee, and a likeness to the southern gentleman stereotype. Behind this facade was a man loved by his contemporaries, who left us such comments as these: "Moroseness and the spirit of complaint were altogether alien to Dally's nature . . . He found happiness in contributing to the happiness of others . . . Fidelity and humility were paramount in him, and his piety and culture were never paraded . . . He possessed a good sense of humor and brilliant conversational powers".

All considered, he seems to have been a good choice to succeed the sparkling Lacey. For one thing, he was not self-conscious about his predecessor's outstanding pastorate. Initial reports following such pastorates usually complain of a leaky roof, some unpaid bills, or several errors in the rolls. Not so with Joseph Dally. His earliest reports reflected no such undercurrents of self doubt, but stated:

> *"I found the Basking Ridge Church in very good condition, thanks to Brother Lacey"* . . . and *"The charge is in good condition, spiritually and financially"*.

In 1876 the Cross Roads (actually Lesser Cross Roads) Methodist Episcopal Church, located at the present Bedminster center, was suffering its death agonies. Our Conference discarded the idea of attaching it to the Peapack (now Gladstone) church, although this would have seemed natural, since they were such close neighbors. Also passed over was a union with Oldwick or Bernardsville. The excellent condition of Bishop Janes Church at the close of the Lacey pastorate prompted the Conference, instead, to assign Cross Roads church to our charge in one last effort to keep it alive. So, in April, 1876, when Joseph Dally arrived in Basking Ridge, he found that church and congregation, now dwindled to less than ten members, part of his charge.

Apparently Dally did his best. He buggied down there Sunday afternoons to conduct worship, but when at last only two or three showed up and membership dropped even lower, he stopped going. Before the year ended, the doors of Cross Roads Methodist Episcopal Church were closed forever.

Locally, Dally went to work on the list of 40 probationers left by Lacey. In this he was successful, quickly bringing 14 of them into full membership. Four others joined by transfer of letter (usually recorded in those days as "transfer of certificate"). At this point his success with membership tailed off. In the latter half of his pastorate he brought only four probationers to full membership, and no probationers were added.

One of these four was George Lawrence, who was the last negro member of our church and the only one accepted after the Civil War. In June, 1877, at the age of 14, he was baptized, along with two other (white) children, and a year later he was accepted by Dally and the congregation as a full member. We know little about him or his family, and even less about a young white man, Martin McKinney, a member of our church who became his close friend. In July, 1880, during a subsequent pastorate, these two men were to come to the pastor and request their letters. Later that month the pastor would report to the Quarterly Conference why the

17-year-old negro and his companion had made this request. His exact words, recorded in the minutes, were:

> *"Brother Mac and Brother Lawrence have taken their certificates and gone to Baltimore to attend college preparatory to the work of preaching the gospel".*

As far as we know, these men may have been the first members of our church to enter the ministry.

Although the Pleasant Plains Church was now a separate charge, its people still had to rely upon the ordained minister at Basking Ridge for marriages and baptisms. Already there were signs that "separation" of the new church had been premature. Usually a church so set aside was able, or gave promise of being able, to support a full-time ordained minister. But growth had stopped at Pleasant Plains, and the addition of the Stirling congregation had not helped, for that group dwindled away, and after 1877 lost recognition for a time as a "stated" charge. The Plains church, too, remained too small, with less than 50 persons, to maintain a successful program. One-year pastorates by supply preachers Thomas Sharp and S. H. Jones had been fairly effective, but they received only $200 and $145 respectively. So, in April, 1877, the pulpit in the swamp again was turned over to Nicholas Bowers for another three-year term.

With both Stirling and Cross Roads now defunct, Basking Ridge and Pleasant Plains each functioned as independent churches, without satellites, from 1877 to 1880. The Basking Ridge Quarterly Conference of October 12, 1877, recommended that:

> ". . . the church property at Cross Roads be turned over to the benefit of the church at Liberty Corner".

The record should have read ". . . the *congregation* at Liberty Corner", for no Methodist church ever existed in that village. From subsequent events we know that the Conference did not act upon this recommendation, probably because the Liberty Corner group was so small that it never earned recognition as a "stated" charge. The few Methodists there usually worshipped at Bishop Janes Church, or became Presbyterians.

During this period class leadership went through its first changes. Hitherto, Samuel Leonard at Pleasant Plains, Nathaniel Gillem at Basking Ridge, and the Bishop Janes pastor always had served as the class leaders. But Leonard died, and Gillem at last was given a vacation from these responsibilities. Our class records under Dally read as follows:

> "There are three classes: The pastor's meets on Tuesday nights in the church, I. W. Lee's meets on Sunday morning in the same place, and Rev. Bowers' meets on Friday night at Liberty Corner".

Obviously, Bowers was making an effort to build a congregation at Liberty Corner, but it was not to be. No further mention of this work would appear in our records.

While Joseph Dally was our pastor there occurred two important events which seem to have received little attention; our records are blank concerning both of them. First, Bishop Janes died September 18, 1876. No local reference to our patron bishop can be found after his dedication of the Pleasant Plains Church in February, 1872. No reference to his death went into our records, and suprisingly it seems that no memorial service was held here for the man who had made it all possible. And second, March of 1878 came and went with apparently no one recognizing that it was the 25th anniversary of our establishment as a stated charge.

These oversights cast much less reflection upon Dally than upon our congregation and its self-preoccupation. After all, since 1872 only Rachel Sanders of our charter members had died, so we still had ten of these. It is strange that our people did not highly honor the passing of "our" bishop, for no longer would Presiding Elders or District Superintendents — much less bishops — pay much attention to our little country church. But the people, of course, did not then know that. The *need* for men of the caliber of Edmund Janes and our other early leaders would become evident many times during our next seventy-five years, but that need often would not be met. For the Methodist itineracy was past its peak by the late 1880's. Outstanding young men had begun to turn to other fields than the ministry. The days when a small country church could expect pastors such as we had luckily had in Basking Ridge were over. Yet, unlike New Vernon, Bedminster, Stirling and others not so close, Bishop Janes Church would *not* fail, even in this Presbyterian stronghold. We would not be able to count upon an unbroken chain of strong pastorates in later years, but we would be blessed with enough of them so that, with the help of a loyal nucleus within the congregation, they would bring the church through its most difficult trials.

Other items of interest are found in the Quarterly Conference minutes of Dally's three years. We find, for example, that modern living had caught up with the people of our church by the meeting in November, 1876, when it was noted that

> "Bros. Dally, Bowers and Lee were appointed a committee to visit Bro. _____ and wife in regard to procuring a Devorce (sic) for Mrs. _____".

Time would prove that appointing a special church committee is not the best way to handle a divorce, but in 1876 the problem was unfamiliar to our people.

And in the minutes of the meeting in October, 1877, we learn of another innovation:

> "On motion a weekly envelope system was adopted".

Although this was the beginning of a new method of raising money at Bishop Janes Church, and although other churches at this time (Hackettstown, for example) were finding that the substitution of envelopes and pledges for pew rents was improving the people's stewardship, the practice of renting pews was not discontinued in our church until some years later.

The whole country had suffered a business depression since 1873, but for four

years our records show no signs of it. Its worst effects may have reached farm areas more slowly, and probably, too, Lacy's excellent management minimized its effects on our church. The peak of the depression was the panic of '77. This ruined Daniel Drew and, as a result, Drew Seminary faced a devastating financial crisis. Our church, like all other Methodist churches, was asked to contribute toward saving it. That same year our receipts took a sharp drop, and for a long time no pastor here would be able to write, as Dally had, that our condition was "good . . . financially".

Returning now to the Quarterly Conference minutes, we read:

> February 15, 1878: "A unanimous vote for the Pastor returns (sic) another year was passed".

This practice of Fourth Quarterly Conference vote on the pastor's return began during Charles Woodruff's pastorate. That it was a determining factor in making assignments seems doubtful, but the ritual would continue.

> July 21, 1878: "It was voted that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated upon the first Sabbath of each month".

So this practice, while not since then observed with unbroken continuity, goes back further than many supposed.

> October 20, 1878: "The new Methodist Hymn Book was introduced to our congregation October first".

Earlier, members had had to buy their own hymnals; the new ones were placed in the pews. So, under Lacey we had acquired an Estey organ, and under Dally, hymnals. Step by step musical worship was to grow with our church.

Some years later it was remembered that Dally was responsible for having horse sheds built in the church yard, and the record was amended to include this information. It was implied that it bothered him during winter church services to think of the horses standing outside, unprotected from the cold winds.

Pastoral support during his three years was set at $650, $600 and $600. But he actually received $850, $650 and $600. This downward trend did not reflect upon his popularity; actually he was well-liked, and he brought dedication and ability to his pastorate. Rather, it was the result of the depression and of Dally's one major weakness, a weakness at evangelism. Unfortunately for both Dally and our people, this is the one flaw which, at Bishop Janes far more than the average church, seems to have been most damaging, the one flaw which could overshadow the effects of the best of abilities and efforts. Membership and evangelism always has called for unusually diligent work at our church, perhaps because of its position as one of the "small" churches in town. Great efforts have always moved membership upstream, but when the minister and church leaders have rested upon their evangelical oars, the boat has been caught by currents which pulled it downstream. The people, of course, *should* man the oars, but in practice they often don't.

Dally had started well by consolidating Lacey's probationers. Then membership fell off. Possibly he turned to other aspects of the ministry that appealed to him more. The result: from Lacey's 150 in 1876, the Conference records show a drop at Basking Ridge to 139 in 1877, a brief upswing to 142 in 1878, then a plunge to 111 in 1879. Otherwise, his pastorate had been a good one. It is too bad that his weakness had to be the one that was always disproportionately damaging here.

From Bishop Janes Church Joseph Dally moved to Irvington, then to Asbury, Englewood, Hackensack, Jersey City, Bound Brook, Englewood again, Pearl River-Montvale, and finally to Paterson (1909-12). He retired from the active ministry in 1913, but enjoyed sixteen more years of life. His death occurred in 1929, and he was buried in Highland Falls, N.Y. His conference memoir tells us that one son survived him.

The Prophet

JOSEPH A. OWEN 1879 - 80

Following the genial Dally, his successor must have come as rather a shock to our Basking Ridge congregation. The new pastor was an intellectual and religious genius. A misunderstood misfit in many places, he must have been an upsetting enigma to the people of our charge. He was about as unerringly right — and as insistent about it — as the prophet Amos. And like them he often angered ordinary people, who will forgive a stern man anything except being infallibly right. But Bishop Janes Church was in its Early Golden Era; it could survive even a genius and prophet.

Joseph A. Owen was born in New York City August 29, 1846, but his family moved to New Jersey soon after. From the beginning it was clear that he had a brilliant mind, but he never was able to develop graciousness to go with it. Perhaps the fact that he was small, almost ugly, and generally sickly was part of the reason for this. He seems to have been unable to adjust to the fact that nearly everyone else's mind functioned more slowly and dredged less deeply than his. At 16 he was converted to Methodism, in Irvington. The life of such city-born scholars is lonely. With each year his manner became more uncompromising, introverted and stiff.

In 1871 he was graduated from Princeton at the top of his class. Not only was his average the highest, but he won first prize in languages, literature and philosophy, and was excelled by a few students only in mathematics. He had majored in law, but soon after graduation he was drawn irresistibly to the ministry. His commitment was complete, — so complete that, paradoxically, the closer he was drawn to Christ, the farther he was drawn from an easy fellowship with people. In other circumstances he would have made a good monk. Theologically he was a century ahead of his time. He went beyond the fundamentalism of his era, beyond the liberal movement not yet born, to a neo-orthodoxy (tinged by elements of mysticism) that would have made him at home with the great religious minds of our day.

And Owen could preach! None denied him this — he could preach like the angels above! And like the raging prophets of old, his words left indelible impressions, particularly upon the handful who could follow his intricate paths. There were few of these on the farms of Basking Ridge. During its centennial observance in 1957 the Newark Conference reviewed the records of its hundreds of ministers to select the 25 or so best pulpit men of the entire century. Only two of our 45 ministers up to that time were selected, and Owen was one of these[6].

If the church in Basking Ridge did not understand him, neither did the Newark Conference, which never could decide what to do with him. One year they would bring him to trial for unorthodoxy[7], the next they would assign him to one of their more important churches.

When the Conference did not have him on trial it gave him the pulpit for conference sessions and for large national events. Bishops came to hear him preach. Dr. Noble, president of Centenary, wrote, "Joseph A. Owen has a gift of textual illumination that is at times almost startling. His running comments on the Scripture lesson are more illuminating and inspiring than most sermons". Once a prominent New York minister, on hearing his sermon titled, "The Self-Emptying of the Incarnation", a typical Owen topic, said, "I think that people who sit under that kind of preaching will either get better or get out!" Owen's was not the message of peace. His "work" was prophetic and expressed the dynamic faith of biblical Christianity — the challenge and cross of sacrifice, not security.

Although separated by a cool gulf from most of his people, his love for them was the classic Christian "agape", as distinguished from "friendly affection". For Owen carried each person's troubles on his own back, shared their guilt, took their lives unto himself as his own. Some loved him, others hated him, for, like Hicky in *The Iceman Cometh*, he shattered their instinctive desires for security and delusion. According to his conference memoir, his contemporaries often "considered him impractical" for his "excessively high ideals".

He frequently prayed for hours at a time. In fact, the best remembered of his idiosyncrasies, if such it may be called, centered around his possession of a giant map of the world with which he covered one whole wall of his study at each of his churches. On it he had marked every single spot on earth touched by Methodist outreach. Once every month, early in the evening, he took a pillow for his knees and, giving attention to each spot marked, he knelt in prayer *until dawn,* asking success for each specific work, one at a time, and for imposition of divine will upon them. Owen was reasonably successful in sophisticated churches; in country churches he usually effected a shambles. But Paul was his ideal, and he believed in the itineracy, so he insisted upon his share of rural charges.

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[6] The other was our 40th pastor, James MacDonald (1932-36). Janes and Bartine, however, were also included.

[7] In 1875 he was tried by the Conference for "articles he printed in a weekly paper" which were unorthodox. He was acquitted with a reprimand. In 1876 he was tried again by the conference for "lack of spirit and soundness of faith". Again his real sin was non-conformity, and again he was acquitted.

Thus, in April, 1879, Bishop Janes Church fell heir to the radical genius, the glory and the cross of Newark Conference Methodism, Joseph A. Owen. Had his term followed the "three-year rule", it might have been a very interesting pastorate, one way or another. As it happened, he was to leave after only one year. At the end of his first three months he had received only $35.35 in salary. This may have been due to one or all of several factors: the effects of the depression, a continuing of the mysterious "troubles" during Dally's last year, or possibly to his own unpopularity.

In the scant records of that year that have been left to us, we find reinforced the master pulpitman's reputation for originality and independence. In fact, there are indications that his respect for conference superiors was slight, though they *had* stopped bringing him to trial. The Newark Conference was emphasizing two things at this time: the use of *un*fermented wine at communion, and frequent sermons on temperance — at least two each month. When asked about these matters by the Presiding Elder at his first Quarterly Conference in Basking Ridge, his reply, say our records, was "Fermented wine is used at the Lord's Supper[8] . . . The Pastor has preached on Temperance *once*" (in three months).

The equal of any man in religious conviction, generations beyond the Conference theologically, Owen showed himself well ahead of his time socially when, in September, 1879, he managed a coup at the second Quarterly Conference. Through the years none had worked harder for our church than Margaret VanAllen and Maria Wilson, charter members, and Charlotte Pruden who joined under Dickinson. Therefore, successfully pitting his will against prevailing attitudes on "women's place", Owen succeeded in having these three elected the *first women stewards* of Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church. Presumably this caused quite a stir, for the attendance records show that none of the three ever attended a board meeting, and so never exercised their right of office. Under Owen's more conventional successor they were replaced on the board by men. It is unfortunate that these ladies did not serve. For one thing, the practice of electing women as stewards was thus delayed another sixteen years; for another, their acceptance of office in 1879 probably would have prevented the first recorded act by a woman on the board (in 1895) of bringing official action to get two other women expelled from the church. So the noble attempt proved premature. Although they were the first to be elected, they were not to be the first women to serve.

In 1879 the Newark Conference decided to end the seven-year independence of the Pleasant Plains Church and again make it part of the Basking Ridge charge. Assisted by Nicholas Bowers, Joseph Owen took over responsibility for both pulpits. The total count at Bishop Janes dropped from 111 to 106 during Owen's year, and Pleasant Plains had less than 50 members. The former figure would have been higher had not nine people been expelled from the church by board action in November, 1879. "Expulsion" was a common practice in churches until the twentieth century. Fortunately it did not occur often in our church. Under the Methodist

[8] Probably Owen's pastorate was the last in which real wine was served at communion services in our church.

system then there was a probation period for prospective members, and many probationers did not make the grade, but the quiet dropping of *their* names caused little onus. Owen was a perfectionist. His own standards were as high as his judgment of others was severe. Consequently there were more "expulsions" during his term than at any other time in our history.

Occupied with other matters, including the removal of these unfortunates from the church, Owen and our people allowed November 9, 1879, to go by, it seems, without anyone realizing that it was the 25th anniversary of the dedication of the Basking Ridge Methodist Episcopal Church. Previously, Dally had overlooked March 1878 as the 25th anniversary of our establishment as a "stated" charge.

The Owens' daughter, Helen, was born while he served our church. The pastor's individualism (for the period) again was revealed when he had his daughter baptized in the parsonage, by a Congregationalist minister, the Rev. D. M. Walcott.

At his fourth and last Quarterly Conference, in February 1880, it was reported that he had been paid only $330 for the year. Probably this reflected congregational coolness as well as a drop in church income. However, it was moved and passed that a committee be appointed to raise a purse for the pastor. Sunday School attendance was high but, asked to report on it, the perfectionist pastor stated, "Condition of the Sabbath School is *outwardly* good".

All told, it would appear that this great but hard-shelled preacher and our rural congregation did not get along too well. Before he left, it must have been pointed out to him that a summary of his work at Basking Ridge was supposed to be added to the historical section of our membership records. This section was supposed to include items like repairs or additions to the buildings, number of members, debt reduction if any, revivals conducted, and other such church "specifics". We learn much about Owen by the way he chose to report his "work":

> *" 'Let your Light (not yourself) so shine before men that they may see your good works (*in *the Light) and glorify (not you, but) your Father which is in Heaven'.*
>
> *" 'My Father worketh hitherto and I work'.*
>
> *" 'This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent' (to work the works of God).*
>
> *" 'No work however showy is a work* for *God that is not first and last the work* of *God. No work however obscured from human eyes can be other than work* for *God if it be the work* of *God'.*
>
> *"I Corin. III, 11-15: 'Some works abide; some will be burned. Few of the former make God's Beatitude 'Well done!'. Many (or any) of the latter make God's Bonfire! I have chosen the works of God.*
>
> *signed — J. A. Owen"*

We can picture the trustees trying to make a business report out of this. In contrast of style and emphasis, we find that his down-to-earth successor's first report

reads as follows:

> *"Upon my appointment here I found the church building much out of repair internally and externally, so much as to be judged unsafe, with a debt of $3000*[9] *and some interest".*

At the end of the conference year in the spring of 1880, Joseph Owen was assigned to our church in Orange. What pastorates followed that we do not know because, contrary to usual practice, they were not listed in his memoir in the Conference Journal. Twenty years later the Rev. Appley wrote, "Owen served for one year, not that the people wanted to see him go, but because he was called away". The first part of Mr. Appley's reason for the one-year term was probably supposition, but the second part, we know, was true. The Methodist Episcopal Church in Orange had grown to a position of importance in the Conference and desired a pulpit man of wide reputation. Then, as now, in Methodism, the "big" church got what it wanted. Owen served a number of conference churches until about the turn of the century. He died in Newark, April 2, 1909.

Today our Conference would probably not allow an Owen to stub his toe on a small country charge. Surely his assignment would be to a large metropolitan church, with a microphone and an occasional television camera, and a staff to handle prosaic details. Although his impact upon our rural congregation then seems dubious, we can be grateful that he served then instead of now. His impact upon the materialistic standards of suburbia would consign us to a fate with Sodom and Gomorrah, and we would be picking either ourselves or him out of the ashes by now.

With membership off at Basking Ridge by 1880, income badly eroded and the program suffering, it may seem strange to call this a Golden Era. But all the troubles centered in just two years of this twenty-year period, Dally's last and Owen's one year. During the next three pastorates growth would be steady and we would reach new heights.

Evergreen Cemetery's troubles were over by 1880. Debts had been cleared, and the first endowments had been set up. The so-called Pennington section (the strip of land along Washington Avenue) had been purchased from the family of that name. In the '70's the better family plots advanced in price to $40, in the late '80's to $50. All told, 130 plots had been sold by 1880.

The trustees, of course, administered cemetery affairs as part of their responsibility for all church property. They included at this time: Daniel D. Craig (still president), Archibald Baird, Oscar Brown, Oscar Conkling, Samuel DeCoster, the Rev. W. H. Dykeman, W. F. Muchmore (until 1880) and William Van Dorn, the head of Van Dorn's mill.

In March 1880 the Pleasant Plains Church reported 54 full members and 5 probationers, but when their records were transferred to Basking Ridge a month later a major reason for the church's difficulties became clear. More than half of this

[9] Mostly incurred during Dally's and Owen's pastorates.

membership were phantoms; only 23 could be placed on our rolls. These, plus the 106 at Bishop Janes, made up the membership of the Basking Ridge charge.

The Refurbisher

CYRENIUS A. WOMBAUGH 1880 - 83

Pastor number seventeen was Cyrenius A. Wombaugh. As indicated by the differing styles of their pastoral reports noted earlier, the contrast between Owen and Wombaugh was classic. And between city "Joe" and country "Cy", it would be safe to assume that our farmers and shopkeepers were happier with the latter.

Wombaugh was a New Jersey native, born in 1826. He received no more than a public school education but applied himself diligently to religious study and to the work of the Lord. Finally, in 1854, at the age of 28, he was accepted as a minister in the Conference. During his 26 years in the ministry he had served our churches in Verona, Staten Island, Rockaway, Hackensack, two in New York State, Springfield, Stanhope, Blairstown, Mendham, Buttsville, Suffern, Sparta and Mt. Horeb. In April 1880 he was appointed for three years to Bishop Janes Church.

At Cy Wombaugh's first Quarterly Conference, in June 1880, he reported:

> *"We held a strawberry festival for the benefit of the Stewards which cleared $75.50 and are preparing for a fourth of July celebration and festival for the benefit of the Trustees".*

The church strawberry festival was to become a regular event for the next 60 years. Its early success in 1880 led to its copying by the Pleasant Plains congregation, with similar results. The July 4th festival, too, became a social highlight and fund-raising tradition at our church, continuing until shortly after World War I. By then the Fire Company carnival, held annually until 1942, had taken the stage.

In September 1880 the pastor's report included the statement that ". . . the Union Temperance Association of Bernards Township has been established". Temperance was on the march in our area at this time. For the remaining six years of this Golden Era and through the years of decline that followed, it would be a major Methodist preoccupation. Handled positively, by tangible assistance and loving encouragement to the alcoholic, it would have added to the effectiveness of local Christianity; handled negatively, as it was, it reinforced a "holier than thou" attitude and eroded Christianity in a manner that needs more historical analysis. Alcoholics were labeled "drunkards" and expelled from the church[10].

In that same report we find the first reference to what would develop as Wombaugh's best-remembered contribution to our church:

> *"We have at last decided to paint the church building . . . it will cost $150 . . . Festivals have raised $200".*

[10] Opposite one name on our membership rolls is a typical notation: "Returned a drunken disgrace. Name Withdrawn!"

This was to grow into a major repair project that would put our run-down building into better-than-new condition. Wombaugh took upon himself the task of raising money, for he was disturbed by our $3000 debt as well as the condition of the church, and he soon revealed unusual ability in this field. We have seen that he encouraged fund-raising festivals, but greater success resulted from a double solicitation project which he organized. One drive was directed at the congregation, another at those outside the church.

Among our records is a detailed list of the results of one phase of this drive, completed in the fall of 1882. It lists 46 contributions by our members, 24 by townspeople, ranging from 50¢ to $50. It's interesting to note that among the contributors were Dr. J. Dayton and Samuel Dayton who, between them, owned all the property between the brick Academy and Evergreen Cemetery, from Oak Street north to the railroad station. Substantial contributions were received also from the Rev. Mr. Winans and the Rev. Dr. Rankin of the Presbyterian Church. This gift of Dr. Rankin's was typical of his many kindnesses to his Methodist neighbors during his long pastorate. His frequent offers to share with us some of the advantages available to a larger church, particularly during the latter half of his Basking Ridge ministry, show up repeatedly in our records, even though the memories of some of our more envious members dwell more upon imagined "slights".

When this phase of Wombaugh's drive was completed, net returns totaled $438.84. To this were added festival receipts and $350 "borrowed at the bank". The original idea, simply to paint, was abandoned, and a plan to repair and remodel was approved. The church was closed (where the congregation worshipped temporarily is not recorded), and the work began at once. Some new beams and a new roof and floor were installed, the choir and pulpit area was redesigned and embellished, the entire building was painted and redecorated inside and out, some ornamentation was added to towers and steeple, new chimneys were built[11] and new coal stoves replaced the old heaters. At this time $802.95 was spent, but subsequent work made the total cost slightly more than $1000.

The church was reopened on November 6, 1881 and probably presented the finest appearance of its life. The following spring our Presiding Elder reported to the Annual Conference session that "The church has been renovated at Basking Ridge at a cost of $1000, of which $600 already had been raised". However, Wombaugh did not relax his fund raising efforts. During his last 16 months in Basking Ridge the remaining $400 repair expenses not only were paid off, but the church debt was reduced by $2300, really a large amount in those days. Our debt stood at only $700 when he moved on.

The Presiding Elder was able to report also that "The balance of the Pleasant Plains Church debt of $200 was cancelled". Probably trustees Silas Leonard and Andrew Baird helped Wombaugh substantially in accomplishing this happy condi-

[11] In 1960 the writer was informed that something resembling a baptismal font, found in an attic in town, was known to have belonged to the old church. It proved to be one of these chimneys. It was of terra cotta, pleasingly shaped, and topped with a venturi aid to draft. It was presented, as a relic of the first building, to a somewhat appalled Official Board later that year.

tion at our daughter church.

Unfortunately, as our records show, the congregations did not do as well with funds for the pastor as he did with funds for them. Pastoral support was set at $725 his first two years and reduced to $600 his last. He was paid only $720, $675 and $600, according to conference financial records. Basking Ridge was setting itself up as a church that would begin to get a few ministers of lesser ability in the near future.

Cross Roads' Last Chapter

Back in 1877 the Newark Conference had vetoed our recommendation to offer the Cross Roads Church building to the little group of Methodists in Liberty Corner. Three years later it decided to bring together the empty church and a promising new congregation in Chester. Although the Cross Roads congregation had last operated as part of the Basking Ridge circuit, we were not brought into this transaction. The Conference felt that responsibility for our many members, as well as for the Pleasant Plains congregation and, intermittently, the small gathering of Methodists at Stirling, was enough for one minister. However, the Bernardsville church, with the former Mine Mount congregation long since absorbed, was unencumbered. In order to fulfill a technicality of the law, Bernardsville was asked to provide a token congregation to worship in the Cross Roads building for a few months, so that a legally constituted congregation could vote upon disposal of the building. So, for a time the church was reopened and about ten Bernardsville members fulfilled this requirement. Then the building was dismantled, and the Conference Journal records the last word:

> "The structure at Lesser Cross Roads was removed last August (1880) to Chester. This church was purchased by Bishop Janes and offered to the Newark Conference 27 years ago".

The old building, tied at several times to our history, served for 42 years as the Chester Church. In 1922 it burned to the ground, and Methodism in that town went down with it.

* * *

Although his talents were not outstanding, and he was near the end of the line as an active minister, Cy Wombaugh's work at Basking Ridge was effective beyond the average. He was simple, sincere and likeable. Probably this sentence from his later Conference memoir best describes him:

> "He was a *good* man; (he offered) no brilliant talents or vast attainment, but self-sacrificial labors, tenderness and quiet competence".

As a matter of fact, Wombaugh seems to have had less "talent" than any of the other nine ministers during our 20-year Early Golden Era. His reports indicate that

he believed this about himself. And yet, our church moved forward under his leadership, slowly in some ways, but forward. The best explanation would seem to be that he worked hard, and that he used what was granted to him to its utmost limits. If his sermons were not inspired, if he could not increase missions support or build churches, he could instead reduce debts and see that necessary repairs were made on buildings. If his revival methods could not convert large numbers to the church, his diligent personal contacts could accomplish a small net gain in membership each year. Through it all we find that his ultimate concern was the salvation of souls and the means of grace. This concern is expressed in practically every report he left us. His final report, in March 1883, ended as follows:

> *"I have sought to promote both the material and the spiritual interests of the charge, have not been favored with a general revival of religion, have had a few hopeful conversions, and now commend the work and the worker to the Lord of the vineyard".*

Obviously, he himself was not very proud of his effect upon membership. Yet he did noticeably better than many. Conference records show that our rolls increased from 129 to 137 during his three years. One probationer who became a full member under him was James W. Southard. A member of the old Basking Ridge Presbyterian family of that name[12], he was descended from Henry Southard who, from 1794 to '97, was a New Jersey Assemblyman and, from 1801 to 1815, was a member of the House of Representatives in Washington. James joined our church in youthful rebellion against either his family or his church — or both — but after several years he transferred back to his more natural environment. He is the only Southard in our Bishop Janes records.

Subsequent events indicate that Wombaugh probably was not in good health during the latter part of his term here. In view of this, his labors for our church were indeed surprising and even more commendable. Although only 57, he seemed much older. In his last Quarterly Conference report, in February 1883, we find these statements:

> *"I have held extra services for five weeks . . . three probationers were received as full members . . . the hope excited one week has been chilled by the indifference of the next".*
>
> *"I have had satisfaction in preaching the Gospel. Its adaption to human needs becomes more and more apparent to me as my ministry shortens and the end of my probation draws near".*

This end he felt coming, and he decided to retire. Asked to reconsider, he dubiously accepted appointment to Kingwood in March 1883. There a heart attack early in 1884 ended his ministry. He lingered in poor health for ten years. Then, in 1894 a stroke paralyzed him and his speech failed. In this broken condition he had to wait almost two years longer for death. He died in January 1896, and was buried

[12] Our Southard Park commemorates this family name.

in Orange. Seventy years of age, he had been a minister for 42 years, an active minister for 30.

Bishop Janes Church has had many young freshman pastors and it has had some older men, at or near the end of their careers. Among the latter, Cy Wombaugh was one of the few to work so diligently for our church.

* * *

At the Newark Conference session in March, 1883, our first pastor, William Day, then serving the Hoboken church, was asked to prepare a "State of the Church" report. In it he deplored the increasing signs of

> ". . . dancing, theater-going and card playing by many of our people (and the) lack of a strong connectional feeling by Methodists"

And he encouraged

> ". . . frequent exchange of pulpits . . . holding of union meetings . . . (and) purchase of the Methodist Hymnal to improve congregational singing".

The Scholarly Evangelist

JOSIAH R. DANIELS 1883 - 84

It was also at the 1883 session of the Conference that our 18th pastor, Josiah R. Daniels, was assigned to the Basking Ridge and Pleasant Plains pulpits. Daniels was an excellent minister, but his portion of our history will be rather short, for two reasons: he was here only one year, and he left scarcely any records.

He was born in Salem County, New Jersey, April 22, 1837, and was descended from noted revolutionary stock. Great-grandfather Daniels had been a general whose best contribution to the cause occurred at the Battle of Long Island in 1776. Grandfather Daniels also had served, as a captain, in the Colonial army. At nineteen Josiah happened to attend a Methodist service, and the closing invitation to come to Christ so moved him that he effected an innocently humorous conversion. He ran down the aisle toward the preacher, leaped over the communion rail and "prostrated himself at the feet of the man he judged mostly godly", as the story tells it. He proceeded to Pennington Seminary, and after graduation taught school for a few years.

In 1860 he was accepted by the Newark Conference. His first appointment was to Green Village and New Vernon, just before the Bebout and Nelson-Barnes pastorates.[13] In 1862 he married Abby Sharp of Camden. They had one son, Morris, and probably other children, not mentioned in the conference records.

Daniels was considered a "very good" pastor and a first-class preacher. He left *4000 sermons* in manuscript in his own hand! These were of such high caliber that it

[13] Other churches served by Daniels are not listed in his Conference memoir.

was proposed by conference members to have them published shortly after his death. He was a noted scholar, and through the years he acquired a library that was the envy of his friends in the clergy.

Yet, above all, was his reputation as one of the best evangelists in the east. He strongly attracted both country and city people to the church. The Basking Ridge charge was fortunate to feel his impact, however brief. This ability was so outstanding in Reeves Daniels (he preferred his middle name) that in time he was lifted from the regular itineracy to hold the office of "Conference Evangelist" (1898-1905). In this way his special talent was spread throughout the Conference, and his assistance strengthened a number of churches too large to mention.

Daniels and Ocean Grove

In 1870 Ocean Grove had been founded by the Methodist Episcopal Church south of Asbury Park. Its governing body then as now was the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association. Elected to the Board of Trustees in 1873, Daniels became one of the most important figures in the development of this Methodist center which still retains many of the characteristics with which he and his associates stamped it. He built the first distinctive "Alaska" type cottages on Pitman Avenue next to the ocean. From 1873 until his death 35 years later he was active in the Ocean Grove summer program. After the Bishop Janes Memorial Tabernacle was built, Daniels for several years led the so-called "Holiness Meetings" in this giant preaching place. Vernon Boyce Hampton, in an article about Ocean Grove in 1957, wrote:

> *"He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Association, active on the Sunday School and Devotional Committees, Vice-president of the Bible Class, had charge of Family Devotions Services during the Camp Meeting, and on occasion was Camp Meeting Preacher.*
>
> *"His interest reached beyond New Jersey as he served as President of the International Camp Meeting Association, Niagara Falls, Canada, from 1887 until 1890, and continued active preaching service in this for many years.*
>
> *"His monument is the beach* (at Ocean Grove), *said the people of Dr. Daniels*[14], *as they viewed the jetties*[15] *and other improved facilities along the beach front . . . the beach was indeed a physical memorial. When he died, his notable work in Tabernacle and Auditorium, 'the seal of his evangelism', stood as a lasting spiritual memorial and tribute".*

We have poor records of Daniels' short pastorate in Basking Ridge. Obviously,

[14] Another of our early pastors to receive his Doctor of Divinity degree.

[15] Apparently Daniels was the driving force behind the first use of "jetties" at the shore to counteract beach erosion.

he was a man on the move. When he did put pen to paper, it must have been to work on his famous sermons. Nothing could be found to explain why his assignment here lasted only one year. Probably the bishop felt a greater need for his abilities elsewhere, or wanted to spread his evangelism as broadly as possible. Daniels submitted no pastoral reports to our Quarterly Conferences. In the minutes of these about all that turns up of interest is the note (April, 1883) that, "Stirling — very small — was added to the Basking Ridge-Pleasant Plains charge". The Newark Conference apparently still had hope for this handful of Methodists.

It was pointed out earlier that the amounts listed as "paid" to our pastors as salary in those days always lumped together both the cash paid to them and the estimated value of the living quarters provided by the church. For the church year 1883-84 Daniels was paid, in total, only $670. Apparently Basking Ridge was continuing its habit of paying pastors, even first-rate ones, as little as possible. Money for other church needs seems to have come rather easily, but too many times this was not true for pastoral services.

The membership records of the Newark Conference show that, as of April 1883, when Daniels arrived, the Basking Ridge total of full members and probationers was 137. One year later, as he moved on to his new assignment, the same figure read 198. This eye-catching jump of 61 set a new one-year record at Bishop Janes Church, a record that doubtless still stands. The figure is particularly impressive when it is remembered that all these people had to come from an area whose population at the time was rather static, and the ministers usually "watch and wait" during their first year in a new charge.

However, some of the gilt is removed from the achievement when our own records are examined, for many of the 61 remained associated for only a short time. Again there seems to be evidence that the excited emotions of revivals often failed to jell into church commitment. Daniels kept such poor records that those members who left early were never added to our rolls, and the names of a number of his 40 probationers also are missing.

Although he ignored the membership book and other records, we can be sure that he scribbled the names somewhere, — on an old shopping list or the margin of a left-over Methodist tract. For almost ten years Bishop Janes Church had struggled to regain the previous high water mark of 150 under Lacey and, when Daniels came, we were back up to 137. His surge regained the other 13 and added almost 50 more; a new mark by a wide margin for Basking Ridge Methodism[16]. His accomplishment was amazing. In those days summer was the best time to interest new members, but Reeves Daniels spent much of every summer at Ocean Grove. In spite of this, he lifted our church to new heights. He, too, deserves a special niche in our history.

Daniels' ministry lasted 48 years, was very successful, and benefited churches

[16] The 198 members were credited almost entirely to Bishop Janes Church. Membership at Pleasant Plains in 1884 had fallen to less than ten. Also, the 198 figure may be considered reliable, for membership remained near the 200 level for some years.

throughout our Conference. He died August 22, 1908, at Ocean Grove, at the age of 71. Burial was in the family plot at New Hempstead, New York. Two years later his son, Morris, was elected a trustee of the Ocean Grove Association, to follow in his father's footsteps.

* * *

Minutes of the Newark Conference session of March, 1884, mention several items of interest: One hundred years had passed since the Methodist Episcopal Church had been organized at Barratt's Chapel and Baltimore, and the Centennial was to be celebrated throughout the Conference. At least one special service of Commemoration was held at our church. And the congregation of 75 years later would make the journey to Barratt's Chapel, as we mentioned at the outset, to again commemorate that beginning. Also, we read in those minutes that ex-president, ex-general Ulysses S. Grant was almost destitute in 1884, and the public was just learning about it. The Conference passed a resolution and forwarded it to Congress, calling for restoration of Grant's four-star rank in the army so that he could receive a retired general's pension.

In respect to more parochial matters, we find that the Conference realigned the charges in our area. It was felt that the pastor of any church with close to 200 members to tend had his hands full. So, starting in April, 1884, Bishop Janes Church was cut from any connection with other churches.

Pleasant Plains had not shared in our good fortune of the preceding four years. In fact, they had lost some members to Basking Ridge. The congregation at Stirling continued very small and unpromising. And the historic church at Union Village (now part of Berkeley Heights) also was having difficulty keeping its head above water. Although 29 years older than our church, its membership had nearly evaporated by 1884. So at this same session the Newark Conference grouped all three — Pleasant Plains, Stirling and Union Village — into one charge and assigned supply preacher S. H. Jones[17] to this three-station circuit. Conference reported a total for all three congregations of 15 members and 1 probationer, a surprisingly low figure.

Scion of a Patriot

JOHN E. HANCOCK 1884 - 87

Assigned to the pulpit of Bishop Janes Church by that Conference session of 1884 was John E. Hancock, the minister who was to preside over the last three years of our Early Golden Era. He was born July 18, 1835, in nearby Madison and was a great-grandson of *the* John Hancock of Revolutionary War fame. Each of four generations of the family had provided a son named John, and three of the four became Methodist ministers. Small wonder that they were often confused.

[17] Jones, an older man, had been pastor at Pleasant Plains before (1876-77). He was married to Mary Day, the only sister of the brothers Day of New Providence.

The first preacher was named John Emory Hancock. Converted in 1801, he founded the congregation in Madison (1803). He was ordained in 1814 and, in the process of helping to establish the Mt. Horeb Church (1820), the Chatham Church (1833) and the Cranford congregation (1840), he became known affectionately as Father Hancock. His son, John Wesley Hancock, also became a Methodist minister, served throughout New Jersey, fathered our pastor and named him, like his grandfather, John Emory Hancock.

Young John Emory was born July 18, 1835. He seems to have been destined for the ministry from the first, but he was in no hurry to get on with it. After attending district school in Madison, he spent fifteen years in various activities. He was no scholar, but he did attend two New York seminaries, Charlotteville and Fort Plain, for six months each, which is about all we find recorded of his years of young manhood. Nevertheless, when finally he heeded the call, he was ready. His heritage allowed for no misconceptions of the Methodist itineracy, and his early reluctance was no sign that he was poorly fitted for the role. Entering the Newark Conference at 29 in 1864, he was to show complete dedication from then on. However, initial conference impatience is revealed by this entrance in the Conference Journal: "Hancock *at last* consented to supply the church at Parsippany" (and Whippany) in 1865. Next he served Verona, Springfield, Sparta, Verona again, Princess Bay, New Germantown (now Oldwick), and then Basking Ridge.

The plebeian status of two — possibly three — of the Hancock preacher generations is a little puzzling. The patriot Hancock, who had said, as he signed the Declaration of Independence, "My name shall be written large enough for the king to see for all time", had possessed wealth, a good education, and close friendship with the discerning Samuel Adams. Unlike Morris, he is not supposed to have poured all his fortune into the Revolution. Yet both his grandson and his great-grandson (our pastor) were poor both in education and in worldly goods. Their direct line relationship to him is recorded by V. B. Hampton in his *Newark Conference Centennial History*, so there seems little likelihood of error in this respect. Perhaps, like Bishop Janes, the first of the Hancock ministers spent much of the family fortune on the churches he is credited with starting.

In 1859, when he was 24 years old and still a layman, our John Hancock had married Clara Sanford of Bushkill, Pennsylvania. She had joined Central M. E. Church in Newark at 18, and had met young Hancock through her activity in church work there. Within five years her husband, who had long hesitated over the decision, entered the ministry. Possibly Clara helped to bring it about, for, when put to the test herself, she seemed happy to offer the itineracy all that she had to give. Her strength of character seems to have been built upon sorrows overcome. She had lost her mother at five, her two sisters during childhood, and three of her own children in the early years of her marriage. Such tragedies could have crushed or desensitized her. But she turned to God and found strength to rebound after each blow.

When John and Clara Hancock were assigned to Basking Ridge in 1884 they

brought with them the three children they had managed to raise, Clara, Edwin and Edith. During the three years they lived in the Elm Street parsonage their mother made a lasting impression upon our people with her deep faith and unobtrusive strength.

Membership did not fluctuate much during Hancock's three years in Basking Ridge. He added about a dozen full members and a like number of probationers each year, and that seems to have been about the number needed to keep our net total stable, for annual losses were about that many. Daniels had left 198 names on the rolls. At the end of Hancock's first year there were 195, even though six or eight members at Pleasant Plains had been transferred from our rolls to the new three-station records by supply preacher S. H. Jones.

By March of 1886 the membership of Bishop Janes Church reached *200* for the first time in its history. Considering that population was small in this area, and that it was not growing much in those days, this was an impressive figure. It was the largest membership of our Early Golden Era. It would not again be equaled for 34 years (and then only briefly), and would not be substantially surpassed until 1947, 61 years later, in the post-World War II surge of our church. The 200 members and probationers (who constituted about 10% of the total) made up the largest congregation ever to worship regularly in our original white frame church.

Among those whom Hancock brought to full membership from probation was Clara Allen, daughter of James and Ruth Stansbury Allen. Soon after she became a member she was appointed our church organist, the first person so designated officially in our records.[18]. Clara was later married to William Dayton, and became the mother of Marion (Dayton) Turner of our present (1983) congregation. Another was Charles M. Allen, Marion's uncle, who would later become one of the leading officials of our church.

Among the children that Hancock baptized during his pastorate here was the eight-year old daughter of John and Carrie Sanders. Her name was Hannie Sanders, and when she grew older she would become the bride of David Y. Moore, a young blacksmith in town, who would become a pillar of our church and a leading figure in our community. Hannie's baptism in April, 1884, marked the beginning of 80 years of continuous outstanding service to Bishop Janes Church. Her name, like her husband Dave's, will appear often in our later history.

Hancock kept excellent records while serving our church. His pastoral reports to our Quarterly Conferences were most detailed and will be quoted liberally, for they provide a clear picture of church life in those years. Explanatory comments have been added parenthetically.

> May 3, 1884: *"The Quarterly Conference voted on request to discontinue the Annual District meetings* (Until then, not only the Conference but also the district held a yearly session).
>
> *"Average attendance at public service is 104; at prayer meeting*

[18] Clara was only thirteen years old at the time. She continued as our volunteer organist (with no pay) until she married.

is 29; at class meeting 14".

November 5, 1884: *"By request of the Presiding Elder, Rev. Dr. Brice, I began preaching at Pleasant Plains on September 28th".* (An emergency at Everittstown had caused Dr. Brice to transfer supply preacher Jones to that charge. This broke up the three-station circuit set up six months earlier by the Conference. With almost no members left, Union Village closed its doors for a time, and the handful at Stirling was left to its own devices for 18 months. Pleasant Plains once again was attached to Basking Ridge charge). *"The attendance thus far at the (Pleasant Plains) Sunday afternoon service is 52* (far higher than the membership). *Signs are rather encouraging in both our churches".*

"It was moved and carried to appoint a committee of four to nominate the several committees to be appointed by the 4th Quarterly conference." (This was the first Nomination Committee for church officials at Bishop Janes Church. Soon after it was expanded to include stewards and trustees. Previously the pastors had recommended most names for election, but since 1885 a Nominating Committee had usually served this function).

January 19, 1885: *"I made 70 calls this quarter . . . Average attendance on Sundays was 75* (typical winter turn-out in those days) *. . . Raised this quarter $160 for Missions . . . A donation visit to the pastor netted $78 . . . In temperance work something has been done; two temperance sermons have been preached by the pastor . . . On December 14 a meeting was held in our church by three members of the Reform Club of Plainfield. One hundred signed the pledge, mostly young people. We have taken some part in the work of the Bernards Township Temperance Alliance, whose annual meeting was held in the Presbyterian Church on November 6th. The meeting was addressed by Mayer* (sic) *Maxim of Plainfield. It has been decided by the* (temperance) *committee to hold a Children's Temperance Concert on a Sunday evening next month".*

Two Trustees' reports were submitted at this meeting:

"Trustees of Basking Ridge

Value of Church	$5000.00
Insurance	?
Value of parsonage	2000.00
Insurance	None
Income	596.40
Expenditures	609.96
Debts	970.00

Trustees of Pleasant Plains

Value of Church	$2000.00
Insurance	1200.00
Income	153.98
Expenditures	2.15
Debts	None

Andrew Baird, Pres."

And following these reports:

Disciplinary Question: "What is the financial plan of the Stewards?"

Answer: 'They have no plan!"

November 2, 1885: *"A collection of $13 was made for the Christian Extension Society. The 'Song Service' was used; the church was filled and all were pleased and instructed . . . Average attendance at church: Basking Ridge 110, Pleasant Plains 51".*

February 22, 1886: *"$30 has been raised for the library . . . George Brown (charter member) died November 27, 1885 . . . We have during the year sold 50 copies of 'The Epworth Hymnal' in our congregation . . . The Temperance Committee has been a joint work of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, and of a Village Society whose only life is what the churches give it."*

Annual finances at Basking Ridge were reported as follows:

Receipts		**Expenditures**	
Balance	$ 7.12	Paid A. Baird (debt)	$113.38
July Festival	135.38	Paid A. Baird (interest)	16.25
Plate collections	63.33	Coal	33.99
Coal Collections	21.00	Stove	25.00
July 4 Festival	67.37	Insurance	44.67
Lots in Cemetery	79.00	Pastor's Salary	22.70
	$373.20	O. W. Brown, Sextin (sic)	75.00
		Miscl.	81.67
			$407.66

Total Debt — $1,150.00

Of note in this report is the first mention by name in our records of a janitor. Oscar Brown had been a church member since Dickinson's pastorate of 1858-59. Also, it is implied that almost everything took precedence over the pastor's salary. Of course, pew rents and donation visits also were applied to his salary.

The Pleasant Plains Church reported as follows:

Receipts		**Payments**	
Festival 1884	$145.04	New Horse Sheds	$145.04
Festival 1885	76.00	New Estey Organ	76.00
Box Collections 1884	4.68	(probably bought second-hand)	
Box Collections 1885	6.37	Fuel & lights	9.10
Rental Ch. Tent	24.00	Insurance	5.40
	$256.09		$235.54

Balance on hand $20.55 *No* debts.

May 27, 1886: *"I have made an appointment to preach in Stirling once in two weeks; the congregation is small, most of the residents being Roman Catholic. Our meetings in Stirling are held in the Presbyterian Church, the 'Session' having kindly offered us the use of their house of worship . . . The Quarterly Conference estimated $600* (a figure which, for some years, had been set by the Newark Conference as a minimum) *for pastoral support this year, (but) the pastor received this quarter $25.05".* (And this was at the exact time when our church had reached its 19th century membership peak of 200!)

August 10, 1886: *"230 attended the pastor's Temperance Meeting of June 27th."* (An attendance not often surpassed in our church since then!)

December 11, 1886: *"The Sunday School at Basking Ridge is in fair condition, but needs a firmer discipline and an addition to the teaching forces; there are 17 teachers. Students — 101. Average attendance — 64. . . . A class of children 9-15 has been formed, numbering 20 . . . The Annual Missionary Sermon was preached on October 3rd by Rev. Solomon Parsons* (our former pastor) *who also gave a very instructive temperance address at the evening service. More than 200 persons had the pleasure of hearing his earnest words.* (200 at an evening service!) . . . *The effort of preaching in Stirling was not successful, and instead a weekly prayer meeting is held with an average attendance of 22, and with good prospects of better things".*

February 2, 1887: *"Two Missionary Concerts were given this quarter . . . $68 has been spent for library books . . . 900 pages of Temperance Tracts have been distributed . . . 3000 pages of other tracts have been distributed".*

Newark Conference records state that pastoral support for Hancock's first year was reduced (before his assignment) from $957 to $575[19]; his second and third years it was set at $675. And here we find an interesting conflict in records. Our 4th Quarterly Conference at the end of Hancock's first year recorded $238.30 paid to the pastor during the conference year. Assuming that parsonage rental value of perhaps as much as $200 was not included in this amount, the total still falls far short of $685, the sum reported to the Conference over Hancock's signature. We don't know which figure (about $440 or $685) is correct, but the possibility exists that Hancock tried to make his people "look good" by inflating the report at his own expense. It is small wonder that ministers of his kind were well loved.

Hancock's memoir in the Conference Journal says that his motto was "Live

[19] The "separation" of Pleasant Plains, which lasted only six months, would account for only part of this sizeable cut.

simply, think clearly, love devotedly and serve conscientiously", and that "In preaching he apprehended the deepest spiritual truths despite rural charges and lack of formal education . . . His sermons were noted for luminous simplicity". Clearly, his preaching was ideally suited to a farm community such as ours.

When they left Basking Ridge in March, 1887, the Hancocks' next assignment was to Glen Cardner, and following that, to Bloomsbury, then to High Bridge. At High Bridge in 1891 Clara's health was damaged permanently by what was then called "la grippe". A similar attack in 1893 left her too weak to travel, but the itineracy in those days made few concessions, especially to those who did not ask for any. When they were transferred to Mount Harmon as their next charge, she made the journey, was put to bed in her new parsonage, and died a few weeks later, in May, 1894.

Two years later the lonely minister, whose children were now grown, married Jennie Hill. Her father had been a Methodist minister, and her birth had been recorded in Raritan, New Jersey,in 1859, the year of Hancock's first marriage. For the last seven years of Hancock's active ministry she proved to be an ideal itinerant's wife.

In 1905, during Rev. Dice's pastorate, John Hancock retired from the active ministry, picked the town he liked best, and bought a home in Basking Ridge. The pre-revolutionary Hancock family had considerable standing in Madison, Morristown and the Somerset Hills area. John and Jennie soon became involved in the affairs of Bishop Janes Church, and there proved to be little rest for the "retired" minister. But that's another part of the story, which will be told when we meet the Hancocks again later in our history (Chapter XI).

* * *

The effectiveness of membership and evangelism efforts at Bishop Janes Church during those closing years of our Early Golden Era probably was the most outstanding achievement of the period. Wombaugh, Daniels and Hancock (particularly Daniels) were responsible for most of the success in what had always been a "Presbyterian town". Their gains had to be scored in spite of the loss of 42 full members and many probationers between 1880 and 1887. By great effort the rolls had been brought from just over 100 to 200. And attendance at Sunday services reached peaks not to be equaled for decades. They must have packed to overflowing that small frame church!

The tenor of the times was briefly lauded by the Presiding Elder at the conference session in March 1877:

> "Basking Ridge membership increased under Rev. J. E. Hancock and benevolences more than doubled. Thirty were converted at one recent meeting".

No one realized then that this marked the end of an era, the strongest twenty years in the first century of our history.

Educational Institutions

So many references are made in our history to Methodist schools which helped train our ministers that a brief summary of these institutions seems in order.

The first Methodist theological school was established in 1841 at Newbury, Vermont. In 1847 it was moved to Concord, New Hampshire, and was named the **Methodist General** (more commonly **"Concord") Biblical Institute**. Of our pastors, Elbert Clement and Ben Simpson graduated from that school when it was located at Concord. In 1867 the school was removed again, this time to Boston, where it prospered. Since 1871, when it became part of Boston University, it has been known as the **Boston School of Theology**.

Allegheny College, in Meadville, Pa., became associated with the Methodist Church upon its 16th anniversary, in 1883. Only Washington Irving Dice (1905-09) of our pastors attended this school. Its present-day (1982) enrollment is about 1900.

Dickinson College, in Carlisle, Pa., where Hanes and Bartine studied for their doctorates, was founded in 1783 but was not associated with the Methodist Church until 1834. Several of our pastors of the twentieth century were graduated from this school, which today (1983) has an enrollment of about 1800.

Garrett Biblical Institute pioneered Methodist education in the mid-west. It was founded in 1854, and several of our later pastors studied there. It is now part of Northwestern University.

Pennington Seminary, a few miles west of Princeton, was established in 1838. Six of our early pastors were among its students. Unlike the other schools, it now confines itself to secondary education, and is known as the Pennington School.

Wesleyan College, in Middletown, Conn., founded in 1831, was called the "mother of Methodist colleges", though ministerial training was only part of its curriculum. Parsons, Young and Woodruff were graduated there. Nowadays, because there are other schools bearing the same name, it is often referred to as "Connecticut Wesleyan".

Drew Theological Seminary was founded in 1867 under the impetus of three men: Bishop Simpson, who shortly before had delivered the funeral address for Abraham Lincolm; Bishop Janes, as ever a moving force in Methodism's growth; and Daniel Drew, a layman with much dedication and even more money. Drew bought the Gibbons mansion and surrounding estate in Madison and presented it to the Methodist leaders. The mansion had been built in 1832 by Thomas Gibbons, a merchant prince whose activities ranged from his native Savannah, Georgia, throughout New York and New Jersey, where he was a kind of one-man Port of New York Authority. His name is familiar to history students for the "Gibbons vs. Ogden" case which established the rules for interstate waterways. The mansion was the home of his son, William Gibbons, who sold it to Daniel and Roxanna Drew for the new college. It is now Mead Hall, one of the administration buildings on the campus.

After transferring title to the property to the Methodist Church, Daniel Drew continued to pay not only maintenance costs but all faculty salaries. Then, in the financial panic of 1877 Drew, who had given so much to the church, was wiped out. Our denomination found itself with an entire campus free and clear, but no money to run the school. The situation was saved by an appeal to the churches. The larger ones endowed faculty chairs, and smaller ones like Bishop Janes gave what they could. Charles Barnes, pastor of the Madison church and former assistant at Basking Ridge during the Civil War, organized this drive and is given much of the credit for saving the school. In time a permanent financial plan was set up, and Drew, surviving its great crisis, acquired a sound organization.

In 1928 the Baldwins of East Orange gave $1,500,000 to establish Brothers College of Liberal Arts, and Drew became a university.

Other Methodist schools such as Syracuse University and Troy University did not figure prominently in the education of our Basking Ridge ministers. Strangely enough, Bishop Janes Church was not assigned an alumnus of Drew Seminary until 1896. Since that time many of our pastors have received their training at Drew.

One reason why many of these schools were not founded earlier may be that, although Wesley had shown almost as much educational as spiritual concern, Francis Asbury on this side of the ocean firmly opposed an "educated" ministry. In this matter then, although always calling themselves "Wesley" Methodists, early leaders of our denomination followed Asbury, not Wesley.

CHAPTER VIII

THE VICTORY OF SMALLNESS

1887 - 1896

IT NOW seems clear that the weakest years in the early history of our church were the four (1887-91) which followed the pastorate of the able John Hancock. With hindsight, to be sure, we find that the destiny of Bishop Janes Church for the next fifty years was shaped during the terms of the next two pastors. It was to remain a small, struggling church.

In theory there is nothing wrong with smallness; many prefer it. But in practice the small church, except in the most sparsely populated area, is often a denial of Christianity. For a church must draw people to it, or it is not doing the Lord's work. It must grow, whether privately it wants to or not.

This history has gone into considerable detail to bring to light the stature of many important Methodists from John Hancock back to Lippincott, Bartine and Janes of our pre-history. To have slumped as Basking Ridge Methodism did between 1887 and 1891 was betrayal, however unintentional, of all that those men had tried to accomplish. About all that smallness could promise our church was a growing colloquialism, inner-directedness, and self-preoccupation. Practically speaking, in the vital post-itineracy years of Methodism, "smallness" would assure that great ministers like Day, Searles and Lacey would be accidental in the future. Money always would run short of local needs, and only dribbles would be available for the world-wide ministry of Christianity.

Two two-year pastorates, beginning in 1887, allowed almost half of our membership to melt away and added only three probationers, then lost two of these. The battle for significance may have been lost later anyway, but this cannot be determined, for it *was* lost in those four years. Had growth continued steadily, however gradually, from the 200-member level bequeathed by the Golden Era, there is no telling what the work of future outstanding ministers like Appley and Ketcham might have accomplished. As it happened, most of these later pastors had little to build upon, and had to devote their greatest efforts to the same endlessly-repeated ground work.

Looking back, we see that the late 1880's gave every indication that the founders' hopes of building a great church in Basking Ridge would never be realized. Other major regressions at Bishop Janes Church have always had causes: the Civil War, the depressions of the 1870's and the 1930's. But in these four years such

mitigating events were lacking, for the business slump of the 1890's had little effect upon Basking Ridge. Even the ever-present and usually healthy competition from local Presbyterianism was at a low ebb at this time, for Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church was in the closing years of an aged pastorate. And a careful check of the Conference Journals shows that these were *good* years for a majority of Newark Conference churches.

"Religion is a reasonable service"

JACOB P. FORT 1887 - 89

Jacob P. Fort, our twentieth pastor, was born in Pemberton, New Jersey, February 20, 1818. At the age of sixteen he became a Methodist under Henry Boehm, a highly-honored Methodist pioneer and associate of Asbury's. The same year he went to work as a mechanic. He and his two brothers received little formal education, but each of them had an inner drive to make his life worthwile. During their years of menial labor they studied by themselves, Jacob absorbing what the Conference called "the advised books". One brotner became governor of New Jersey; Jacob and the others became ministers.

His ten years as a mechanic ended in 1842 when he was licensed as a local preacher. He was admitted to the Conference in 1844 and assigned to Freehold. During the next 43 years he served twenty-one pastorates: Bethel, Vernon (Verona), Newark, Dover, Perth Amboy, New Providence, Hackettstown, Staten Island, Harmony, Wantage and Deckertown, Pine Brook, Peapack, Clinton, Succasunna (where he presided at the funeral of Caleb Lippincott in 1871), Asbury, Franklin (now Nutley), Spring Valley, Saddle River, Stony Point, Buttzville and Lafayette. In March, 1887, he was assigned to Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church.

He was a tall, graceful man. A commanding presence was abetted by expressive eyes and a deep, resonant voice. His actions were calm and deliberate. He was a prodigious worker at fifty consecutive Newark Conference sessions; probably no one ever served on more Conference committees.

In 1850 Jacob Fort had married Margaret Force of Arcola. They had ten children, five boys and five girls. The eldest son was already a Newark school principal when his parents moved to Basking Ridge, and several others were off on their own. All of the younger children moved into the parsonage, including two who were old enough to have transfer letters from their previous church. What so many Forts needed was a mighty fortress, but they shoe-horned into the little Elm Street parsonage. The crowding made a few responsible church members begin to think of the need for larger quarters for their pastor, and action on this matter was not far off.

Fort's long experience made him quick to put his finger on all that was wrong at Basking Ridge. (He even knew what was wrong with the weather). Had he put, or been able to put, his hand instead of his finger on the troubles, the results of his pastorate might have been quite different. But we find little evidence of corrective

or constructive action on his part.

The following are extracts from his pastoral reports at the Quarterly Conference meetings[1] during his term:

> May 21, 1887: *"The pastor can report favorably on the condition of the Basking Ridge Sabbath School . . . We are satisfied there are a large percentage of the people who never enter the house of God except when death comes around to stir up their sleepy consciences . . . The pastor's salary was set at $500 and giving visits at the Ridge and the Plains . . . Moving expenses of the pastor in the amount of $14 was paid".*
>
> September 15, 1887: *"In view of preaching three times* (morning at Basking Ridge, afternoon at Pleasant Plains, evening again at Basking Ridge) *every Sabbath it is impossible to give a full report of the real condition of the Sabbath Schools . . . There is need of much more to be done at the parsonage . . . Trustees are now negotiating for additional lands to the Cemetery".* (These were lands adjacent on the north).
>
> December 17, 1887: *"The Basking Ridge Sabbath School is in prosperous condition, new scholars are entering, but new and* more *suitable teachers are greatly needed . . . Two oyster suppers have been held, one for the benefit of the Choir in the Basement of the Church and the other at Nicholas Bowers' to aid the Stewards . . . The Trustees have decided to put up gates at the church to shut out the public on weekdays . . . The pastor preached at a Union Thanksgiving Service in our Church".*
>
> March 17, 1888: *"Prayer Meetings are a little better attended, but a large percentage of our membership never enters them. There is really no excuse for so many absentees.* ***Religion is a reasonable service,*** *and we believe God does not require attendance on instituted means of grace of invalids and sick people; but all well-bodied Christians should occasionally at least be found there".*
>
> November 17, 1888: *"The pastor might report that in all the records of his ministry such continued rain storms have not been known . . . Our congregations on fair Sabbaths sang above the average".*
>
> February 12, 1889: *"I have given attention to special religious services beginning January 2nd for three weeks. Our congregations were good, very good when we call to mind the fact that special services were held in the Presbyterian Church under the direction of a*

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well-paid and fully trained evangelist, and the first of very successful meetings in Bernardsville where many souls were led to cry to God for Mercy . . . Heavy rains flooded the flats at the Plains, and it seemed almost impossible for the people to come together . . . The people on the Plain plead poverty more than they do at the Ridge. They say, that they borrow money to live, but vow they (will) *pay their $100 salary if they have to borrow the money".*

Pastoral support was set at $600 during Fort's two years, and the Pleasant Plains Church was to raise $100 of this. He actually was paid $700 and $600.

His reports were full of complaints and empty of any conspicuous efforts to overcome their causes. But the real tragedy of the Fort pastorate comes to light as we turn to church membership. Hancock had left 11 probationers on the rolls; 7 of them were almost ready for full membership when he left, and were so accepted in Fort's first weeks at Bishop Janes. In two full years he brought no other members to our church, and he was our first pastor to add not a single probationer to the ranks. This could only result in a net loss, and it turned out to be the worst loss our church had ever suffered. Total membership at Basking Ridge and Pleasant Plains, when Fort left, stood at 140, a drop of about 30%[2]. So great a decrease is difficult to understand. Deaths, of course, accounted for a few, but transfers and withdrawals amounted to a virtual exodus.

Jacob Fort was at the end of the line in Basking Ridge, and his overall long ministry should not be judged by his record here. Reading between the lines, we can sense that he was well aware of the poor record at his last charge. His final report (February 1889) ended:

". . . I have now about made up my mind after much prayer to retire from the active ranks of a ministry of 46 years, and leave the field to be cultivated by others who may be more successful than I have been".

The last reference to his Basking Ridge pastorate appears in the 1889 Conference Journal, where it is recorded that he filed a claim for the Conference to make up a "deficiency of support" during his pastorate here. He retired later that year and joined the congregation of Central M. E. Church in Newark until his death four years later, on November 23, 1893.

His memoir in the Conference Journal is generous to him, but between the lines emerges a plodding, sincere, but rather poorly endowed preacher of the Gospel:

". . . He never sought an appointment, nor refused one assigned to him, no matter how humble or remote . . . (He was) diligent on temperance . . . While surrounded by those who sympathized with the nation's enemies (at the outbreak of the Civil War), no

[2] Fort abandoned the work at Stirling, and that station never again was mentioned in Basking Ridge or conference records.

threat of diminished support could suppress his patriotic sermons . . . The church owes much to those of every rank and talent — not only to those who fill large pulpits, but also to those who toil in obscure places".

Our Last Englishman[3]

GEORGE T. JACKSON 1889 - 91

George T. Jackson was born in Leeds, Yorkshire, England, on June 22, 1820. His parents belonged to the Wesleyan Methodist Society, in which his father had become a class leader and later a local preacher. When George was fifteen he was "converted" at the Annual Love Feast at his father's church. He became a Sunday School teacher, then an exhorter, later a local preacher, and finally enrolled at Carwood Seminary in Yorkshire. As a student, he "supplied" neighboring pulpits.

Having completed his studies, he sailed on May 18, 1853, for America with two other ministers, Richard Wheatley and Thomas Stephenson. They landed in Philadelphia on June 3rd. He was at once put to work by the old New Jersey Conference and performed his greatest services during those early years. He supplied the New City (Rockland City) Circuit and Saddle River, brought about many conversions at each charge, and at the same time founded the Spring Valley congregation, all in his first ten months in the United States. He was pastor of the Bloomingdale Circuit in 1855-56, having served Fort Lee and Bull's Ferry in 1854, when an older minister introduced him to Miss Isabella McCable. Isabella was then working as a volunteer at the Methodist Old Ladies' Home on 42nd Street in New York City. They were married in May, 1856, and she seems to have been particularly well suited to the demanding and rewarding role of an itinerant's wife.

At the founding of the Newark Conference in 1857 Jackson was assigned to Stanhope and Waterloo. He increased these congregations, particularly at Waterloo, where he organized construction of their first church building. His next charges were Flanders, Narrowsburg, Otisville, Verona, East Newark (now Harrison), Franklin (now Nutley), Sergeantsville, and Mount Horeb, which he served while S. P. Lacey was the pastor at our church. Next came Centerville and Greenville, Port Oram (now Wharton), Hibernia, Monsey and Saddle River, Pine Brook and Clinton, and Broadway. In March, 1889, at the age of 68, he was assigned to our church in Basking Ridge.

Jackson left only a few pastoral reports in the Quarterly Conference minutes, and we quote from two of them:

> August 15, 1889: *"47 names* (from Pleasant Plains) *were given to me by my predecessor, J. P. Fort. After checking I find it is now 39 . . . No history of Basking Ridge Methodist Episcopal Church has been written since the pastorate of C. A. Wombaugh in 1883. No*

[3] The others were William Day and Samuel Lacey.

history of Pleasant Plains since 1876". (Deficiencies he noted but did not correct).

January 30, 1890: *"A new Freedman's Aid and Southern Education Committee was appointed . . . There is great room for an increase of spirituality and increased zeal in the financial and spiritual affairs of the church".*

On November 1, 1890, Mrs. Mary Baird Janes died in Thiels, New York. She was the wife of Rev. Lewis Janes and the daughter-in-law of "our" bishop. Her funeral was conducted at the Bernardsville Methodist Episcopal Church by William Day, P. E. Lourie, C. C. Winans, the Bernardsville pastor, George Jackson, our pastor, and Henry Buttz, president of Drew and an old family friend. Many childhood companions from our area and friends of the Bairds and of Bishop Janes attended the services and the burial in the family plot at our Evergreen Cemetery.

Under Fort the rolls of Bishop Janes Church had fallen to 140; under Jackson another 20% was lost, leaving a total Basking Ridge-Pleasant Plains enrollment of 112. Four years of aged, ailing pastors revealed that the pastorate, not the laity, had been the evangelical force at our church, probably from the beginning. The drop from 200 to 112 confirmed this.

Jackson added two probationers, the only two since Hancock's pastorate, and brought one of them to full membership. During his two years six others transferred their letters to Bishop Janes Church, but two of these left again before his term ended. Against this gain of four members there was a loss of thirty — ten by death and twenty by transfer to other churches.

Among those who transferred was Samuel DeCoster, a Lacey convert and a long-time steward and trustee. He became disgusted, took his letter, and walked the path other members of his family had worn between our church and the Presbyterian church. However, he did not resign as a trustee of Bishop Janes, and for eight more years took care of our insurance, among other duties. His wife, Deborah, who had joined in 1860 under Sovereign, would not transfer with him. She was to complete 64 years as a member of our church by the time of her death in 1924.

Jackson's last pastoral report, February 5, 1891, ended as follows:

". . . On the Sabbath of January 18th the following four brethren from Morristown spent the day with us: Brothers Green, McCollom, Medget and Moore. Their service was instructive and spiritual, but no visible fruit resulted from their labors . . . the spiritual condition of the charge is discouraging. The pastor is concerned and depressed, but he hopes and prays for better days".

In the years before Fort and Jackson the strong earlier pastorates had built the Bishop Janes congregation to twice the size of that of our parent church in Bernardsville. This condition had held for a quarter of a century. But, when

Jackson left, membership in the two churches was equal. However, Bernardsville was paying twice as much for pastoral support (Jackson's estimated and actual support both years was $600). Our church debt had grown to $1675, the parsonage was almost unlivable, and the church, hardly touched since Wombaugh's pastorate, was again in poor repair.

Blame for these conditions should not rest upon Jackson. He had spent all of his energies in itinerant service, and his health seriously failed in Basking Ridge. He became completely deaf, and other ailments brought about what Conference records referred to as "severe surgical treatment", probably in Morristown. The Conference Session of 1891 assigned him to Coleville and Libertyville, but the doctors ordered him to quit. He retired to Newark, where he died June 3, 1905. He was buried in Nutley.

If blame must be placed for the shattered condition of Bishop Janes Church in 1891, it has to fall upon the Methodist people, both locally and throughout the Conference. Young men built churches and congregations; old men past reasonable retirement age often eroded this work through lack of strength, not lack of desire. Yet our churches supported the "Preachers' Aid Society" so poorly that only token sums were available to retired men. They worked to keep from starving, and the churches they were assigned to were, of course, those which, like Bishop Janes, were paying the $600 minimum.

Methodism in Basking Ridge long had escaped retribution for its poor pastoral support. When that retribution came, it took only four years to wipe out half the gains of fifty years. All this did not escape notice by the Newark Conference. In April, 1891, they assigned to Basking Ridge another elderly minister, but this time a very special one.

The Orphan Who Wasn't

JEREMIAH COWINS 1891 - 94

Jeremiah Cowins was the victim of a cruel, ironic trick of fate which in his infancy whisked him from the arms of his family simply because communications and public health procedures were so poor in those days. Except for the empty knowledge that his name was Jeremiah Cowins, he did not know until his late forties who he was.

He was born in New York City March 1, 1830. About three years later his father, whose occupation involved some kind of "public work", according to conference records, had to make a quick trip to Trenton, New Jersey. Some temporary emergency at home — probably his mother was ill at the time — made it necessary for Mr. Cowins to take his little son with him. They arrived in the midst of a terrible cholera scourge, by accident were not turned back, and so became subject to a mass quarantine. Almost at once the father fell victim to the disease and died. During his last hours he had become separated from his three-year-old son, and we can im-

agine the poor man's desperation as his life ran out. A panic law consigned him to immediate mass burial.

The father's name and address were found among his papers, and within a week Mrs. Cowins was notified of her widowhood by Trenton officials. But no word about Jeremiah was included. The frantic woman must have checked as soon as possible. Undoubtedly she went to Trenton as soon as permitted, but in the confusion she was told that her son must have died and been buried with the others. Unfortunately the poor woman became convinced that this was the case, and she returned to New York.

Meanwhile, Jeremiah, who had learned to walk but could talk very little, had wandered about the neighborhood until a kindly family noticed him and took in the frightened lost child. Through something in his possession they discovered his name, but nothing more. Mrs. Cowins surely had checked with Trenton officials, and this family must have done so too, but somehow, in the panic conditions, reports of these inquiries were not connected. And Mrs. Cowins must have given up too soon. The kind Trenton couple knew only that little lost Jeremiah could have wandered from anywhere in their upset city, and naturally assumed he had been orphaned in the wave of deaths. They cared for him for several years. Then, for reasons unknown, he was turned over to another family and for the rest of his boyhood was shifted from one household to another.

The bitter irony was compounded when Jeremiah was fifteen. Having heard fascinating tales of seafaring, he went to New York, signed on a whaling ship, put his clothes and possessions aboard, and was told to report back by nightfall. Wandering through the tough waterfront saloons that afternoon, he heard enough about whaling to shatter his illusions. Here the self-reliance of an orphan came to his aid. Somehow he managed to recover his belongings and escape from the port area unseen. Whithin a few days he found work as an assistant to a kindly carpenter in the heart of the city and located a room nearby. This was the irony: the room where he lived was on the *same street* where his mother, brother and two sisters were then living! What ridicule such a story would bring upon a fiction writer! Jeremiah and his family lived this close together, it was later discovered, for almost three years but never found each other, never guessed that the loose strings to their past had not been severed.

At seventeen he returned to Trenton, where he was converted and joined the Presbyterian Church. He was a bright young man and loved to read. Although he had only $40, he decided he would enter Pennington Seminary. His retentive mind held more academic and musical knowledge than those of most young men of his age, knowledge picked up from some of the families who had sheltered him. So he was able to work his way through school by qualifying for jobs as a grammar and music teacher.

Soon he decided to direct his studies toward the ministry, and transferred allegiance to the Methodist Church. After graduation he was accepted by our Conference in 1855 and was assigned to the New Dover Mission in Rahway. Beginning

in 1857 he served Bound Brook, Elizabethport, Westfield, and in 1860 our neighbor, Mount Horeb. During the Civil War his charges were Perth Amboy, Spring Valley, and Montclair. After the war he was sent to Hackensack, Staten Island, Springfield, East Newark (Harrison) and Jersey City.

It was during his pastorate in Jersey City (1876-78) that a member of his congregation brought him a New York newspaper which contained a story about a Cowins family with a passing reference to an infant mortality bearing his name, long ago in Trenton. Jeremiah rushed to New York and found that it was, in fact his family. He had the bittersweet experience of reunion with a sister and several cousins, and the discovery that his mother, whom he had lived so near as a carpenter's helper, had recently died. His other sister, and his brother, who had become a ship's captain, also were dead. So at 47 Jeremiah Cowins had, in effect, ceased to be an orphan. It is an incredible story, one that probably could not happen in our time.

After Jersey City, Cowins served Bayonne, Watsessing, Rahway, and Newark. In 1890 his passionate interest in both secular and church history resulted in his appointment as Newark Conference Historian, and he effected a complete reorganization of the Conference Historical Society.[4]

Jeremiah Cowins had been a highly successful pastor. His power in the pulpit was matched by special ability at the personal level. He earned a reputation within the Conference as one of its best ministers. He attracted the people to Methodism and showed a net gain in this respect at practically all of his charges, especially at Perth Amboy and Hackensack. At the peak of his powers, he discovered upon arrival at Hackensack an irreparable split in the congregation. So he took half the membership, built a new church nearby, and tripled its rolls in little more than a year. (The two churches were reunited in 1913 into a much larger church than he had inherited). Above all his other accomplishments, what the Conference called "Cowins' ability at reviving debt-ridden churches" was almost unmatched within its jurisdiction.

That the bishop would have moved a man of Cowins' ability from his conference office to "rescue the perishing" at Basking Ridge is evidence that active concern, backed by effective remedial action, for even the small churches, had not died in the Newark Conference of the 1890's. Like Fort and Jackson, Cowins was well along the downward slope when he came here, but the bishop and the presiding elder counted upon his ability and his fund of experience, and told him to do what he could for the prostrated church in Basking Ridge. But it was almost too late, as far as his talents were concerned. For three years he drove a weak and failing body to achievements that were astonishing under the circumstances.

In 1859 Cowins had married a girl from his second church, Bound Brook. Her name was Catherine ("Kate") Hodge. They had three sons and, finally, one daughter, named Florence. Florence worked through her probation at Bishop Janes

[4] 67 years later this work was most helpful to Rev. John G. Lytle of our congregation in compiling the Society's contribution to the Conference Centennial Celebration.

Church and became a full member in September, 1892.

So, in April 1891, Jeremiah Cowins, the first-rate administrator, the pastor with a sense of history, took up his duties at Basking Ridge. And we would expect excellent records of his three years, with such a reputation behind him. Instead we find the next twelve Quarterly Conferences blank in our second book of minutes. There were no baptismal records, and the membership rolls of his term were not kept properly, but were filled in by his successor as best he could. In fact, it would seem from this that Bishop Janes Church in 1891 was starting its third successive tired, old pastorate.

But this first impression proves to be entirely misleading. The explanation for his poor records is found in the recorded marriages. Cowins performed two, and we find the information transcribed in the painfully slow, uncontrolled scribble of a man who has suffered a stroke. There is no mention of a stroke in his biography, but the evidence of his script is incontestable. Cowins was physically near the end in his three years here. He would, in fact, not live another three.

In spite of this, he dug in at once, without the usual protests that "it takes time" to get started in a new charge. He heeded but one Master, and that Master seemed to want the failing condition at Bishop Janes Church reversed. Driving his worn-out body, the new pastor began to comply.

The Front Street (Dayton-Dunham) Parsonage

The most significant event of the Cowins pastorate began taking shape during his first weeks in town.

In 1891 the land upon which our church stood was less than half the size of our present property. Located on the northern half of today's lot, it extended from Front Street (now South Finley Avenue) about three quarters of the way back to the footpath which would later become part of South Maple Avenue. With much of it occupied by the church building and the horse sheds that had been built later, it was a sexton's delight in grass-cutting season.

Alongside this property on the south stood a home which pre-dated the church by many decades. The main part of it had been built before the Revolution by the Dayton family, early settlers in our area, some of whom later moved west and founded the city of Dayton, Ohio. Today (in 1983) our only membership ties to this family are Marion Dayton Turner, her son, Ken, and her grandchildren. The early history of the home is vague, in spite of efforts by the Basking Ridge Historical Society to obtain information about it. It is known to have been the boyhood home of William Lewis Dayton[5], and is thought to have been his birthplace.

[5] William Lewis Dayton, LLD, was born in Basking Ridge February 17, 1807. He was graduated from Princeton in 1825, became a lawyer in 1830 and Associate Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court in 1838. Elected a U.S. Senator in 1842, he became, in 1856, the first Republican candidate for Vice President (Fremont's running mate). After serving as Attorney General of New Jersey (1857-61) he was appointed our Civil War ambassador to France in 1861. He died at his post in Paris December 1, 1864.

In mid-19th century this house had been sold to Benjamin Dunham, and it was shortly after his death that Jeremiah Cowins became pastor of Bishop Janes Church. One of the minister's first discoveries here was that the widow, Mrs. Osee Dunham, might agree to sell the house and the sizeable property that went with it. He at once began to dicker with her and the executor of her husband's estate, Joseph Alward, with one hand, while briefing and winning support from Bishop Janes trustees with the other. The house was larger and better preserved than the Elm Street parsonage then in use. The latter was practically unlivable in 1891; it needed so many repairs.[6]

On December 19, 1891, the Dayton-Dunham home on Front Street, next to the church, was purchased by our trustees, acting for the congregation. At the time the house was our major concern. Of greater lasting value was the property that went with it, — a flag-shaped lot of about two acres which extended eastward about 250 feet from the present South Maple Avenue, where the Township Library now stands. The larger (eastern) portion of this property was sold by the trustees about five years later, but the part retained more than doubled the former size of the church property.

The Presiding Elder's report in the Newark Conference Journal reads:

> "Basking Ridge sold its old parsonage property and purchased another next to the church. The exchange was a remarkably good business transaction".

His report was well stated. Cowins arranged to buy the property and new parsonage for $2200, a very low price even in 1891. The money was raised as follows: $875 was realized from the sale of the Elm Street parsonage; a $1000 three-year mortgage was secured, and a private loan of $325 made up the balance.

The church debt increased from $1675 to $3000, but it should be remembered that Cowins was noted for debt reduction. In the last four months of this, his first year at our church, he raised $100. In his second year he raised $700 more. In his third year the $1000 mortgage was paid off and the debt further reduced by $200. The Presiding Elder's report in this Conference Journal reads:

> "Improvements have been made on the church buildings at both points of the Basking Ridge charge. The greatest achievement is the paying of the mortgage of $1000 on the parsonage at Basking Ridge, thus providing a large . . . home for the pastor, clear of debt, immediately adjoining the church, including two acres of valuable land in the center of the village".

In all, Jeremiah Cowins left seven legacies to his successors in the Bishop Janes pulpit. First, he stopped the exodus of members and started the church upstream once more. The rolls climbed from 112 to 121 and then, with a big surge of proba-

[6] The new owner and later owners practically rebuilt it, and surprisingly it has outlasted the Dayton-Dunham house. That was torn down in 1960, but the original Elm Street parsonage is still a well-kept home at the corner of Lewis Street and South Maple Avenue.

tioners his last year, to 138. Second, he left 28 probationers, of whom the unusually high number of 19 proved ready for full membership within a few months. Third, the new parsonage and property that he acquired greatly improved our desirability as a charge. Fourth, he cut our debt from $1675 to $1000 in spite of this purchase and the doubling of our maintenance allowance.

Although Cowins himself left no records of his Quarterly Conference meetings, we can reconstruct from subsequent events the three most important actions of his last such meeting, in February or March of 1894. His fifth legacy, resulting from this session, got pastoral support for his successor increased by $200. Conference records show that during his three years it was estimated at $632, $500 and $650, but he was actually paid $614, $546 and $600. So the increase voted was relatively significant, but it was still pretty small pay.

The sixth, also brought about at this meeting, saw Joseph Owen's attempt of 1879 resurrected. With Quarterly Conference approval, three women were elected stewards of Bishop Janes Church. They were: Mrs. Catherine Bowers (second wife of Nicholas Bowers), Mrs. Catherine Boss of Basking Ridge, and Mrs. Lillian Leonard of the Pleasant Plains congregation. It will be remembered that women had first been *elected* as stewards fifteen years earlier, but they had refused to offend the mores of the period and had declined to serve. For a time in 1894 it looked as though Mesdames Bowers, Boss and Leonard would do likewise, for they did not attend their first or second Quarterly Conference meetings. However, Cowins' successor appointed the "forward" Miss Phoebe Conkling to fill a board vacancy in December, 1894. At the next Quarterly Conference meeting, in January 1895, Miss Conkling (perhaps leading the others), Mrs. Bowers and Mrs. Boss took their seats with the Board. At the next meeting, in March, Lillian Leonard joined them. Women's rights at last were established at Bishop Janes Church.

The seventh and last of Jeremiah Cowins' legacies was the chartering, in February, 1894, of a chapter of the Methodist Epworth League at our church, with an initial membership of 23. At first our people must have thought this young people's group was for the "young at heart" for, though most of the members were young, the group included several who were well past their teens. There were Oscar Brown, who had grown too old to continue his duties as sexton, and George Wyckoff, a charter member of the congregation, Civil War Sunday School superintendent and former steward, who was now too old for anything but the youth group. Even old Dominie Bowers joined later that year. Within a decade, however, the Newark Conference put a stop to "older" members. Our Epworth League obviously filled a need and it came alive at once. They charged 5¢ dues at monthly meetings and raised from $10 to $30 at monthly "sociables". As money accumulated it was turned over to church needs. For example, they began to finance the pastor's annual trip to the Conference session, paid interest on the church debt, and picked up the tab for illnesses in church families who were financially embarassed. Almost over night the League became a vital church organization, and it was organized by Cowins during his last six weeks here.

Jeremiah Cowins' active work for our church was to be about the last he offered to his Lord. Leaving Bishop Janes in 1894, he served one more year, as an assistant pastor in Jersey City. In 1896 he retired to his wife's native town, Bound Brook, and it was there that he died, in February of the following year. Cowins had had to fight for existence throughout his youth, and he never lost this spirit of determination. Unlike others among our early pastors, who came to long for death and heavenly release as their powers failed, Cowins faced death as an enemy and fought it to his last breath. It was noted at the time that he was the 100th Newark Conference minister to die since its organization in 1857.

His achievements at our church were indeed remarkable for a broken old man in failing health. Certainly this "orphan who wasn't" must be counted as one of the stronger pastors in the history of our church.

"No Stamping in Church"

WILSON F. RANDOLPH 1894 - 96

Our 23rd pastor was Wilson F. Randolph. Born in Newark May 22, 1842, he joined Central M. E. Church there early in life. He was drawn to the ministry, attended Pennington Seminary, then went west and entered Garrett Biblical Institute, was graduated there, and was ordained in 1863.

He joined the Wisconsin Conference for four years, transferred to the New Jersey (South Jersey) Conference in 1867, back to the Wisconsin Conference in 1874, and finally completed the circle, by his last transfer, to the Newark Conference in 1882. While in the New Jersey Conference he built churches at Beverly in Burlington County and at Port Republic in Atlantic County. In the Newark Conference, beginning in 1882, his assignments were to Mount Hermon, Harmony, Staten Island, High Bridge, Milford, Sergeantsville, and Thiels. Then, in April 1894, shortly before his fifty-second birthday, he was assigned to Bishop Janes Church.

In 1866 Wilson Randolph had married Harriet Russell in her native Wisconsin. They had three sons and one daughter. The oldest, Herbert, became a minister in our Conference and, in fact, received his first appointment (Plainfield) just one year before his father came to Basking Ridge. Later Herbert served at Bernardsville. Another son, Russell, settled in Bernardsville around 1905 and provided a home for his father when he retired. The younger children, a boy and a girl, moved into the Front Street parsonage with their parents in April, 1894.

Jeremiah Cowins had received below-minimal support during his term in Basking Ridge. In fact, the conference session of 1894 voted that he be granted conference funds to make up the deficiency. He had not pressed the question of salary for himself but, as we have noted, he did press it for his successor and, in the long run, for the good of the church. The Official Board was led to increase estimated support to $850, a $200 raise, long overdue. The church fell a little short of this dur-

ing Randolph's first year; he was paid (including parsonage rental value) $795. This caused the timid Board to reduce estimated support to $750 for his second year, but that year he was actually paid $850.

Randolph reactivated the book of Quarterly Conference minutes, which Cowins had left blank, and made a few quotable entries in his various reports. It is interesting to note that none of them refer to the outstanding pastorate of his predecessor:

> June 24, 1894: *"There are two Sunday Schools in the charge. The one at Pleasant Plains is very small because there are so few children in the neighborhood. It seems that the only hope for the school is that the members of the church support it by their presence and form themselves into a Bible Class, thus saying* ***come*** *instead of* ***go*** *to all the children and young people".*
>
> October 19, 1894: *"The Sunday School at Pleasant Plains is feeble, there being few Protestant American children within several miles of the church . . . The Sunday School at Basking Ridge is in a flourishing condition, attendance is large and membership growing . . . The pastor in three months made 200 visits, conducted one funeral, two baptisms, held Communion*[7] *twice, and conducted one Love Feast".*

The Parsonage Aid Society

Although various informal women's organizations existed in our church from its earliest years, the first one of which we have a record, and the first one with unbroken continuity down to the present, was formed as the "Parsonage Aid Society" in the Front Street parsonage on October 18, 1894. ·

Charter members at this meeting were: Mrs. Wilson Randolph (elected president), Mrs. Stephen Benbrook (vice president), Miss Phoebe Conkling (secretary), Mrs. Nicholas Bowers (treasurer), Mrs. Samuel Decoster, Mrs. Oscar Brown, Mrs. Mary Hill, and Miss Anna Figg. They voted to meet once a month, that dues should be 10¢ per month, and that all "monies" collected would be spent "for benefit of the parsonage". This group, which was to reorganize into the "Ladies Aid Society" two years later, became a helpful organization within our church almost at once. Several entries in their minutes give us an idea of their activities in their first years:

> December 1894: "Moved and carried that we join with the Social Committee of the Epworth League to give a Social to aid in raising the Parsonage debt . . . Moved and carried that we make an Album Quilt that will contain gentleman's names only, for which honor they will pay the sum of 25¢".

[7] First use in our records of the word "Communion" (in place of "Lord's Supper").

February 7, 1895: "Moved and carried that we have the parlor ceiling papered and have a double register put in the ceiling to heat the room above".

June 5, 1895: "The treasurer reported that Mrs. Bowers and Mrs. Randolph had paid 50¢ dues in advance . . . which sums enabled the treasurer to pay Mr. Craig's bill for papering the parlor, after taking all that there was in the treasury to complete the amount of the bill which was $3.75."

February 6, 1896: "Moved and carried that we recover the cushion around the altar in the church". (As early as this the group's activities began to expand from parsonage to church. Also notable is this first use of the word "altar"). . . . "Moved and carried that we pay $14.50 on the debt".

Referring again to Randolph's reports in the Quarterly Conference minutes, we find several more items of interest:

January 1895: *"The meeting opened by singing 'A Charge to Keep I Have' . . . We set up with Dr. Rankin alternate meetings with the Presbyterian Church for two weeks*[8] *. . . We appointed a committee to see the brethren at Pleasant Plains to find out what they intended to do the present year and the coming year.* (Clearly, Pleasant Plains was floundering).

"The Christmas service was considered a success. Though the aisles were filled with chairs and the members sat upon the platform, many had to stand both on the main floor and in the gallery and a goodly number went away unable to find standing room.[9] *No higher commendation can be given than that this large audience was mostly quiet and orderly during the exercises of the evening, after they were requested to please express their appreciation by clapping of hands and* ***not by stamping****".*

March 9, 1895: *"I diligently cleared the rolls and after deducting losses we find a net increase of 32 members which constitutes more than one quarter of the numerical membership of this church".*

June 7, 1895: *"Sunday School classes are very large, but we regret to have to state that that compendium of Methodist doctrine and Bible truth, the catechism, is not to be found in the school . . .*

[8] Several months later in 1895 the Rev. Dr. Rankin retired as minister of the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church. He had accepted its pulpit three years before our first church was built, and had been pastoral neighbor to our first 23 Methodist ministers, over a term of 44 years. His personal kindness, cordiality and hospitality had been an ever-present help to our struggling congregation and its pastors.

[9] Any special service strained the capacity of that little white church. During Hancock's term the strain had been even greater. The church simply was too small.

We have but one Sunday School including 4 officers, 8 teachers and 100 pupils . . . In three months I have made 150 pastoral visits".

Wilson Randolph was proud of his membership record and, comparing it with that of Fort or Jackson, he had a right to be. However, it was not quite as good as he implied, for we find that, in spite of his claims, he did not deduct losses. The number of full members did increase during his term (from 110 to 122), thanks to 19 good probationers left to him by his predecessor. But it seems that he added only one probationer, so actually there was not much change in the total count.

One of Cowins' probationers who became a full member was young David Y. Moore, who was to become a key member of both our community and our church in the years that followed. He was our town's blacksmith (the last one), a skilled craftsman, and he was chosen chief of our volunteer fire department in its early years. For sixty years — until his death in 1956 — he faithfully served Bishop Janes Church in many capacities, both as an official and as a never-failing helper wherever needed. His name will appear often later in our history.

Death claimed ten of our members during Randolph's two years. Such a high number leads us to suspect that an epidemic of some kind may have visited Basking Ridge. One of these losses brought special sorrow to the Front Street parsonage. The pastor's youngest son, Wilson F. Randolph, Jr., died there on July 30, 1895.

Several other things that happened during Randolph's term should be noted. The church debt rose from $1000 to $1200 his first year, then to $1475 by the time he left. The deaths of two of our former pastors occurred during that time; William Day, our founding minister, died in July of 1895, and Cy Wombaugh in January of the following year. In 1895 a new Methodist Church in Martinsville was dedicated and became part of the Mount Horeb Charge. In later years it would outgrow its mother church by a wide margin.

Wilson Randolph left Basking Ridge in April of 1896, having been fairly effective as pastor of Bishop Janes Church. No stigma should be assumed because he was not assigned here a third year, for by 1896 the "three-year rule" had come to be observed more in breach than in practice. Earlier, three years *had* been a rigid maximum, but this no longer was the rule. Our next pastor would serve six.

However, he left with a bad taste in his mouth. His last pastoral report ends with the answer to the disciplinary question, "Are there any complaints or appeals?" and he answered as follows:

"As for complaints, Stewardess Phoebe Conkling (requests) — that Miss _____ be asked to withdraw her membership. Also that Miss _____ be asked to withdraw her membership. Mrs. Bowers so moved . . . Carried. The minister was instructed to send the notices".

and the report ends:

". . . many and painfully adverse influences have been working".

Obviously, the pastor did not approve, but he lacked the ability to block this primitive brutality. Probably never again in our history would a motion by women of our Official Board look as bad as this, their first recorded action.

Randolph was very upset, both by this action and by the recent death of his young son. His health was affected, and he found it necessary to request a leave of absence for one year, before he could return to the ministry. Then he served another two years at Anderson and Mount Freedom. From 1900 through 1903 he worked in semi-retirement as a supply preacher. He retired completely in 1904 and lived with his son in Bernardsville. Eight years later he suffered a stroke which left him paralyzed, and he died on May 24, 1914. He is buried in Port Jervis.

His conference memoir points to

> ". . a hopeful spirit, untiring energy and courage. He possessed a strong faith that laughed at the impossible. He believed in 'the right' and had the courage of his convictions. He stood for the 'faith of our fathers' . . . was always truthful, but not always tactful".

Randolph loved the Methodist Church, but, a natural conservative, he fought all efforts to change or modify its system. His preaching was called "practical". Above all, he insisted upon the moralities of religion, and that right conduct was the evidence of true piety.

Our church had now passed through a decade of pastorates by four old men. Church finances remained unimproved, but several important innovations had been accomplished. Church property had been extended and a more commodious and convenient parsonage had been acquired. For the most part, these years would be remembered in our history as those which saw the enduring victory of "smallness" at the Basking Ridge Methodist Episcopal Church.

CHAPTER IX

THE DIVIDER OF HISTORY

Joseph E. Appley 1896 - 1902

HOWEVER one may answer the classic question, "What think ye of the Christ?" all must agree that Jesus of Nazareth split in two the history of mankind. Our very system of dating reflects this fact.

Locally, just such an inpact was made upon Bishop Janes Church by our turn-of-the-century pastorate. The ministry of Joseph E. Appley put an archaic stamp upon all that had gone before and so influenced the years which have followed that, unlike Searles, Clement, Lacey or Ketcham, whose outstanding terms are unknown to most of today's members, Appley's mark still exerts a powerful influence upon our church. Every phase of this young man's work was tremendous. Most of it was so competent and right that all pay tribute to its results. Methodism would profit from a biography of such a man. In this chapter we can no more than provide a nodding acquaintance with this out-sized, complex figure.

Joseph E. Appley was born less than a year after the close of the Civil War, November 20, 1865, in Hancock, N.Y., a Delaware Valley town near the northeast corner of Pennsylvania. His parents, Asa and Ellen Appley, moved to Iowa when he was a boy. He received his early education in a small country schoolhouse, and studied by the light from tallow candles which he and his mother made. High hopes concerning Iowa did not materialize, and the family returned to Hancock where Joseph, now 16, continued his studies at the local academy. He decided to teach, and trained for it at Hudson River Institute. He began teaching near his home, at Livingston Manor, N.Y., and by the time of his conversion he had become that town's superintendent of schools. He must have become an expert educator because even after he became a minister he was to be asked to lecture to the New York City Board of Education at least once a year in fifteen different years. His last such lecture took place in 1930.

A growing conviction that he had to serve Christ led to his resignation from the Livingston Manor schools. He trained for the ministry at the old Clavarack College near Hudson, N.Y., in 1889 and 1890. At Clavarack he was attracted to a coed, Miss Jessie Moore, of Tarrytown. Jessie was a promising music student who had transferred from Pennington in New Jersey because of the superior music faculty at Clavarack.

Joseph mastered his work quickly, was admitted into the New York Con-

ference, and was ordained a local deacon in 1891. He began his ministry by supplying a circuit of small churches which included Norton Hill and Medusa in the Catskill Mountains. Courting was difficult under these conditions. In later life he was to claim, with a twinkle in his eye, that Jessie's weekends were so filled by a religious schedule that he had to marry her in order to get a chance to visit with her.

They decided together that he should take the full ministerial course at Drew Seminary, so he moved to New Jersey and entered that school in September, 1892. During his first year there he supplied the pulpit at nearby Mount Hope. The following spring Jessie joined him in Madison and they were married there in June, 1893. His young bride was a girl with many special endowments, and in winning her hand he achieved one of his greatest victories for both his own happiness and for his ministry. The Newark Conference accepted him on probation in 1893 and ordained him a deacon in March, 1894. During his second and third years at Drew he supplied the pulpits at Harmony and Stewartsville, near Phillipsburg, and in his fourth year the pulpit at Port Morris. It was here that the young couple's first child, Margaret, was born.

Bishop Janes Church at this time awaited its 24th pastor. Generally speaking, it had advanced in the past under young ministers, but had recently retreated under elderly men. Some of our older members could recall the successful pastorates of Searles and Woodruff, both of whom had come to us as fresh, young students, so it is doubtful that our congregation entertained any qualms when, late in March of 1896, they learned that Joseph Appley had been assigned to our pulpit.

They would soon discover that Rev. Appley was a forthright and courageous young man, and later they would find that the few who opposed him usually came off second best. Many years later Jessie, in her widowhood, liked to tell those who had come later about her tall, handsome and commanding young husband. She seemed happiest when remembering him as he stood firm, with fire in his eyes, determined to overcome some ungodly opposition, and by all accounts be *was* an impressive figure at such times. Yet, in spite of his overpowering ability to influence — sometimes maneuver — people, Appley had a reputation for "tenderness, tolerance, human understanding, and kindness". At Basking Ridge he became the first minister since Clement for whom members named their children. It is natural that such a man would have been powerful in the pulpit. His preaching style recalled the Bartine-Lippincott tradition and was most successful, though he lived in more modern times. According to Mrs. Appley, "he always stuck to the Gospel" and, as we shall see, he knew how to apply it to the situation confronting him.

Prior to the Appleys' arrival in Basking Ridge we can find no clear omen that this pastorate would be pivotal. Joseph had raised $350 for improvements at the little Harmony church, but otherwise there was little advance warning to our congregation that it was receiving a giant.

Six years later he would write:

> *"The undersigned was appointed to the pastorate at Basking Ridge Methodist Episcopal Church in the spring of 1896 and found*

two churches (one at Pleasant Plains) *paying but $600*[1] *the congregations small and discouraged, the buildings old and dilapidated, and evidence of decay . . . everywhere . . .*"

Although basically true, this report is colored by his later disillusionment, for we know that Rev. Appley's first impression of Basking Ridge assessed the situation as ripe for the advancement of the Kingdom, and the people as probable lieutenants in the work. The earliest writing in his own hand was set down during his first few weeks in town. It is a pastoral report of May 10, 1896, and shows his pleasure with the new assignment and his sense of expectance:

> *"I found a board of trustees who are anxious to free themselves from all financial incumbrances and make aggressive movements (toward) repairing the church building, and operations are actually begun (with) $400 already pledged".*

This report gave a clue to what Joseph Appley was likely to accomplish, for the progress he referred to had been made within a month of his arrival. Further, this first entry should be kept in mind as the story unfolds, because it explains most of the conflict which was to be a part of this long pastorate. Whether or not he realized it at the time, Appley had described not only what the "official brethren", as he called the stewards and trustees, wanted, but also the limit of what they wanted — a repair job.

The new pastor was that rarity, a man who could get things done if the people were behind him, or even if they were not. With both sides pulling together, as they did, the results of this first year should not be too surprising. By any standard, however, they were impressive. After only eight months at Bishop Janes Church, Appley's third pastoral report stated:

> *"December 18th, 1896, we held a Jubilee over having paid all the standing indebtedness of the church, amounting to about $1475, much of it of many years standing. In fact,* ***this is the first time the church has ever been out of debt.*** (Conference records support this statement of Rev. Appley's). *With a surplus, the Trustees contemplate much needed repairs on the parsonage . . . We hope for a new auditorium*[2] *in the near future,* (Even this early the Appley vision had begun to take shape) *which will render the society capable of doing the work needed in this place. Spiritually, we are in the midst of a modern Pentecost. The Lord has shed down upon us from Heaven the Spirit of His power, and a revival is in progress that already has resulted in twenty seeking their soul's salvation . . . The*

[1] The $600 was the amount of cash paid. Adding parsonage rental value in the usual manner, the "support" figure really was $750.

[2] To avoid the charge of "high churchmanship", earlier Methodists always scrupulously shunned such words as sanctuary, holy communion and altar. The pulpit was often called "the platform", the sanctuary was labeled an "auditorium" or "audience room".

whole membership is awake and at work with very few exceptions. The prospect grows brighter. As we march along the King's Highway, we are faithfully praying for more souls. God send them!"

However, it seems that it was Rev. Appley's eye that travelled the King's Highway. The people's desires were somewhat less exalted; they wanted their church clean and painted, and the burden of debt removed from their backs. But under his prodding they did dig into their pockets, just how deeply we can not tell. As Mrs. Appley much later recalled, "My husband had a particular ability to secure money for the Lord from those who had a lot of it". And it is clear that, of the large amounts raised by him during his six-year term, the greater part of it came from people who did not belong to our church.

In April, 1897, our Presiding Elder, Samuel P. Hammond, gave his report to the Annual Conference session. In it he did not mention many of his churches, but he did have this to say about Joseph Appley's first year here:

"Basking Ridge has improved its property by introduction of steam heat (to the parsonage[3]) *at a cost of $250, and paid her mortgage and debts to the amount of $1400. This charge in all its departments has had a year of marked success, an old-fashioned revival with 32 converted, Sunday School and congregation enlarged, plans formed for improvement of church property, a subscription of $1050 being already in hand, and missionary collection nearly doubled. New hope and confidence are everywhere present".*

Later he added that:

"Basking Ridge led the entire Newark District in contributions to the Centenary Fund and Preachers' Aid Society with $152.50".

Here we see that Rev. Appley was one who wanted good pensions established for old, ailing preachers, both for their own sake and for the sake of Newark Conference churches.

Early in his first year here the new minister found himself aligned against two powerful laymen. The first was Samuel DeCoster, who had seen his church decline under Fort and Jackson and then had transferred to the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church. However, as mentioned earlier, he had *not* resigned from his position on our Board of Trustees. Having been a power at Bishop Janes since the days of Lacey, he still continued a dominant influence. He soon became the leader of the conservatives, and he organized opposition to the young preacher who was so full of desires and plans for a change. DeCoster found an effective, if decorous ally in

[3] Mrs. Appley recalled, 65 years later, that living conditions at the parsonage were poor during their term here. The building was drafty, with coal stoves heating the first floor but not the second. The kitchen was cold, dark and primitive, there was no plumbing, water had to be drawn from an outdoor well, and the outhouse stood some distance from the house. The installation of a steam heating system and a kitchen hand pump were much appreciated improvements.

our local preacher, Nicholas Bowers. Mr. Appley sometimes suspected that Bowers had been happy to see our church grow smaller so that, at last, in his old age, he, Bowers, might be chosen to supply the little country pulpits at Basking Ridge and Pleasant Plains. There may have been some basis for Mr. Appley's suspicions. As an unordained, or local preacher, Bowers' only hope for appointment depended on these churches being very small; "supply" charges, in other words. Also Charles Woodruff's instinct more than twenty years earlier that Bowers had to be kept "under my oversight" may be recalled. On the other hand, during his younger years Bowers had labored diligently to bring souls to our church, had worked to build congregations at Pleasant Plains and Liberty Corner, and in the end pledged financial support for a new church in Basking Ridge. Nevertheless, he did oppose the new minister, and in his position as a licensed preacher, this seemed out of order.

Many ministers would have been defeated at the start by such opposition, but not Joseph Appley. Sometimes he deftly sidestepped conservative tacklers, other times he bowled right through their defensive line. And the people began to side with him. They overpaid his first year's salary by $108, raised pastoral support $100 for his second year, and although seldom on time with payments, overpaid that by the year's end. Certainly they were aroused by his accomplishments.

One of these innovations should be examined at length, for it had a permanent effect upon our church and was one of the Appley impacts earlier said to have rendered archaic much of our earlier history. Before he came to Bishop Janes the charge had a quaint, if brutal, quasi-official method of "expelling" people from membership. It was used, for example, upon real or suspected alcholics, women or girls whose reputations were at all in question, and possibly upon the somewhat unorthodox as well. When the Official Board met, any member could move that a name be stricken from the rolls and if the motion passed the pastor would be "instructed" to inform the party that he or she was no longer a member of the church.

It will be recalled that this had happened to Joseph Appley's predecessor, to that unfortunate man's sorrow, and it happened to young Appley soon after his arrival. To the disciplinary question, "Are there any complaints or appeals?" someone moved that a girl, a full member, be "asked to withdraw". No vote, however, was taken at this time, for the chairman, Rev. Appley, spoke substantially as follows:

> *"Very good! Now, when do you want me to schedule the trial?* (pause) . . . *There has to be a trial, you know . . . according to accepted Methodist procedure.*[4] *Set the date, and I will arrange for the Presiding Elder to chair the proceeding . . . perhaps the Bishop*

[4] Appley was quite correct. Minutes of the original Methodist Conference as early as 1789 had tried to prevent hasty expulsions as follows: "When a member of our Society is to be tried (even then trials were mandatory, but our church had not used them) for any offense, the officiating Minister or Preacher is to call together all the members, if the Society is small, or a select number if it be large, to take knowledge, and give advice, and bear witness to the justice of the whole process; that improper and private expulsions may be prevented for the future".

should be here too. The accused will have to be charged to her face, and her accusers will be cross examined . . . A Methodist trial is no small matter."

After the Board had regained its composure, the motion — not the girl — was withdrawn, and Appley had the abortive proceedings struck from the records. No trial ever again was held at Bishop Janes Church, and as far as our research has been able to discover, no active member ever has been "kicked out" since the arrival in Basking Ridge of the Rev. Joseph E. Appley. He may have demonstrated it too often for a few members, but at least he recognized the fact that a first-line Methodist pastor sometimes must be dictatorial.

Severance of Official Ties to Pleasant Plains

Joseph Appley had a strong conviction that Methodism in Basking Ridge *had* to make inroads into the long-dominant Presbyterianism. He mistook the strong social-status attraction of his much larger neighbor (for years, joining the Presbyterian Church in town was socially "the thing to do") for a triumph of Calvinism and its doctrine of predestination, and he felt it his calling to build local Methodism toward effective rivalry. This, he knew, would involve immense labors that would leave him little time for the dying church at Pleasant Plains. His superiors must have agreed, for during his first year here they removed the Pleasant Plains church from our charge. It was combined with Union Village, whose condition was similar, and a supply preacher, Luke Davis, was assigned to both churches at $300 per year. Except for a short period after World War I, this marked the end of official connection with our daughter church, built 25 years earlier by another young, industrious Bishop Janes pastor, Charles Woodruff. Needless to say, the separation did not please our local preacher, Nicholas Bowers.

We had been tied, usually officially, with Pleasant Plains from the start of both our congregations in 1841-42, during the Bartine-Lippincott revivals. From 1871, when their church was built, until 1897 they were more often than not part of the Basking Ridge charge. From 1897 until 1925 their church continued to struggle along and unofficially relations continued close. As will be seen later, our former pastor, John Hancock, "supplied" their pulpit after his retirement, and from 1918 to 1921 Pleasant Plains was again made a part of the Basking Ridge charge. For the most part, however, because the church in the swamp could not qualify as an active member of the conference itineracy, its supply preachers usually were not ordained, and our ministers performed its baptisms and marriages.[5]

Organization of the Ladies' Aid Society

Jessie Appley was a strong Christian leader for the women of our church. Two months after her arrival here she re-organized the little Parsonage Aid Society into a

[5] For a more complete story of the Pleasant Plains Church, see Appendix A.

regular Methodist Ladies' Aid Society, and from that time women's work at Bishop Janes came alive and has continued with unbroken continuity down to our present United Methodist Women.

Charter officers, elected at the first meeting, on June 5, 1896, were: Mrs. Appley, president; Mrs. Mary Hill, vice president; Mrs. Charles Allen, secretary; and Mrs. N. M. Culberson, treasurer. There were sixteen charter members, and during its first year ten more members were added to the Society.

Minutes of the first meeeting tell only that it was opened at the parsonage with prayer by Mrs. Appley, dues were paid, new members were welcomed, and the above officers were elected. Expansion of its activities beyond simply concern with the parsonage began very early. The Society's minutes of March 4, 1897, include this statement:

> "Clothing etc. was brought by the ladies to make and fix for the children of Mr. George Hand, deceased".

A Junior Epworth League Formed

The Epworth League, a consolidation and strengthening of the various young people's groups, had been established in Methodism in 1889, and by 1894 most churches of the Newark Conference, including Bishop Janes under Jeremiah Cowins' leadership, had established a chapter. Then in 1891 Charles Barnes of the Hoboken Church, our assistant at Bishop Janes during the Civil War, had organized the first *Junior* Epworth League for the younger children. In our archives is the original charter for Chapter #5358 of the organization, formed at Bishop Janes Church by Rev. Appley. It is dated February 5, 1897.

* * *

At the end of Joseph Appley's first year the Presiding Elder had reported "an old-fashioned revival" at Basking Ridge which "converted 32". This was a good group, for 30 of them enrolled as probationers, and Appley brought 22 of these to full membership his second year, and two more his third year. There were also five who joined by transfer of letter during his first two years, and only ten members were lost during this two-year period. So even though all Pleasant Plains names again had been removed, the total on our rolls had increased from 125, when he came, to 136 at the end of Appley's second year.

Among those who went through the probationer class and became full members were Ferdinand R. Van Dorn and his son, Ferdinand Van Dorn II. The father was the 91-year-old patriarch of this family. He had built our famous Old Mill landmark years before, was the father of Susan Van Dorn who married our third preacher, Dickinson, and had "got religion" late in life. Another was Miss Hannie Sanders, who later, as the wife of David Y. Moore, was to play such an important role in the life of our church until her death in 1965. Two of those who joined by transfer were Henry and Anna Tobelmann, who came from Newark.

Tobelmann had bought the store and building diagonally across from the Presbyterian Church, which later became the Cerino brothers' store and now (in 1983) is occupied by Burgdorff Realtors and other businesses. "Tobelmann's" was to become an important general and grocery store in town for the next twenty years and Henry Tobelmann was to be one of the strong pillars of our church for several decades.

By the beginning of his second year with us, Joseph Appley had become convinced that Methodism never would "win" this town with its focal point a small, run-down frame church. He envisioned a solid structure, built of stone and large enough to seat three or four times the membership of his day. As always, he looked to the future, and the future he desired for our congregation could not be contained in the original church built by William Day and our charter members.

So in 1897 he contacted the successful church architect who had designed the original buildings for Centenary College at Hackettstown. The plans drawn pleased Rev. Appley at once, and seemed to fill our need. With them in hand, Appley became a man obsessed.

He had the "official brethren" study them, and loosed his enthusiasm and determination. The trustees did not wholly share these emotions. Neither did they take him very seriously, for they believed the young pastor's proposal didn't stand a chance. Why, the cost of such a building would run well over $10,000, and in those days, when most monies had to be raised in advance, they *knew* that such an amount lay beyond even the hopes of our people. Best to let the eager pastor's enthusiasm spend itself in gradual awakening.

But they underestimated their man. They made, from their later viewpoint, one mistake. Thinking to outsmart young Appley, they granted him a conciliatory opening wedge. And it is amusing to trace how this proved to be the undoing, in time, of their conservative position.

It happened at the Second Quarterly Conference, in October, 1897. Rev. Appley presented the architect's plans to the Official Board and called for a vote upon them. Both his enthusiasm and his determination seem to have blinded the usually observant minister, for it appears that he was not aware of the strategy behind the opposition's tactics. The "official" members had no desire to openly cross their overpowering young pastor, so the front that they put upon their resistance was quite understandable, though deceitful. The minutes of the meeting read as follows:

> "A motion by Nicholas Bowers, seconded by Samuel DeCoster, and carried, that the plan for building presented by the Pastor be adopted as our plan, and that the pastor be authorized to complete the plan on the condition that three-fourths of the cost be raised before commencing work".

The deceit was compounded by having the motion offered by the two leaders of the opposition. Eager to get on with the project, Appley paid attention only to the *authorization* granted in the motion. Most board members, on the other hand, had

in mind only the three-fourths cash requirement, and trusted that this would effectively block construction indefinately, even though Appley already had subscriptions for more than $1000.

But he may not have been as blind as some supposed, for we note that somehow he got himself appointed as the *only* member of the nominating committee which would nominate church officials due to be elected four months later. Laymen had held this responsibility for fourteen years. Clearly, Mr. Appley was preparing to defend the future of his dream.

Cheered by the authorization, he crossed to the parsonage after the meeting and told Jessie about it. Some time later he walked to the outhouse and shortly, quite by accident, he overheard men talking in the horse sheds nearby. Some members of the Board had lingered after the meeting, in time-honored fashion. He heard his nemeses, Bowers and DeCoster agree loudly that "Joe Appley may think he's going to build that new church, but he has another thought coming!"

Mr. Appley was shocked. One thought kept passing through his mind: the Board had passed *unanimously*, less than an hour earlier, *approval* of his plans for the new church. And they had meant it! The decision that he now made was crucial in the history of our church. As Mrs. Appley later recalled, her husband returned to the house astonished and disturbed. With his typical determination he exclaimed, "Jessie, with God's help, I'll build that church, no matter what!" And so he did.

Faced with the added duties of what was virtually a one-man building project, he was soon to learn that something had to give. What did give was pastoral attention to individual families, as well as work on membership and evangelism. He had the ability to attract large numbers to the church, but never again did he attract as many to Bishop Janes as he did during his first year. As we see in his pastoral report of February 18, 1898, he was disappointed with revival results of his second year:

> *"In the autumn, when the minds of Christian people naturally turn to the harvesting of the Lord's grain, and when we should soon have entered the field for a rally, we were embarrassed by an invitation from the Presbyterian Church to join them in calling an evangelist into our midst. The invitation was accepted, but the method presented, while satisfactory from some standpoints, was too cold, formal and inactive to fit our people, and they froze well nigh to death in a nominal revival, and the results were very unsatisfactory. Out of 30 cards handed us, we could succeed in getting only 10 into any prayer or class meetings and have been able to induce only 7 to enter probationary relation. The precedent thus established made it impractical to do any old-fashioned work, and an attempt to do so largely failed".*

Our growth in new members slowed down, because most of the pastor's time for some months had been spent in raising subscriptions for the new church. These already had grown beyond the expectations of the "official brethren". Most

noticeably disturbed by this was Samuel DeCoster. This Methodist-turned-Presbyterian continued to be elected a Bishop Janes trustee year after year and was, in fact, though a member of the Presbyterian Church, elected president of our Board of Trustees in 1897-98. A strange situation indeed! Possibly it reflected our congregation's respect for his wife, Deborah, who insisted on remaining a Methodist. Or maybe he had our people convinced that he was a man of importance.

One day, having learned of the growing size of the minister's subscription list (which included, to his chagrin, a large pledge from his own wife), DeCoster stopped Appley on the street. He said that, since Mr. Appley clearly was going ahead with the project, even though the officials of the church were against it, he, as head of the trustees, was going to lock the minister out of the church from that day on. We could wish for an exact record of the minister's reply. We have been told that it was extensive and that it ended by informing our Presbyterian trustee that neither he nor anyone else in Basking Ridge would lock the church on this or any other pastor! "In Methodism", Appley concluded, "only the bishop has the power to do that!".

February of 1898 found Joseph Appley still determined to go ahead. On one Sunday of that month he preached from the text, "Who is on the Lord's side?" and we can guess upon whose side this sermon left those who opposed the building project. After that service he wrote:

> *". . . we called for an altar consecration service, and nearly the whole congregation knelt before the Lord in reconsecration. The spirit moved upon us and penitential tears flowed . . . Finally, while some disgrace themselves and the cause, others prove fit for martyrs".*

Shortly thereafter the Fourth Quarterly Conference (annual meeting) for the church year 1897-98 was convened. The minutes of this meeting record an unprecedented action concerning the Official Board. Clearly, Rev. Appley had found it difficult to sway this long-established institution and was ready to try another tack, for it is recorded that

> ". . . a motion was made that the Official Board be discontinued and that the Stewards and Trustees do their business separately".

Divide and conquer! Only five of the members voted *for* this motion to discontinue; none had the fortitude to directly oppose the pastor by voting against it. All the rest abstained. So the motion passed. Appley's pastoral report to this Quarterly Conference ended as follows:

> *"Hopes have been entertained by the pastor and a large portion of the people that we might rebuild God's house among us and thus honor His name . . . and establish Methodism on a foundation that*

could not be shaken and thus lift the burden that has rested upon the shoulders of so few and place it upon a larger number. But . . . a number of our officials and members, seeing nothing but their pocketbooks, have placed themselves so staunchly in front of the movement as to make success the result of a laborious and unpleasant task . . . if not impossible. How easy success would have been had it been possible for all to pull together, but alas! how difficult to move the load with forces divided and pulling in opposite directions. May God grant the needed enlightenment from on high, and lead this church as it should go in the immediate future".

The Conference closed with Rev. Appley's report in his capacity as the entire nominating committee. The terms of Nicholas Bowers and Samuel DeCoster as trustees expired at this time, and probably to everyone's surprise and their own dismay, neither was renominated. Bowers continued as a steward, but DeCoster, who so recently had threatened to lock the church on the pastor, now found his last connection to Bishop Janes Church cut. His absentee trusteeship was ended, and his name was not to appear again in our records. Another member who firmly opposed a new church, Joseph Faulkner, was not renominated as a steward. Disturbed by all the tension, our only women stewards, Catherine Bowers and Mrs. Albert Culberson, followed Phoebe Conkling's lead and declined re-election. Mr. Appley's nominees were elected, for, as usual, there were no nominations from the floor. They were: as trustees, Henry Tobelmann and James Baird, and as stewards, John Coddington and Henry Tobelmann.

Still, Joseph Appley was greatly disturbed by the situation. During the next few weeks he mulled over the problem and gave much prayerful thought to the whole matter. Confronted by a large and seemingly unchangeable opposition, and finding it increasingly unpleasant to resort to dictatorial methods for every forward step, he came to a decision that was known to only a few. He decided to request a new assignment at the Annual Conference of 1898, then only a few weeks off. He told several of his closest friends at the church of this decision, and he wrote a letter to the Presiding Elder presenting his request and asking for a meeting with him as early as possible during the conference session.

Somehow this decision of Rev. Appley's seems entirely to his credit. In spite of his difficulties, Basking Ridge already had grown close to his heart, as the rest of his life would show. He was requesting this transfer because the people were not united behind him, and a congregational split was not his idea of proper Christian service, however much he and his supporters wanted a new church.

But one of these supporters was not ready to accept this decision. Telling no one, our steward-trustee Charles M. Allen went to Newark to visit the Presiding Elder, Samuel Hammond. That gracious minister heard Allen's description of our local situation and his plea for Appley's return and for a new church. Sympathetic to his requests, Hammond discussed the matter with the bishop and a course of action was decided upon. Appley did not know this, nor did he know of Charles

Allen's visit to Newark.

On March 30th our minister arrived at the Annual Conference session and shortly was granted his requested interview with the Presiding Elder. He was prepared to discuss a new assignment. Instead, Dr. Hammond began a short conversation which has been reported substantially as follows:

> Hammond: "Appley, do you think it is physically possible for the Basking Ridge congregation to build a new church?"
>
> Appley: "Yes sir, I think it is both possible and necessary. But first you must get a man who . . . ."
>
> Hammond: "Good! Because we have just such a man. I have talked to the bishop and *you* have been reassigned to get it built. Good luck!"

Hammond then rose, shook the surprised minister's hand, and walked out. The interview was over. Appley had expected to leave with a new appointment; instead, he had a mandate from his superiors to push through his plans. He has been criticized by some for the determination with which he proceeded, but in the light of what had happened, the onus should be removed. In Methodism the episcopacy has final authority, and Appley had his orders. Moreover, these orders derived not from his own actions, but from the actions of a layman from Bishop Janes Church.

Expanding our view momentarily, we find that this Conference session of 1898 commended the government's efforts to end the still young Spanish-American War and called for peace, but peace with honor. It sympathized with the suffering Cubans and praised the Red Cross for providing them food and assistance. And it reported the death, on November 12, 1897, of our former pastor, Dr. Solomon Parsons. In his report to the Conference, Presiding Elder Hammond stated:

> *"Basking Ridge is face to face with a new church building enterprise; subscriptions begun and plans adopted".*

When they learned that Joseph Appley had been reassigned to Basking Ridge, and was more determined than ever to build a new church, three trustees, John B. Smith, Albert Culberson and Joseph Faulkner, resigned. To replace them, Archibald Baird was re-elected, and John Coddington and A. C. Bailey were newly elected. These three, plus James Baird and Henry Tobelmann (recently elected) and Charles M. Allen (held over from pre-Appley days) made up the trustees who were to serve through and beyond Appley's remaining four years.

Now the minister gave his full attention to preaching and fund raising; other parish work was limited by his bigger goal. He wrote in his pastoral report of November 25, 1898:

> *"The spirit of God is with us something after the manner of olden times. The congregations are increased to nearly the former size and the Spirit seems to move among the people . . . A complete,*

unconditional Victory for the Lord Jesus Christ is immediately before us . . . Our pastoral work is confined to visiting the sick and soliciting funds for the building".

These pastoral reports reveal the minister's inner fires. Though Mrs. Appley insisted that her husband was "never impatient" and possessed a very "controlled spirit", his pen gives him away. (Note his report later, on completion of the church). Today, with educators and psychologists encouraging the "unruffled spirit", we would remind ourselves that the unruffled are often the uncommitted, and that the spirits that soar to the heights, then plunge the depths, seldom resting in between — in short, the Appleys of this world — compose Ninth Symphonies, paint Last Suppers, or build churches — for their Lord.

Three months later, in February of 1899, the Fourth Quarterly Conference minutes read:

> "A motion was made and seconded that we instruct the trustees to sell the Church to the highest bidder. Carried".

Behind this short entry is a story attested later by several of our then oldest members. It is said that, during arguments by the opposition at the meeting, one of them concluded with, ". . . and besides, what would you do with the present church?" to which Rev. Appley replied, "Why, we'll auction it off!"

By this time the conservatives were beginning to suspect that their dynamo pastor just *might* raise sufficient funds to reach the three-fourths stipulation. All along they had assumed that this would automatically kill the project. Now they asked all possible local bidders to remain silent at Mr. Appley's proposed auction. However this may be, it is known that the minister imported a professional auctioneer and, when the auction took place, no one offered a bid.

But Joseph Appley was not to be overcome at this point. He had secured Conference and local Quarterly Conference approval for the auction. When no bid was heard, he raised his hand and himself bid $50 to get things started. Still no one said anything. After some delay the auctioneer banged his gavel and declared Joseph Appley the lawful owner of the 45-year-old Basking Ridge Methodist Episcopal Church building. Things had moved too fast for most of the people. To those who asked "What will you do with it?" he replied, "Get it off church property as soon as possible". And he did.

He borrowed money from some friends and bought property on the southeast corner of what is now South Maple Avenue and East Oak Street, directly across from the house that, until mid-1980, was the Presbyterian manse. Then he borrowed another $500 and employed carpenters to partially dismantle the church building and move the shell to a new foundation built on the East Oak Street property. Appley's private debts began to mount. After a year or two his father, who was a carpenter, came to visit him and offered to convert the structure into a three-family apartment that still stands there (in 1983). This was accomplished eventually, at still further expanse, and we are told that it was many years before rentals finally caught

up with costs. The entire transaction proved to be the greatest financial burden of Rev. Appley's life, persisting throughout that life; one more sacrifice that this minister made in serving the people of our church.

Returning to the pastoral report of February 17, 1899:

> *"We have been wandering in the wilderness for some time and are now at the borders of Canaan, on the shores of the Jordan, anxious to enter the promised land. The chosen ones have borne the ark . . . Nothing but a blizzard hindered us from passing the $4000 line in our subscriptions for a new church. While some of the opponents to the plans are too stubborn to come into line, the majority of them* (even including Nicholas Bowers — ed.) *placed their names on the subscription list . . . Subscriptions now amount to $3820. Only three persons* (expected to give) *have refused, and they are not of us. It seems that the people really want the church . . . We have ground for hope to dedicate free of debt.*
>
> *"The only material interest seemingly suffering now is the pastor's salary. We realize in this connection that two or three* (?) *families have withdrawn support on account of the new Church, amounting to about $100 . . . but it is not the people, but the Stewards, who are at fault, as they seem content to limit solicitations to people in the Church or to others who voluntarily come forward. If the pastor did this with financial things he attends to — or they wouldn't be attended to — absolute failure would result".*

Mr. Appley, of course, was calling for the stewards to seek church funds from the wealthy families nearby and "on the mountain", as he had done for building funds.

The original subscription list for this second church building, covering only the first big drive for funds, was found in our safe deposit box. It is the earliest document in our records to have been typewritten, and it supports Rev. Appley's claim that solicitation of outsiders was an effective way to raise money. The subscriptions total $3770.25. Of this amount 52% came from non-members, 32% from members, and 16% from church organizations. The largest contribution ($1000) was given by Mr. S. S. (Sandy) Swaim.[6] He was a successful New York business man who commuted to his home in Basking Ridge on weekends. He was the husband of one of the Van Dorn girls and an admirer of "Dominie" Appley. This was only the first of several donations he made to the project. The second largest gift ($500) came from A. W. Dennett. He, like Swaim, was not a member of our church and, like the Childs family, he also had founded a chain of restaurants in New

[6] Sandy Swaim was descended from a line of Methodist ministers. One was Richard Swaim, who became a circuit rider in 1789, the same year that John Childs, whose descendents later acquired the Van Dorn Mill properties and founded the once very popular Childs' restaurant chain, was admitted to the Methodist Conference. Another was John Sanford Swaim, who served the Newark Conference from its founding in 1857 until his death in 1876, and yet another Rev. Swaim is buried in the Van Dorn plot in our Evergreen Cemetery.

York. Mrs. Dennett also gave $50. The Ladies' Aid pledged $200, and the Epworth and Junior Leagues $100 each. The records show that 30% of the money raised in this first drive came from the Van Dorn family. But this first drive was only the beginning; much more had to be raised before the church was paid for.

At the Annual Conference session of April 1899 Presiding Elder Hammond reported:

> *"The people at Basking Ridge have now in hand their new church enterprise. The disciplinary requirement has been met in a good, reliable subscription, equal to the three-quarter valuation of the new building*[7]*, and the Quarterly Conference has ordered work to commence, and what is still better, the Building Committee has begun to work. The old church has been sold, contracts have been let and the stone is being carted to the ground".*

At this same session young Joseph E. Appley was one of seven men ordained elder by Bishop Fowler. The Conference gave thanks for the recent ending of the Spanish-American War, looked forward to missionizing Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, called for the government to assist the Cuban people, and hailed the disarmament conference soon to be held in Holland at the request of the Czar of Russia.

Our historical records at this point become rather meager, but we can understand why. Although the Newark Conference minutes refer to a building committee at Basking Ridge, in reality that building committee, and the finance committee as well, through default of the congregation, consisted of one man, Joseph Appley. Others helped, of course, but they left all responsibility to him, feeling themselves over their heads in this project.

For example, the stone for our church, except the dressed trim around openings, provided by the masons, was acquired in the following manner. Several times a week Rev. Appley would line up one or two volunteer wagons and some men and boys of the church as helpers. He had permission to roam the fields from the present foot of Lindbergh Lane southward, between South Maple Avenue and the edge of the swamp. Through the years most of this land had become the property of John Jacob Astor. Hours before the wagons were to arrive, Appley could be found inspecting a pre-selected area, checking every large stone for shape, soundness and hardness, and marking with chalk those which passed his test. He is credited with having selected all of the stone for the church himself. Clearly, this was a labor of love. His Conference memoir implies that he felt the construction of Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church to be the highlight of his long ministry, or at least of his early ministry. From the third through the fifth year of his term in Basking

[7] It is doubtful that the subscriptions totaled much more than $5000 at this point. Either the Conference winked at a very low estimated cost by Rev. Appley, or he actually expected to build the church for much less than the eventual cost proved to be. Three -quarters of the final cost would have exceeded $9000. The minister considered the question academic, however. He intended to raise the entire amount, whatever that might be.

Ridge he did not find enough time to submit many pastoral reports to our Quarterly Conference meetings.

It was because he was unable to assemble a dynamic Board of Trustees that the minister shouldered almost the entire load. This was not an active group, as our charter trustees had been. They kept no detailed accounts and descriptions of the construction project like the historically interesting accounts of our first building. However, many of the people had become Appley allies by this time, and the remainder were afraid to face the future without his strong leadership, now that the bridges had been burned behind them. Each year they all joined in "urgently" requesting the Presiding Elder to arrange for his reassignment to our church.

Before work could be started on the new church there was another little matter to be taken care of, the matter of acquiring a little more land. The plans called for a building about 20 feet wider than the first church, and unless some additional land could be obtained it would have to be placed very close to the parsonage. Fortunately, this acquisition was accomplished, but our records don't reveal just how Rev. Appley managed it. We do, however, have a copy of the deed, dated August 31, 1899, by which Rachel Moore, for the sum of $80, transferred to our trustees a flag-shaped plot which added about 8 feet on the north side of our property and extended the original lot about 50 feet to the eastward. Even with this added width, though, there was no room to spare. By placing the new building just 3 feet from the new north property line, there would be a space of only 20 feet between the church and the parsonage.

By mid-year, 1899, the old church building was gone. During its dismantlement the original hand-split shingles were removed. Some of them were preserved, and upon them were mounted prints of a photograph of the old church and adjoining parsonage. One of these is now in our archives. When the old building was reconstructed as a triple dwelling new siding was applied.

From the time that the old church was dismantled until the new one was almost finished — a period of about 14 months — the congregation was without a house of worship. Prayer, class and organizational meetings were held in the parsonage and in private homes. For Sunday worship, however, the congregation gratefully accepted an offer to use a building across the street, which was unoccupied at the time. That was the building which today (1983) houses the Reynolds Gallery and the Pizzeria Restaurant.

While the new church was building, the Ladies' Aid Society was active in supporting the work. These are some excerpts from their minutes:

> June 8, 1899: "For our July 4th Festival . . . (moved that) the VanDorn boys erect a large tent . . . (and that) Rev. Appley and Mr. C. M. Allen secure a 'band of Music' and also Fire Works . . . Voted that we send one subscription for the Ladies' Aid Society Paper".
>
> October 5, 1899: "Paid trustees $150 toward new church . . .

Motion to pay Mr. Hill 64¢ for all milk used at the July 4th Festival".

December 6, 1899: "Paid trustees $40 toward new church".

During Appley's fourth year, the year of church construction, seven members were added to the rolls by transfer of letters. Offsetting this gain, however, five members were lost, one by death and four because they moved away.

By the first snowfall of 1899-1900 the new church had begun to take shape. Probably the roof was in place, but the stained glass windows had not yet been installed, and much of the masonry work would not be completed until the following summer. However, by February 1st the "chapel" fireplace must have been finished, for on that date Mrs. Douglas and Mrs. Culberson requested use of ". . . the Chapel for our Ladies' Aid Society's Seventh Birthday Party on February 22nd".[8] In March the ladies turned over another $75 for the building. These amounts helped, but construction was eating up thousands. Mr. Appley asked the Fourth Quarterly Conference, in March, to pass a motion

". . . That the Trustees be given the privilage (?) of issuing a first mortgage on the church property for $5000 for the purpose of issuing church bonds for the building".

By the Annual Conference session of April 1900, held in Paterson, $4,463 had been raised and spent, and an additional $1,992 had been advanced on credit. The latter amount effectively ended the only three years of freedom from debt that our church had known up to this time. Also, at this Conference session, a Twentieth Century Commission reported upon its special goals for 1900, the dawn of another century for Methodism. Among these goals were: the raising of $20,000,000, the recruiting of 2,000,000 new members, and the complete reconstruction of Centenary College for Women in Hackettstown, which had burned down. Appeals to the churches for rebuilding contributions had to be overlooked in Basking Ridge, however; Bishop Janes Church had its own problems.

As construction seemed to be proceeding smoothly toward completion in the spring of 1900, the Appleys agreed to take their first vacation in four years at Basking Ridge. Hoping for a few weeks of rest and release from worry, they traveled to the Catskills. But before they had settled properly, a telegram was received from Charles Allen. It said that the building funds had been depleted and that the masons were demanding their next $1000, due at that time, before they would continue their work. Mr. Appley hurried home, and when his request to the contractor for further credit proved futile, he went to New York City and the friendliest pocketbook he knew.

Calling at Sandy Swaim's office, he explained his problem. Probably he intended to seek Sandy's advice as to how he should go about further financing. But before he could get to that Sandy asked, "How much do you need, Brother Ap-

[8] Actually, this was the Society's fifth birthday. They were counting the two years that their organization had been the "Parsonage Aid Society".

pley?" When Appley told him "A thousand dollars", Swaim asked his secretary to bring in the ledger of "the Lord's account". Appley discovered that a good portion of Swaim's business profits went into a special fund which bore this label and which was kept in a business-like manner for just such occasions. Taking the ledger from his secretary, Swaim studied it a moment and then said, "Yes, there is enough!" He then wrote a check and handed it to the minister. Appley was stunned and most grateful to read: "Pay to the order of the Trustees of Basking Ridge Methodist Episcopal Church the sum of $1000".

The final stages of construction began the next morning.

About one-third of the total cost of the church was to become a debt that would not be cleared for twenty years. Of the other two-thirds it seems quite likely that Sandy Swaim and his Van Dorn relatives contributed about half.

In June, 1900, the Ladies' Aid voted to "carpet" the new church. It would take them four years of fund-raising efforts to pay off the debt thus incurred. The Epworth League also worked hard to raise money for the new building. During 1899 and 1900 they turned over to our trustees the amount of $200, and Rev. Appley suggested that perhaps they might like to undertake buying the bell for the church. The League agreed, and assumed full responsibility for the project. They decided to have one cast to order at the Troy foundry of the Meneely Bell Company, at a cost of $200. When it arrived by railroad, in October, they hired Mr. George Bender to transport it to the church and mount it. Their records show that he was paid 25¢ per hour for 17 hours of labor. In our church office is a photograph of the proceedings, showing our new church with ladder and tackle mounted, Mr. Bender and his wagon, and the bell and its mounting about to be raised into place. The League finished paying for the bell and its attendant costs early in 1903, a large share of the funds having been raised by Mrs. David Moore, who had hitched up her buggy and covered the entire town for contributions.

This organization of our young people was particularly active during the Appley years. The sum paid toward the church cost and the donation of the bell were sizeable contributions for such a group, but these were only two of their many good deeds. The Epworth League also paid a large part of the cost of steam heat for the parsonage, and upon occasion paid for repairs to the pastor's "carriage". Above all, many of their activities showed true Christian concern. When the wife of one of our hard-pressed families became seriously ill, the League had coal delivered, paid medical bills, and reimbursed Hannie Moore, who had paid for a nurse for three weeks at the stricken home. It seems that there was one dimension of Christian responsibility present in the youth work of those early days that, for some reason, is lacking in their activities in our more affluent era. Yet, the old League's program was neither dull nor solemn. They were, after all, young people, and their monthly "sociables", where most of their funds were raised, were held in an atmosphere of fun-loving exuberance which helped their need for recreation and social maturity.

Rev. Appley had located the new church building about fifteen feet farther back from the street than the original church had been. He knew that this would im-

prove its appearance, and he expected that within a year or two the dilapidated parsonage next door would be torn down. In fact, he had plans drawn for a new stone parsonage which matched the style of the church and which would be built some distance south of it. Instead, the old parsonage was to sit out near the road for another 60 years, detracting from the appearance of the church by partially screening it when viewed from the south. Decades later, when rebuilding of the church was being planned, there were impassioned efforts to save the old pre-revolutionary parsonage as a landmark. This seemed strange to some of the older members, especially Jessie Appley. She had found it primitive and run-down when she moved in in 1896, and felt that it might well have been replaced even before that. The idea that it would not be within a short time never crossed Joseph Appley's mind.

The New Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church

By August, 1900, the new church was completed. It was dedicated at multiple services on August 26th, by Bishop Thomas Bowman[9]. At Mr. Appley's suggestion the new building was named the "Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church", whereas our church heretofore had been named for the town. The new name was indeed a fitting commemoration of that great man who had given our church its start.

The new stone church was a little difficult to classify as to architectural style. Locally it was described as everything from "perfect Gothic" to "19th Century Dismal", but it certainly by no means qualified as the former, and it wasn't as bad as the latter label implied. The Presiding Elder's report to the Newark Conference session of 1900 stated that:

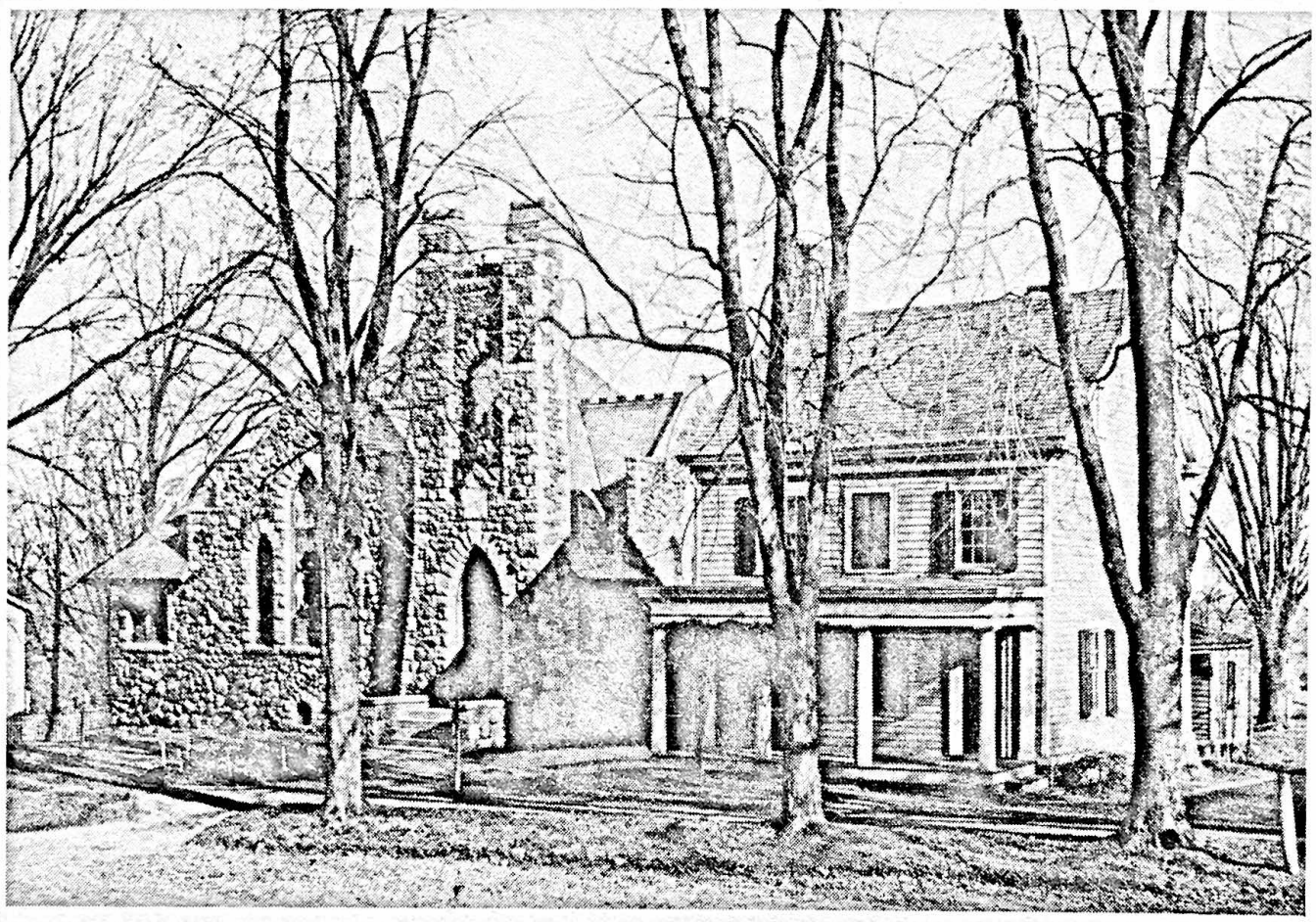
> *"Basking Ridge has built of field stone a beautiful English chapel."*

and perhaps this comes closest to describing it, as far as its exterior appearance was concerned. Like many of the small rural churches of England, it was built of local field stone, with gabled facades containing Gothic-arched stained glass windows, and its "auditorium" (sanctuary) was square in plan. On the right (south) side of the Front Street (Finley Avenue) facade, framing and extending above the arched entrance, was the high bell "tower", consisting of two tall piers joined near their tops by a pointed arch, all of the same field stone. In the opening between these piers hung the bell that the Epworth League had worked so hard to provide.[10]

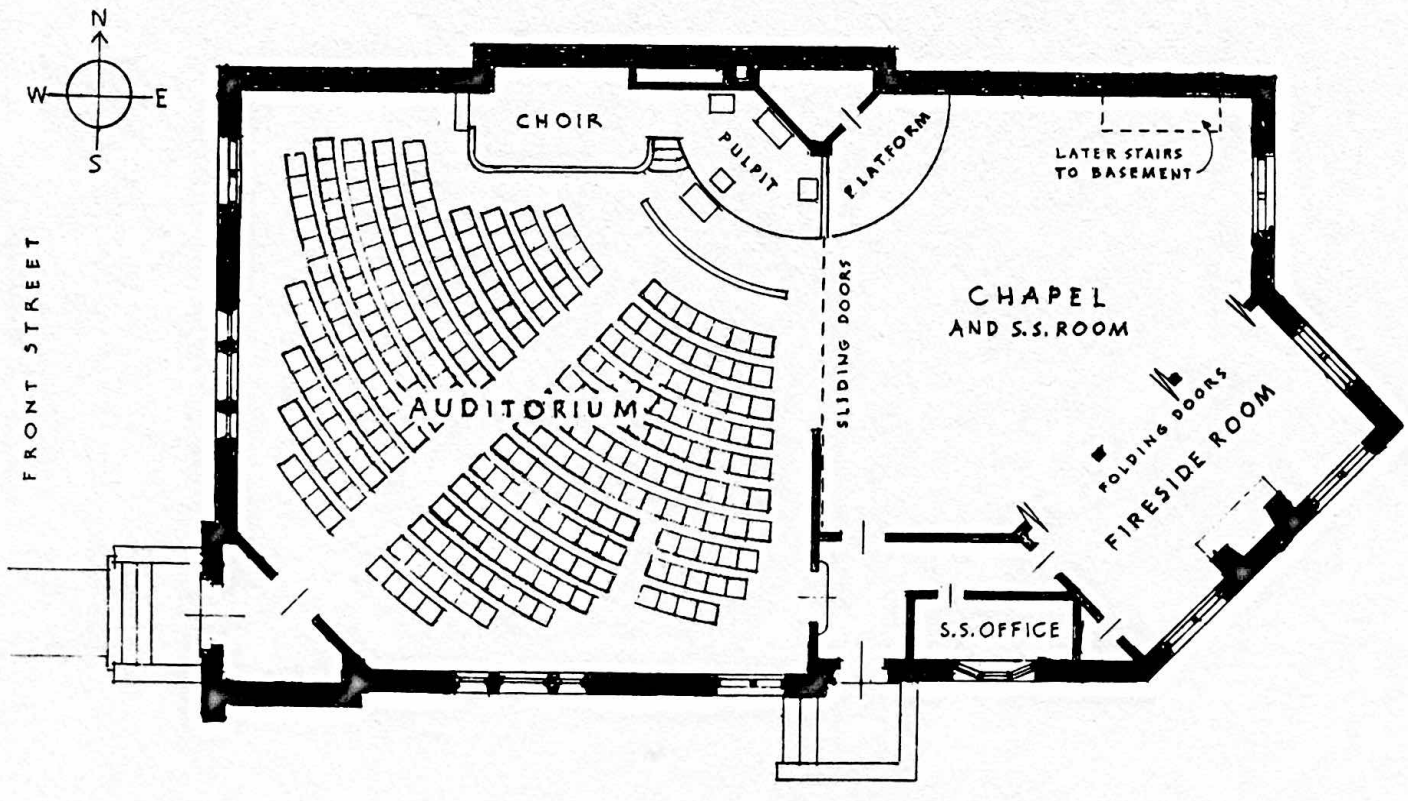
In its plan arrangement, the building followed a popular — though unfortunate — concept of the early 1900's known as the "Akron plan", owing to its

[9] Thomas Bowman (1817-1914), a Methodist minister at 22, founded and headed Dickinson Seminary (1848-58), was president of Indiana Asbury University (now DePauw (1858-72)), Chaplain of U.S. Senate and close friend of Lincoln, and elected a bishop in 1872. He retired in 1899, but accepted Appley's invitation to dedicate our new church. He died in Orange, at the age of 97, and is buried in Greencastle, Indiana.

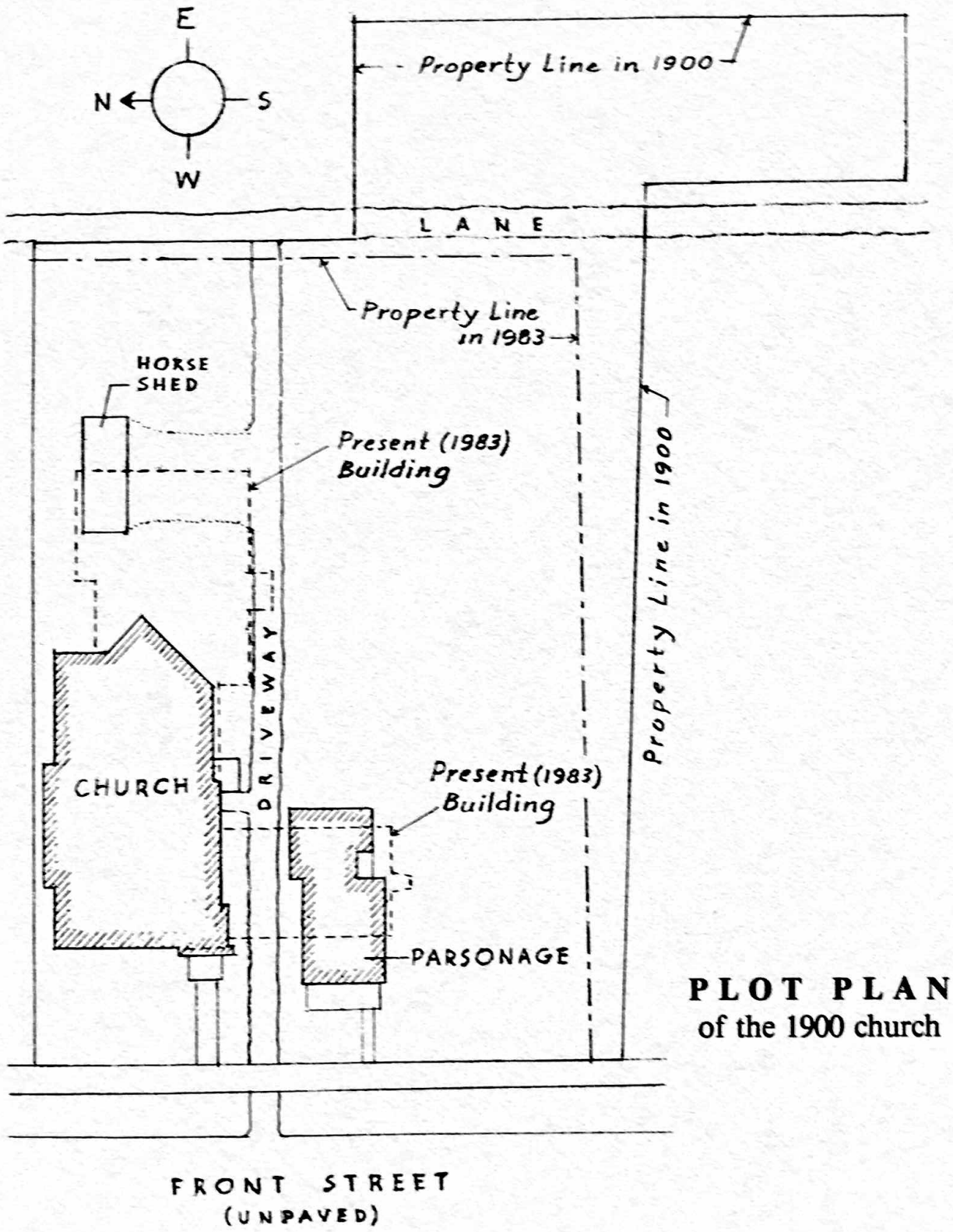
[10] The same bell is still in use, but is now mounted on a pier on the south wall of our present narthex.



BISHOP JANES METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND PARSONAGE
From a post card of the early 1900's

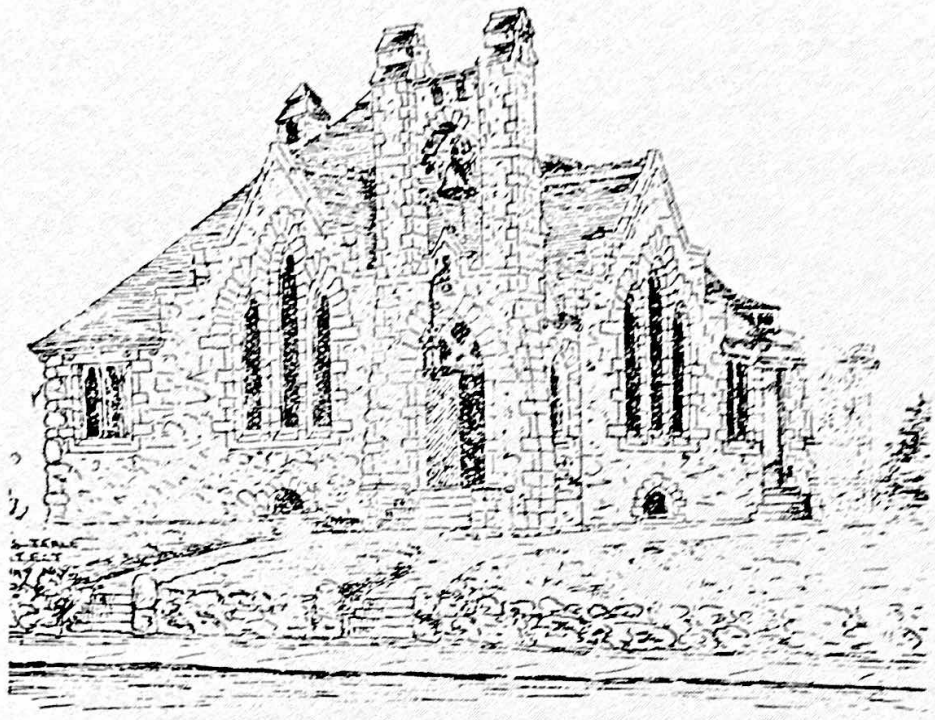


PLAN OF THE 1900 CHURCH



PLOT PLAN
of the 1900 church

reputed origin in Akron, Ohio. It was a design that was widely used in those days for small churches of several denominations, not because of any architectural merit, but because it was "practical". It offered much flexibility of use and provided seating for a large number of people in a minimal amount of space. Forget about amenities and "atmosphere". The square auditorium had a "center aisle" extending diagonally from a miniscule entry vestibule at the southwest corner to a pulpit platform in the shape of a quarter circle at the opposite (northeast) corner. The floor sloped downward toward this platform, and theater-like folding plywood seats were arranged in concentric curved rows. Alongside the platform on the north



•DEDICATORY SERVICES•

OF THE

BISHOP JANES CHURCH,

(Methodist Episcopal,)

BASKING RIDGE, N. J.,

SUNDAY, AUGUST 26th, 1900.

REV. JOSEPH E. APPLEY, Pastor.

wall was a small choir loft. Adjoining the auditorium on the east, and separated from it only by large sliding doors, was the "chapel", or Sunday School room, into which the circular platform extended. By sliding back these doors this room could become an extension of the auditorium, to accomodate larger audiences on occasion. There were about 260 seats in the auditorium, and the chapel could be filled with folding chairs to accomodate another 175 or so. Off the chapel, located diagonally between its east and south walls, and separated from it by folding doors, was a room about 25 by 50 feet, with a stone fireplace. This room, a nursery on Sundays and a "Fireside Room" on other occasions, could, in turn, become an extension of the chapel by opening the folding doors, and could seat still more people, also facing the platform. Used to capacity and seating about 500 people — a rare happening — the whole much more resembled a theater-in-the-round than a house

of worship as we know it today. Except for a side entry hall, a small Sunday School office, a couple of small closets and an unfinished cellar housing the coal furnace, there was nothing else in the building — no kitchen facilities of any kind, and no rest room or any toilet facility.

The more attractive features of the auditorium were its many-planed high sloping ceiling which echoed the peaked and gable roofs of the building, and the large triple-opening stained glass windows dominating its west and south walls. These large windows were given as special contributions and were dedicated as memorials, one to the memory of Bishop Edmund S. Janes and the other to the pastorate of Joseph E. Appley, the church builder — fitting dedications both. The Good Shepherd window on the west (Finley Avenue) wall is the Janes memorial and remains in our present church as it was originally built[11]. The Apostle Paul window commemorating the Appley pastorate was identical in size and form, and was located in the south wall of the church. When the church was rebuilt, some sixty years later, this window had to be removed, but the main part of it was preserved and now graces the north wall of our narthex.

Below eye level the interior of the auditorium had little to recommend it. Much of its design seems to have been inspired, not by good church architecture but by the early American theater. The sloping floor, the cheap stain-varnished wainscoting and woodwork, the curved-front platform and the uncomfortable folding seats contributed little to a mood of reverence and worship. But all were quite common in American churches of those days and were generally accepted without question as the current vogue. On the whole (there were still some dissenters) our congregation was pleased, and very proud of its brand new church. It was sturdily built, of durable stone, it had beautiful stained glass windows, and it certainly could seat a lot of people. With periodic patchings and refurbishings it would serve them for more than six decades.

* * *

The Ladies' Aid Society continued its work of raising funds for the new building. They conducted a Labor Day Carnival, and at their meeting in September voted to hold a "progressive dinner" on December 5th, charging 25¢ for adults, 15¢ for children. The minutes of that meeting record "Paid toward carpet $100". At their January meeting a few months later it was reported that another $50 had been paid to the trustees.

It was about this time that the Presbyterian minister, Dr. Reeve, suggested that our people join his in worship on some Sunday soon, with his people returning the visit the following week. Instead, Rev. Appley insisted that the ministers exchange pulpits, and after some delay his plan prevailed. He preached at the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church to the Presbyterians, and Dr. Reeve preached at Bishop Janes Church to our congregation, a practice that continued intermittently for some years. Pulpits had been exchanged in the past for special union evening services,

[11] When the church was rebuilt in 1964 the original stone walls on the west and north sides of the 1900 church became part of the new structure.

temperance meetings and such, but this was the first exchange for a regular Sunday morning service.

No new members were added during Appley's fifth year. His hands were full finishing the church, handling bills and subscriptions, and trying to keep the financially-frightened membership together. His last detailed Quarterly Conference report, made at the December 23rd meeting in 1900, reads as follows:

> *"Our joy arises from the consciousness that, over seemingly insurmountable obstacles, our building project has progressed until finally it stands complete and for our uses perfect; 'a thing of beauty' and, we hope, 'a joy forever'. Our hope springs from the spiritual side of the work. Perhaps it is like the expectation that exists in nature when that peculiar intensity of darkness settles upon the earth just before dawn, that soon the glorious light shall flood the world . . . If our people will come together with one accord, and we believe they will, this may still be the greatest winter of the five during the present pastorate. Our church completed is compelled to carry but $3000 indebtedness, — about one quarter of the value of the plant, and plenty of grounds upon which to still reduce or entirely annihilate that".*

At about this time he talked Samuel Dayton into deeding a 100-foot-wide strip of land between Evergreen Cemetery and the railroad to the church without charge. With this addition our cemetery acquired its present width from the railroad to Washington Avenue.

During this fifth year another $3425 in cash (including Sandy Swaim's second $1000 gift) was raised, mostly by the minister, and further debts amounting to $2183 were added. The total cost of the new church seems to break down about as follows:

	Raised and Paid		**Borrowed**	
1899-1900	$4463		$1992	
1900-1901	3425		2183	
1901-1902	56		325	
	$7944	paid	$4500	debt

Total Cost — $12,444

The Newark Conference session of April, 1901, met in Hoboken, and the new Presiding Elder of our district, W. L. Hoagland, reported:

> *"At Basking Ridge a beautiful new church was dedicated on August 26, 1900, by Bishop Bowman. It is worth $12,000, and has a debt of only $4170, which the pastor thinks can be still further reduced".*

In July, 1901, the minister made an interesting entry in our records. Nathan

Woodward, a negro, had become a full member under Edwin Day in 1857. In 1867 he moved from Basking Ridge to a neighboring town and continued to live there the rest of his long life. Rev. Appley apparently regretted that prejudices in his day no longer tolerated negro membership, as our church began to move toward "suburban captivity" and a congregation of social look-alikes. So he felt obliged to report Nathan Woodward's death to our Quarterly Conference. This is the last entry to date (1983) in our Bishop Janes records concerning a black member.

Times had changed since that day 45 years earlier when Woodward had been welcomed as a full member of our church. An event in the spring of 1900 underlined this. At the close of daily proceedings toward the middle of the 1900 Conference session in Paterson, the ministers were entertained by a skilled quintet of negro singers the Conference had engaged, immediately following their performance at the White House before the President and governmental officials. Later Rev. Appley enjoyed dinner at the table with these singers, and they exchanged stories of their work. Quite casually he described the new church for which he was trying to raise funds, and added, "We'd love to bring your excellent singing to our little village to help raise funds, but we never could afford your usual fees". As he probably had surmised, the five negroes were themselves good churchmen. The next day they contacted Mr. Appley and offered to come out and sing for us for their train fare only.

They gave an evening performance in our new church, which was packed, and they added significantly to the building fund. But a complication developed. Their program and its many encores caused them to miss the last train back to the city, and it became necessary to find quarters for them for the night. Jessie Appley phoned the local hotel and most of her friends in the congregation, but all that she received was an interesting variety of evasions. So she moved her husband and the girls to the living room and put the five singers in the two bedrooms, demonstrating that, to the parsonage family, at least, Jesus' ministry was more than just a pretty story.

During Appley's sixth year death claimed four of our members. Two of these were the last of our charter members, who had lived long enough to worship in the new church that had replaced the one they had helped to build 47 years earlier. One was Sarah Gillem, the widow of Nathaniel Gillem, our first and long-time class leader. The other was George Wyckoff, who had been a steward and was for many years our very capable Sunday School superintendent. During the Civil War, when there were eleven teachers on his staff, almost half of the congregation had flocked to the class which was the most popular of them all, the one taught by George Wyckoff himself. Before he died he was honored in a way that must have pleased an old man whose interests had always been with the young people. He was made an honorary lifetime member of their group, the Epworth League.

The loss of our last charter members at this time adds to the feeling that our history is naturally divided into two parts at the Appley pastorate.

Joseph Appley had completed his fifth year with hopes that "our people will come together", that the debt would be "reduced or entirely annihilated", and that

"soon the glorious light shall flood (our) world". But none of these things happened. Exactly what did happen is difficult to reconstruct, impossible to explain fully. Whatever it was, it is clear that Mr. Appley had not anticipated it. We are reminded of William Day's experience of 1855-56. During the sixth Appley year only $56 could be raised toward the new church building, although $436 was spent on the finishing touches. So the debt was increased, not decreased.

Although most of the "official brethren" had been hand-picked by Rev. Appley, some of them began to obstruct many of his efforts. Charles Allen was, as ever, loyal, but several others grew difficult. Henry Tobelmann, as a trustee, was partly responsible for delays in paying the pastor, and a parsonage food bill began to grow at his store, where the pastor was "expected" to shop. When the salary was increased[12] Tobelmann deducted this bill before turning the remainder of it over to Mr. Appley — a pointed insult of questionable legality, but an example of the kind of treatment the minister was being subjected to increasingly.

To make matters worse, church membership began to drop with an acceleration resembling a bank run. Some of the old die-hard opposition withdrew, a few to other churches in the area, but many of them simply leaving. A number of thoroughly loyal members had to move from town because of business or other personal reasons. Local preacher Nicholas Bowers ended a thirty-year membership and an even longer affiliation with Methodism by accepting the pastorate of the small Presbyterian church in nearby Stirling. Mrs. Bowers kept her membership here for several years after her husband left, but then sent for her letter, too. When the dust settled, Rev. Appley, who had found 125 enrolled when he arrived in 1896, and who had raised this figure at one time to 136, was crushed to have to report to the Conference session of 1902 only 68 full members and 7 probationers, a total of 75, our smallest membership since 1866.

The time had come to leave. Early in 1902 he told the people of his decision to do so. In February Jessie asked the Parsonage Committee of the Ladies' Aid to report "on the condition of the furnishings" in preparation for receiving a new parsonage family, and on March 6th she presided at her last meeting of the Society.

Rev. Appley wrote in the "Historical Record" a summary of his ministry, which he concluded as follows:

> *". . . The beautiful new stone church, now occupying the place of the old one, speaks for itself. The building was dedicated August 26, 1900.*
>
> *"We are sorry to leave the present indebtedness and never should have thought of leaving until it was paid, had the official brethren not grown unsympathetic and unkind. May God bless them and lead them to glorious victory yet under my successor.*
>
> *"We have tried to discharge the various duties of the pastorate but have found it impossible to do what should have been done for*

[12] Appley's estimated "support" (cash plus parsonage rental) was $750 his first year, $850 the other five years. Except in his 3rd and 6th years he was actually paid from $8 to $51 more than this.

the past three years as to pastoral work because of the many minor matters thrust upon me in building and kindred matters.

"We have sought the spiritual advancement of all, and some progress seems to have been made.

"With regrets for the failures and thanks to God who has given us the many victories of the six years' pastorate, we dare to subscribe ourselves as the —

Faithful Servant of Him
Joseph E. Appley (1902)"

This was a sorry ending to an historic pastorate, the longest pastorate in the first 75 years of our church's history. Mr. Appley may have tried to move too fast, but it is impossible to build half a church. One is reminded of the post-war rejection of Winston Churchill by the British people. For the real judgment lay upon our people, who had a good bird in hand and had broken its wings. In so doing they clouded their reputation with the Conference for many years to come.

Subsequent Career — Union Village

Joseph Appley's reputation in the Newark Conference, however, was not clouded, but shining. At the Conference session in April, 1902, pulpit assignments were exchanged between the pastors of Bishop Janes Church in Basking Ridge and Janes Methodist Episcopal (Summit Avenue) Church in Jersey City. Appley had been "promoted" in recognition of his excellent work here to a city church which paid its pastor about $1200 per year. At this church, named like ours for Edmund S. Janes, he increased membership by 27 during his one-year term. He next served the Nyack congregation for two years. That church, twice the size of Janes Church and four times the size of our church, paid a salary of $1700.

At this point Joseph Appley made what in retrospect seems to have been a mistake, although to consider it such one must look upon the ministry as a "career" rather than a "calling", a not uncommon viewpoint. He became a "conference jumper" by making the first of three conference transfers during his long service as a minister. Within the Newark Conference he seems to have been heading for top assignments. Certainly he had the ability, dedication, and even the sophistication demanded by the large city churches. But a study of others who have shifted from conference to conference has revealed that, other things being equal, the "best" assignments usually have gone to those who have given their entire service to one conference. The number of small charges during the rest of his career would seem to bear this out.

In April of 1905 Joseph Appley transferred to the Pittsburgh Conference and served it for six years. Of his several charges, probably the most satisfying was the Mount Washington Church in suburban Pittsburgh. But it was while there that the Appleys were frightened by a throat ailment suffered by the minister. It reduced his voice to a whisper, persisted tenaciously, and brought about a decision to retire.

Medical treatment seemed fruitless, until one doctor told him that he had "too much palate tissue". Though skeptical, he had some of this removed in a quick operation, and his voice returned at once. He resumed his duties, feeling twenty years younger.

In the spring of 1911 Appley transferred to the New York Conference and was assigned to the church in Tarrytown. This was both Jessie's native town and the home of many of their friends and relatives. We might suspect a little family connivance in bringing about this move. Then followed pastorates at Canaan, Fleischmanns, and Ellenville, as well as considerable activity with the New York State Board of Education prior to the United States' entry into World War I.

Early in 1918 Mr. Appley requested a leave of absence and traveled to New York City to sign up as a chaplain with the American Expeditionary Forces in France. At the last minute it was found that he was one year past a new age limit for combat chaplains. With typical dispatch he walked to another address nearby and signed up for overseas duty with the Y.M.C.A. The war ended before he got to France, but he worked with A.E.F. abroad during the occupation of 1919 and 1920. In the Y.M.C.A's official World War I History he was honored by being referred to as one of the "Eminent American Divines . . . (who) crowded the huts and tents wherever they appeared".

Sometimes we forget that Methodism is a big business, as well as a religious denomination. And in a manner typical of the business world, Methodist ministers frequently were penalized for leaving the itineracy for overseas duty. Upon Joseph Appley's return in 1920, according to the Newark Conference Journal, there was "no charge immediately available". So Joseph and Jessie stayed on in New York City.

We tend to think that the ecumenical movement is a recent development. Many are surprised to learn that a strong movement toward church union following World War I had everyone much more convinced than now that unity was just around the corner. Both Joseph and Jessie were in the forefront of this movement, she by helping him and later organizing the United Council of Church Women in our area, he by devoting his full time in 1920 and '21 to the World Inter-Church movement. Although the spirit of Protestant Christianity benefited permanently from these activities, union of the churches did not come about as some had expected.

However, one field in which the ecumenical movement won the battle, if not the war, during the 1920's, was in the rapidly expanding Sunday School movement for children. By 1921, when Rev. Appley was appointed head of the New Jersey Sunday School Association, most Sunday Schools of Protestant churches in the state belonged to it, and they received more direction from it than from their own denominations. During the four years he held this position he also edited the *New Jersey Sunday School Messenger.*

The new position dictated a move from New York City, so Joseph and Jessie decided to follow the persuasion of their hearts. He was drawn, in spite of their

shortcomings, to the Methodist people to whom he had given his most diligent service. In 1921 they moved back to Basking Ridge and built the home in which they would spend the rest of their lives. The house at 18 South Maple Avenue was built on the property just south of the triplex apartment that once had been our church. Actually, it was not a new building, but a converted one. Some years earlier Appley had built a strong barn for one of the apartment tenants who owned some fine horses, and it was this structure that they remodeled, in 1921 and '22, into an attractive and comfortable dwelling. Standing back from the street, northeast of the Township Library, it still (in 1983) serves as a residence but is so hidden by a high fence, trees and shrubs that many townspeople haven't noticed it. More will be said about this house later (p. 146).

In the spring of 1924 his New York Conference (four years late) called him to serve the church at Housatonic, New York. After much prayer and a good deal of family discussion he accepted the call, and again the Appleys left Basking Ridge, but this time leaving a home to which they planned to return. After Housatonic he served churches in Chester and Marlboro until, in 1930, he requested "retired relation". In May of that year they returned for good to their Basking Ridge home. As our history later moves into the thirties we shall find the Appleys helping — but never interfering with — the young pastors who would be serving our church in those later years.

But Joseph Appley's active and productive career was by no means ended in 1930. To set the stage for his next role, we must digress briefly.

The Union Village Methodist Church, just south of the intersection of Mountain Avenue and Hillcrest Road in Berkeley Heights, was established in 1825. Often assisted by its mother church in Turkey (New Providence), and sometimes part of a circuit with Pleasant Plains, it had struggled through the years with more difficulties than we had known at Basking Ridge. Closed several times during its history, it had found itself, in 1907, with heavy debts and only a few members. It was then, by conference action, closed again and auctioned off. The new owner, Dr. W. F. Johnson, not a Methodist, one day went inside to inspect his purchase and was struck by a moving religious experience which dropped him to his knees in prayer. Some time later, according to his brother, he came out of the building deeply agitated, hurried to the pastor at New Providence and then to the Presiding Elder in Newark, demanding that they accept his deed to the church as a gift and reopen it at once. This they did, and for a time it revived, but then it fell again into bad times after the panic of 1929.

In the spring of 1935 Mr. Appley, in his fifth year of retirement, received a visit in Basking Ridge from an old friend of Newark Conference days, Dr. J. Edgar Washabaugh, who was then our District Superintendent. Washabaugh said, "Joe, you're an old man now, almost 70, but I have a little church nearby and no one, not even a student, to supply it. If you would agree to go down there Sundays, I think I can get a young man with an automobile who will drive you both ways. I will understand if you can't accept, but I will also have to close the church".

Enough said! Joseph Appley was in Union Village the next morning, and in his own car. He took over the church gladly, and he was back in the Newark Conference. He became a bigger figure in the history of the Union Village Church than he had been in Basking Ridge, for that church became a thriving congregation, and they credit him for it. By 1937 the Conference Journal reported, ". . . a large increase in membership and giving". In 1939 it reported the *only* building project in our district as taking place in Union Village — a new church school addition which pioneered separate class rooms for each grade. Appley worked on this with all his old vigor, saw that every penny was raised, and never ceased increasing the membership.

In 1935 he had started with a corpse, and he revived it at a time when Bishop Janes Church was in comparatively healthy condition. For the next seven years our own church continued to grow, but it did not have Joseph Appley in charge. The 1941 Conference Journal reported membership at Basking Ridge to be 146; at Union Village it was 164! By starting from scratch, then passing our total in Basking Ridge, he had demonstrated how a *real* church builder should operate. And this time his inevitable building project had no adverse effect upon his congregation. Asked later about this difference, Jessie Appley said, "Mr. Appley always felt that he had learned a great deal from his experience as pastor in Basking Ridge".

He left Union Village in 1942 in such condition that it never faltered again. In 1948 a new parsonage was dedicated. In 1955 the education wing was doubled in size and the church purchased additional property. A new church was completed and dedicated in 1962, with one of its main halls named in honor of Joseph Appley. By 1980, when Bishop Janes Church reported 542 members, Union Village reported 810.

In 1942 the 76-year-old "supply" preacher retired for good. Unable to fill his need for productive activity, his health declined. He died at Memorial Hospital in Morristown on October 23rd, 1945. The funeral services were held in our church, conducted by our pastor, Herbert Richards, assisted by District Superintendent Lambdin, former District Superintendent Washabaugh, and Dr. Edwin Earp, a former Drew professor and member of our church — all close personal friends. Fittingly, he was buried in a plot in Evergreen Cemetery which was given to the Appleys by our church. It is located in that part of the cemetery which, fifty years earlier, he had wheedled out of old Sam Dayton free of charge.

Jessie Appley

We can not leave the Appley story without a closer look at that person who contributed so much to that remarkable man's career, his wife, Jessie. As we noted earlier, in taking Jessie as a bride, back in 1893, Joseph Appley achieved his first — and most lasting — victory. Jessie's love of her husband, and the way she filled the role of wife and mother, were pillars of strength to our pivotal pastor. With her strong Christian conviction, high intelligence and untiring energy, she was his con-

fidante, advisor and helpmate in all matters, always proudly supporting him in his setbacks as well as his triumphs. But more than that, she was a great achiever in her own right. Her stature among women equalled that of her husband among men.

Early in life she had developed skill as a pianist, organist and teacher. Then, feeling that most churches her husband would serve would have one or more music teachers among their members, she demonstrated her dedication to husband and church by giving up her own music teaching from the time of her marriage, in order never to seem in competition with one of his parishioners.

The people of our church were to profit from her talent and ability, however. Clara Dayton Allen had resigned her position as church organist during Randolph's term, while she raised her family. Her place was taken by a likeable old rascal, a non-member, who was over-fond of the bottle. In order to keep up a good temperance front, the people pretended that this was not so, and upon occasions when Saturday night had been too strenuous for him, Mrs. Appley quietly took over the organ for the Sunday services. Added to this, she became the first of several women in our history who have given excellent training in church music to the children of our Sunday School. Finding no proper instrument available, she purchased one of the small, rugged, portable organs, manufactured by the Estey Company for cheap export to foreign missionaries. It cost $25, may now be seen in our reception room, and was the attractive little instrument exhibited at the Township Bicentennial in 1960.

During the Appley's Basking Ridge assignment, little Margaret received a baby sister, Winifred, born in our parsonage. Margaret was later to become Mrs. Adolph Koch, the wife of a Congregational minister serving in a Presbyterian church, and Winifred was to become Mrs. C. Whitford McDowell. A son, Lawrence, was born several years later, when his father was serving in Nyack. Lawrence Appley was graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University, later received many honorary degrees, and has had a most distinguished career in the business world. For twenty years (1948-68) he was president of the American Management Association, and he has been a director of several large companies, a trustee of several colleges and universities, and a consultant to, or member of, numerous governmental and presidential commissions. The recipient of many awards and honors, he is the author of at least six texts on business management. But, though a very busy man, he remembered Bishop Janes Church with a generous contribution to our building program in the early 1960's.

Musical talent such as Jessie Appley's was not unusual among women of her day. But she developed another ability which made her almost unique. She felt called, within the limits of the decorum of the era, to preach! So she early perfected this ability in women's groups, later took the necessary training after she first left Basking Ridge, and eventually bacame one of the first of several women to be officially licensed by American Methodism as a "local preacher". This in itself places her among the true pioneers of the church. Her name was first proposed for a license by the board of St. Luke's Church, Newark, but after that it was the Official Board of

Bishop Janes Church that voted every year, for many years, to request the renewal of her license.

There was no need to tell her about "woman's place", for Jessie was feminine, not feminist. During their many years of service she seldom left her husband's side. One time, however, she accepted a one or two-week preaching engagement sponsored by the Missionary Society in his old circuit in the Catskill Mountains. Such requests had been coming in since she had started editing a monthly magazine covering women's work in Methodism. At one of these small Catskill churches she was approached, following the service, by an old woman who squinted at her for a few moments, then said, "So ye be Joe Appley's wife. When he boarded and roomed with us, 'twarn't *yer* picture he set on his bureau".

We can imagine Joseph's surprise when his wife arrived back home ahead of schedule with demands for an explanation. Mr. Appley had some bad moments during his ministry, and this may have been one of them. Of course it *had* been her picture, but it took him a while to convince the fiery Jessie that the old Catskill bat had been as blind as one. Perhaps our minister's wife had secondary reasons for the way she handled this. Joseph was handsome; probably ever after he tended to keep his counseling sessions short.

Both of the Appleys were active in early ecumenical efforts. Their interest in interdenominational cooperation later led Jessie to organize our area's United Council of Church Women among ladies from churches all about us. This organization, now known as **Church Women United**, is still active, and is supported by some of our members, most of whom do not know that Mrs. Appley founded it (with, she always insisted, the help of many faithful friends).

After her husband's death in 1945 she continued living in their Maple Avenue home. She mourned him deeply, of course — he had been her idol and the light of her life — but she was not despondent. Having always been Joe's right hand, she knew that he would expect her to "carry on the good work" after he was called away. There was so much still to be done! Certainly, life was much more difficult for her now, but she couldn't let it be empty. Her children, now all married, wanted her to come and live with them, but she couldn't be persuaded. Of course she would be glad to visit them often, but she didn't want to leave the home that she and Joe had built, or the many friends she had here.

So it wasn't long before she was again deeply involved in the church work she loved. For the next two decades she was one of our church's staunchest members, always interested in its affairs, serving on many church committees, and taking an active part in the work of our womens' organizations. Many of our older members still have fond memories of meetings they attended, year after year, at Mrs. Appley's house. She was a never-failing practical help and spiritual aid not only to all of the pastors who served our church in those years, but to countless members of our church — and other churches — as well. And every year until her death her license as a local preacher was proudly renewed.

It was on June 20, 1967, twenty-two years after her husband's death, that

Jessie Appley died, at the age of 95. She had lived to see, and enthusiastically support, the completion of our educational building in 1954, the removal, at last, of our old Finley Avenue parsonage[13], and the dedication, in 1964, of our new sanctuary and narthex. And she had never stopped helping, giving and inspiring. Her passing was mourned not only by our congregation but by the multitude of friends she had made in many places. Jessie was buried by her Joe's side, in our Evergreen Cemetery.

In accord with her will, the house at 18 South Maple became the property of her son, Lawrence, and his wife. They, in turn, knowing his mother's love for our church, deeded the property to the Board of Trustees of Bishop Janes Church, "without conditions". As the Appley's had no doubt anticipated, the trustees did not wish to hold the property for rental and, at the Annual Meeting in April, 1968, requested authority to sell it "and to apply the net proceeds of this sale to reduce the existing mortgage on our church property". This authority was granted and the sale was made shortly thereafter. Thus the Appley family extended still further their countless benefits to Bishop Janes Church.

* * *

Although this chapter has been long, it has suggested only in general terms why Joseph E. Appley was our "divider of history". To tell the full story would require volumes. In 1945 the earth took his body, the Lord took his spirit. Yet part of his spirit, and the legend of the Appley name, live on, the heritage of past, present and future members of Bishop Janes Church.

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[13] As mentioned earlier, Mrs. Appley bore no love for our run-down, antiquated parsonage. She wrote to her daughter Winifred (Mrs. McDowell) in December of 1960, "The people at last tore down that old house where you were born. The church looks much better now".

CHAPTER X

A CHURCH AT THE CROSSROADS

1902 - 1905

MOST Methodist ministers at one time or another will be called upon to succeed a giant. Until this happens, their education will not have been completed. Some become bewildered, and a few never come to understand what has happened. Usually they have been transferred from a charge where their efforts have been fairly successful, but, soon after moving to their new church, the bottom seems to fall out. That this is a trying experience hardly need be said.

The people think that they do not expect the new minister to be as capable as his predecessor; that would be unreasonable! But they do expect that all aspects of the church's metabolism should continue with the same intensity and success as before. Unfortunately, the two expectations can not go together.

It is a trying experience for all. The congregation is unhappy, for they tend to have accepted as definitive the scope of the previous pastorate. The departed minister is saddened, and usually feels somehow to blame. Hardest hit is the new man, who often comes to question his own and his people's adequacy.

It was especially difficult to follow Joseph Appley at Bishop Janes Church, for in 1902 all of the above conditions were present, and they were compounded by a depleted membership. Dissension over the new church and its cost had left only 75 names on our rolls, and some of these were totally inactive. Added to this, the 1902 Conference Journal tells us that "Western farming has nearly killed eastern farming . . . greatly weakening our rural charges". This obituary, although somewhat premature, referred to a condition that already was having its effect within our congregation. No longer would our local farmers enjoy prosperity such as, for example, Ezra Dayton had known back when he leased whole railroad trains to carry his peaches to market.

Minister number 25 faced a difficult task indeed.

Figure of Tragedy

WILLIAM M. JOHNSON 1902 - 03

William M. Johnson was born in Chester, Pennsylvania, October 23, 1846. He completed high school there during the Civil War and, deciding against war service,

accepted a job that was offered to him in Philadelphia. Early in the post-war period he moved to Jersey City and went to work for the Erie Railroad. Before turning thirty, he became their head bookkeeper.

He was attracted to Methodism, and his dedicated work for the Union Chapel in Jersey City won him a local preacher's license in 1878. The following year he left his railroad job and entered Drew Seminary. During his first year there he married Miss Anna Westervelt, a girl from his Jersey City congregation. He completed his studies while supplying the pulpit at Arcola (1880-82). After his graduation from Drew there followed appointments at Thiells, Vienna, Worthendyke, Deckertown, Paterson (Embury), Blairstown and Janes Church in Jersey City. During these years two sons and two daughters were born to the Johnsons. All but the eldest daughter, who had married by then, moved to Basking Ridge with their parents in April, 1902, when, at the age of 55, Johnson was assigned to Bishop Janes Church.

Although he was to have a poor term at our church, the records of his two pastorates before coming to Basking Ridge seem commendable. At Blairstown (1897-98) he had helped raise $2400, and at Janes Church in Jersey City (1898-1902) he had increased membership from 104 to 150.

It would seem that the situation he found in Basking Ridge was difficult enough for him, but the worst was yet to come. Soon after the Johnsons moved in, typhoid fever struck the parsonage family. The three children were the hardest hit; both sons barely survived, taking a year to recover; the 19-year-old daughter died. We can imagine what effect this had upon the pastor of whom so much was expected in 1902. Shocked by the severe illnesses and death in his family, he was unable to perform well even the minimum of pastoral duties. As the successor to an outstanding minister he was starting under a great handicap.

The struggles of the preceding three or four years had effectively winnowed the chaff from the grain of our rolls, so the members remaining were above average in loyalty. Membership did not fall appreciably during Johnson's term. Five of Appley's last seven probationers became full members, and this just balanced the losses, so the number of full members remained at 68. Counting probationers, the grand total dropped from 75 to 73.

A membership of this small size seemed unable to contend with the large debt and operating expenses of the new church. Pew renting had been abandoned with the old church, but the honor of a more voluntary basis for stewardship did not result in healthier finances as it had in many churches. Perhaps our church should have kept the old system. The debt climbed from $4500 to $5600 in one year. To our people's credit, although they allowed the debt to grow, they did pay the entire estimated pastoral support of $850. Had they failed in doing this, in view of all the medical expenses facing the Johnson family, it would have been a black mark indeed, in our history.

The Ladies' Aid Society was shocked when Mrs. Johnson declined the office of president. It had seemed to them automatic that the pastor's wife should serve, as had her predecessors at our church and her contemporaries in the itineracy. Vice-

president Mrs. Mary Hill would not accept promotion to president for eight months, until certain that Mrs. Johnson would not change her mind. But in January, 1903, she agreed, and became the second president of the Society, with Mrs. James Frost as vice-president. Some excerpts from their records are revealing:

> April 3, 1902: "Paid $20 for new parsonage furniture".
>
> May 1, 1902: "Voted to pay moving expenses of Mr. Johnson, $15". (Later they found that the bill came to only $9.50).
>
> May 22, 1902: "Planned Decoration Day Festival. Motion to order one crate of strawberries and 25 quarts of ice cream, $43.20".
>
> November 13, 1902: "Voted a handkerchief and doll Bazaar Dec. 11th". (Such fund-raising activities permitted the following:)
>
> October 2, 1902: "Paid trustees $25 on carpet bill".
>
> November 6, 1902: "Motion to try to raise $100 against church debt".
>
> February 5, 1903: "Paid trustees $50 on carpet bill".

Reminders that these were the days before the Pure Food and Drug Act occasionally appear in the records:

> April 9, 1903: "Voted to accept (for re-sale as a fund-raising project) L. B. Goff's $10 donation of (assorted) medicines".

In 1903 the Ladies' Aid Society went to great pains to celebrate the "7th" anniversary of the founding of their forerunner Parsonage Aid Society. They chose to credit all seven years to their then-current organization, but that really was only five years old.

March 1903 marked the 50th anniversary of the chartering of our Methodist Society in Basking Ridge. Yet, strangely enough, no one seemed to be aware that half a century as a "stated" charge had been completed at this time, and this important anniversary went by unnoticed. This is difficult to understand when we note that the last two charter members had died only two years earlier. Surely that must have reminded some people of the age of our congregation.

Of course many things are likely to be overlooked in a period of general apathy. Bishop Janes Church, used to almost monarchial leadership under Joseph Appley, almost fell apart with the lack of even democratic leadership in 1902-03. The people were lost without a king bee.

At the Fourth Quarterly Conference in March, 1903, the board reported to the Presiding Elder that

> ". . . The Pastor has made no visiting list as required by the Discipline".

Their next action was conclusive:

> "A motion was made that the pastor be returned next year".

Only three members voted "yes" to this motion; the rest of the board abstained. And that effectively ended the 25th pastorate at our church, the first one-year term in almost twenty years. We can hope that the actions of our leaders were motivated by more than the impediments imposed upon this term by typhoid fever.

Conference officials must have taken a long look at the situation in Basking Ridge in the spring of 1903. The problem was complex. On the one hand there was much ground for hope, for the town had Methodist roots 120 years old, and had been a strong Methodist center just 15 years earlier. Bishop Janes Church possessed excellent location and property, a suitable parsonage, and one of the better new church buildings in rural New Jersey. Although largely agricultural, the community was by no means poor. On the other hand, the membership at Bishop Janes Church was not even half of what interested observers had expected it to be, the debt seemed to have overwhelmed the people, and financial support was lamentable.

The first assessment called for a strong itinerate appointment to realize the promise of future Methodist success in Basking Ridge; the second called for retreat to supply or student pastors who were, in effect, part-time, and expected no more than minimal pay. The latter course, often considered necessary, was known to involve risk. For many churches it had meant the beginning of the end.

At the Conference session early in April, 1903, it was decided, fortunately for us, that Basking Ridge would be given one more chance at the itineracy. A really top-drawer Newark Conference minister with long and successful experience, yet still in good health, was appointed to our charge. Probably few realized it then, but Bishop Janes Church was on trial.

After leaving here, Johnson served our churches in Rahway, Little Falls, Piedmont, and Travisville. In 1910 he was moved to Whitehouse. At this charge he fell victim to a tumor which affected his mind, left him in a coma by the year's end, and caused his death on March 19, 1911.

Until the end William Johnson had kept in excellent physical condition, and his strong muscular body proved an asset to itinerate duties. His character was said to have been as handsome as his features were not. He was noted for exceptional gentleness and self control; even trying circumstances — of which he had more than his share while with us — did not affect his genial, sunny temperament. His memoir tells us that his piety was "very deep, yet joyous and winsome". None of his ministerial abilities seem to have been outstanding, but neither were they below average. His year at Basking Ridge was certainly not one of his best; here he had been the victim of tragic circumstances which hampered his effectiveness.

Indian Fighter Turned Philosopher

ELEANDER S. JAMISON 1903 - 05

Our next pastor, Eleander S. Jamison, was born in Troy, New York, October 16, 1846. As he grew toward manhood, two characteristics became dominant;

patriotic zeal and intense interest in the liberal arts. Too young for service when the Civil War started, he was accepted into the army toward its conclusion. Apparently he was too late for combat. However, many army units were transferred west after Appomattox, and Jamison's was one of them. Most of his hitch was spent fighting in the Indian Wars of the late 1860's. But Jamison found no pleasure in harassing the native Americans, and he was by inclination more scholar than soldier. When his enlistment ended he returned to Troy and to his studies of literature, art and languages. His A.B. degree from Troy University soon followed.

Converted to Methodism while a student, he decided for the ministry soon after graduation. Quickly mastering his further studies, he was accepted into the Newark Conference and was assigned to the Kingwood Church in 1872. Next, he served at Cranford, Somerville, and a large church in Newark. In 1877 he acquired both a wife, the former Miss Emma Ruckel, and a desire for more education. As his conference memoir tells us, "A liberal arts course would not satisfy his quest for learning. He pressed on to a doctorate in philosophy".

His next pastorates were at Arcola, Everittstown, Milford, Elizabeth and Mechanicsville (Whitehouse); then Staten Island, Arlington, Englewood, Boonton, Irvington, Dunellen, and Raritan. In April, 1903, he was assigned to the pulpit of Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church.

Dr. Jamison was an unusual, interesting minister. His contemporaries said that he "walked and conversed with God" and, as the years moved on, he gained a reputation as a pastor to pastors. Above all, he was noted for his belief in "the centrality of worship". He probably was our first pastor to believe that most manifestations of religion and of ministry for God derived from deep, enlightened and sincere corporate worship. He believed that religion could spring from anywhere, but that Christianity must spring from the sanctuary. To Jamison everything was secondary to Sunday services. He spent endless hours preparing each week's service. His memoir says that "Preparation of the most minute detail characterized his sermons".

He improved our church music by appointing Miss Laura Frost as our organist and choir director, the beginning, for her, of a long period of service.[1] The excellence of his prayers was pointed out as exemplary to young ministers. Unfortunately, we find no indication that the quality of his worship services was particularly appreciated in rural Basking Ridge; this would not happen until the intellectual climate improved, as it did in later years. In the first decade of this century such careful preparation of corporate worship — such power of exposition — did not translate into evangelical success. Not yet were the people ready to respond to this as they did to the old emotional approach.

During Dr. Jamison's pastorate there was little net change in the size of our membership. Seven new Basking Ridge residents joined by letter, and four probationers were enrolled. Losses, however, just about equaled gains. Among those who

[1] Laura Frost was to serve at various times for many years as our organist, and would hold other church offices as well. She was a member of our church for 69 years, until her death in 1969. See also the footnote on page 158.

left was Mrs. Nicholas Bowers, who transferred her letter to her husband's Presbyterian church in Stirling. The net result was that our rolls increased by one, from 73 to 74, and this failure to recover any lost ground dispelled conference hopes for a strong church in Basking Ridge.

For all his ability, Jamison probably lacked the vitality and specific conviction to devote the necessary time and effort to building membership. Perhaps he was *too* important a man to have been sent here. He lectured all over New Jersey while our congregation, his main responsibility by assignment, desperately needed rebuilding and rededication. His emphasis on stewardship, however, did improve the financial condition of the church. That Jamison could accomplish this without an increase in membership was entirely to his credit. The debt was reduced from $5600 to $4500, where it had stood when Appley left. Pastoral support was increased $100, to $950, and was paid in full.

During these two years the Ladies' Aid Society continued much as before:

> May 7, 1903: "Moved to ask Mr. Hill to make a flower bed in front of the church".
>
> December 10, 1903: "Moved to present Mr. Fred Weyman and Mr. John Sanders (then sharing church custodial duties) a Christmas gift . . . for their services to the Society".
>
> February 2, 1905: "Moved to engage 'Colored Musicians' of Somerville for an entertainment on March 16th".
>
> March 2, 1905: "Motion carried to buy a large coffee pot and 200 paper plates for $2".

As usual, the ladies cheered and assisted the sick and needy, and at last they finished paying for the new church carpet.

The pastor's reports to the Quarterly Conference meetings include a few items of interest:

> June 23, 1903: *"The Trustees have been obliged to have the church roof repaired to prevent an unfortunate leaking of rain in the audience room".*

Six months later this work was reported finished. But a leaky roof only two years after the church was built boded trouble ahead. Often during the next fifty years we would be plagued with the same problem. Also in that same report:

> *". . . The Pastor has preached twice in the Presbyterian Church* (relations with our neighbor were close during this pastorate), *been speaker at the Public School Graduation Exercises, and at Dunellen".*
>
> December 27, 1903: *"Our Christmas Service was held Christmas Night; both Church and Chapel were filled, and all appeared happy".*

February 14, 1904: *"Opening of the New Year was observed by a week of Union Services with the Presbyterians . . . The Ladies' Aid Society enjoyed a sleigh ride to Somerville January 11th . . . The pastor gave an address on Lincoln at our public schools* (just forty years after the Civil War, Lincoln and the northern "cause" were — rather belatedly — becoming popular in Basking Ridge) . . . *The pastor is pleased to report with reference to work on temperance that, as a member of the committee appointed by our village improvement society, the licensing of a saloon at the station has been prevented".*

October 9, 1904: *"An illustrated lecture by Rev. J. E. Appley* (down from Nyack) *under auspices of the Stewards netted $41.80".* (He had been gone three years, but Appley was still raising money for Bishop Janes Church).

One month later, November 9, 1904, the 50th anniversary of the dedication of our first church building by Bishop Edmund Janes passed without mention of any kind in the records. Either our people were not interested or they did not know the church's founding dates. The 25th and the 50th birthdays went unheeded; not until the 75th would anything be made of our anniversaries.

The 1904 and 1905 Conference Journals reflect the mores and concerns of the period. The Methodist Episcopal Church petitioned Congress to intervene against Mormons in Utah and to refuse a seat to their senator, Reed Smoot. They called for wider observance of Lincoln's birthday in spite of the fact that Lincoln had been a glaring contradiction to Methodist belief that a man could not be a Christian outside of the church. Widows of four of our past ministers (Bebout, Cowins, William Day and Fort) were receiving between $155 and $230 annual support from the church's pension fund. Missionary work continued successfully, largely because the church had set an impossibly high goal: "the evangelization of the *world* in *this* generation". The State Sunday School Association (at this time guiding most of the large Protestant denominations) was recommending adoption of a Cradle Roll by each church, as well as observance of Rally Day and Decision Day, training of teachers in "normal" classes, and careful grading of schools. As secretary of the Conference Freedmen's Aid Society, Joseph Appley pressed for "full citizenship" for negroes, since they had "no inherent incapacity", and since not only one seventh of *our* population, but millions in Africa, could not be evangelized save by brotherly treatment here. As usual, our former pastor was way ahead of his time.

As for our own congregation, we find that church officers at this time were: Trustees — Allen, Baird, Culberson, Drumheller, Frost, Pruden and Tobelmann; Stewards — Allen, Baird, Burnett, Culberson, Drumheller, Frost, Husk (recording steward), Tobelmann (District steward), Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Frost and Mrs. Hill. Fred Weyman was president of the Epworth League, Mary Hill headed the Ladies' Aid, and Laura Frost was the capable new organist-choir director. The Epworth League records reveal that in January, 1904, that group bought a new piano for the chapel.

Dr. Jamison's last pastoral report to us was at the Fourth Quarterly Conference in March, 1905. It was *not* recorded in our second book of Quarterly Conference minutes (1887-1905), but survives on a sheet of paper. Unfortunately, the excellent system of keeping permanent detailed records in a substantial bound book was abandoned. In our records for the following 47 years — until our system of Annual Reports was initiated by Garrison in 1951 — we have found relatively few pastoral reports, all of them separate items surviving only by good fortune. Jamison wrote as follows:

> March 23, 1905: *"Union evangelistic services were held during November in the Presbyterian Church, conducted by Dr. Ely with Professor Pearman as music director . . . The January 'week of prayer' was observed by our churches uniting in the services . . . Special services by your pastor included Union sermon at the Presbyterian Church on Thanksgiving, five days as a delegate to the State Sunday School Convention at Burlington, a study course on the 'Life of Christ' after prayer meetings, an address at the installation of officers of the A.A.U.W., preaching at the Bernardsville revival meetings, an address to the public school pupils* (tomorrow) *on Fanny Crosby, the blind poetess, and taking part in the dedication of the new church at Arlington* (the next day) . . . *The wife of the pastor was obliged to undergo a serious and complicated surgical operation in December. We are happy to say that it was successful and results highly gratifying. The sympathy and kindness shown by many friends in this time of trial will never be forgotten".*

As the spring of 1905 approached, conference officials again studied the Basking Ridge situation. Jamison's stature was not in question. The first Ph.D. ever sent to Bishop Janes, his popularity as a speaker in our area was wider than that of any of our previous pastors. Added to this, he was a permanent member of the twelve-man Conference Board of Examiners who passed upon new conference members and young men asking to be ordained. This was a position of great trust and a mark of that body's high esteem.

Yet, in two years our church had shown only one positive sign under his leadership — a sizeable debt reduction. It is possible that he might have been unhappy with this assignment — he had usually headed more important churches than ours — and this can subtly undermine a minister's effectiveness. On the other hand, he may have done as well as any man could. These were discouraging times, both for him and for our faltering church.

Certainly he had raised the status of our church in the eyes of the community. But the membership remained depleted. A roll of 74 (including probationers) could not be counted upon to clear its debts. Nor could it provide a salary of $1000 or more, the amount which the Newark Conference then considered the minimum that should be paid to its regular ministers.

So, in April, 1905, Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church dropped to the status of "supply charge" for the first time in its history.[2] Now the list of "regular" conference ministers was closed to Basking Ridge. For most of the time during the next four decades the charge was to be "supplied" by either young men who were students at Drew or by older men who had retired or were in semi-retirement. Fortunately, some of these men would do much to rebuild our church; more, perhaps, than "regular" ministers might have done. In any case, the Early Golden Era, and the Appleyan challenge to our church, now fumbled, was receding into memory.

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[2] Once or twice before our church had been *temporarily* "supplied", but only briefly, due to some emergency.

CHAPTER XI

RISE OF A DEMOTED CHURCH

1905 - 1913

IN A WAY, the church was to begin all over again in 1905. And the early success of that rebirth under limited pastoral service was due to two of the more fortunate assignments in our history. Both men were students at Drew, but the first had had years of ministerial experience; the second also had experience and, as his subsequent career would show, great potential. The conference list of "regular" members could not have provided us with two better men. And probably our church would not have survived without them.

The First-born Offering

WASHINGTON IRVING DICE 1905 - 09

Our 27th minister, Washington Irving Dice (who usually passed himself off as William or Bill Dice) was born May 11, 1863, in Akron, Ohio. When only a few weeks old he became desperately ill. His father, who was training nearby to become an infantryman, was given a special furlough in order to comfort his wife during the expected death of their first-born. Their loving care of the stricken infant was strengthened by frequent prayers, during which they promised that if the child could be spared they would consecrate him to the service of God. Miraculously, it seemed to them, the baby recovered. The grateful father left to fight the last great battles of the Civil War and next saw his son a healthy two-year-old.

Young Dice did well in school, was sent to Allegheny College, and was graduated there in 1884. His parents, in spite of their promise, had exerted no undue pressure upon him to become a minister, but thoughts about his infant consecration troubled his soul when he happened to hear a presiding elder of the Baltimore Conference make a plea for young men to enter the ministry. Dice had been capable but directionless until he answered this call in 1886. He quickly mastered the necessary courses and was ordained within two years. In 1889 he married a Maryland girl, Miss Lucy Ellen Read, who proved a faithful partner in all that was to follow. They had no children.

Dice served the Baltimore Conference 18 years, from 1886 to 1904. For our purposes it is enough to say that his work there was very successful. In 1904 he felt a

desire for more advanced theological training and enrolled at Drew Seminary, a move that was to prove fortunate for Bishop Janes Church. Basking Ridge had fallen to the status of "supply charge", but the painful consequences of this would not be felt for eight more years, for in April, 1905, Bill Dice was assigned to supply our pulpit, and he was to have an equally competent successor.

Records of the Newark Conference indicate that he was considered capable and industrious, but no highly memorable accomplishments are mentioned. His photograph reveals our first minister with a definite twentieth century "look". Gone now were beards and sideburns. Dice, one of our more handsome pastors, with his neatly parted, tonic-disciplined hair, his wide stiff collar and his dapper expression, looked not unlike F. Scott Fitzgerald. But all this is, of course, superficial; our interest is attracted instead by the excellence of his pastorate at Bishop Janes Church.

When the Dices moved into the Front Street parsonage in April, 1905, he was confronted by a membership book which listed a total of full members and probationers of only 74, a debt of $4500, and a church building too big and expensive for this combination. Older members were still harking back to the simplicity of the original church and unconsciously fostering discouragement in the newer people.

However, Bill Dice did not know the meaning of discouragement. He had come to New Jersey for four years of study at Drew, and he would complete these studies to everyone's satisfaction. But from the time he accepted appointment to Basking Ridge — an assignment he took partly because he had few resources, and a wife to support — he quite clearly made the needs of our church his first concern. Although a student, he brought considerable experience to the job, as well as excellent health and great vitality. He never was known to criticize, although he quickly pinpointed what was missing at Bishop Janes Church and realized that all improvements would depend upon him, or would not be accomplished. Throughout its history one of the main impediments to a vigorous church at Basking Ridge had been the fact that, while the laity often provided willing workers, it had seldom provided laymen who would assume the responsibilities of leadership.

The new pastor picked up his own and everyone else's marbles. He conducted services on Sundays, morning and evening, and ran the weekly prayer meetings. Lacking class leaders, he headed the probationer and adult classes himself. When James Baird and Fred Weyman declined to continue or to arrange for successors, and the nominating committee shirked its responsibilities, Dice took up the slack as superintendent of the Sunday School and as president of the Epworth League. He also attended the more important meetings of the Ladies' Aid Society, headed most of the church committees and, in his spare moments, redecorated the parsonage himself. He cheered the sick and, as substantiated by his reports to our Official Board, given in the presence of the Presiding Elder, he visited every home in the congregation from four to six times each year. All of this while attending full-time classes five days a week at Drew and doing all the studying this entailed. That he was not crushed by such a schedule is proof of a fantastic capability for work.

Bill Dice, as the first full-time Drew Seminary student to occupy our pulpit, performed these double duties for four years, and with marked success. Few others could have equaled his ministry here, even without the heart cut out of their days by classes and study. Many young men shared this type of double assignment, however, and for most of them some lightening of the ministerial work load was necessary. One simplification that was adopted, unfortunately for church historians, did away with the long-established record books of Quarterly Conference and Official Board meetings. These had been especially valuable for the pastoral reports they contained. Membership records continued to be kept in good order, depending upon the individual pastor's diligence, but at Bishop Janes Church we sadly lack records of the doings of the Trustees, the Official Board and the Quarterly Conferences from 1905 through 1924. Fortunately this did not happen until there were some members who are still with us and from whom we can gather recollections of those years.

The new system in 1905 called for standard one-sheet forms which could be filled out quickly. These were brought to Quarterly Conference meetings by the Presiding Elder, and seldom, even if made at the time, was a second copy preserved for our church files. One envelope was found which contained a few copies made during meetings in 1905 and 1906, but Dice's last two years, when his best work was accomplished, are not represented by a single file copy. From what we do have, we can learn something of this pastor's thoroughness:

First Quarterly Conference, June 18, 1905: *"Presiding Elder Hoagland in the chair. James E. Baird was appointed Sunday School Superintendent.* (But he did not finish the year, and Dice had to assume the job for much of the rest of his pastorate) . . . *The Sunday Schools are organized into missionary societies, and the children have been properly instructed . . . Laura Frost was appointed superintendent of the Junior Epworth league*[1]*. . . George Drumheller and Henry Tobelmann were elected delegates to the coming Laymen's Conference at Trinity Church, Paterson".*

Third Quarterly Conference, November 5, 1905: *"We have one Sunday School in* fair *condition; average attendance 40 . . . It has been my privilege to be in my pulpit every Sunday except two (in month of September when we had our vacation trip). I also have been present at every Prayer Meeting, Epworth League Meeting, and Sunday School service. We held two and a half weeks of revival meetings this quarter, which have proved very beneficial to the church in recalling several backsliders into the fold.".*

[1] Organist, choir director, long-time head of the Junior Epworth League, sometimes Sunday School superintendent, — all of these were Laura Frost's secondary responsibilities. She was, first of all, a school teacher. Originally employed by the local school board to teach at the old Academy, she became one of the original teachers at Maple Avenue School when it opened in 1903. She taught for many years, until retiring in her sixties.

Dice's reports seem to picture a stern, no-nonsense type pastor. And Mrs. Marion Turner of our present (1983) membership will testify that in the pulpit he *was* exceptionally stern, both theologically and morally. He regularly blasted liquor, cards and dancing. Out of the pulpit, however, he was as fun-loving as anyone in town. He and Mrs. Dice attended most of the local entertainments and parties at Dayton Hall, which then occupied the present parking lot on North Finley Avenue, behind the Presbyterian cemetery, and they served as participating chaperons for all youth activities at Bishop Janes Church. The young people thought highly of both of them. At one church festival the ladies sent a boy to find out where some of the men had gone. The boy returned, at the minister's mischievous direction, with word that they were "rolling dice out back of the church". The astounded ladies hurried to the scene, only to find the men taking turns in friendly challenge to the pastor's college-trained ability at wrestling.

The athletic pastor's extra-curricular interest centered, above all, in baseball, which at that time, more than ever before or since, was the national game. He played it as a boy and had been a star on the varsity nine at Allegheny College. At church picnics he always organized ball games, and he occasionally slipped guiltily out of town by train to catch a game at the Polo Grounds in New York (early in the week, of course, so that his voice would return by Sunday). His extreme interest in the game had been whetted by a geographical circumstance. As a boy he had lived in Ohio at the time that the first "professional" ball team had been organized, — the unbeatable Cincinnati Red Stockings. By the time his ministry had shifted to the Baltimore area the old Baltimore Orioles of the nineties had become the center of the baseball world and he had watched McGraw, Jennings, Keeler and Robinson tear the National League apart.

A brief look at the big league picture while Dice was serving in Basking Ridge may further explain, to baseball fans at least, his fascination with the game: His first summer here found Rube Waddell striking out 286 for the A's, and a rookie named Ty Cobb breaking in at Detroit. Of greater interest to the pastor, old Oriole John McGraw's New York Giants' pitching star, Christy Matthewson, was the first of the literate, clean-cut school; "Big Six" won 31, lost 9, struck out 206, pitched his second no-hitter, and in the World Series against the A's won three shut-out victories for a record that still stands. In 1907 a kid named Walter Johnson won the first 5 of his eventual 414 victories, and Cobb won the first of twelve batting titles. Cy Young won only 21, which left him 33 short of his later all-time record of 511 wins.

All in all, it was a difficult time *not* to be a ball fan, even for a man of the cloth. It must have taken fortitude for Dice to preach against the printing, buying and reading of Sunday newspapers, after an important Saturday double-header.

But enough of this diversion. Let us get back to the pastoral reports:

> Fourth Quarterly Conference, March 8, 1906: *"The Sunday School has 5 officers, 8 teachers, 65 scholars, average attendance 45, and 10 children on the Cradle Roll"*.

First Quarterly Conference, June 30, 1906: *"New Presiding Elder, J. M. Meeker, in the chair . . . The Sunday School continues to grow, with increases to 14 teachers, 80 scholars, and 50 average attendance. . . . Motion passed that the Official Board be reorganized and to have monthly meetings".*[2]

Second Quarterly Conference, October 4, 1906: *"I have called upon the entire membership this quarter and am on my second rounds. I have been in my pulpit every Sunday this quarter except one when my father-in-law was seriously ill, and the Rev. J. E. Hancock* (our former pastor) *officiated. I also have superintended the Sabbath School, led the prayer meetings, attended the meetings of the Epworth League, also most of the Ladies' Aid Society meetings, and* (attended to) *all matters pertaining to the charge".*

Bill Dice believed that his first responsibility was the restoration of the depleted membership. He worked hard on this challenge and was surprisingly successful. During the preceding twenty years Joseph Appley and Reeves Daniels had been the only ministers to draw a large group of probationers to Bishop Janes Church; Dice's list of probationers fills several pages in our records. People joined, and some members transferred away, but by the end of his four-year pastorate membership had grown from 74 to 124, bringing our rolls back to the size they had been before the new church was built. Dice visited members' homes with record-breaking frequency, but he must have visited prospects' homes even more often.

Among the new members were Arthur and Elizabeth Brush, the parents of Howard and James Brush of our present (1983) membership. Mr. and Mrs. Brush would both later play important roles in our church life and, as our older members know, Howard and his wife Dorothy have continued that fine family tradition. There was also the Terry family, who moved here from Brooklyn. One of the daughters, Ethel Terry, was to be an active member of our church and Sunday School for 61 years, until her death in 1969. Her brother, Clifford, was an organist and choir director by avocation and, though he did not join the church, Laura Frost was pleased to have his assistance and soon turned over the direction of the choir to him while she continued as organist. This arrangement lasted three years. Then Clifford Terry was appointed organist-choir director of the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church and Laura again took over both duties at our church.

Either growing membership made money easier to come by, or Bill Dice was a talented fund raiser in the Appley tradition — probably both. First, about $550

[2] The Official Board, consisting of stewards, trustees and organization officers, was the governing body of the church. It had been established at Bishop Janes Church fifteen years earlier, ours being one of the first churches to adopt the system. In 1898, during Appley's authoritarian term, it had been dissolved. After reorganizing in 1906, the Official Board continued to govern the church until, in 1969, it was replaced by the newly created Administrative Board and Council on Ministries. The reactivated Board began to meet monthly, and "Quarterly" Conferences were held less frequently. Later, only the "Fourth Quarterly Conference" met each year, and this became our "Annual Meeting", now (in 1983) officially designated as the Annual Charge Conference.

raised for improvements during this pastorate. Second, although some new debts were added, about $2000 was raised for debt reduction, so that the total church debt was reduced from $4500 to $3900 by the end of his term. It seems, however, that the congregation failed to appreciate this in terms of compensation to the minister. Pastoral support was set at $950 for Dice's first year, then at $900 for each of the following three years. Our church is credited in the Conference Journal with having paid him these amounts, except in his fourth year, when only $850 was credited. However, the Conference allowed us to increase the "free quarters" value of the parsonage from $150 to $200 per year, so in cash the minister received only $700, $650, $650 and $600. Bishop Janes Church remained addicted to one of its poorest habits.

The minutes of the Ladies' Aid Society from 1905 to 1909 show it to have been Dice's chief ally in fund raising for debt reduction and operating expenses. The ladies have at some times raised more money, for short periods, but never have they worked harder than they did during his pastorate. They began collecting newspapers for sale, storing them in the church cellar. This continued for several years until it was recognized as a fire hazard, and was stopped. Interestingly, a report of May 2, 1907, shows $22.51 received for three and a half tons of paper.

These are some excerpts from the Society's minutes:

> May 4, 1905: "Carried that the ladies who did not help clean the parsonage before the new minister arrived pay for the hired woman (to do the scrubbing) instead of taking it from the treasury".[3]
>
> June 1, 1905: "A Soliciting Committee for the 4th of July was appointed: Logansville, Mrs. Wood; Madisonville, Mrs. Bailey; Lyons, Mrs. Culberson; and Basking Ridge, Mrs. Sanders. Mrs. Rachel Sanders to act as our correspondent for the "Newark News".
>
> December 7, 1905: "Paid $5 for (10) hymnals for the church. Loaned Mr. Dice $50 to be paid back to the Society only if the church raises his $700 salary. (It didn't). Paid (50¢ each) for Christmas presents for the custodians, Fred Weyman and John Sanders".
>
> February 1, 1906: "Motion carried that we have the (colored) Jubilee Singers from Somerville . . . on a moonlight evening in March".[4]
>
> October 3, 1906: "It was moved and carried that we have an Oirster (sic) Supper on Election Day".[5]

[3] A commendable idea, but it didn't work; the money eventually came from the treasury.

[4] With poor country roads and no lighting, transportation was easier and a better attendance was assured if evening events were scheduled on nights when there was a good chance for moonlight.

[5] The beginning of a long tradition in our church. It was later changed to a turkey supper, possibly because that was easier to spell than "oyster". Except for a few years when it was skipped for some reason, the Election Day Dinner would be an annual event for the next sixty years.

April 11, 1907: "A motion carried that the money made on ice cream be turned over to the . . . Literary Society". (probably a local, not church organization).

August 1, 1907: "Ladies' Aid Society selected paper for the dining room in the parsonage . . . Mr. Dice was paid $10 for papering the dining room himself".

Pleading poor health, Mrs. Mary Hill declined reelection as president of the Ladies' Aid at the time. She had served in this office from 1902 until 1908, and was the first *lay* woman of record to lead women's work at Bishop Janes Church. She had succeeded Mrs. Appley and, if we count the earlier short-lived Parsonage Aid Society, Mrs. Randolph. Elected as the new president — the Society's third — in January, 1908, was Mrs. Charles M. Allen. This was the beginning of an all-time record, for Mrs. Allen would serve as president for all but oné of the next fifteen years. Other officers remained unchanged, with the minister's wife re-elected vice-president, Mrs. James Frost secretary, and Mrs. Henry Tobelmann treasurer.

Continuing with the Society's minutes:

January 2, 1908: "Christmas gifts were presented to custodian John Sanders and to Mr. Arthur Brush for his help".

May 7, 1908: "There will be a bread and cake sale every Saturday this summer".

July 9, 1908: "Sent a note of thanks to Mr. Heman Childs[6] and Carl Greulack for the milk donated for our ice cream on July 4th".

October 8, 1908: "The Society bought wholesale assorted medicines from Dr. Goff and asked the firm of Tobelmann and Allen to buy it from them in turn". (Instead, Tobelmann agreed to sell what he could on consignment. Anyone could sell drugs in those days).

November 12, 1908: "Paid $25 on Pastor's last year's salary and $25 on this year's . . . Sent $2.50 to the Deaconess's Home . . . Organized a 'Seven-cent Sale' which netted $18.67".

February 11, 1909: "Motion carried to ask Mrs. Allen to see about getting a moving picture entertainment".[7]

March 11, 1909: "Voted to serve only light refreshments instead of the usual supper after our regular meetings . . . Voted to hold a banquet at which husbands of members would be guests of honor".

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[6] Probably the grandson of the Heman Childs who permitted use of his property (Childs' Grove) for the fruitful Lippincott-Bartine revivals of 1841-42. Both Heman Childses are buried in our Evergreen Cemetery.

[7] It is reasonably certain that this marked the first screening of a "movie" at our church, and it may well have been one of the first in Basking Ridge, for motion pictures had been introduced only six years earlier.

The Society always sent flowers and condolences to members who were ill, or the families of those who died. In February, 1908, they sent flowers to Deborah (Mrs. Samuel R.) DeCoster, who had been "sick so long". Mrs. DeCoster had been a member since before the Civil War, and after nearly 50 years on the rolls now led the ladies to conclude that her life was drawing to a close. But the tough old girl fooled them all; she soon recovered and proceeded to add another 16 years to her Bishop Janes membership.

Two major long-term fund raising projects were begun by the ladies during Dice's pastorate. The first is recorded as follows:

> April 11, 1907: "Motion carried that we undertake a scheme of raising a Mile of Pennies . . . Mrs. Baird to send for paper strips and Mrs. Dice to keep them . . . Mrs. Tobelmann to be the treasurer of this 'Mile Fund' ".
>
> May 2, 1907: "While penny scheme is on, each member agreed to wear a sky-blue badge with a penny on it".
>
> May 23, 1907: "Five hundred feet ($80) of our mile of pennies has been raised so far".
>
> January 2, 1908: "On the 'Mile Fund' $539.42 has been raised to date. This plus other receipts permitted $600 to be paid on the church debt".

Years later Mrs. James Baird wrote that the Society almost, but not quite, reached its goal of a line of pennies a mile long. The second project saw the ladies embark upon an ill-fated business venture, as follows:

> February 1, 1906: "Motion carried to get six dozen tubes of Witch Hazel Jelly to be sold by the ladies".
>
> April 5, 1906: "$9 net proceeds from Witch Hazel Jelly".
>
> March 18, 1909: "Motion carried that the Ladies' Aid Society take the (exclusive) agency for the sale of Witch Hazel Jelly in the State of New Jersey and that we mail circulars to the Ladies' Aid Societies of all Methodist churches in the Newark and New Jersey Conferences. Mrs. Charles Allen was named agent, and a motion carried to buy a Hectograph[8] to make circulars".
>
> April 8, 1909: "Notice has been received that our society has been appointed sole New Jersey agent by the Witch Hazel Jelly Company, giving us entire control of the sale of the article in this state".

The project sounded promising but, as we will see later, it was not to be. Nevertheless, active support of the church by the ladies never had been greater than during this first decade of the century. There is no telling what the results would

8 An early duplicating machine whereby written material was transferred to a slab of gelatin treated with glycerin. Copies could then be taken from the gelatin.

have been had not their efforts been offset by a gradual decline in masculine interest. Proportionately fewer men felt the church to be their central concern. The difference between these men and those of the 1850's had begun to be apparent, and much of the glowing zeal of earlier Basking Ridge Methodism had begun to fade. Never again would Bishop Janes men think in terms of missionizing a new church for another congregation as some of their fathers and grandfathers had done.

During Dice's pastorate one of the trustees, Jonathan Pruden, a non-member, resigned, while Charles Allen, James Baird, A. M. Culberson and Henry Tobelmann continued to serve. And four new trustees were added: William Dall and Thomas Ramsdale in 1907, James Frost and Greorge Drumheller (the local printer) in 1908. Five stewards from previous pastorates — Allen, Baird, Tobelmann, Mrs. James Frost and Mrs. Mary Hill — were joined by five new ones: A. Burnett, George Drumheller, Thomas Ramsdale, Mrs. Charles Allen and Mrs. Culberson. It should be noted that the practice of rotating membership on the Board of Stewards was discontinued at this time. For the next 54 years such membership would be considered a more or less permanent assignment for members in good standing (and good health). In 1962 the rotation plan would be reinstituted, "to distribute responsibility more broadly among our church members and thus draw more of our people into a working relationship with the church".

The Hancocks

It will be remembered that John E. Hancock had been a minister at Bishop Janes Church twenty years before Bill Dice arrived in Basking Ridge, and that following his last assignment as an active minister he chose our town as his home. John and Jennie Hancock (his second wife) had returned to Basking Ridge in 1905 with plans for a well-earned, restful retirement, and very soon they reestablished the respect and popularity that he and his first wife had enjoyed among our people in the 1880's. But for some men the body can not rest if the soul will not, for God and bishops always need sowers. Within weeks of their return here a worried District Superintendent[9] called upon the old man, and Hancock's conscience told him that this visitor might be bearing God's message. After the visit everyone learned that Rev. Hancock had agreed to supply the vacant pulpit at the backwater church in Pleasant Plains. Union Village Church had had to be closed, and Pleasant Plains, with less than ten members, was all that was left of the earlier combined charge. They no longer paid any salary, so student supply was out of the question. But the Baird family and other members had been begging that Sabbath preaching, at least, be continued. Hancock made this possible as the summer of 1905 began.

It is sad to recall the struggles of our daughter church at Pleasant Plains. In 1850 it had been a vigorous pocket of Methodism, but by 1905 the swamp population was disappearing. The land, always too wet, had been farmed for more than a

9 In 1907 the title "Presiding Elder" was changed to "District Superintendent".

century since being cleared by Lord Stirling's slaves and had become marginal; those who still lived and toiled there now were, as our Conference Journals often observed, mostly immigrant Roman Catholics. And the frequently flooded roads marked the area for future desolation.

Two years earlier, in 1903, the Rev. John Reeve of Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church had begun the organization of an Italian Mission in Bernardsville, which was to grow into the present Bernardsville Presbyterian Church. Hancock believed that the new Italian-Americans in the swamp should also be welcomed — perhaps a few could be converted — instead of being looked upon with the distaste expressed by some of our District Superintendents in their Conference Journal reports. He and his people invited them to most of their outdoor festivals and entertainments, though they were unable to get them to enter the church. And they had no qualms about attending such events on the church property. Fifty years later, as he stood looking at the remains of the church's stone foundation, one of these old-timers was heard to remark, "When I was young, the strawberry festivals we went to on these church grounds were the biggest get-togethers of the year for all of us in Pleasant Plains".

For five years Hancock performed miracles at Pleasant Plains which would prolong its crippled life for two decades. Like Appley later at Union Village, he was in his seventies when he did it. And he not only continued "Sabbath preaching"; in effect he became a full-time minister for the little church. He did not convert many Roman Catholics, but against staggering odds he labored magnificently. No records survive from the Pleasant Plains Church, but from conference records we learn that by 1908 he had 17 members and 1 probationer, and the people, who had contributed nothing in the way of salary for a long time, paid him $90. The following year they raised $194 for pastoral support, even though the membership was so small that the Conference did not recommend any amount for this purpose in their approved budget. Hancock was, of course, on pension, but that was only a few hundred dollars.

On June 1, 1908, the Hancocks joined the Dices in our parsonage next door to the church and an interesting event, recorded in our records, took place. Also present in the group were the minister's daughter Edith and her husband, Joseph Gatts, with their infant daughter, Bernice. The Rev. Hancock had the pleasure of baptizing his granddaughter in the presence of the three families.[10] This completed, Jennie Hancock brought forward another infant and handed him to her husband. John Hancock was then 73 years old, his wife 49, but not long before they had become the proud parents of Emory Davis Hancock. With all the joy of a young couple (they were to have only this one child) they stood before Washington Irving

[10] Although Methodists never believed that baptism conferred church membership, as in Roman Catholicism, the home, not the sanctuary, was the preferred locale for this sacrament well into this century. Recognition, however, that Methodist baptism emphasizes the dedication of the parents before the congregation, and that of the congregation itself to share the responsibility of providing a Christian upbringing for the child, has made the sanctuary much the more proper place for baptism in our era.

Dice and received the sacrament of baptism. Emory Davis Hancock would spend the first 17 years of his life in Basking Ridge, eventually join Bishop Janes Church, and later move from town in the '20's.

In 1909 the Pleasant Plains Church lost several members and Hancock, now in poor health, could not replace them. Perhaps not even Saint Paul could have done so under the conditions. Early the next year he did enroll two more probationers, but a sudden stroke left him paralyzed in his Basking Ridge home. Possibly because they thought it would have pleased him, the Pleasant Plains congregation painted their church, and the 1911 Conference Journal recorded that "The interior at Pleasant Plains has been handsomely redecorated". But Hancock was not to see it, for he died on November 14, 1910.

Although as a young man he had been somewhat reluctant to start his ministry, he ended it as one of the sainted group who expend their last strength keeping in the saddle. The funeral in Bishop Janes Church was conducted by Conference luminaries and by Dice's successor in our pulpit. He was buried in the Madison Methodist Cemetery which had been founded, along with the Madison Church, by grandfather Hancock 107 years earlier.

Mrs. Jennie Hancock lived on in Basking Ridge with her young son for more than ten years. She remained very active in women's work at Bishop Janes, and helped whenever she could at Pleasant Plains, until her death in March, 1921. Several years later young Emory Davis Hancock moved to St. Louis, transferring his letter to Centenary M. E. Church in that city. He was the last of the historic Hancock family on our rolls.

* * *

With real affection the people of Bishop Janes Church said good-bye to Bill and Lucy Dice in April, 1909. At the next Conference session our District Superintendent Hurlbut stated:

> *"The minister for the twentieth century must be a good preacher, a faithful pastor, an able executive, a man with the vision of a statesman, and a tireless worker. There is no preacher in our Conference great enough to win and hold a congregation without house-to-house visitation, and no pastor can maintain his standing among the people unless he is a master in the pulpit".*

Although these specifications lie almost beyond human reach, Washington Irving Dice came very close to meeting them during his four years in Basking Ridge. Even had he made no substantial gains, it would have been a victorious pastorate. For the tide had been ebbing at Bishop Janes Church since completion of the new church in 1900. Simply to have stopped this ebbing took outstanding ability and herculean efforts, especially with the effects of the 1907 panic pulling in the opposite direction.

Dice's personal ministry was thorough. He got into every church home (considerably fewer than now, of course) as often, probably, as any of our pastors had

before or has since, all while attending regular classes at Drew. He increased our membership from 74 to 124, increased the Sunday School from 6 to 13 teachers and from 68 to 107 pupils, strengthened the Epworth League to 67 members and 37 juniors, reduced the church debt nearly 15%, and doubled our giving to benevolences. For these and other reasons, he is remembered in Basking Ridge with respect, affection and gratitude.

In 1907 he accepted an invitation to transfer from the Baltimore to the Newark Conference. After Basking Ridge he was assigned pulpits at Pearl River and Montvale for two years, then Stanhope for one year, Waldwick for the following year, Stony Point for two years, and finally Westtown for two years (1919-21). Obviously his ability was not rewarded by strong appointments within our Conference, possibly because they remembered that his years of strong service when he was young had been given to Maryland.

In 1922 the Dices retired and moved back to Maryland. During the 18 years of retirement that followed we may assume that one of their pleasures was attending big league ball games in Baltimore; we are not told how he occupied his time. We do know, however, that Bill Dice's full life came to an end on February 14, 1940, at the age of 73.

The National Scene

Most of us have such a poor grasp of the early 1900's that it is difficult to place our church of those years in proper perspective. Perhaps a brief review of some of the highlights of that period will help.

In 1900 the country's population was exactly half of that of 1950, a third of that of 1980. In 1900 deaths per 100,000 population in the United States stood at 201.9 from tuberculosis (down to 30 in 1950), 181.5 from pneumonia (down to 38.7), 43.3 from diphtheria (down to 0.4), and 11.4 from scarlet fever (down to 0.1 in 1950, with only 68 in the whole country). In 1900 our life expectancy was 48 years; today it is well over 70.

In 1900 more cigars, chewing tobacco and pipe tobacco were produced than in 1950, but only 4 billion cigarettes were manufactured, against 384 billion a half century later. In 1900 telephones were still clumsy and rare; there were only a few in town. With the advent of modern steel and the elevator, New York's first great skyscrapers were building, including the 41-story Singer Building in 1908, the 50-story Manhattan Tower in 1909, and the 60-story Woolworth Building in 1913.

Basking Ridge storekeepers Henry Tobelmann and P. C. Henry did not face the competition that Jim Brush and Bill Hawkes face today. There were only 200 A&P stores in the whole country in 1900, and by 1912 only 400. But by 1924 there were 11,413 A&P stores, including the first super markets.

The first crude hand-built tractors were made in 1902; by 1910 production reached 4000, and by 1920, 200,000. In 1902 the advertising business was 78 times smaller than it was in 1922, and infinitesimal compared with today's. In 1903 the

Wright brothers completed their first airplane flight at Kittyhawk, N.C. Those who heard of it were skeptical or looked upon it as magic, much as we would react to a demonstration of telepathy. Reporters would not be sent to the site of Kittyhawk for almost six years.

In 1900 radio was still 20 years away, television 45 years. But in 1903 the first motion picture, "The Great Train Robbery", was produced, and movies would reach Bishop Janes Church within six years. Although celluloid had preceded it, the real start of the plastics industry began in 1909 when Leo Baekeland marketed "Bakelite". At the St. Louis Exposition in 1904 Rudolph Diesel's remarkable new engine was displayed.

Of greater significance to us all, the first big oil well began to produce in Beaumont, Texas, in 1901. For the most profound impact upon the American way of life would be made by the automobile. At first only the wealthy could afford the $2000 to $5000 price tag, and in 1906 Woodrow Wilson protested, "Nothing has spread socialistic feeling in this country more than the automobile (which flaunts before Americans) a picture of arrogance and wealth". But Henry Ford would contradict Wilson's opinion. By 1903 he was building his first cars, and by 1909 he had the price of his Model T down to $950. By 1914 the world's first great assembly line was in operation in his factory. Next, Henry gave American industry the greatest shock it would ever receive. Top industrial wages had reached $2.40 for a 9-hour day. Overnight Ford jumped his men to $5.00 per 8-hour day, and the price of the Model T continued to drop to an eventual low of $290. America responded by putting everyone on wheels, even though nearly all roads were dirt, and the dust and mud made chains and shovels mandatory equipment. As late as 1921 there were no numbered highways in America. However, change in the automobile industry always would be rapid; in 1916 only 2% of our cars were closed models, ten years later 72% were. In time the automoblie would create the "motorized suburbs" and make rich soil thirty miles from a railhead highly profitable farm land. Then later, in our era, this farm land would become giant urban areas stretching, for example, like one huge city from Boston to Washington. And the auto would change American morals; already preachers had begun to point out that these vehicles encouraged "private intimacies".

The era is noted for being the greatest period of social reform in the history of our country. Historians often refer to the years 1900-1915 as those which fostered the "Revolt of the American Conscience". Labor laws, food and health laws, fair employment and business practice laws were passed to keep pirates like the late Daniel Drew in check. In 1913 the income tax arrived. Clergymen increasingly were seeing in their parishes and in their calling opportunities for social work, and our Conference Journals of those years reflect this. Spurred by the Great Panic of 1907, the peak of the reform movement probably occurred in 1912, when Wilson (a liberal) received 6 million votes, Teddy Roosevelt (a liberal) 4 million, and the Socialists one million, a total of 11 million votes recorded against the conservative Taft's 3-½ million. World War I would kill this spirit of reform, and at the war's

end would come women's suffrage.

All these changes did not affect, or even reach, Basking Ridge at once, but they arrived inexorably one by one, slowly changing our village, our church, and the people of our little community.

The Conference Scene

Conference Journals during Dice's term are rich in background. The 1907 Journal tells of the 50th Anniversary celebration of the Newark Conference; eight original members from 1857 still survived, including two of our former pastors, George Dickinson and William Nelson. Many churches reported conversion to electric lighting, although the new church in Green Village (1907) had greater faith in the future of acetylene lighting, and installed it. The deceased churches at New Vernon and Union Village were ordered sold, but, as we have already related, the latter was later "saved" by Joseph Appley. Bishop Janes Church was credited with sending $40 to the fund for furnishing the new buildings at Centenary Collegiate Institute. The *Missionary Cause* reported that "A century of God-directed effort in China has opened up that great Empire and roused it from its slumber of centuries". Finally, it reported the deaths of one of our former pastors, George Jackson, and of "our" bishop's only son, Lewis T. Janes. The latter was buried, amid Conference pomp, in Evergreen Cemetery at Basking Ridge.

The 1908 Journal recorded a conference petition for three forward-looking actions: a move to have bishops assigned geographically (as at present), a study of the possibility of church union for the larger Protestant denominations, and a strong recommendation that those churches which had not already done so should establish an Official Board as soon as possible. (Dice had beaten this directive by two years at Basking Ridge). The church building which had been given to the old Cross Roads (Bedminster) congregation by Bishop Edmund Janes before the Civil War, and which had been moved to Chester about 1895, was reported to have been replaced by a new church building in that town.

The 1909 Journal reported the deaths of two more of our former pastors, Reeves "Ocean Grove" Daniels and Joseph Owen, the latter on the third day of the Conference session. Two others of our former pastors, Captain John Wesley Young and Elbert Clement, having completed 49 years in the Conference, were asked to "address the next session on their semicentennials". Also, we read in this Journal that

> "At Basking Ridge Mr. Frederick Olcott of Bernardsville has erected a fine granite receiving vault, costing not less than $40,000[11] in Evergreen Cemetery, which is owned by Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church. It will be at the service of the patrons of the cemetery".

11 Surely $4,000, not $40,000, must have been meant for the value of Mr. Olcott's gift.

This vault, a mausoleum-type structure still standing in the cemetery, was used for brief cemetery-site services and for temporary body storage when the ground was too frozen to dig. It is strongly built of solid granite (including the roof slabs), with bronze doors and grillwork. Over the years, however, our limited cemetery funds have not permitted proper ongoing maintenance and the interior of the structure has fallen into disrepair. At the present time (1983) the structure is being used for the storage of cemetery maintenance equipment.

The Local Scene

The face of Basking Ridge was changing, too, in the first decade of this century. The village was growing, not as rapidly as it would later and is in the 1980's, but steadily. Some activity was due to its "resort" status at the time. The Washington House and the Union Hotel (where the bank now stands) usually boasted full occupancy. Most of the resort development, however, was in the Bernardsville "mountains".

In 1906 the Visiting Nurse Association was organized in the area, and the Boy Scouts followed in 1911. In 1904 the new stone crusher plant was started next to the railroad near the Passaic River trestle, and in 1908 the "Millionaires' Express" was wrecked nearby with only 11 casualties out of the 300 passengers aboard.

School growth continued apace with the opening of Maple Avenue School (where the Township Library now stands). Earlier, the first school in Basking Ridge had been founded by Presbyterian minister Kennedy in 1751. Half a century later the Rev. Finley supervised construction of the "Academy" in 1809 for private pupils from New Jersey, neighboring states, and the south. That venerable building is now (in 1983) the home of our Historical Society. The Academy quickly won a wide reputation for excellent education "for mercantile business or for college". As the public education movement in America began to take hold the Academy lost its prestige. By 1844 there were seven small crossroads schools in the Township. When the first regular Township school board was established, in 1852, they bought the Academy building and it was used as our town's public school until 1902. In 1902-03 Maple Avenue School was built, and Elm Street (now South Maple) was extended from the fire house, along the old foot path between Bishop Janes Church and the new school, to join North Maple Avenue. A steady increase of pupils while Dice was serving our church necessitated the construction of a second floor on the school building in 1910.

Possibly due in part to the long Methodist assault — although the causes more likely were economic — distilling ceased in the Bernardsville mills about 1905. Messrs. Ingersol and Eams bought the Old Mill (used only for the grinding of flour and putty) from William Van Dorn and Sandy Swaim. And they in turn would sell the property to William Childs in 1929.

The Basking Ridge Volunteer Fire Company was formally organized on June 24, 1904. Their first hand-drawn hose cart (still a prized possession) helped keep a

serious fire at Maple Avenue School in 1906 down to about $1000 damage. Many of the early volunteers were members of Bishop Janes Church. In 1905 our David Y. Moore built the body for the first horse-drawn hose wagon, and that fall the original wooden fire house was built, at a cost of $600.[12] In 1908 the company bought a hook-and-ladder wagon which was known for years as the "White Elephant". It got this name, not because it was a failure, but because it was painted white, was bulky and hard to handle with its 65-foot ladder, tiller steering, and complicated harness. In 1909 Bill Dall, David Moore and Moses Riker, all Methodists, were heroes of the great Peapack fire, reaching it with their horse-drawn hook-and-ladder in exactly fifty minutes. By 1911 the era of horse-drawn equipment was already on the wane, for in that year a Moline 35hp pumper was purchased, and the modern period of fire fighting began.

Beginning in about 1906, the Fire Company sponsored summer excursions, usually to Cranberry Lake, as a fund-raising project. Total cost was 50¢ per person. Then, in 1910, they held the first of 31 annual carnivals which for years were the biggest, most popular social events in Basking Ridge. So popular did they become, in fact, that carnival week became known as "Old Home Week", and hundreds of former residents took the opportunity to return for a visit with earlier friends and neighbors. Thanks to carnival profits and various donations fire protection did not cost the Township government a cent. Bill Dice might have opposed the raffles and games of chance, but his successors at Bishop Janes generally remained quiet about this aspect of the most popular event in the Township.

The Orientalist

WILLIAM M. NESBIT 1909 - 13

Washington Irving Dice's successor, the 28th pastor of Bishop Janes Church, was William M. Nesbit. He was born (February 15, 1881) and raised in New York City, and when he was old enough to be on his own, his parents, William and Leonore Nesbit, moved to Cleveland.

Nesbit was a brilliant student. He entered Columbia University at 17 and was graduated in 1902 with an A.B. degree, a Phi Beta Kappa key, various other prizes, and a recently acquired but firm determination to become a Methodist minister. This was a natural development, stemming from a consuming interest in Bible study. He applied to the New York East Conference and, because of his excellent record and obvious aptitude, was not only accepted on trial but was appointed pastor of a small country church even before he started training. He soon decided to work for his B.D. degree and received permission to do this, but it wouldn't be easy. His church was in Eastview, New York, several miles east of Tarrytown, but,

[12] That building served until the brick fire house was built next door to it, on the corner of Henry Street and South Maple, in 1915. It continued in use as an accessory building until the fire house was expanded in 1962 and it was demolished.

attracted by its growing reputation, he wanted to enter Drew Seminary. So he started at Drew in 1903, and every weekend he must have set some kind of travel record for those days by taking the train from Madison, the subway to New York, and another train upstate to Tarrytown, There a member of his congregation from Eastview always met him at the station each Sunday morning and drove him by wagon the ten miles to his church. Late Sunday afternoons the process was reversed. Nesbit was graduated from Drew with his B.D. degree in the spring of 1905. He was ordained an elder and continued at Eastview for another year.

The authorities at Drew had been extremely impressed by the young man and had made him a "fellow" after granting his degree. He taught both Old Testament and Hebrew at the Seminary from 1905 through 1907 along with his pastoral duties. In 1906, however, he transferred to the Newark Conference and exchanged the long weekend trip to Eastview for a shorter one to Jersey City, where he served for one year as an assistant minister.

The administration at Drew wanted to groom him for an important faculty position as eventual head of the Department of Old Testament, and their world-renowned Hebrew scholar, Dr. Robert W. Rogers, wanted to train him as his successor. But Nesbit always was drawn more toward scholarship and writing and, above all, toward the active ministry. Although he was an excellent teacher, and would teach off and on all of his life, he never agreed to devote the better part of his time to it, and the hopes of the Drew administration were never realized. In 1909 he started four years of work at the school toward his doctorate, resigned from all teaching responsibilities on its faculty, and accepted Newark Conference appointment to the Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church.

Although Nesbit's was primarily a teaching ministry, never once in his career would he be without the responsibility of his own church and pulpit. He would have many opportunities to serve God as a scholar, or as a teacher of religion, but he believed that he *had* to be first of all a *pastor* in order to walk in Christ's steps. As a Hebrew scholar he looked upon the study and understanding of the Old Testament as indispensable preparation for understanding of the New Testament. His scholarship was exclusively Old Testament, but his preaching, which would become known throughout Methodism as highly Christ-centered, was based upon the New Testament.

Such was the second "student"[13] pastor to be assigned to the pulpit of our church, in April 1909.

Nesbit was a bachelor, had lived in a single room for years, and when he moved to Basking Ridge he saw no need to have a house here. So he rented a room in the George Dobbs residence on North Maple Avenue and suggested that the trustees rent the parsonage to others during his term. No record has been found of who rented it, but presumably someone did, for the Ladies' Aid prepared it for occupancy in the late spring of 1909.

[13] Student in the sense that he was still attending school, though he already had his AB and BD degrees, and was ordained elder, with pulpit experience, when he arrived.

The fact that the church would not be providing his living quarters as was normally done, but that he would be providing his own, called for some adjustment in the amount of pastoral support. Dice, in his last year, had been paid $650 plus the $200 estimated rental value of the parsonage. This totaled $850, $50 less than the Conference expected and $150 less than it desired from us for pastoral support. Both the Conference and Nesbit expected the church to pay its minister $900, all cash, because he would be paying his own rent. Instead, in his first year he was paid $700, which the church officials thought was a good increase over the *cash* amount Dice had received. However, the District Superintendent had a long talk with the Quarterly Conference in 1910, stressing ethics, stewardship, and more especially, the fact that Nesbit had to pay rent to Dobbs, and that the Conference was pushing strongly for a recommended minimum of $1000 for pastoral support. This talk bore fruit, and the figure was set at $1000 per year cash for the rest of Nesbit's term. More importantly Nesbit actually *was* paid $1000 for his second and third years here. In his fourth year, however, his pay fell $50 short of this amount.

What was the impact upon Bishop Janes Church of a scholarly minister of such outstanding qualification and ability? To be truthful, it was a paradoxical impact. The effect upon the health of our church was so great that this must be rated as one of the finer pastorates in our history. But the *personal* impact upon our people seems to have been small. All existing records testify to the first effect; recollections — or the lack of them — by the older members leads to the second conclusion. The story of his local ministry has been difficult to piece together, because he did not leave behind a single report. The lack of reports is not critical, except historically, because as a minister he was a doer, not a scribe.

Still, it seems strange that the old-timers have only the vaguest impressions of the 1909 to 1913 period. One of these older members, a youngster then, of course, has said that "All I remember about Nesbit is that he always wore a bright red tie with his blue suit in the pulpit". At first this kind of statement puzzles the researcher; later he concludes that some kind of a gulf must have existed between minister and people. Nesbit's term was so successful that his heart and hands must have been theirs at all times. Perhaps, however, his mind was in another world. This, and a slight natural reserve, must have precluded close, easy-going relationships. After all, of what interest were the Hittites to Basking Ridge farmers?

Lacking other organizations' records during Nesbit's pastorate, we must look again at the minutes of the Ladies' Aid Society for our clues to church life in those days. These reveal that the ladies of the church were just about as active then as they had been during Dice's term. They continued raising money in a variety of ways, contributing to both current expenses and the pastor's salary, and they faithfully sent flowers and condolences to their ailing and bereaved members. The following excerpts tell of some of their activities during his first year:

> May 6, 1909: The new pastor opened the meeting with a prayer. "On motion it was decided to meet on May 13th to put the parsonage in order for renting".

June 3, 1909: "Motion to pay $20 on debt and pastor $50 on salary . . . Motion carried to give each member 10¢ to make as much as possible in one year". (18 months later, as the minutes disclose, this investment netted $220.25).

August 5, 1909: "$20 more raised on our mile of pennies".

September 9, 1909: "Bought 25 hymnals for the church — $12.50".

November 4, 1909: "Motion carried to pay $15 toward new piano".

March 24, 1910: "First 'Husbands' Banquet' held." (Apparently the "banquet at which husbands would be guests of honor", held a year earlier, had been successful and was to be an annual event).

April 14, 1910: "Paid $50 toward the pastor's salary".

The gulf which seemed to exist between minister and congregation may, in part, be explained by the theological climate of those days. In the America of the "Progressive Era" (1900-1915), certain scientific discoveries had added validity to the earlier so-called Evolutionary Hypothesis, with the result that our theological scholars turned more and more toward the "Higher Criticism" of the Bible, which encouraged a re-examination of the familiar creeds of many protestant denominations.[14] Earlier there had been no persons labeled as "Fundamentalists" because all were fundamentalists.[15] But the new higher criticism (of which Nesbit's scholarship was a small part) began to reexamine the Bible through archaeology, scientific-historical methods, linguistic studies and the comparative study of religions. This encouraged a deeper insight into the scriptures to discover the mythological elements, symbolic language and post-apostolic glosses. Happening as it did in an age of growing enlightenment, this could have deepened everyone's involvement in Christianity. Instead it served to divide the church, for in America the church was no longer leading society, but beginning to follow it. The modernists scorned the blind superstitions of the fundamentalists and the fundamentalists rejected the followers of the new scholarship as devil-inspired heretics.

But when newly-ordained young seminarians reached their first churches (seldom in sophisticated urban centers) their liberal flags had to be struck. They found that those who paid their salaries were almost always conservative and demanded, not modernism but traditional theology (and less of it), shorter sermons

[14] At the higher denominational levels, modernism was ascendant among Congregationalists by 1900. Liberal teaching began in the Baptists' Chicago Divinity School between 1905 and 1915, and the Presbyterians were led by H.S. Coffin of Union Theological Seminary to reject infant damnation before World War I. Symbolic for Methodists was the decisive acquittal of Prof. C.P. Browne of Boston Univ. when brought to trial for heresy.

[15] By early definition a "fundamentalist" subscribes without qualification to the "five fundamentals": virgin birth, physical resurrection, inerrancy of the Bible, substitutionary atonement, and the imminent physical second coming of Christ. Any qualification of these beliefs, it was felt, precludes a person being considered a Christian.

and Billy Sunday dramatics. The modernist-fundamentalist rift in Protestant churches opened a gulf between the minister and his congregation that would not soon be bridged.

Gulf or no, Nesbit brought good organization and improved community stature to Bishop Janes Church. This and his other talents kept membership climbing almost as steadily as it had under Dice, in spite of the inevitable losses. Dice left Nesbit a membership of 125; four years later Nesbit would leave a membership of 163, of which only four were probationers. The records show that in this era there had been no easing of probationer requirements since the earliest days of the church. Generally a probationer attended classes for two years before earning full membership.

Nesbit began by bringing seven of Dice's probationers to full membership. One of these was Marion Stansbury Dayton of Madisonville. Still active, Marion (Mrs. Kenneth Turner) has given 73 years of outstanding service to Bishop Janes Church at this writing (1983). Her Dayton ancestors settled here before 1740; her Stansbury and Allen ancestors soon after. She is the granddaughter of early trustee Ezra Dayton, and was born in his Victorian mansion just west of Dayton Crescent in the Pill Hill section, where once he had his great peach orchards. Her mother was Clara Allen Dayton, who had been our first recorded organist. Her parents owned the former Albro home (the big Coffee House) at Coffee House Corner, Madisonville Road and North Maple Avenue. It was in this house that Marion was raised from early childhood. As a school girl she took as a matter of course her daily walk to and from Maple Avenue School, and on Sundays usually made the trip several times, to attend Sunday School, church service and young peoples' meeting. The house has remained in the Turner family, being now (in 1983) the residence of her son Kenneth and his family, also members of our church.

In addition to the probationers he inherited, Nesbit also brought many of his own into the fold. The largest class of them was received into full membership in March, 1912, and this group included two young girls who would devote much of their lives to the work of our church. They were Blanche Edith Homler (later Mrs. A. Hartman Bornmann) and Mabel Esther Clark. Both of them were to be active members for more than sixty years[16], doing yeoman's work in all departments of our church — the Official Board, youth work, secretarial services, Sunday School teaching and women's activities. Their names will be appearing often in the later chapters of our history.

Members who joined by transfer from other towns and churches outnumbered even the large group of probationers. Some of those gained were, of course, offset by losses; more than 20 members moved away, and there were several deaths.

During his four years with us Nesbit baptized thirty children and almost as many adults. He performed eight marriages, all of them taking place in the bride's home, as was the custom then. It's interesting to note the grooms' occupations, as listed in the records: signalman, cattle dealer, plumber, clerk, and two farmers.

[16] In 1983, Blanche is living in a nursing home; Mabel passed away in December, 1980.

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First .....
Second .....
Third .....

100 YARDS DASH—OPEN; HANDICAP
First .....
Second .....
Third .....

RUNNING HIGH JUMP—OPEN; HANDICAP
First .....
Second .....
Third .....

RUNNING BROAD JUMP—Open; handicap.
First .....
Second .....
Third .....

ONE-MILE RUN—Limited to boys under 18 years; scratch.
First .....
Second .....
Third .....

TWO-MILE RUN—Open, handicap.
First .....
Second .....
Third .....

EXHIBITION POLE VAULT.
First .....
Second .....
Third .....

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WM. M. DALL
Old Library Building
BASKING RIDGE
THAT'S ALL

A page from the program and scorecard for the Fourth of July festival in 1910

There were few executives, especially among Methodists, in those days.

Returning to the minutes of the Ladies' Aid, we learn of their later activities:

> March 9, 1911: "Witch Hazel (Jelly tubes) up from $18 to $24 a case".
>
> May 4, 1911: "Motion to work as usual at the Fair on July 4th, but also to hold our own Fair on August 10th".
>
> December 7, 1911: "Mr. Dobbs authorized to buy lumber for repair of church vestibule, L.A.S. to pay . . . Paid $19.10 for Bibles".
>
> May 12, 1912: "Moved and carried to buy 3 dozen carnations for Mother's Day — each mother to receive one on Sunday as she enters church".
>
> June 4, 1912: "Annual outing this year at Lake Hopatcong".
>
> July 11, 1912: "Voted to reimburse Tobelmann for advancing $72.50 on the church mortgage" (6 months' interest).
>
> December 5, 1912: "Motion carried that we discontinue the agency for Witch Hazel Jelly". (Thus ended this state-wide selling project, begun so enthusiastically three and a half years earlier).
>
> February 6, 1913: "Voted to hold a Progressive Supper on March 14; 35¢ for adults, 20¢ for children" (prices higher due to "inflation"). Later records show receipts of $37.79, cost of food $6.20.

The ladies of our church had supported the Methodist Women's Foreign Mission Society since its establishment, but a chartered chapter does not seem to have been organized at Bishop Janes until 1912. Jennie (Mrs. John) Hancock became its first president on October 7, 1912.

Although he left us no pastoral reports, Nesbit was the last minister for years to record membership of the Official Board. Pastors from 1913 to 1923 left no such records, and the Board's minutes from 1908 through 1923 have not survived. Nesbit inherited Dice's Board of Trustees: Tobelmann, Allen, Baird, Culberson, Ramsdale, Dall, Drumheller and Frost. In Nesbit's second year Frost retired, and later Drumheller and Culberson moved away. They were replaced by W. A. Richardson, John Sanders (sexton and non-member) and Vincent Faulkner.

The Board of Stewards was increased from ten to sixteen members. A. Burnett and Mrs. Culberson resigned at the time of the pastoral change, so only eight members were carried over. New stewards elected in 1909 were George Bolmer (who transferred to Mt. Horeb two years later), James Frost (who resigned in poor health after one year), and Miss Rachel Sanders. In 1910 were added A. A. Palmer (who transferred to Bernardsville after one year), W. M. Dall, Walter Mucklow and Miss Laura Frost, the organist. When Drumheller and the Culbersons moved away, they were replaced by Mrs. Dall and Mrs. Faulkner.

James Baird was Sunday School superintendent during Nesbit's term (Nesbit succeeded here, where Dice hadn't). Mrs. Charles Allen continued as president of the Ladies' Aid, and Tom Ramsdale was president of the Epworth League. Harried MYF sponsors today should not feel uniquely burdened, for exuberant Junior Epworth Leaguers in those days exhausted three different superintendents, Mrs. Hancock, Ethel Terry and Gussie Baird.

The Epworth Leagues fluctuated during those four years. Under the varying intensity of Tom Ramsdale's leadership the Seniors' membership rose from 67 to 75, then fell to 56; the Juniors' membership jumped from 32 to 46 the first year under Mrs. Hancock, then dropped to 35. But the Sunday School, which had shown marked development under Dice, really flourished under Nesbit, assisted by the excellent leadership of Supt. James Baird. Although three of Dice's thirteen teachers were lost at the start, the staff was increased to 23 by the fourth year, and enrollment climbed from 107 to 154. The large staff was necessary in order to implement the Graded Lesson Plan which the Conference was pushing, and which was followed to the letter at Bishop Janes Church. The terms of Dice and Nesbit together increased the staff almost 400% and the enrollment about 230%. This was another of the times in our church history when the old term "flourishing condition" was no overstatement in describing the status of the Sunday School.

Up to this time Bishop Janes Church had had only one local lay preacher, Nicholas Bowers, who from 1873 to 1902 had pulled sometimes with the church, sometimes against it. For a shorter time during this era it would have a similar experience. Thomas Ramsdale had transferred here from Mt. Horeb in 1903, under Jamison. He was full of fire, with firm ideas about how a church should be run, some probably right, some wrong. In November of 1905, disturbed over something Dice had done or had not done, Ramsdale transferred to the Bernardsville M.E. Church, then thought better of it and transferred back three months later. His son Fred remained in Dice's probation class through all of this, and became a full member in June 1907. Apparently Dice tried to channel all this disjointed fervor by suggesting to Ramsdale senior that he study to qualify himself as a local preacher. Accordingly, Nesbit received word during his first year here that Tom Ramsdale had been granted a local preacher's license by the Newark Conference. He was so listed in the 1910 through 1913 Conference Journals, but for some reason no longer had his license by publication of the April 1914 Journal. Unable to get along with Nesbit's successor, Tom stormed over to the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church in December of 1914 with the request that his membership be transferred there, and that was the last that our church saw of its second lay preacher. His son Fred, not nearly as impulsive, remained a steady member of our congregation until his death in August of 1954.

The financial stability of our church was improved under Nesbit more than it had been under Dice. To the debt, which stood at $3,900 in 1909, was added both interest charges (seldom less than 10% in those days) and additional borrowings, between 1909 and 1913, totalling $750. Against this, however, $1750 was raised for

debt reduction, so by the spring of 1913 church indebtedness stood at $2,900, a reduction of more than 25%. Money raised for current expenses — fuel, lights, sexton, repairs and Sunday School costs — exceeded $400 for the first time. Conference claims rose from $49 to $66. Only benevolence giving went against the trend, dropping 15% during Nesbit's term.

Though the improvement of our financial condition was chiefly due to Nesbit's work, there was another contributing factor that should not be overlooked. Farm conditions had been shaky for decades, particularly in the East, but from 1906 through 1913 there was a series of bumper crops throughout the country. The local effects of this made Bishop Janes farmers, still the bulk of our congregation, a little more generous in their support of the church.

In the spring of 1913, near the end of his fourth year in Basking Ridge, William Nesbit received the Ph.D. degree he had earned at Drew, and in April was assigned to Ferry Methodist Church in East Orange. While pastor of that church one of his most scholarly books, "Sumerian Records from Drehem", was published. In 1917 he left the Newark Conference and during World War I was pastor of Union Church in Brooklyn. It was there that he married Theodora Dennis, and their only child, a daughter, Bessie, was born. After Union Church, his next pastorates were at Brooklyn's First Church, at New Rochelle, and at Glen Cove, Long Island.

His standing as a recognized scholar of the Old Testament, biblical archaeology and Hebrew continued to grow with the publication of his various books and articles and his contributions to Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible. He often taught courses in the New York area, and came to be known as one of America's foremost "orientalists". For the rest of his life "Who's Who in America" would devote a long listing to Dr. Nesbit and his many achievements and honors.

Becoming deeply involved in the study of the old Hittite civilization, he arranged, in 1928, to be transferred to a New England Conference and appointed to a church in Watertown, Conn., so he could further his research in Hittitology at Yale University. His continued studies and writings made him an outstanding contributor to the knowledge of that civilization, and the Methodist Church, then developing its own printed Sunday School material, prevailed upon him to co-author the nationally used "Lesson Handbook" for 1925 through 1929.

After Watertown he accepted a fifth conference transfer to serve churches in Delaware and Maryland, but in 1937 he returned to New England to become pastor of Grace Church in New Haven and continue his studies and teaching at Yale. His next assignments were to two other Connecticut churches, Naugatuck and Unionville, each for four years. In 1946, nearing retirement, he accepted recall to his former pastorate in Glen Cove, Long Island, and made his seventh and last conference transfer[17] — a record for Bishop Janes pastors. He retired in 1949, and died in Glen Cove on September 13, 1950, at the age of 70. He was buried in the Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn.

[17] Nesbit's world renown precluded the usual unwritten penalties for conference transfer.

Dr. Nesbit's whole life testified that all his activities had to stem from a pastoral base. Never once did he take a sabbatical leave from his active ministry, notwithstanding the temptations of Drew, Yale and various archaeological expeditions. And his pulpit mastery was famous, not only throughout Methodism but in all of American Protestantism. Yet we are led to suspect that, like another Phi Beta Kappa pastor who would serve us later, his preaching was over the heads of many of our members.

CHAPTER XII

THE STATIC YEARS

1913 - 1924

IT WAS NOW sixty years since our church had been established, and we had come a long way. The total of 163 names now on our rolls meant a healthy church, and the future looked promising, even though we *were* a supply charge. Had the growth under Dice and Nesbit continued after their times, the years that followed would have been great ones; without the substantial increase under these two men at that critical time we might not even have been here today.

But our first six decades had by no means been steady progress. We had had our periods of retreat as well as our times of advance. And, as we shall see, this pattern would continue. The whole first century of our church's history would, in fact, be characterized by fluctuations between exciting promise and missed opportunities. And true to form, following the encouraging promise of the eight years just past, during the next decade our church would again lose ground. For a brief period, about 1920, both interest and membership would increase sharply, but by 1924 these gains would be wiped out and there would be fewer members than there were now, in 1913.

In retrospect, it seems that one reason for the lack of progress during this time must have been the high turnover in pastors. From 1903 to 1913 we had had three pastors, the last two each serving four years. But in the decade ahead there would be a succession of no less than eight different ministers occupying the Bishop Janes pulpit. With so many changes at the wheel there was bound to be some floundering. There would be several capable men in this group, as we shall see, but for most of them their time with us would be too short for them to contribute much in the way of accomplishments.

Although for our church this period appears, in the light of history, to have been a static one, we will recall that for the country — and the world — it was far from that. In 1913, just before Woodrow Wilson's inauguration, the Federal income tax had become law, and in many states women had already won the right to vote. In Europe, that year, the war in the Balkans and the Kaiser's expanding military power were causing growing concern, though most Americans paid little heed to these matters. Even when, the following year, Europe erupted in war, we would at first see it as no great concern of ours. Later events, however, would drastically change this attitude, and America would finally be drawn into that war "to end wars" and "to make the world safe for democracy", emerging as a world

power. Then, following the dubious peace, would come the painful period of readjustment and disillusionment.

No, the decade ahead was certainly not to be a static period for the world at large. But, except for higher taxes and some troublesome shortages now and then, the effects of the world turmoil on the life of our little rural community seem to have been surprisingly small.

The Ex-Circuit Rider

ALBERT CAIN 1913 - 1915

Most of the pastors who had served Bishop Janes Church up to this time had been relatively young men. Of the twenty-eight, nine had been in their twenties when they came to Basking Ridge, nine were in their thirties, and only seven were more than fifty years of age. Albert Cain was another of the older men. Born in Clarksburg, Indiana, on November 4, 1851, he was 61, and had already served 35 years in the ministry, when he was assigned to our pulpit.

The new pastor had a brother who was a minister, and his son Charles was also a Methodist minister, serving in Plainfield during his father's pastorate here. As in the case of Edwin Day, our second minister back in the 1850's, preaching seems to have "run in the family".

After being graduated from Mor's Hill College, Albert Cain had gone into business in Cleveland, though he had already felt some urge to enter the ministry. There he married Hannah Jane Brocker in 1876. After their first child was born he could no longer resist God's call (and his wife's urging), so, giving up his business, he joined the Saddlebag Circuit Riders at a salary of $266 a year, paid mostly in farm produce.

In 1878 Cain was received into the Southern Kansas Conference, where he held large revival meetings. Two years later he transferred to the Southeast Indiana Conference. In 1886, at the age of 34, he moved east and entered Drew Seminary as a theological student. In 1888 he became a member of the Newark Conference and was assigned as a supply to that traditional starting place, Butzville, where he is said to have done an outstanding job, converting a hundred souls. Quite an accomplishment for one still attending school! During the next twenty-four years he served ten churches before being assigned to Bishop Janes Church. He was two years at Mendham (1889-91), then a year at Franklin (Nutley), two years at Wortendyke, and a year at First Church, Hackensack (1897-98). Following that, he served a year at Metuchen, then three years at Andover and one year each at Paterson Calvary and Little Falls. In his Conference memoir he is credited with having done his best work in Mendham, Nutley, Andover and Paterson.

In 1907 he was given a leave of absence, probably because of ill health. The following year, though semi-retired, he supplied the pulpit at Branchville, and then was assigned to Succasunna for three years (1909-12). Though not listed by the Conference as a "regular" minister, he wasn't yet ready to retire, either. So, in

April, 1913, he was assigned to supply the pulpit of Bishop Janes Church.

As previously noted, our church records for the period from 1905 through 1917 are unfortunately very sparse[1], so we know relatively little about Rev. Cain's ministry here, or about the affairs of the church during his tenure. Our present (1982) members dating from that time were only children then, and have only the vaguest memories of him. Probably, being beyond his prime, he didn't participate in youth work, and so made little impression upon them.

That Rev. Cain's illness recurred during the late fall of his first year with us is indicated by an item in the Bernardsville News of November 21, 1913, stating that "Rev. and Mrs. Albert Cain have gone to Florida for the Winter". The District Superintendent's report to the Conference the following spring throws a little more light on the matter:

> "At Basking Ridge the illness of the faithful pastor for several months has to some extent hampered the progress of the church, but a useful local preacher (Tom Ramsdale) has cared for its interest and it has lost no ground. We are glad to report that he is now well and the church is united behind him".

Some interesting glimpses of our church's part in community life in those days may be found in the far-from-complete files of the Bernardsville News for 1913 and '14. It was customary then to publish in the paper every week the International Sunday School lesson for the following Sunday, and beginning late in 1913 the paper also published each week the notice of services of the three Protestant churches in town, Presbyterian, Episcopalian and Methodist. The notice for Bishop Janes seems never to have varied during Cain's two years: Sunday morning services at 10:30, evening service at 7:45, Epworth League at 7:00, Junior Epworth League on Wednesdays at 3 PM, and Wednesday evening prayer meeting at 7:45. The Sunday School probably still met on Sunday afternoons, as it had in Appley's time. There were also monthly meetings of the Ladies' Aid and the Mens' Brotherhood".

What was considered "a red letter day" for the village occurred on October 9, 1913, when the town hosted a unit of Civil War Veterans, the 27th Regiment of Volunteers of New Jersey, which held its 22nd annual reunion here. The veterans arrived by train in the morning and were met by a welcoming committee. There they formed ranks and, with banners flying, marched east down dusty Craig Street, then south on dustier North Finley, under the color-splashed maples, where townspeople lined the roadsides to watch. Arriving at the center of town they broke ranks, amid the cheers of the crowd, and assembled in Bishop Janes Church for their business meeting. Then at 1 o'clock they adjourned to the Presbyterian church, where they were served dinner, and after dinner enjoyed "a program of some rarely entertaining features".

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[1] No records of this period were left by any of the pastors, the Trustees or the Official Board. Our only sources of information have been the Conference Journals, minutes of the Ladies' Aid Society, old newspaper files and the recollections of some of our long-time members, who were very young then.

The minutes of the Ladies' Aid Society reveal that during his tenure Cain attended nearly all of the Society's meetings. Attendance at these meetings ranged from 8 to 14 faithful (and very active) members — about one-quarter of the average membership. But the Society, small though it was, under the continuing leadership of Mrs. Charles Allen, was still the backbone of the church. The ladies pledged, and paid, $52 a year (later raised to $60) toward the pastor's meager salary, and paid most or all of the interest on the church debt. In 1914 they contributed $100 to reduce that debt to $2800. As is still their custom, they also provided money and much of the labor needed to keep the parsonage in shape and occasionally make some improvements. Fund-raising projects to support these enterprises kept them busy.

The annual 4th of July dinner and festival, with a program of athletic events, continued to be a big social event of the church year. And in November of 1913 the ladies put on a New England supper, serving ham, baked beans, brown bread, apple sauce, pie and coffee — all for 25¢ a plate. That it was well patronized by the townspeople is evidenced by the reported net proceeds of $47.90.

Some excerpts from the Society's minutes of the following months attest to their busy-ness:

> February 9, 1914: "Moved and carried that we hold a Valentine Box Social on February 14th".
>
> May 14, 1914: "Moved, seconded and carried that we hold a bread and cake sale on May 30, and that we ask the Epworth League to serve strawberries and ice cream at the sale".
>
> June 4, 1914: "Moved that we have our usual dinner on July 4th".
>
> July 9, 1914: "Moved that we pay $72.50 interest (for 6 months) on the church debt . . . It was decided to hold a bread, cake and fancy goods sale on the parsonage lawn on August 22nd, and that each member should donate either 25¢ or an apron". (The lawn was to be decorated with Japanese lanterns, a popular custom in those days before electric lights were common.)
>
> September 10, 1914: "Motion carried that we have our annual church supper on October 8th".
>
> November 5, 1914: "Moved, seconded and carried that we hold a Variety Sale on December 5th". (Net proceeds of $13.25 reported later.)
>
> February 4, 1915: "Moved that we have a Birthday Party on March 4th for the benefit of the stewards' fund". (This did better than the Variety Sale in December; it netted $54.61.)

The Epworth League, too, continued its busy program of service begun under Appley, sponsoring various social events for the young people of the town. Often

these were "pie socials", held at the members' homes, but we note that in November of 1914 they held a "shoe social" at the church. It featured musical and literary entertainment which included a playlet, "Reveries of a Bachelor", with 21 young people taking part.

As we know, several events of grave world-wide importance occurred in that summer of 1914. In June, a student in far-off Serbia killed an archduke and his wife — but that event didn't even make the headlines of some of our newspapers. There was much more interest in the news that on the 4th of July Eddie Rickenbacker, in his Dusenberg Special, averaged 78 miles per hour to win the big auto race in Sioux City, Iowa. Then, a month later, the country awoke to find that all of Europe was embroiled in war. Incredible! What was it all about? Well, anyway, (many thought) it was half a world away, and probably wouldn't concern us very much. A few days later, though, when the German army invaded Belgium, most Americans began to get a little worried.

On the whole, however, life in our community, as in most of the country, continued much as usual that summer of 1914. Little did anyone — even the government in Washington — realize what lay ahead for us. Our rather busy calendar of church life events was typical of those years before radio, when there were few automobiles, fewer garages, and no paved roads, and when the social life of the community still centered around the churches.

In August the Panama Canal was opened to traffic; the timing couldn't have been more fortunate.

The Bernardsville News of January 22, 1915 featured a long front page article on Billy Sunday, the "acrobat and orator" evangelist who was then at the peak of his glory. The headlines of the article proclaim that

> "He Defies the Devil, the Church and all Coventions - Speaks Glibly of Hell and Calls a Spade a Spade! Convulses Scranton, Crumples up Pittsburgh and Even Awakens Philadelphia! Paterson Next. 50,000 People Surge Against the Doors of His Tabernacle!".

The Newark Conference, at its meeting in March that year, sent a telegram to the Evangelistic Association of Paterson, congratulating it on the dedication of the Tabernacle for Mr. Sunday's campaign and "praying earnestly for the abundant success of his work".

Also in March the "Volunteers" of our church presented a play, "Under a Cloud", at Dayton's Hall. Just who this group was we don't know, but as "their teacher" was Mrs. James Baird, we assume it may have been a young peoples' Sunday School class. At any rate, the production, a "thrilling comedy drama", was reported to have been a great success, was given an excellent review in the paper, and "realized a fair profit".

Dayton's Hall, we do know, was a very important building in the life of the community in the early 1900's. It was a barn-like one-story wood frame structure, 30 by 70 feet, facing North Finley Avenue just north of Allen Street, where is now

the Presbyterian church parking lot. It contained an auditorium and stage, several small rooms, and a basement kitchen. The Hall was used as a community center, serving as a place of assembly for many organizations in town. The firemen used it for their dinners and balls, the school for its graduation exercises, and the churches for their various entertainments and stage productions. In the spring of 1917 the building was converted into a garage, with a second story for living quarters. About thirty years later, after World War II, the property was purchased by the Presbyterian church and the building was torn down.

Though its social schedule seems to have been a rather full one, the spiritual life of the church under Cain was not too healthy. If we are to judge by membership figures reported to the Conference, these years were not very fruitful. Cain had inherited 11 probationers and 152 members (including two non-residents) from Nesbit. When he left Bishop Janes in 1915 there were 4 probationers and 160 members, but 28 of the 160 were non-residents; the total resident membership seems to have dropped by 25. Epworth League membership also fell off about 12% during these two years, but Sunday School membership increased from 154 to 168. In his report to the 1915 Conference, the District Superintendent stated that

> "Basking Ridge, beautiful for its situation, should be much stronger than she is. With wise, energetic leadership this church should show marked improvement".

We can only surmise that such leadership must have been lacking.

Conference records show that the official "claim" for pastoral support during Cain's two years was $1000 a year, which included an allowance of $200 for parsonage rent. In his first year, however, he was paid only $700 in cash — $50 less than his predecessor had been paid — and in his second year only $560. Our generosity certainly wasn't improving, either.

When he left Basking Ridge in the spring of 1915, Albert Cain was designated a "supernumerary" minister, the term applied to those who are either temporarily or permanently retired. The Cains moved to Verona, where their son was then stationed, and two years later he finally retired completely. In 1923 they moved to Coronado Beach, Florida where, in 1929 Albert Cain was bereaved by the death of his wife of 53 years. But the old gentleman apparently still had a zest for life, for four years later, at the age of 82, he married Jane Marot, who had been his wife's best friend, and enjoyed another nine years of married life. He died on August 4, 1942, in Deland, Florida, and was buried at Coronado Beach.

An Engaging Young Bachelor

GEORGE H. KETTERER 1915 - 16

During the next three years, three much younger men were to be assigned, in turn, to the Bishop Janes pulpit. The first of these, George Henry Ketterer, began his ministry with us on the first Sunday in April, 1916. Later that month this engag-

ing bachelor was welcomed at the traditional reception for a new minister, arranged by the Ladies' Aid Society. As usual, this affair was well attended, not only by our members but by other townspeople, including the ministers and representatives of our neighbor churches.

George Ketterer was born in Scranton, Pa., in 1880. It may be that his family moved to New Jersey during his youth, for it was in Union Church, Camden, that he was "converted to the Christian way of life" at the age of 17. Believing that conversion meant service to God, he planned his life accordingly. Feeling a call to the ministry, he entered Dickinson College in 1904 and while still a student there did his first preaching, serving as a supply at Boiling Springs and Pine Grove Furnace in 1905 and at Washington Borough the following year. Admitted to the Philadelphia Conference, he served New Holland and Leola in 1908-09.

After his graduation from Dickinson he entered Drew Theological Seminary, where he received his B.D. degree in 1912. He was admitted to the Newark Conference in 1910, however, and had served the church at Westwood from 1910 through 1914 before coming to Basking Ridge. Considering that in those days college and seminary training were not prerequisites for the Methodist ministry, Ketterer's quest for education indicates that he had a great thirst for knowledge and believed that a Christian minister should seek the best possible preparation for his task. This conviction, and his never-ending study, were to characterize this minister throughout his life, and would bring him many notable honors and achievements in his later years.

Such was the background and nature of this new pastor. Unlike his predecessor, whom they scarcely remember, the several youngsters of those days who are still members of Bishop Janes in the '80's have fond memories of Ketterer as "a very jolly fellow". Even at this early stage of his career he must have been an able preacher; certainly he had an engaging personality that appealed to the young folks. He is rememberd as having given the youth program "a new start", and the Conference Journal confirms that Epworth League membership increased during his year with us, though Sunday School membership fell off.

Scarcely had he begun his pastorate with us when, on May 15, came the news of the sinking of the Lusitania by a German sub, with the loss of 1100 lives, 128 of them Americans. The country was shocked, and condemnation was general; if the Germans continued such atrocities we would sooner or later have to break with them. But in the meantime, while the President and Congress clung to the stance of neutrality, American industry and agriculture were flourishing as they attempted to supply the burgeoning needs of the Allies.

At their meeting in May 1915, the Trustees elected Charles M. Allen as their president and Henry Tobelmann as vice president. Other trustees elected were James Baird, John Sanders, Vincent Faulkner, Samuel Humphreys and David Y. Moore. This was the first of many, many terms for Dave Moore, our village blacksmith; he would still be serving as a trustee in 1950.

Although a bachelor, Ketterer lived in the parsonage and did his own

housekeeping. But his life there was by no means lonely. In fact, with the frequent meetings there of the various church organizations, he probably enjoyed more company than he would have, had he been married. He encouraged such use of the parsonage, particularly by the young people, and the Epworth League held many of its meetings there.

Of course the Ladies' Aid, as always, kept a watchful eye on the parsonage needs and supplemented, when necessary, the pastor's housekeeping, which understandably may have been sketchy at times. The Society's minutes of August 12, 1915 include these items:

> "Motion made and seconded and carried that the parsonage committee do the necessary cleaning, also purchase linoleum, etc. . . . Motion made seconded and carried that we paint the hall in the parsonage one coat of white".

At the next meeting the committee was instructed to "use their judgment in regard to changing the shades in the parsonage". Ketterer's previous experience in keeping house may well have been limited, and his busy schedule did not allow him much time for routine chores. We find no mention of it in the Ladies' Aid minutes, but we're told that sometime during the winter of his occupancy the pipes in the recently installed bathroom over the kitchen froze and burst, and "there was water all over the place".

At a meeting of their Society early in 1915 the ladies had voted that

> ". . . as many of the members as feel inclined to do so, hold 'thimble parties' at their homes, where each one will entertain ten or more and turn the proceeds over to the Society, each guest having paid ten cents".

Many — but not all — of the members cooperated, and the proceeds, a dollar or two now and then, were duly recorded.

The social life of the church continued as usual, thanks to the ladies and their unremitting efforts to raise money. In mid-summer they staged the traditional 4th of July festival (with a good deal of help from the men, of course), and in October they served the "Annual Donation Dinner".

Ketterer attended many of the Ladies' Aid Society's monthly meetings, and seems to have been more than simply an observer. He helped them frame the resolutions memorializing the deaths of two of their members, Mrs. Anna Allen and Mrs. Mary Hill, the latter of whom had earlier served for six years as their president. Also, in the minutes of their meeting of November 4, 1915, we note that

> "Mr. Ketterer is made a committee to ascertain the cost of putting a floor in the basement of the church".

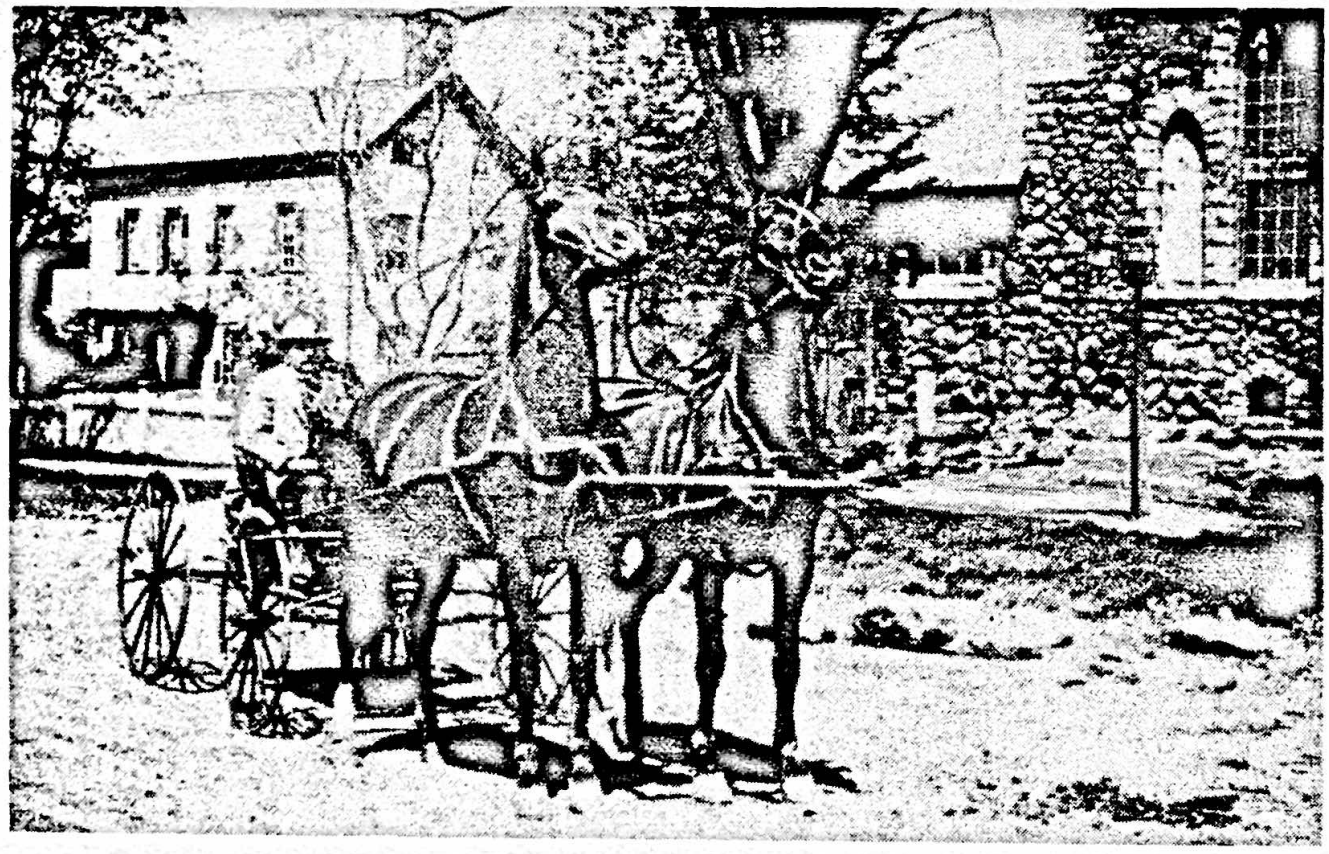
If he carried out this assignment he must have found the project either infeasible or too expensive, for that work was not to be undertaken for another ten years.

No doubt inspired by the great Billy Sunday meetings then being held in Pater-

son, Rev. Ketterer undertook that fall an ambitious program of evangelistic meetings in "our stone church". During November, services were held every night for twenty nights, including Sundays, of course, when there were two services as usual. A number of guest ministers participated, including Dr. Bennett of the Presbyterian church, who preached twice, but many of the sermons were delivered by Ketterer himself. We don't know how successful these meetings were, or how many souls were converted. A news item in the paper during the course of the series reported that "A large number are attending the revival meetings at the Methodist church". But the story did not make the front page of the paper, and the membership rolls for that year showed no great increase.

At the end of the year Mrs. Charles Allen, having served in the office for seven years, asked to be relieved as president of the Ladies' Aid, probably because of the ill health of her mother. Mrs. James Frost consented to relieve Mrs. Allen for a year and was elected president, with Mrs. Allen being elected vice-president. In January of 1916 the ladies put on a "Pure Food Demonstration Supper", and in March a "Parcel Post Social". It seems they never lacked ideas for making money, or the energy for implementing them.

With the proceeds from their various projects the ladies of the church continued to pay the interest on the $2800 debt and to contribute toward the pastor's



ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON

The house at the left in this picture was purchased by the Presbyterian church in 1946 to house church offices and Sunday School rooms. It served as their church house until replaced, in 1967, by the present brick building. Note, at the right, one of the village street lamps, which burned kerosene as a fuel.

salary. The minutes of their meeting of March 12, 1916, include this item:

> "Motion made by Mrs. Tobelmann and seconded by Mrs. Homler and carried by the society that we pay to the Board of Stewards the net proceeds from the Parcel Post Social which were $40, also a motion (was carried) that we pay to the Church Budget all money held in the treasury, after all our bills are paid but $5, which we will reserve".

So, for the 1915-16 Conference year, instead of the $60 they had pledged, they gave to the Stewards about $165, and also purchased 24 new hymnals, at a cost of $12.

Even in those early years of his ministry George Ketterer must have been an able and interesting preacher. His Conference memoir, in summarizing his life, says that his sermons were well organized and convincing, his style appealed to his hearers, and he had a particular gift for choice of words and illustrations. Although there was a net loss in membership during his year, and no reduction was made in the church debt, it seems that this energetic and likeable pastor did revive the lagging spirits of the congregation. Conference records show a gain of 6 resident full members during the year, but whereas 28 non-resident members had been reported in 1915, there were none reported at the 1916 Conference. Ketterer was paid the full $1000 salary (less $200 rent allowance) that the church had set. At that time this was the minimum amount that the Conference considered appropriate.

In the spring of 1916 Rev. Ketterer was assigned to West Orange, and there, the following November, he married Bertha Hutchison Curry. In 1917 he was moved to Frenchtown for one year, then spent a year as chaplain in the U.S. Army. In 1919 he transferred to the Central Pennsylvania Conference, where he had a series of highly-successful pastorates at Market Street Church in Williamsport and at Everett, Harrisburg, Camp Curtin and Milton.

In recognition of his unusual abilities he was appointed, in 1931, to one of the most important pulpits of the Conference, St. Paul's Church at State College (now University Park). While serving that church he was also Director of the Wesley Foundation for Methodist students. In 1935 Bishop Edwin Hughes appointed him Superintendent of the Altoona District and he served six years in that office. In 1941 he was assigned to First Church in Hollidaysburg, and he occupied that pulpit until he retired from the active ministry in 1945.

But George Ketterer was not one to sit idly by, even when retired. As his Conference memoir tells us,

> "By no means did he become inactive. Perhaps two of the outstanding contributions of his useful life were developed during this period of retirement: his work on the Board of Trustees of the Methodist Home for the Aged at Tyrone, where he was serving as president, and on the Board of Trustees of Dickinson College, where he was serving as secretary at the time of his death".

He died on February 6, 1958, after a brief illness, in the Altoona Hospital.

The Man from India

EDMUND GUEST 1916

Our thirty-first pastor, Edmund James Guest, first occupied our pulpit on April 6, 1916. A few weeks later he and his wife were officially welcomed at the customary reception given by the Ladies' Aid Society. Probably no one suspected then that the pastorate of the Guests was to be one of the shortest in our history[2], lasting only seven months.

Edmund Guest was born in Jalgon, India, of missionary parents, on August 2, 1883. At the early age of seven he dedicated his life to Christ, and while still in his teens, "hearing the call to preach", began preparing himself for this work. He was graduated from Wilson College in Bombay, India, and received his M.A. degree from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. Later he came to the United States and enrolled at Drew to earn his B.D. degree.

In 1916, while still a student at Drew, he was admitted to the Newark Conference on trial and was assigned to serve as supply pastor to our church, his first charge. Just before coming to Basking Ridge he had married Elizabeth Brown, his sweetheart of college days. Both he and his wife were, quite understandably, very much interested in missionary work.

Edmund Guest's memoir in the Conference Journal, in summarizing his later career, describes him as "a preacher of the Wesleyan type, of power and conviction, a Methodist in every sense of the name, believing and practicing methods, system and gospel preaching. Although possessing a rather reticent and retiring nature, he always 'put first things first' ". When he served our church, however, he was just starting this career, and it may be that those traits which characterized his later life had not yet become evident. He was with us for such a short time that the congregation scarcely got to know him, and his contribution to our church's history was necessarily minimal. It is not surprising that little is remembered about his brief pastorate at Bishop Janes.

The minutes of the Ladies' Aid Society do tell us a little, however, about the life of the church in that year of 1916. On Memorial Day the ladies sponsored a "musical and literary entertaiment", and on the 4th of July there was the usual dinner and festival of games. And care of the parsonage continued to occupy much of the ladies' attention, as evidenced by these items:

> June 1, 1916: "Motion made, seconded and carried that Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Guest be a committee to paper parlor in parsonage".
>
> June 27, 1916: "Report of committee in regard to papering parlor says that the roof leaks so badly that they cannot paper until that is fixed".
>
> July 6, 1916: "Motion made, seconded and carried that we have

2 The 1870 pastorate of Benjamin Simpson had lasted only four months, due to his illness, and in 1951 our 44th pastor, Joseph Scharer, would serve only seven months.

the parsonage porch painted, and that we purchase three porch rockers. . .Motion made, seconded and carried that Mrs. Frost be a committee to see Mr. Craig in regard to painting porch. . .Motion made, seconded and carried that we loan the firemen the usual things for their carnival".

September 7, 1916: "Motion made, seconded and carried that Mr. Bender be engaged to repair roof of parsonage".

By the November meeting it was reported that Mr. Bender had fixed the roof, and his bill of $6.50 was approved and ordered paid. At the December meeting (after the Guests had left) it was reported that the wallpaper had been purchased.

The summer of 1916 was a memorable one in our town because of a serious outbreak of infantile paralysis in the area. Several cases having been reported in neighboring towns (but none in our Township), the Bernardsville News, in July, carried on its front page for several weeks a "Notice to Parents and Householders". Among the rules and precautions listed were these:

Don't allow your children to attend public gatherings, picnics, parties or outings.

Notify the Board of Health of any visitors, children or adults, coming to your homes, giving their addresses.

Clean up your cellars, your stables, your privies and your manure piles, using lime freely. If your neighbor does not clean up his, notify the Board of Health promptly.

Buyers of all articles of food are cautioned to make their purchases in such places as are guarded against flies, etc.

Most social events were cancelled, including the firemens' 8th annual carnival. (So the ladies didn't have to loan them the "usual things" after all). In August it was decided to build an isolation hospital in the Township, as some other towns were doing. A fund-raising campaign was launched and in a short time the cost — about $3000 for building and furnishings — was subscribed. Work on the modest 24' x 44' frame structure was begun in mid-August and was completed in about ten days. By September, however, the epidemic was on the wane, and fortunately the need for the "hospital" was short-lived.

On October 12th the annual congregational meeting was held, and on October 31st Rev. Guest gave an illustrated lecture on India, in the church chapel. Clearly, this was the subject most dear to his heart, and no doubt he had already decided to devote his full time to it, for shortly thereafter it was learned that the Guests were leaving Basking Ridge to return to the land of his birth. Within a few days they left town, and we were advised that Horace E. Dewey had been appointed by the Conference to fill the vacated Bishop Janes pulpit.

No new members were taken into the church during Guest's brief stay. Instead, some names were removed from the rolls. Guest found that the membership count wasn't realistic; the rolls still carried names of some who had moved to other

churches, and even some who had died. So he did some pruning of the list, and Dewey after him, being equally conscientious, deleted still more names. As a result, during the 1916-17 year the reported membership dropped from 138 to 116. And during that year our debt increased from $2800 to $3600.

In his report to the 1917 Conference, District Superintendent George Vogel did not include Basking Ridge among those rural churches which he said "have shown progress", but he did mention that

> "Basking Ridge, New Providence and Rockaway Valley, we believe, in a very short time will find their rightful heritage."

Back in India, while serving as principal of the Baldwin Boys' High School at Bangalore, Rev. Guest was bereaved by the death of his young wife at the birth of their second son, Frank. In 1921 he returned to New Jersey and was appointed principal of the Lambertville High School. But he had not given up the ministry. On weekends he served as a supply pastor at our churches in Linvale, Titusville and Stockton. In 1924 he married Vivian Fauss of Stockton, and to this union four sons, Robert, Walter, Richard and Donald, were born. In 1932 he transferred his conference membership from South India to the New Jersey (not Newark)[3] Conference, and as a member of that Conference served as full-time pastor, first at the Clinton Avenue Church in Trenton, and later at Kingston, Cranbury, Newfield and Cedarville. He died on October 7, 1940, at the age of 77, and was buried in Rosemont, New Jersey.

A Great Missionary-To-Be

HORACE E. DEWEY 1916 - 18

Our next minister, who was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Edmund Guest, was another young student at Drew, still in his twenties, Horace E. Dewey. He and his young bride moved into the parsonage in November of 1916, coming from Green Village, which had been his first Newark Conference assignment. Just three months before coming here he had returned to Ohio to marry his sweetheart, Carol McCurdy. The Green Village congregation had become very fond of young Dewey, and had welcomed his bride with equal affection. And the Ladies' Aid Society arranged a hearty welcome for the young couple in our town, too.

Horace Dewey was born in Geauga County, Ohio, on April 29, 1889, the son of a Methodist minister. He attended high school in Cambridge, Ohio, and in 1909, while teaching country school, assisted in evangelistic services being conducted by his brother-in-law minister and was inspired to enter the ministry himself. He enrolled at Ohio Wesleyan University and was graduated in 1913 with an A.B. degree. He was admitted to the Northeast Ohio Conference in 1912, while still in

[3] Back in 1857, what was then the New Jersey Conference (founded in 1837) had been divided into two conferences: the Newark Conference, which included that part of the state north of a Perth Amboy-Flemington-Milford line, and the New Jersey Conference, which had jurisdiction over the remainder of the state.

college, and served as supply pastor at Barton and Old Washington, in Ohio, before entering Drew Seminary in 1914. Before coming to Basking Ridge he had been a student pastor at Green Village for a year and a half. He received his B.D. degree from Drew in 1917, while serving as our pastor, and would later receive his M.A. degree from that school, in 1936. And still later, after years of missionary work in China, he would be honored with a D.D. degree from his Ohio alma mater.

It didn't take long for the Deweys to become actively engaged in their new responsibilities, and they soon earned themselves a place in the hearts of our congregation, just as they had in Green Village. They were a busy young couple. Mr. Dewey commuted every day to Madison to continue his studies at Drew, and his wife, who was still studying, too, went by train to New York several days a week, to attend classes at Columbia University. But she wanted to have an active part in all of the church activities, so the Ladies' Aid Society, of which she had been elected vice-president, changed its meeting date so she could attend. She was also an accomplished violinist, and contributed often to the musical life of the church. The program for Christmas Sunday, just over a month after their arrival, featured a violin solo by Mrs. Dewey.

It was at the December 1916 meeting of the Ladies' Aid Society that Mrs. Charles Allen was re-elected president, following her sabbatical year and, although having previously served in that office for seven years, was to continue her able leadership of the Society for still another seven years.

By this time the war in Europe was going badly for the Allies and they were pleading for more and more aid from America. Increasingly, our sympathies were with them, and we were doing all that we "legally" could to help. While President Wilson continued his untiring efforts to bring peace, Germany persisted in its submarine warfare, sinking ships much faster than the Allies could build them. Matters grew steadily worse, and on February 3, 1917, the President, abandoning hope, broke off diplomatic relations with Germany. In the next two months six American ships were torpedoed and sunk. On March 15th a revolution in Russia forced the abdication of Czar Nicholas II, and finally, on April 6th the United States formally entered the war.

In May, Congress passed the draft law, and June 5th was designated as Registration Day for all men between 21 and 31 years of age. In all parts of our Township on that day, as everywhere else in the land, there were spontaneous parades and demonstrations, and in the evening the people crowded special services held in the churches. America was gripped by patriotic fervor. Now we were at war!

By the end of June the vanguard of the American Expeditionary Force, under General Pershing, landed in France.

In spite of these momentous events, coming in rapid succession, the life of our community — and our church — continued with only minor disruptions. Some of our young men, of course, would soon be leaving for training camps, and most everyone would be pitching in, one way or another, to help in the war effort. But with our boys "over there" this war would soon be over. In November Bernards

Township over-subscribed by 80% its quota for the Second Liberty Loan. And the government raised the postage rate on letters from 2¢ to 3¢.

The few records we have of our church's activities in 1917 reveal several items of interest. In March the Ladies' Aid Society held a "Methodist Banquet", for which they charged 50¢ a plate, and made a fair profit as usual. It must have been an oyster supper, because the minutes of their meeting that month contain this item:

> "Mrs. Baird reported that Mr. Baird had gotten a price of 90 cents a 100 on oysters and $2.00 a 100 on pattie shells . . .At the suggestion of Mrs. Baird the society decided to add creamed salmon to the menu".

At their May meeting the ladies voted to continue paying $5 a month to the Stewards, and to hold the usual 4th of July dinner. In those days the monthly meetings of the Society were held at the homes of various members (including "the home of Mrs. Dewey"), and each member was assessed monthly dues of 10¢.

Sunday July 8th was reported by the Bernardsville News as "Ingathering Day" at Bishop Janes Church, with 28 new members being added to the roll. Later that month the Ladies' Aid sponsored a Tom Thumb wedding, in which the cast was comprised of children not more than four years old. This was a not uncommon event in many communities in the early 1900's. The ladies continued their "thimble parties" begun two years earlier, and the year's income of $26.85 from this project was reported.

The members of the Ladies' Aid Society, seemingly heartened by the successes of their various ventures, were inspired to go all out in their money-making schemes for the church. At a special meeting held after church on September 16 they voted to pledge $500 "towards the church debt". To implement this commitment they decided, in October, to hold a bread and cake sale that month and every two weeks thereafter. And this they did religiously through the winter and into the following March. Not content with that, they initiated two other projects:

> "Motion made, seconded and carried that Mrs. Baird, Mrs. Frost and Mrs. Allen be made a committee to write to all Ladies' Aid Societies in the Conference asking them to give something toward the church debt". (As if the other churches didn't have enough worries of their own!) Also: "Motion . . .carried that each member of the Aid Society have her choice of sending out envelops (sic) to five friends or having a mite box at her home to carry out the penny-a-day scheme".

They must have adopted the first proposal with tongue in cheek, because for several months following it was "laid over". In March of the following year, though, the committee reported "having sent letters to the different churches". This bold venture, as might be expected, did *not* make them rich over night. They received about $40 from their appeal during 1918, and about $85 came in during the following year. But the ladies, through their untiring efforts, did pay their pledge on the

church debt, as well as their $60 a year to the stewards. Besides that, they paid the $5 monthly salary of Miss Frost, our church organist at the time.

During the winter of 1917-18 there was a serious shortage of the common fuel, coal. In January industries throughout the country were shut down for five days for lack of it, and they were ordered to remain closed every Monday thereafter until the end of March. Our local schools were affected, too, by this coal shortage, the High School at one point reporting that it had only one day's supply. Then in March President Wilson decreed that Daylight Savings Time would be put into effect at the end of the month, as a fuel-saving measure.

It was in February 1918 that a Goodwill Industries was organized as a part of the missionary program of the Methodist Episcopal Church. An "Evangelization Union" of the churches in Jersey City, Hoboken and Bayonne was the sponsoring organization. Offices and a workroom were opened in Jersey City and Hoboken in 1919, and another branch office and furniture repair shop opened in an abandoned M. E. Church in Newark in 1920. In January 1921 the organization was granted a state charter under the name "Goodwill Industries of New Jersey". During the depression years of the '30's the going was rough, but the program survived, and over the years this Methodist institution, as we know, has provided employment and millions of dollars in pay to many hundreds of aged and handicapped persons.

The general popularity of the Deweys was attested by two events that occurred during their stay with us. In August of '17 a hundred or more of their friends and neighbors, including many from Green Village, joined in a reception at the church to celebrate their first wedding anniversary, and the couple was presented with a purse. And the following January they were happily surprised by about twenty of Dewey's classmates and friends from Drew, who drove over from Madison in sleighs to pay them a friendly visit.

Even in his earlier years Dewey was an interesting and effective preacher, delivering his sermons, like his father before him, from a well rehearsed outline. Like his wife, he was fond of music, and he liked people. Nothing gave him more pleasure than calling on the members of his congregation, and this remained his favorite occupation throughout his long career. In his later recollections of Basking Ridge days he remembered as highlights the excellent mid-week prayer meetings, the Epworth League meetings and the good Sunday evening services. And he fondly recalled his "privilege of teaching the adult Sunday School class".

During his year and a half at Bishop Janes, Dewey was paid the same salary as his predecessor — $1000 a year, less $200 rent allowance. The Conference Journal of March 1918 (when his successor at Basking Ridge was appointed) reports that our church debt was reduced, in the 1917-18 year, by $700 (to $2900), largely due to the splendid work of the Ladies' Aid Society. It also records that during that year 8 full members and 8 probationary members were added, and Epworth League membership — Junior, Senior and Intermediate — increased from 93 to 99. All of these pluses testify that Horace Dewey and his wife did much, in their short stay, to "turn things around" and revitalize the life of our church. It was with much regret

that, in April of 1918, the congregation bid them farewell.

For three years following his departure from Basking Ridge, Dewey was given no appointments, so that he might continue with his studies. They were interrupted in 1918, when he was assigned as chaplain to a colored regiment, but Armistice Day came before his unit could be called into service. In 1920 the Deweys' first child, Horace W., was born. In 1921 Dewey transferred to the West Ohio Conference, and that same year he and his wife, with their infant son, sailed as missionaries to China, where they were to serve for 28 years. It was there that their two daughters, Enola and Roberta, were born in 1923 and 1925.

During their stay in China the Deweys were granted occasional furloughs, and on some of these they visited Basking Ridge and Green Village with their children, receiving a warm welcome by their many friends in this area. They also kept in touch with some of these friends by correspondence, often sending at Christmastime interesting summaries of the year's experiences. Thus we fortunately have some record of at least the highlights of their later years.

On the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, in 1941, his wife and children fortunately having returned to the States a year earlier, Rev. Dewey was taken into custody by the Japanese and was held for 17 months in several internment camps. Being finally released in an exchange of prisoners, he returned to the States in December 1943, after a hazardous 74-day voyage almost around the world.

In 1946 Dewey returned to China, where Mrs. Dewey joined him the following spring. Shortly after her arrival the Chinese Communists attacked their village and burned their home. But they stayed on for seven more weeks, at the risk of their lives, helping their "church people" wherever they could. Then, on the advice of a Chinese bishop, they fled to Peking and on to Hongkong. From there they flew to Manila where, except for two furloughs, they spent the next nine years. Rev. Dewey was Professor of New Testament at Union Theological Seminary there, and Mrs. Dewey taught English literature, drama, and religious education at the Philippine Christian College. In 1957 Ohio Wesleyan University honored him with the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Quoting from his memoir in the Ohio Conference Journal,

> "What he and his wife have meant to the people of China and the Philippines cannot now be told. But it will not be forgotten either by those persons or in God's economy of love. He knew no color barriers and he knew no bounds to his love. He loved children, and they were a large part of his life".

The Deweys retired from missionary service in 1957 and returned to Denver, Colorado, where Dewey taught missions in the Iliff School of Theology. In 1960 they moved back to Columbus, Ohio, Mrs. Dewey's home town, and Dr. Dewey, then 71, and though retired, became Associate Pastor and Minister of Visitation at Indianola United Methodist Church. This was the church which, along with the First U.M. Church of Summit, had supported

their missionary work, and which, since 1926, the Deweys had considered their "home church". He gave up this work for true retirement in 1962 but continued living in Columbus until his death there on December 3, 1968. He was buried in the New Union Cemetery of that city.

* * *

The 1918 Newark Conference was held early in April, at the Halsey Street Church in Newark. At its closing session the Committee on the State of the Country was called upon to make its report. This it did, in a rather lengthy, but carefully prepared and impassioned statement, from which the following are excerpts:

> "These times call on us to be constructive patriots. A peaceful, self-governing nation requires time to assemble and organize the resources by which it makes war".
>
> ". . .We have raised . . .a great and growing army of selected young men. . .We have promptly subscribed enormous sums of money for the prosecution of the war . . .Our captains of industry and business have responded heartily to the needs of the hour, many of them devoting all of their time . . .without fee or reward . . .The people have cheerfully made unaccustomed sacrifices of food, clothing and fuel, that victory might be hastened".
>
> "But our task is only begun. We must win this war . . .Whatever the cost, in men or treasure, we will not falter. We will not allow the barbarism of the Hun and vandals to be enthroned in the world's places of power, and Christian civilization to be put back for centuries".
>
> "We repudiate all idea of 'divided allegiance'. The foreign-born citizen who did not entirely renounce his allegiance to his native country and assume full allegiance to this when he made his oath to do so is a perjurer and a traitor . . .We believe all pacifist agitation gives aid and comfort to the enemy . . .(and) should be immediately suppressed".
>
> "We commend the Third Liberty Loan, the War Savings Stamps, and the great humane organizations which are seeking . . .to diminish and relieve the horrors of war. We urge upon all our ministers to keep constantly before their people the great moral aims of this conflict . . .The way may be long. Victory may be delayed, but it is not in doubt".

The Conference minutes state that "Bishop Cooke then delivered a stirring patriotic address, after which the Conference stood and sang 'America'. The

question of adoption (of the report) was then put, and passed by a unanimous standing vote".

He Cleared Our Debts

IRA L. KETCHAM 1918 - 20

The Bernardsville News of April 11, 1918, carried an item announcing that "Rev. Ira L. Ketcham of Boonton will succeed Rev. Dewey at the Methodist church in Basking Ridge and will also act as supply at the Pleasant Plains Methodist Church". The Conference that year had made Pleasant Plains again a part of the Basking Ridge charge. The new pastor assigned to supply our pulpit and also to conduct Sunday afternoon services at the little church in the swamp was another young Drew student, still in his twenties, a native of New Jersey who had grown up in the west.

Ira L. Ketcham was born in Camden on October 10, 1890. He was graduated from high school in Spokane, Washington, then enrolled for a year at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. Having decided, however, while still in high school, that he wanted to be a minister, he set about implementing that decision and became a member of the Puget Sound Conference. In 1916 he married Margaret Hunter of Spokane, and the young couple moved back east so that Ketcham could enter Drew Seminary. During the year previous to his appointment to Bishop Janes Church he served as supply pastor at Parsippany, and in 1918 he was ordained a deacon and admitted on trial to the Newark Conference.

By the time this new pastor and his wife were officially welcomed at the customary reception in early May they had already made friends in his new charge. Mrs. Ketcham was a graduate of the Belden School of Elocution and it wasn't long before her readings became a popular feature of church socials and entertainments. She lost no time, either, in taking an active part in the Ladies' Aid Society. Of course Ketcham himself commuted to Madison every week day to attend classes at Drew, and on Sundays preached not only twice at our church but at Pleasant Plains as well. Like the Deweys before them, the Ketchams were a busy couple, and they liked it that way.

By the early summer of 1918 American troops were engaged in the grueling trench warfare in France. Fighting along with the French at Chateau Thierry and Belleau Wood they repulsed the Germans in several critical and bloody battles. In September our troops captured the Saint-Mihiel salient. The Germans were weakening, and victory for the Allies was now in sight.

But in the face of the ongoing war, with its attendant hardships and sorrows, life on the home front continued as much "like usual" as possible. Every week the News carried many columns of "Letters from Our Boys" with the armed forces. Stricter sugar rationing had reduced the monthly allowance from 3 to 2 pounds per person, and the fuel administration in Washington was urging

HONOR ROLL - WORLD WAR I

Members of our church or
of church families who served

Baird, Leland A.
Bender, Lenhardt G.
Bornmann, A. Hartman
§Card, Arthur A.*
Craig, John K.*
Ehrler, Charles F.
Hicks, Ernest V.
Mase, Franklin L.
Mertz, Edward
Moffett, Charles C.
Petty, Arthur R.*
Pope, D. Russell*
§Pope, Robert E.*
Ramsdale, Fred
Richards, Edward
Richardson, Bernard L.
Richardson, Wilbur N.
Starin, Arthur N.*
Starin, Harold S.
Winn, Walter L.

§ Died in the service

* Not listed on our membership roll

the "discontinuance of Sunday motoring", to conserve gasoline. There was another draft registration, this time for all men in the 18 to 45 year age bracket, and the Fourth Liberty Loan was launched on September 28.

The Liberty Theater in Bernardsville showed movies every Wednesday evening and three times on Saturdays, featuring every now and then Mary Pickford "5-reelers", and Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd comedies. Adults paid 25¢ admission on Wednesdays, 28¢ on Saturdays; children paid 15¢ and 17¢. And in Basking Ridge there were movies at the firehouse every Saturday evening at 8, preceded by merry-go-round rides for the kiddies, beginning at 7.

At the adult level there was a lot of talk, and much concern, about the growing prospects of prohibition, for it was in November that year that New Jersey was voting on local option. For weeks the Bernardsville News carried, in large boxes on its front page, appeals by the Local Option Committee of Bernards Township[4] urging voters to stamp out the saloons. But in the election the "drys" lost in the Township by 312 to 290, a margin of 22 votes.

Early in October our community faced some real trouble. As many of our older members will remember, there was a nationwide epidemic of Spanish flu. Within weeks the disease had swept the country, resulting in tens of thousands of deaths, and New Jersey was very hard hit. The toll in army camps was particularly high; hundreds of enlisted men in training at Fort Dix contracted the disease and died. The situation became so serious that our town, like most others in ours and neighboring states, was virtually in a state of quarantine. All public places, including schools and churches, were closed for several weeks, and even attendance at funerals of flu victims was restricted to the immediate family. But gradually matters improved, and by the middle of November the worst of the epidemic was over.

On November 6th came the news that Germany had surrendered, touching off spontaneous rejoicing that proved to be premature. The report was denied by Washington; it was false. But five days later, in the early hours of November 11th, came the true news, confirmed by Washington, that the war was over! From dawn to midnight, on that first Armistice Day, there were never-to-be-forgotten celebrations throughout the land.

Peace at last! Now our boys would soon be coming home! A few of the luckier ones still in camp might even make it by Christmas! But for five of the young men from our Township there would be no homecoming. They had lost their lives in the conflict. And of these five there were two, Arthur Card and Robert Pope, whose names were on the honor roll of Bishop Janes Church.

The Ladies' Aid Society continued its busy fund-raising activities that year except, of course, during the flu quarantine. In April they had held an auction sale, at which the refreshments served were sandwiches and peanuts. (Mrs. Baird was asked to buy a bushel of peanuts for the affair.) In May, on "Decoration Night", there was a "Sweet Sixteen Party". In June, and again in July, the

[4] Bernards Township at that time still included Bernardsville and Far Hills.

ladies voted to pay $100 on their $500 pledge to the church. Then in August, no doubt at the suggestion of the new minister or his wife - or both - they decided that they should increase their pledge from $500 to $800. It's noteworthy that Mrs. Ketcham (as vice president) presided at that August meeting and that it was well attended. The Ketchams had inspired the ladies to vigorous efforts. In October, before the quarantine, they held a rummage sale, in November the usual Donation Supper, and in December a "rummage and cake sale".

Years later, in describing his personal traits to our historian, Ketcham characterized himself as "of the handshaking variety". Like Dewey, he was an outgoing person; he liked people and people liked him. Even while still a student he must have been an interesting and effective preacher, having a keen sense of humor. And he was also a good organizer and good administrator, one who held strongly to the pay-as-you-go philosophy. To cap it all, this young minister was a good salesman — an able and energetic fund rasier. In fact, what is remembered most about his tenure at Bishop Janes is the fact that he cleared its debts of more than $6000 and left us, for only the second time in our history, debt free. Ours was the first of many churches whose debts would be either wiped out or greatly reduced by Ira L. Ketcham.

In those days a good share of the financing of local churches was done by individuals. The bank held mortgages on church property, but often, to meet current expenses, money was borrowed, on interest-bearing notes, from some of the more well-to-do members. In our church of the early 1900's our special "angels" were three of our trustees, David Moore, Charles Allen and Henry Tobelmann. One of our older members (in 1982) recalls that "without Dave Moore and Henry Tobelmann we wouldn't have made it".

Horace Dewey had begun a campaign to raise money to pay off the church debt, but wasn't with us long enough to make much headway. Ketcham didn't waste much time in taking up where he had left off. Within four weeks of his arrival he seems to have inspired the Ladies' Aid Society, as we noted, to work harder at this task. In August of 1918 he got the trustees to "pay J. E. Baird $300 on account of note", and in September they voted "that Bro. Ketcham have authority to get out a circular letter to send to all those who have subscribed on the church debt". No copy of that letter remains to us, but we do have a copy of a printed statement issued by Ketcham, supposedly to all members, in the fall of 1919. More about that statement later.

The money-raising campaign was waged relentlessly through the fall of 1918 and all of 1919 until its goal was reached. Rev. Ketcham, in recalling forty years later those experiences, wrote:

> *"I took one summer* (1919) *to completely finish the job of raising new money and collecting some old subscriptions. I remember one bright summer night, driving with David Moore in his old Model T up to the palacious home of John A. Roebling. We parked the rattling jalopy outside the grounds and approach-*

ed by foot, courage oozing away with every foot of advance. We finally passed the two outer footmen and then two French maids, and reached the sanctum. To his (Roebling's) *scathing statement that the rich were spreading their butter pretty thin in those post-war days, I replied that down at our church we were using oleo. I asked him for a thousand but he outmaneuvered me and sent, I believe, a check for $500. Anyway, we patted the old Ford on the back and thanked the Lord!''*

Roebling wasn't a member of the church, but that didn't make any difference. Ketcham solicited every good prospect in the area, including the wealthy Samuel Childs, founder of the Childs restaurant chain, and a leader in the local Presbyterian church.

Henry Tobelmann, who for years had been the church treasurer and one of its chief financial backers, died in May of 1919, and the trustees appointed Laura Frost, our organist, to succeed him. As treasurer of the debt fund they appointed Mrs. Rachel Sanders. She showed no interest, so a month later Mrs. Frank McGuirk was appointed in her place. But Mrs. McGuirk didn't want the job either, so in August the trustees elected Rev. Ketcham himself as treasurer of the fund.[5]

It was then that he circulated his printed statement, intended "to make things clear". And it did. It began by explaining that

"For a period running back into the years there has been confusion as to what the debt was. The original debt twenty years ago was made up of numerous accounts, just as it was in 1917. In 1917 we had accounts as follows: Two mortgages and five individual accounts, as you will see by the figures below. Some people have thought there was just one mortgage and asked if the mortgage was paid. Others thought that everything was owing to Mr. Tobelmann and asked if he was paid yet. Then others would ask if the debt had been paid, which is readily seen to be a far different thing from the mortgage or the Tobelmann account; it is the total of all. Also, there is a difference between raising in subscriptions and raising in cash . . .At Mr. Tobelmann's death the books showed that he had figured the debt incorrectly. He had under-figured. If an account was $542 he would call it in round numbers, saying, 'well, it's about $500'. Also, he did not figure the interest on the debt, which should have been added to the total".

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[5] It's noteworthy that the trustees of the church met as often (10 times) in Ketcham's two years as they did in all of the following six years combined. Customarily they met no more than three times a year, and some years no meetings were recorded.

This confusion as to the actual amount of the debt was reflected in the contradictory statistics given in the Conference Journals of those years. In the 1918 Journal, when Ketcham was first appointed to Basking Ridge, the reported debt was $2900. The following year it was recorded that $4000 had been paid on debts, with a balance of $1500 still unpaid. This puzzling discrepancy was no doubt due to the loose accounting that Ketcham's statement referred to.

That statement hastened to clarify, however, "But he (Tobelmann) was as honest as the day is long. His bank book on the debt balances to the penny. Money paid Mr. Tobelmann on the debt *got* to the debt fund. Neither, to my knowledge, has debt fund money been used for any other purpose than to pay debts". Then it presented figures showing that as of July 1, 1917 (under Dewey) the total church debt had been $6282 — more than double the amount reported in the Conference Journal. This included mortgages of $2800 and $750 on the church and parsonage respectively, and $2184 in personal notes. By August 1919, when the statement was issued, $4262 had been paid in through subscriptions to reduce this debt, leaving a balance of $2020 still to be raised. And raised it was, within the next few months. Early in 1920 all debts were paid, the mortgages were burned, and Bishop Janes Church was debt free for the first time in twenty-four years.

But it wasn't all work and no play in the church life of those years, not by any means. The Ketchams were friendly and outgoing people, and they loved a good time. For more than half a century after leaving Basking Ridge Rev. Ketcham kept in touch by correspondence — and sometimes by phone — with some of the friends they had made here. Of particular interest is a letter he wrote to Edward Schroeder in 1961, in which he recalled some of the highlights of his two years as our pastor. For some glimpses of our church life in those days, and the Ketchams' part in it, we can do no better than to quote several paragraphs from that letter. He wrote:

> *"Our days in Basking Ridge were very happy ones, in spite of the turmoil of war and the great flu plague that hit us in 1918. We lived in the old parsonage, which was old even in those days. We wrestled with an out-dated furnace which tried the patience and the bank account, but which had a steam heating system. It made things easier to have the house warmed by the genial steam heat".*

The minutes of the trustees' meeting of April 1919 record that they voted to buy a new furnace for the parsonage, and their October minutes record that the bill for it was ordered to be paid. So Ketcham's second winter in the old house was probably easier than the first.

Continuing with the reminiscences:

> *"Our house became a gathering spot for the young people and we had a great time with them. Taking three or four carloads of them over to Morristown one night* (to a Methodist rally?), *one*

of the cars had a terrible wreck and landed six, including my wife, in the hospital. The suffering of so many brought us all closer together and the congregation was in much anguish and concern. During this siege Mabel Clark stayed at our house and helped to take care of Mrs. Ketcham. Mabel is a jewel".

"Among the interesting things that occurred in our ministry at Basking Ridge was the annual May Day parade. One year Mrs. Ketcham and I were asked to lead the parade. Our vehicle? None other than the Tobelmann horse and buggy. I'd never driven a horse and buggy in my life, and I was holding on for dear life. We sat up there on this high-seated thing as stiff as ramrods. But we got back safely".

"One day with a few spare moments and a desire to explore the attic of the old parsonage, which was a precious antique to us, we began going through the accumulated debris of fifty years. We came across suddenly a little old yellow bag that resembled nothing more than the shape of a dachshund dog, and it was heavy. It looked like a find, and it was. It contained hundreds of dollars in five and ten and twenty dollar gold pieces!".

What a fortune that would be today, in 1983! The letter goes on to say that they searched out the owners of this hoard, former occupants of the house, and returned it to them, and "They were overjoyed to recover the long lost possession of their savings".

Of course the Board of Trustees in those days, just as today, was responsible for running and maintaining Evergreen Cemetery, and that required much of their attention. W. B. Craig, who was our church sexton, was also the Cemetery Superintendent. He was not only an invaluable handyman but a good bookkeeper, painstakingly accounting for every penny of income and expense. In 1918 cemetery plots sold for $125, and an additional $150 was charged for perpetual care. And in that year also, the trustees decided that the charge for digging a grave for an adult should be raised from $8 to $10.

1919 was another busy year for the Ladies' Aid Society. Attendance at their monthly meetings increased noticeably, and their accomplishments were many. The year began with another rummage sale in January and a "cafeteria supper and rummage sale" in February. Then in March they decided to put on a show, an "Old Fashion Ladies' Aid Social", on the occasion of their mite box opening. This entertainment was so successful that they decided to repeat it in June, charging "2 shillings admission for adults, 1 shilling and 2 pence for children". 300 tickets were printed for it. Again they prospered and the "Old Womens' Meeting", as they re-named it, was given a third time, this time at Millington.

Following the customary Fourth of July dinner and festival, the Society voted to pay another $150 on the church debt. In late October came the other

annual church event, the Donation Supper, all the proceeds of which ($36.65) were paid to Miss Frost. And in November, to support Ketcham's fund-raising campaign, the ladies voted to pledge still another $200 toward the payment of the debt. All in all it was a banner year for the Ladies' Aid Society. The treasurer's report shows that their receipts for the year totaled about $667, and that $450 of their income had gone toward the church debt. Not for many years to come would the Society match this splendid record.

Considering what they had — or rather, did not have — in the way of facilities to work with, it's really amazing what the ladies of the church accomplished in those days. Unbelievable as it may seem now, there were no kitchen facilities in that 1900 church — no range, no sink, no cupboards, and of course no ice box. The only plumbing in the whole building was the cold water line to the boiler. How they managed to serve all the dinners and suppers they did, month after month, taxes the imagination. They did have a small closet where they could store some chinaware and utensils, and of course they made use of the parsonage kitchen next door, small though it was. But they had to bring in portable kerosene stoves, set up plank tables on horses, and lug in water by the bucketful, and heat it, for washing dishes. It was the "fireside room" that served as their kitchen. Silverware and linens were stored in boxes and a trunk or two, most of which were kept in members' homes and carted back and forth to the church when needed. If sometimes the ladies of the church today feel that they are working under difficulties, let them remember what their hard-working predecessors had to put up with.

It was on August 21, 1919, that the men of the church, no doubt at Ketcham's urging, met to organize, as the News reported, "what promises to be the most active Mens' Club in this part of the country". At a dinner meeting in the "chapel" (put on by the ladies, of course) the group was addressed first by G. C. Smith of Morristown, then by several other speakers, including the pastor. Charles Allen was elected president of the new organization, and other officers chosen were A. P. Brush, vice president, W. L. Starin, secretary and athletic director (!), and G. F. Bender, treasurer.

At their February meeting in 1920 the ladies of the Aid Society voted to purchase an organ for the parsonage, for $5. (It *must* have been a used one). By the next month's meeting they had apparently given or spent all of their funds; the treasurer reported a balance of only 87¢. So they voted to borrow $150 to tide them over, and to use some of this money "to paper and fix the parsonage".

Having accomplished what he set out to do, Ketcham asked, at the 1920 Annual Conference, to be without appointment, so that he could devote full time to his studies. Understandably, it was with much regret that the congregation bid goodbye to this exceptional young minister and his wife who had done so much for them.

Clearly, they had breathed new life into Bishop Janes Church. They

restored not only its financial health but its spiritual vitality as well. Membership had a healthy gain during each of Ketcham's two years with us. According to statistics in the Conference Journals, there were 110 full members and 12 probationers on the rolls when he came, in 1918; in 1920 he left a membership of 204, which was more than at any time previously or for 25 years to follow. But these figures may not be wholly accurate. As with the church debt, our local membership records of those days don't always jibe with the Journal figures. Our records do confirm, however, that membership increased substantially under Ketcham. And membership in the Sunday School and Epworth Leagues grew, too, during this period. His record of accomplishments was one that very few, if any, other two-year pastorates in our history have equalled. But Ketcham's salary during his tenure remained the same as that paid to his predecessor.

After his graduation from Drew in 1920, the Ketchams went back home to Spokane, where he transferred to the Columbia River Conference and was assigned to the Manito Methodist Church in that city. In 1922 he was appointed to the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, where he served for three years. After having suffered there a bout with pneumonia, he moved to Arizona, where he gradually regained his health. It was there that, as he said, "A Christian Church, Disciples, called me to be their pastor, and I started in a new direction, denominationally. I have been preaching Methodist sermons in the Christian Church ever since".

As a minister in the Christian Church he served large churches in Ventura, Alhambra and Glendale, California. He held various positions of authority in the Christian Church, and wrote, in one of his letters, that he had "served on countless important committees and commissions and addressed innumerable service clubs, given convention speeches, dedicated church buildings, and even crowned 'queens' of this and that". In 1948 Chapman College honored him with a Doctor of Divinity degree.

After twelve years at Glendale, and recovery from throat cancer that necessitated partial amputation of his tongue, he became minister of the South Pasadena Christian Church. Following the death of his first wife he was remarried, in 1964, to Elspeth Geyer, a native of Stuttgart, Germany. His next parish was the Eagle Rock Christian Church in Los Angeles and, following that, the Highland Park Church in the same city.

Our last communication from Dr. Ketcham was a letter he wrote in June, 1980, to Mr. and Mrs. William Scheuerman, couched in his usual interesting and witty style. Recounting his experiences and bringing us up to date on his activities, he wrote,

> *"We are now completing our sixth year with this fine congregation. Last fall I had a recurrence of cancer but bypassed the medical approach in favor of faith healing. The Lord has honored my faith. I have not lost a Sunday of preaching nor a week of ser-*

vice. On October 10, 1980 I will be 90 years of age . . .Life has been exciting - happy - checked with health upsets and recoveries, but it has been highly rewarding. And Basking Ridge stands out clearly and beautifully against an adventuresome and glorious horizon . . .Please call me when you come to Los Angeles or Glendale".

Ira Ketcham celebrated his 90th birthday, and his exceptional record of 62 years in the active ministry. But ten weeks later, on December 23, 1980, after a short illness, death claimed him. To the very end he was cheerfully busy and active.

While we may regret that this remarkable man chose not to remain a Methodist, Ira Ketcham will always hold a unique place of honor, gratitude and affection in the history of Bishop Janes Church, for which, at the beginning of his long ministry, he did so very much.

The Genial Outdoorsman

THOMAS J. CLARK 1920 - 21

The new pastor who was appointed to our church at the 1920 meeting of the Newark Conference was an older, more experienced man. In his sixteen years as a member of the Conference he had already served four charges before coming to Basking Ridge.

Thomas James Clark was another native of New Jersey, having been born in Paterson on September 12, 1877. He was graduated from Pennington in 1897, and received his B.A. degree from Ohio Wesleyan University in 1901. He then entered Drew Theological Seminary, was graduated from there in 1904, and in that same year was admitted to the Newark Conference. His first appointment was to Centerville and Greenville, where he served for two years. In 1907 he went to Barryville, and while serving there he married, in November of 1908, Daisy Kalbfus of Shohola, Pa. To them was born one son, Edward. In 1910 Clark was assigned to the Midvale Circuit for five years, and following that served another five years at Clinton prior to his appointment to Bishop Janes Church (and Pleasant Plains).

As he was with us for only one year, and achieved no memorable accomplishments during that short time, our older members have very few recollections of his pastorate. And of course the Ketchams' was "a hard act to follow". They do recall, though, that Rev. Clark was the first of our ministers to own an automobile which, having no garage, he kept in Mr. Buck's barn up the street.[6] In those days, when only a third of the homes in the country boasted electric lights, the ownership of a car — and by a preacher, no less — was a

[6] The Buck residence was the house on the west side of South Finley Avenue that is now the Gallaway funeral home.

mark of distinction. It is remembered, too, that Clark was an outdoorsman, an avid hunter, and that when relaxing at the parsonage he liked to smoke a pipe. There wasn't much precedence for that, either.

Our church records of the early 1920's are rather sparse. We do know, however, that Charles M. Allen, one of our most helpful and influential trustees, was then Chairman of the Township Committee, and that his wife was the capable president of the Ladies' Aid Society. We have minutes of only one meeting of the trustees in 1920, in December. At that meeting they voted to raise the salary of Mr. Craig, our hardworking sexton and cemetery superintendent, from $15 to $18 a week.

Following the previous two years of hard work under Ketcham in paying off the church debt, this was understandably a period of relative calm in church activities. Even the Ladies' Aid rested a little on their oars, though attendance at their monthly meetings held up well, averaging more than a dozen. On April 29th they held the usual reception to welcome the new minister and his wife. They must have soon found that the Clarks were not great music lovers, because they decided at their May meeting that the organ they had purchased for the parsonage should be moved to Mrs. Starin's. The Society sponsored an entertainment in June, and the usual dinner, a "cafeteria", on the Fourth of July. There was the annual Donation Supper in October and a "Harvest Home" festival — a sort of fair, with refreshments served — in early November. This affair netted them more than any of their others that year, $124.41. With the church debt paid off, the ladies used their earnings chiefly to repay their loan and to continue paying Laura Frost's $5 monthly salary. In February of 1921 they held a bread and cake sale, and at their March meeting they voted "not to pledge anything on the 1921 pledge card". The incentive was gone.

Being an outdoorsman and fond of sports and games, Clark, though in his forties, was well liked by the boys of the church, among whom were Ned Allen, Howard Brush, Ray Day, Paul Bettler and Dan Craig. And he was fond of their company, too. Often he invited them into the parsonage after school for an informal get-together. Sometimes he would join them in playing carrom and other games, sometimes they just "chewed the fat". Some of them still remember that "he always had some good clean thoughts for us".

The congregation had agreed early in 1920 that the minister's salary should be raised (perhaps with the hope that Ketcham would be returned), so Clark received $1200, including the $200 rent allowance. The membership roll was pruned again to more realistic figures during his stay, and the 1921 Conference Journal (when his successor was appointed) credits Bishop Janes Church with 159 full members and 13 probationers.[7] Still, these were higher figures than had been reported for some years prior to Ketcham. That record shows also that Sunday School enrollment declined in that year from 164 to 134. Average at-

[7] As noted earlier, figures given some years in the Conference Journals are not in agreement with our local records.

tendance at Sunday School, stated for the first time in the 1921 Journal, was 70.

In those days attendance at Sunday School was as large as, if not larger than, it is in 1983, often exceeding that at the church service. As one of our older members recalls, "All of the children went to Sunday School, but many of the parents didn't go to church". And many of the children, it seems, were ecumenically minded. Some Sundays they would attend the Methodist Sunday School and on other Sundays they would be found with their friends in the Presbyterian Sunday School. At Christmas time in particular, attendance at both Sunday Schools swelled; two free boxes of candy are always better than one.

A few items of interest are found in the report of the church treasurer (and organist), Laura Frost, for the nine-month period from April 1, 1920 to January 1, 1921. During that period income was $1448.76 and expenditures were $1397.82. At least we were maintaining our solvency. For those nine months the cost of power, light and water was $28.37, and $4.30 was spent on choir music.

In his Conference memoir, Thomas Clark is remembered as

> ". . .a dedicated Christian, a considerate, humble and sincere pastor and minister. He was not the shouting, arm-waving, pulpit-pounding preacher, but a quiet, dignified disciple of Jesus Christ. He had a deep concept of faith which governed his life. He was a good minister of Jesus Christ".

It seems, however, that the brief pastorate of this quiet, sincere man at Bishop Janes Church was another of those so-so years in our history when, after a spurt of growth and achievement, the fires were banked.

After leaving Basking Ridge in the spring of 1921, Rev. Clark served for relatively long periods in larger churches, and in these later years he became widely respected as the dean of Newark Conference ministers. He was appointed to the pulpit of the Summit Avenue Church in Jersey City for two years, and for three years following that served at Browne Memorial Church in the same city. Then he was moved to Staten Island, where for five years (1926-31) he was pastor of St. Mark's Church in Prince Bay. His next charge was the Forty-Sixth Street Church in Bayonne, which he served for eight years. In 1942 he was appointed to Midland Park for another long pastorate of seven years. He retired in 1950, after 46 years in the Conference, and died at Westwood, New Jersey, on August 21, 1957, just eight days after the death of his wife. Interment was at George Washington Memorial Park, in Paramus, New Jersey.

He Left Us No Records

WILLIAM HUDSON 1921 - 22

In our church of the early 1900's one-year pastorates were not at all uncommon. Following Clark's one-year stay came another pastor, William H. Hud-

son, who also was to serve for only one year. Like his predecessor, he was an experienced man in his early forties, and had already served a number of churches. Some of these were larger churches, and it's said that he accepted his appointment to our small rural charge with some reluctance. If that be true, it may in some degree account for his mediocre record here.

William Hudson was born on June 15, 1879, at Bayville, Delaware. At the age of 18 he felt the call to preach and entered Wesley College at Dover, Delaware. Upon graduation he won a scholarship which enabled him to attend Drew Theological Seminary, where he received his B.D. degree in 1908. Just a few months before graduating from Drew he married Mary McKee of Rockaway, New Jersey. The Hudsons had one child, a daughter, Alice May.

Hudson was ordained an elder by Bishop Hamilton, in Salisbury, Maryland, in 1910. For two years following that, he was a member of the Troy Conference, serving at Panton. Then he transferred to the Wyoming Conference and was stationed at West Nicholson and Orson. In 1918 he transferred again, this time to the Newark Conference, and was assigned to the Graniteville church on Staten Island for two years. Subsequently he was pastor of Grace Church in Jersey City for one year prior to his appointment to Basking Ridge.

His memoir in the Conference Journal, unlike most such obituaries, gives us no clue at all as to his personal traits, or his accomplishments during his ministry, so we know very little about him. And, like Clark before him, Hudson seems to have made little impression upon either our church's history or the memories of our older members. He left us no records of his own, and there are no records of any meetings of the Trustees, either, in 1921 or 1922. We do have minutes of several Official Board meetings then, however, and the Ladies' Aid Society, bless them, faithfully recorded all of their doings. From these, and old newspaper files we can learn something of what happened that year.

As in the previous year, the activities of the Ladies' Aid Society were chiefly routine. The reception for the Hudsons was held following a Sunday evening church service early in May. At their regular monthly meetings there was the usual average attendance of about ten members, but at their December meeting in 1921 eighteen members — a record number — attended. It was at this meeting that the ladies decided to get estimates on the cost of installing electricity in the parsonage, a project that was completed the following year. There were the usual annual events of the church social calendar, but not the many fund-raising affairs that filled the earlier years before the debt was cleared. They held the 4th of July dinner, of course, and the Harvest Home festival in October. This event, the embryo of our present day annual bazaar, was a kind of fair, with booths displaying for sale "fancy articles", fruit, vegetables, candy and potted plants, and with cafeteria service of food and refreshments. That year the fair netted the Society $108.19. Then, in November, came the annual Donation Supper, with orchestral music during dinner. In February of 1922 the ladies sponsored a "50¢ Supper" in the chapel, featuring roast pig.

Other organizations of the church also sponsored social events from time to time. The Epworth League had its strawberry and ice cream festival in late May, and on New Year's Eve served a roast pig supper in the chapel, with a Watch Night service following. The Sunday School put on a bazaar and entertainment, also in May, and the Joybearers held their regular monthly meetings, with now and then a social evening. In October the Mens' Club sponsored an entertainment featuring "several pleasing selections" by the Bernardsville M.E. Church orchestra. And in March of 1922 even the Official Board sponsored a chicken dinner, served in the chapel.

Sunday evening services and mid-week prayer meetings were still being held, and would be for some years to come, but enthusiasm was waning and attendance was poor. In an effort to bolster the former, the Methodist and Presbyterian congregations joined frequently in Sunday evening union services, meeting alternately in the two churches. During the fall and winter these were scheduled about once a month, and Dr. Bennett and Rev. Hudson took turns in the pulpit.

Our records show that the church budget for 1921-22 was set at $2787, though the congregation had failed by $500 or more to meet its somewhat smaller budget of the year before. Of this amount, the pastor's salary accounted for $1200, the organist's salary $100, and our share of the District Superintendent's salary, $75. There was $147 budgeted for "conference claimants" and $150 for "other benevolences". Fuel (coal) accounted for $210, light and water $45, and choir music $15.

A rather large budget item was the levy, by the Conference, of $563 for the "Centenary Fund". The raising of this fund was one of the great undertakings of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the early 1920's. In 1919 the church had launched a great nationwide campaign to raise $120 million for World Service -"the biggest single project ever undertaken by any denomination", said the press. Every Methodist church in the country was assigned its quota to be contributed annually over a period of five years. This $563 was our annual quota, but the records indicate that we didn't come anywhere near meeting it. Only $125 was paid to the fund in 1921-22, and even less in the following years. In the minutes of the meeting of the Official Board in September of '22 we find this item:

> "Matter of Centenary fund brought to attention of Board. Matter of giving from our current expense acct. to this fund discussed. Motion made and carried that we are not in position to do as surgested (sic)".

It was hard enough to make ends meet in just keeping our own church going. But many churches did more than their share, and the overall campaign was a great success.

The files of the Bernardsville News remind us that it was in June of 1922 that the voters of the village, at a special election held that month, defeated the

proposition that Basking Ridge should seek to become a borough. The vote was 161 to 34. Bernardsville had filed an application to the State legislature in March, for permission to form a borough, and a committee of Basking Ridge men had followed suit, but the voters now vetoed the idea, as the voters in Bernardsville had done in the first attempt there.

At the local commencement exercises that year the graduating class of the high school numbered 22. Nine pupils were graduated from the Basking Ridge (Maple Avenue) elementary school, and twenty-six from the elementary school in Bernardsville. The Deweys came back to visit their friends in Basking Ridge and Green Village that summer, before sailing for China, and Rev. Dewey occupied our pulpit once again on the first Sunday in August, warmly welcomed by the congregation. On a Thursday evening early in September the Bernards Concert Band gave a concert on our village green (probably not for the first time), and "nearly $20 was contributed when the hats were passed around". In early October Rev. Appley and his family moved back from Newark, temporarily occupying one of the apartments he had built (from the old church) on East Oak Street while their new home was being built near by. And on Halloween, one of the pranks played by the village youngsters was the placing of one of Rev. Hudson's chairs from the parsonage atop a telephone pole.

It must be remembered that at this time, and in fact until World War II, this area, like much of the state, was predominantly agricultural in nature and depended upon real — not mechanical — horse power. Dairying and peach growing were the big businesses in these parts. A feature article in the Bernardsville News of October 21, 1921, reported that "Somerset County ranks high in the circles of successful dairy counties in New Jersey, with more accredited herds than any other county". Every week the paper carried its "Dairy Facts" and "Poultry Notes" columns, and other helps to the farmer. And the big agricultural fair held every year at the Far Hills fairground drew hundreds of exhibitors and great crowds of spectators from all over the state.

It seems clear that under Hudson the social life of the church continued much as usual, but the enthusiasm generated by the Deweys and the Ketchams was lacking. And there was a significant drop in church membership during his year's tenure. But again, the records are confusing. According to figures published in the Conference Journals the number of full members fell, during the 1921-22 year, from 159 to 115. The accuracy of these figures may be questioned, but there's little doubt that the membership, when Hudson left, was lower than it had been in a decade. How much of this decrease may have been due to further pruning, and how much to a possible change in the methods of calculating and reporting, we cannot say. As reported, the Sunday School membership dropped, too, from 134 to 111, and average attendance fell from 70 to 50. The church remained free from debt, but all in all it wasn't a very good year.

The Bernardsville News of March 9, 1922, reported that "An out-of-town

committee recently attended the morning service in the Basking Ridge Methodist Episcopal Church and after hearing the pastor, Rev. William H. Hudson, preach, extended a call to him to become their pastor this coming year". These out-of-towners must have come from Dover, for it was to Grace Church of that town that the Conference assigned him when it convened several weeks later. And very likely Hudson was not unhappy to be moved.

After serving three years at Dover, William Hudson next occupied the pulpit of Paterson West Side Methodist Church for five years (1926-31). Then he was assigned to Congers and Thiells for one year, followed by three years at Hampton and another year serving both Hampton and Glen Gardner. In 1938 he was appointed to the churches at Branchville and Frankford Plains, which he served for four years. His last charge was the Madison Park Church in Paterson, where he retired in 1945, but continued active for another three years. In 1957 the Hudsons moved to Los Angeles, where he died not long after, of a heart attack, on March 14, 1958. Burial was at Valhalla Memorial Park in Hollywood, California.

Retired But Never Quitting

WILLIAM S. COEYMAN 1922 - 24

Our next pastor, the 36th, is remembered by our old-timers, who were then teenagers, as a "nice old man". In the eyes of youth, 57 was — and still is — an advanced age, especially for a preacher, and in our 70-year history up to that time only three of our previous pastors had been older when they came to Basking Ridge. But this "old man" still had a lot to offer, and was to have many more years of effective service in our Conference.

William S. Coeyman was born on August 23, 1864, in Orange, New Jersey. He left Orange High School to go to work to help support his family, and it seems that he had little further formal education; at least we have no record of any. In October 1886 he married Mary Weed Pike. He worked for six years for the American Bible Society and other religious organizations, then decided to enter the ministry, and in 1893 he was admitted to the Newark Conference. His first charge was at Centerville and Greenville, then he served at Harmony for two years and a year at Lebanon. In 1899 he was assigned to the pulpit at Gladstone, where he was stricken with ill health and was "compelled to ask for a supernumerary relation". The District Superintendent reported, at the 1901 Conference, that "in appreciation of his faithful ministry, the Gladstone congregation has continued to pay his salary, notwithstanding he was obliged to be away from them for a whole year". A preacher friend from East Orange had generously substituted for him in the pulpit "for no other compensation than his travel expenses".

Having recovered from his illness, Coeyman was assigned, in 1902, to the church at Finesville for one year, then served as assistant pastor at Summit for

two years. Following that, he was appointed Conference Evangelist for one year, then served as pastor of the church at Hilton for a year, and again, for two more years, as Conference Evangelist. His three years in this office left an enduring mark upon all those churches which he assisted. In 1909 he was again granted supernumerary status. His wife's health had begun to fail, and the Coeymans moved to California in the hope of regaining it. But this proved to be a vain hope; Mrs. Coeyman died there, in 1914. He then moved back to New Germantown (now Oldwick), where he retired and later married his second wife, Edith Redding. Never one who could enjoy idleness, he left retirement in 1919 and was assigned to the church in Hampton, and had served that church for two years when, in 1922, the Conference assigned him to the Bishop Janes pulpit.

Though past his prime when he came to us, William Coeyman was by no means letting down. With his gentle persuasion, he set about putting things in order. At the first meeting of the Official Board after his arrival it was agreed, no doubt at the new pastor's suggestion, to change the Sunday morning meeting schedule; Sunday School to meet from 10 to 11, morning worship service to be held from 11 to 12. At their May meeting the Board "approved insurance for the pastor — $18, 40% paid by the pastor, 60% by the congregation".

At the Fourth Quarterly Conference in January of 1923 the pastor, in his annual report, stated that

> *"Our Sunday School is making progress, and plans are being made to bring the school up to a high degree of efficiency. The pastor has preached to the Sunday School and reviewed the Epworth League in their studies. He has also started a probationers' class for religious instruction. The Sunday School has pledged to support a native preacher in India . . .The pastor has visited the homes of church members . . .The Lord has blessed the pastor with health and strength during the year, thus enabling him to serve his people each Sabbath in the ministry of the Word. He has conducted two Love Feasts*[8]*, five marriages, five funerals, and conducted evangelistic services from October 22nd to November 5th.* (7 from Sunday School knelt at the altar; only two joined the church). *He is thankful to report that our offering to the Centenary cause will exceed last year's by $200. In addition, our gratitude ascends to the Great Head of the Church who inspired our people to lay upon the altar $60 toward the support of an orphan in the American Orphanage for one year".*

Under Coeyman the Board of Trustees became more active again. As we noted, they seem to have held no meetings in 1921 or '22; at least we have no

[8] These may have been the last "Love Feasts" conducted at Bishop Janes Church; no reference to a later one has yet been found.

records of any. But they met four times in 1923 and three times in 1924. At their March meeting in 1923 they elected James Baird as chairman and Charles Allen as president. Other officers chosen were: George Bender, vice president; A. H. Poyer, secretary, and F. Loree Mase, treasurer. Ten days later, at a special meeting, Charles Allen resigned as president and David Moore was elected in his place. Faithful Dave Moore was to serve in this office for seventeen years.

At the trustees' July meeting it was reported that the perpetual care fund for the cemetery amounted to $1372.05, and it was decided to rent a safety deposit box at the bank "for all deeds and records". Also, Coeyman was "given full power to forbid anyone from removing or placing pols (voting poles) or cutting trees on church property without permission of the Trustees". In August Poyer resigned as secretary of the Board and W. L. Dayton was appointed as a new member of the Board and its new secretary. At the same meeting they moved to request the police not to allow autos to park directly in front of the church (on Sundays). Even in those days of relatively few automobiles they seem to have had this problem, which is still with us. At their January meeting in 1924 the trustees moved to "request the Official Board not to hold Board meetings in the church when coal is scarce except on Sundays".

The Ladies' Aid Society continued its steady pace of activities during Coeyman's pastorate, but with no church debt to challenge their efforts, there weren't as many fund-raising projects as there had been. Attendance at their monthly meetings numbered, as usual, from eight to twelve faithfuls. In June of 1922 they paid Elmer Gardner's bill of $174.65 for wiring the parsonage. That work had been completed in April, and soon after a telephone, too, was installed. There was the customary 4th of July festival, and though they decided to raise the price of tickets from 50¢ to 75¢, their profit was less than usual — under $90. The annual Harvest Home Fair was held in October and the annual Donation Supper on Armistice Day, November 11th. At their December meeting in 1922 the ladies elected Mrs. Starin as their president, to succeed Mrs. Allen, who had served in that office, except for one year, since 1908. Other officers chosen were: Mrs. Arthur Brush (Howard Brush's mother), vice president; Mrs. Wm. Zander, secretary; Mrs. Coeyman, assistant secretary, and Mrs. James Baird, treasurer. The treasurer's report for the 1922 year showed a gross income of $383.76, most of which had been spent for parsonage improvements and upkeep and incidental Society expenses. No longer were they contributing toward the pastor's salary, paying the organist's salary, or paying the interest on the church debts (of which there were none). But during the year they did pay $12 to the Smyrna Relief Fund, and they gave to the Stewards the proceeds of $41.54 on the January 50¢ supper. Also, as was their custom, they sent a box or barrel of useful apparel to the Deaconess Home in Newark.

Now that the Appleys were back in Basking Ridge, both the Reverend and his wife took active parts in church affairs. During Coeyman's summer vacation in 1922 Rev. Appley, who was then General Secretary of the New Jersey Sunday

School Association, preached at our church one Sunday, and Mrs. Appley, a licensed local preacher, occupied our pulpit the following Sunday.

In October the "Men's League" (Men's Club) of the church was reorganized, with Stanley Wilson as president and Arthur Brush as vice president. Under Clark and Hudson this organization had fallen apart, but now Coeyman was reviving it. A. H. Poyer was elected recording secretary, Daniel Craig corresponding secretary, and George Bender treasurer. That same month the men of the church, in their new enthusiasm, put a new shingle roof on the parsonage. In December Mrs. Appley set about organizing a Community Bible Class.

In the spring of 1923 James Baird resigned, after *32 years* of service, as our Sunday School superintendent, but agreed to continue as assistant superintendent. Mrs. Appley was appointed honorary superintendent. In early May an item in the News announced that "the men of the congregation will meet on the church grounds on Saturday for the purpose of erecting a garage for housing Mr. and Mrs. Coeyman's automobile". Times certainly were changing! Last year a telephone, and now a garage! Apparently their success with the roof-shingling project had given the men confidence to tackle another job for the parson.

The same paper announced the newly elected officers of the Epworth League: president, Mrs. Wm. Zander; vice-presidents, Wanda Bettler, Mabel Clark, Verna Pope and Emily Craig; secretary, Mrs. Robert Garrabrant; treasurer, Mrs. Kenneth Turner. Mabel Clark was also elected superintendent of the Junior Epworth League.

In July the annual church picnic was held at Burnham Park in Morristown, and in August the Sunday School held a bazaar of its own, on a Thursday afternoon, on the parsonage lawn. Later that month there was held at the Far Hills fairground the "first annual" inter-church school picnic, with nearly every Sunday School in the county represented and competing in athletic events, following an address by Rev. Appley. Basking Ridge Presbyterian Sunday School captured the trophy in this meet, but two of our girls, May Bailey and Helen Snyder, placed high in several events.

A few excerpts from.the minutes of the Ladies' Aid Society's meetings give us some further glimpses of their routine housekeeping concerns:

> "March 1, 1923: "Motion made, seconded and carried that the church property comm. remove the linen, silver and napkins out of closet and put in trunk".
>
> "May 5, 1923: "Motion made, seconded and carried that we buy 6 screens for the parsonage . . . Motion made, seconded and carried that we send Mrs. Stitt a vote of thanks for presenting us with a parlor suit (sic) for the parsonage".
>
> September 6, 1923: "Motion made, seconded and carried that we bring the matter of the parsonage porch up before the Of-

ficial Board, and if they will secure labor we will buy material''.

October 4, 1923: ''Motion made, seconded and carried that Mrs. Gutlieber and Mrs. Starin be made a committee to see carpenters about parsonage porch . . .Motion made, seconded and carried that Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Coeyman be made a comm. to have the old carpet made in a rug for Study in parsonage''.

November 1, 1923: ''Motion made, seconded and carried that Mabel Clark do up the new table linen after each affair . . .Motion . . .carried that Mrs. Coeyman take charge of Ladies Aid silver and Mrs. Starin the linen and towels''.

December 6, 1923: ''Motion made, seconded and carried that we buy a ton of coal as a thank offering to the church''.

The Fourth of July festival that year did a little better, netting them $111.25. In October they held the usual Harvest Home Fair, and in November the Donation Supper.

Those were the days when Model T Fords were selling for from $400 to $600, and at the butcher shop rib roasts of beef were 25¢ a pound. The 1923 budget adopted by Bernards Township (then much larger in area than now) was $78,464, of which $52,664 was to be raised by taxes. In March of 1923 Mendell Schaenen purchased his 160-acre farm, part of which is now occupied by Ridge Oak, with a 15-room residence, a barn for 40 cows, a tenant's cottage and other farm buildings — ''one of the most productive and best properties in the area'' — which was listed at $32,000.

On Christmas eve in 1923 community ''exercises'' were held on the village green, around a large Christmas tree that had been cut on the Sutro estate and placed there. The tree was ''illuminated by 75 colored electric bulbs'' — a marvelous new idea that was just becoming popular. The electric wiring had been done gratis by Arthur Burrett, and the current for lighting was furnished free of charge by the New Jersey Power & Light Co. The clergy of the village, Dr. Bennett of the Presbyterian church, Rev. Montgomery of the Episcopal church, and our own Rev. Coeyman, all participated in the program, which included carol singing by the school pupils and a reading by Mr. Fred Sutro, a member of the Board of Education. In reporting the event the Bernardsville News stated that ''The project originated with Rev. Coeyman, and Mr. Moffett (our next door neighbor on the south) did much to make the initial community celebration the success that it was''. So it was our thoughtful and kindly Bishop Janes minister who started, sixty years ago, that still continuing beloved Christmas tradition in our town.

Judging by the records, Bishop Janes Church neither prospered nor suffered significantly during Coeyman's two-year pastorate. This was another of those hold-the-line periods when little ground was lost but not much progress was made, either. Clearly, William Coeyman was a mature and capable

minister, friendly, genial and well liked, but not an inspiring leader. His Conference memoir states that "the charges he served have good reason to remember him with grateful affection as a faithful pastor, evangelical preacher and loyal friend".

A copy of the "subscription list" for the 1921-22 year, found in our records, provides an interesting view of church giving in those years. It lists 90 families and individuals and their weekly pledges, which were designated for either current expenses or benevolences or both. The largest pledge, $2 a week, was that of the Epworth League. Six families pledged $1 a week for current expenses, and five of these pledged an additional 30¢ a week for benevolences. There were two who gave 80¢ to current expenses and 20¢ to benevolences weekly, and three who gave 50¢ a week. All of the other 78 on the list pledged less; many only 5¢ a week. Only 50 of the subscribers pledged anything at all to benevolences, in amounts ranging from 3¢ to 20¢ a week. Compared to present day giving, these pledges may seem very small, but it must be remembered that in 1922 one dollar an hour was a very good wage; the union scale for carpenters was only $1.40. How many of us now give as much per week as we earn in an hour?

As previously noted, the membership of the church was at a ten-year low when Hudson left, due, in part at least, to his pruning of the rolls. Conference statistical records show that about 30 members were added during Coeyman's first year, but there was a loss during his second year, and that when he left in the spring of 1924 the number of full members stood at 134, nine of whom were non-residents. During his pastorate Sunday School membership dropped a little, from 111 to 105, and average attendance fell from 50 to 43. There was also a significant decrease, from 105 down to 80, in membership of the Epworth Leagues.

The church budget for 1922-23 was approximately $2690, which included $690 for benevolences and Conference claimants, and that for the following year about $2235, with apparently no provision for benevolence giving. Both of these budgets represented a decrease from the previous year, yet it seems that the congregation still had trouble in meeting them.

When he left Basking Ridge in April of 1924, Coeyman was nearing the end of his career as a full-time pastor. He was assigned to New Providence, where he served as pastor for three years, and then was given supernumerary status and moved to Summit. In 1928 he was named a chaplain at Overlook Hospital in that city. Then in 1930 he retired again, this time permanently. Still he was not content to "sit idly by". He had always had a passion for missionary work, not in foreign fields like Guest and Dewey, but on the home front. Quoting from his Conference memoir,

> "He took an active part in juvenile delinquency work in Union County. In Florida, where he visited often, he distributed Bibles to the players in major league baseball camps. During

> World War II he furnished religious literature to soldiers in army camps and on leave. Serving as spiritual advisor to a woman imprisoned for involuntary manslaughter, he was able to bring about the betterment of certain prison conditions which he described as 'wretched'. He never lost his Christian interest in such matters. His modesty, his sincerity, his wide interest in the best things, his deep religious faith — these have left a precious heritage".

William Coeyman died at the Methodist Home for the Aged at Ocean Grove on July 22, 1953, just a month before his 90th birthday. He had outlived both of his wives and one of his two sons. Interment was in the Rosedale Cemetery in the town of his birth, Orange, New Jersey.

CHAPTER XIII

A SWERVE TO THE RADICAL RIGHT

Carl C. E. Mellberg 1924-1930

THE NEXT six years were to be the strangest period in the church's history. Just as in our nation's history, and even in the personal lives of some of us, there have been times that are later recalled with disbelief — how could such things have happened? — so that period from 1924 to 1930 is remembered by some of our older members, who would prefer to forget it. Others remember it, with no regrets, as a time when the church came alive, and some important things were accomplished.

In retrospect it seems clear that what took place during those years was not inconsistent with the social climate of those early post-war years. There was quite a different set of values then than we know today; the times were ripe for it. And in the hindsight of nearly sixty years of history it may still be argued whether this was a bright or a shady spot in our records. In any case, it was an interesting period, and certainly a controversial one. And however we may regard it, the story of those days *is* a chapter in our history. In telling it, we shall attempt to relate only the factual happenings, without taking sides, and let the reader form his own opinions.

Rev. Coeyman's successor was another young man who was still attending college. Only two of the 36 pastors who had preceded him at Bishop Janes (Searles and Woodruff) had been younger — he was 24 — and only one other, Joseph Appley, had occupied our pulpit for as long a period as he was to be with us. But this young man was to make a long-lasting impression not only upon our church but upon the community at large.

Carl C. E. Mellberg was born in a Methodist parsonage in Axtell, a small Nebraska town, on July 27, 1899. He decided at an early age to follow in his father's footsteps as a minister and, with only a high school education, became a member of the Iowa Conference at the age of 20. In the same year, 1920, he married Leona Deeds, of Ottumwa, Iowa. Not long after, he and his bride moved east to New Jersey and enrolled at Upsala College in East Orange, where he was to pursue his studies part time, off and on, for a number of years, finally receiving his AB degree there in 1930. Before coming to Basking Ridge he had been a supply pastor for one year at Bethel Church in New York City and for

another year at neaby Mt. Horeb and Martinsville. When he was appointed to our church in the spring of 1924 the Mellbergs had two small children, Carl L. and Dolores; a third child, Betty Jean, was born to them a year or so later.

Mellberg's six-year pastorate with us, all as a student, was to be remembered, not so much for progress (some thought it the opposite), but for activity. He was the kind of energetic and capable activist — a radical, in the eyes of some — who was bound to make people sit up and take notice, like it or not, and come what may. Fortunately for the historian, there is no dearth of records for those years, and some of our older members have some vivid memories of things that happened then.

Easter, in 1924, came only two weeks after the new pastor's arrival, and it was customary then, as now to observe this holy day with an early morning service. But This Easter sunrise service was to be something surprisingly different. At 4:30 a.m. many of the residents of Bernardsville, Blazure's Corners and Basking Ridge were awakened by the shrill blasts of bugles sounding reveille. Those in the center of Basking Ridge who were roused by the sound and rushed to their windows, saw that lights were burning in the Methodist church. There were a lot of people gathered in the church yard and in the street, and the crowd was rapidly growing. And rubbing their sleepy eyes in disbelief, a few minutes later they saw a number of Ku Klux Klansmen, in full regalia, emerging from the church. Then they noticed that many in the crowd around the church were wearing white robes, too. Soon the assembly was formed into ranks, six or eight abreast, by the Klan leaders, and led by bearers of the American and Klan flags and a brass band, with torch bearers lighting the way in the pre-dawn dusk, they began an orderly march westward on the dirt road that was West Oak Street. Singing "My Country 'Tis of Thee" to the accompaniment of the band, the procession, swelling its ranks as it went, marched to the Whitnall tract[1] at the top of the rise, south of Evergreen Cemetery, where it broke ranks. Many others were already gathered there and in the light of 23 burning crosses stationed around the big field, a crowd of about 2500 men, women and children began their celebration of Easter as the sun rose. They stood in a mass around a crude platform and bowed their heads as Rev. William Amos of the Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church gave the opening prayer. Then they joined in singing "Onward Christian Soldiers", and the huge gathering was addressed by none other than our new pastor. Rev. Mellberg, robed in purple, spoke from atop a wagon draped with the American flag. Following the sermon there was more hymn singing, and two robed Klansmen took up a collection. All of the $470 they received was turned over to the Bishop Janes Church, to be used toward the purchase of a new organ!

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[1] Dr. Whitnall's farm of about 250 acres extended south from Oak Street to about where Culberson Road now is, and from the back of lots along South Finley westward to Harrison's Brook (I 278). His residence was the building on South Finley now (in 1982) occupied by Queen City Savings Bank, and the barns and tenant house stood where Oak Street School now stands. A half-mile race track was built on the property in 1879.

Well!! This event, we may be sure, caused quite a stir, a lot of talk, and not a few raised eyebrows throughout the village. The new Methodist minister was a Klan leader! Whether any of our church leaders had been aware of this previously we don't know — perhaps they were — but certainly everybody knew it now. And, suprising as it may seem to us now, most of our people seem to have accepted it with few qualms.

It wasn't the appearance of the Ku Klux Klan that was surprising; it had been active in our area before. It was the discovery that our church was now associated with it that came as a shock. A year earlier burning crosses had been seen in fields and on hills around Bernardsville, Far Hills and Basking Ridge, as in many other New Jersey communities, and there had been talk of an organizational meeting in Peapack. The previous June there had been a much larger Klan gathering of 10,000 or more on the Whitnall tract where this Easter morning service was held, at which some 800 candidates were reported to have been initiated. And just a month before Easter there had been a big parade of 500 or more Klansmen, many from Newark, through Peapack and Gladstone. But to have the Klan help a local church — our church — in holding an Easter morning service — that *was* something new.

The Ku Klux Klan

Because our concept of the situation then may, at best, be vague, a few words about the Klan of the 1920's may be in order. This was not the Ku Klux Klan of reconstruction days following the Civil War — that died out in the 1880's — but a rebirth, along somewhat similar lines, of that organization. This had taken place in Atlanta in 1915, as the brainchild of a fraternal organizer, William Joseph Simmons. It wasn't until 1921, however, that this "new Klan" began to prosper. Then it spread rapidly to all parts of the country, numbering its converts in the millions. Its rosters included many native-born white Protestant Americans from every level of society, but especially from the middle classes, who yearned, after the war, for a return to normalcy, and were all too willingly persuaded to vigorously oppose everything that did not conform to a dictated concept of "100 percent Americanism". War propaganda had taught most Americans to hate Germans and, with the war ended, many sought outlets for their pent-up animosity and found them by creating new enemies.

Unlike the earlier Klan, the new Klan did not have, as its principal target, the Negro. Quite the opposite was true, in fact, of the local Klan organizations. At Christmas time they delivered food baskets to some fifty needy black families in the community. Also, there were few instances of the night-riding atrocities associated with the history of the earlier Klan. The Klan of the 1920's cut a wider swathe. Chief among its tenets were white supremacy, anti-Catholicism, anti-Semitism, anti-radicalism and opposition to foreign immigration. Along with this was a strong concern with the restoration of "law and order" — enforcement of the prohibition laws — and the strengthening, by

force if necessary, of crumbling moral standards. As we see them now, these Klansmen were bigots, as personified in the 1970's by TV's Archie Bunker, and no doubt many of them were. But that was decades before integration and a long time before the ecumenical movement had taken hold.

Klan leaders, at least at the upper echelons, were politically ambitious, and the Klan was a large factor in defeating Al Smith in his first quest for the presidential nomination in 1924. By 1928 it was no longer powerful enough to prevent his nomination, but its influence no doubt contributed to his defeat at the polls.

To think that only riff-raff and fanatics joined the Klan is to be grossly mistaken. Business men, lawyers, doctors, ministers and even university professors donned their hooded robes alongside mechanics, farmers and day laborers. The Klan had something for all of them. And being the champion of Protestantism, the Klan accordingly sought the support of the Protestant clergy, or at least tried to minimize clerical criticism. Simply by not protesting when Klansmen marched into the church with donations, clergymen tacitly gave their approval. Mellberg obviously not only approved, but actively supported and even proclaimed at least some of the Klan's tenets, though he may not have subscribed to all of them. There were many Protestant clergy, among them our Joseph Appley, however, who decidedly disapproved of them, and there were several national Protestant leaders who spoke out strongly against the Klan.

* * *

On a Saturday in June, under the direction of the Official Board and no doubt promoted by Mellberg, the church put on its "first annual Flag Day Karnival". This was an all-day picnic and celebration held on the church grounds, with games, entertainment and movies, interspersed with speeches extolling the flag and patriotism in general. Later that month Mellberg's father and mother from Ottumwa, Iowa, paid a visit to their son and his family in their new home here. Apparently they liked our village and, with the elder Mellberg having retired from active ministry and their desire to be near their son, they decided to move to Basking Ridge themselves. They purchased a lot on Hillside Terrace, where they later built a home. But they were to enjoy it together for only a short time, as death claimed the father in the fall of 1926.

It was in that June of 1924 that Bernardsville, having received State approval to become a borough, voted to withdraw from Bernards Township and become an independent municipality. Basking Ridge, a few days later voted for the second time, this time by a 217-81 majority, to reject the borough form of government.

For the first time in years the church did not hold its customary Fourth of July dinner and festival that summer, and for a good reason. The whole community was joining in a big celebration that Bernardsville was staging on that holiday, and our Ladies' Aid wisely decided that it would be foolish to compete.

The citizens of Bernardsville had several good reasons for specially marking that Independence Day; not only did it mark the birth of the country, but they had now become an independent political entity themselves. And more than that, the concrete paving of Route 16 (now Rte. 202) through their town had just recently been completed.

Late in July it was announced that Bishop Janes Church would be holding a "series of 100% American services" on the first Sunday evening of each month, beginning in August, for the community at large. There were to be special outside speakers from time to time, and special efforts would be made (no doubt with Klan assistance) to draw a good attendance. And these efforts must have been very successful. Incredible as it may seem, the paper reported that at the third service in this series, in October, there were "over 700 in attendance and many of these, unable to gain entrance, stood outside during the service". There must have been a lot of outdoor standees! Even with both sets of dividing doors open, and the whole filled to capacity, including standees, that 1900 church could not have accomodated many more than 500.

The phrase, "100% American", used to publicize these services, will be recognized as a Klan slogan. And, like the Flag Day "Karnival", with its emphasis on the flag and patriotism, it reveals in retrospect Mellberg's deep, and no doubt wholly sincere, commitment to this aspect of the Klan philosophy. But one could hardly be criticised for being patriotic, nor could patriotism be said to be unchristian.

At their meeting on August 13th, the trustees voted to "sell to Raymond Moffett a strip of ground 5 feet wide adjoining his property (on the south side of our land) and running from Main Street (now Finley Avenue) to School Street (now Maple Avenue) for the sum of $300 and the cost of surveying; money to be used for repair of church". It seems that this deal was consummated soon thereafter, but without bothering to make it a matter of legal record. In fact it was many months later that the District Superintendent, learning of it, informed our church officials in writing that no sale of land could be made without the prior approval of the Conference. Mellberg replied that it had already been done and the proceeds had been spent. It wasn't until August of 1928 that the Official Board appointed a committee "to review the deed of the property" and the proper deed was duly recorded. The deed states, however, that the width of the strip was 9.2 feet, not 5 feet.

In October the Ladies' Aid Society put on their usual Harvest Home supper and bazaar, and the annual Donation Day supper was held the week before Thanksgiving. At their December meeting they re-elected Mrs. Starin as their president for another year. The Presbyterians joined with us for a union Thanksgiving service at our church that year, with Dr. Bennett preaching the sermon. And that fall the Mens' Bible Class, which Mellberg had organized, presented the church with a new bulletin board, electrically lighted.

Another achievement noted that fall was the growth of the Sunday School,

resulting from a well-publicized membership contest. An item in the Bernardsville News stated that attendance had increased "from 37 to nearly 100 in five months". Judging by official Conference records, this claim seems to have been somewhat exaggerated, but it does appear that the attendance more than doubled, and that there was a substantial increase in membership as well (to 179, officially) during the 1924-25 conference year. This rate of growth was not to continue very long, however. In the years following both attendance and membership were to gradually decline, with membership remaining in the 100 to 130 range for the next two decades.

Following the precedent established by Coeyman the year before, a community service and carol sing was held on the green on Christmas eve. This second service was organized by the Ladies' Auxillary of the local Fire Company. Again the clergy participated, and the singing was directed by Miss Ethel Light, music supervisor in the Bernardsville schools, with the Township school orchestra accompanying. To all the children attending, Santa Claus presented boxes of candy.

In January of 1925 the Sunday School celebrated the results of its recent membership contest with a turkey banquet. The dinner was served by the losing "Red" side, captained by Mabel Clark and Elizabeth Bender, to the winning "Blues", led by May Bailey and Wanda Bettler. Music for the occasion was provided by the Sunday School orchestra.

It's interesting to note that the Bernards Township budget for 1925, with Bernardsville having become a separate borough, was less than half of what it had been two years earlier. It was fixed at $28,200, of which $24,000 was to be raised by taxes.

Ku Klux Klan activities in the area — and throughout the country — continued apace. On Memorial Day there was a big gathering of Klansmen from all parts of the state, held on the Haas farm in West Millington, with several hundred initiates, men, women and boys. A meeting scheduled there a few weeks earlier had been rained out and was held instead in the Liberty Corner Presbyterian church. There was a cross burning in Bernardsville on the eve of their Fourth of July celebration, and in September there was a big torchlight parade, with bands, from Basking Ridge to Bernardsville. The marchers, after demonstrating in Olcott Square, returned to the Basking Ridge school grounds, where they were addressed by a Klan leader from Atlanta, a cross was burned on the Bishop Janes Church lawn, and Mellberg was presented with a purse of $300. On a Sunday afternoon in October the Klan held a big meeting in the Gladstone Methodist Church. That meeting was addressed by Rev. Parris Greenley, who was then pastor of the Peoples' Community Church in Newark, substituting for Rev. Mellberg who was to have spoken but was vacationing in Iowa. Later that day Rev. Greenley, who was later to become the pastor of the Gladstone Methodist Church, spoke to an even larger crowd that filled to overflowing the Lebanon Reformed Church. His topic was "Protestantism and

the Klan''. Yes, strange as it may seem to us now, the Ku Klux Klan and its activities were very much a generally accepted part of our community life of the middle 1920's, and our church, under its young and very energetic pastor, was very much involved.

The ''second annual'' Easter sunrise service that year, again held at daybreak on the Whitnall farm, was organized and conducted much as the first had been, and with an even larger crowd attending. As before, it was our church, under Mellberg's leadership, that was repsonsible for all of the arrangements, but it was emphasized that *everyone* was cordially invited to attend. There were many Klansmen among the members of other Protestant churches in the area. Those assisting in the service included Eugene Van Riper, lay preacher in charge of the Bernardsville Congregational Church, Rev. Greenley, and Bishop Bridwell of Denver. Automobiles bearing Klan members from neighboring states, and some from the midwest, began arriving in Basking Ridge by 3 A.M. Before daybreak Klan bugles sounded in Bernardsville, Liberty Corner, Far Hills, Millington and Stirling. Shortly thereafter, led by a band from Zarapath Academy and robed Klansmen, some on horseback, the orderly march westward on Oak Street began. Then promptly at five, as dawn dimmed the light from nine 40-foot crosses burning around the field, another bugle sounded and the service began. Again Carl Mellberg delivered the sermon. At the close of the service he was presented, by a hooded Klansman, with ''a beautiful Ku Klux Klan flag of black velvet, bearing a white cross studded with jewels''. Gratefully accepting it, Mellberg said he would always cherish it and would ''keep it floating from the pulpit at every service''. And according to accounts, he kept this promise.

By this time, as might be expected, there were those among our Bishop Janes members who were having some serious misgivings about our church's identification with the Klan and our ready acceptance of its support. There were those, too, who rejected the Klan and thoroughly disapproved of Mellberg's conspicuous role in its affairs. A few felt strongly enough about it to cancel their church membership, while some others simply withdrew their presence and support, attending other churches pending a return to normalcy. But the number of objectors was surprisingly small. Most of the congregation and its leaders seem to have accepted quite willingly, and even with enthusiasm, this rather exciting new concept of the church militant. Certainly young Mellberg was a dynamic leader who was getting things done, and there could be no doubt that he was attracting a lot of attention.

The minutes of the Official Board in the spring of 1925 contain several items of interest:

> April 6, 1925: ''Resignation of Mrs. Zanders as Financial Secretary accepted. Motion made that Verna Pope fills the vacancy, which was accepted . . . Motion made that all money in Bdsville Bank be placed in any bank that treasurer desires''. (It

was placed in a Morristown bank, probably for some reason associated with Klan activities).

April 17, 1925 (special meeting): "Motion made that a committee be appointed for the arrangements of a Flag Day Carnival to be held June 13th. Committee being heads of all Departments who can chose their own chairmen . . . Motion made that Bishop Janes Church father the picture "My Friend the Devil" to be shown in the Liberty Theatre, Bernardsville sometime during May."

May 19, 1925: "Motion made to secure 250 posters for the Carnival to be made similar to those last year. To be secured by Mr. Mellberg. . . . Motion made we charge 35¢ for adults and 25¢ children for the motion picture held at the Carnival".

The Flag Day affair that year, again held on the church grounds, was bigger and more successful than the first had been, drawing a large crowd. There were games, contests, patriotic speeches and a picnic supper. The program also featured a parade, motion picutres and a popularity contest (for men and women), with the final counting of votes being taken at 10:30 P.M. Then the long day was climaxed with — fireworks!

The trustees held only one meeting that year, in May, when they re-elected Dave Moore for another term as their president, Charles Allen as secretary and George Bender as treasurer. At this meeting they were advised that payments to Mr. Craig, our sexton and cemetery superintendent, for salary and out-of-pocket expenses, were far in arrears; they now owed him $613.41. And it was not until four years later that this debt would finally be cleared.

One of the projects undertaken that summer was the painting of the parsonage. This was initiated by the Ladies' Aid when the ladies voted, at their April meeting, that "the Ladies' Aid buy paint for the parsonage and the men of the church put it on". Apparently the men were willing, but the ladies were dilatory, because the Official Board, in May voted that "the secretary inform the Ladies' Aid the men are waiting for the paint for the parsonage". Still, for some reason, perhaps because funds were low, the ladies delayed. The record of their May meeting, two weeks later, states that "buying of paint discussed and laid over". Two months passed, with still no paint, and it seems that by this time the men had lost interest. At the August Board meeting Mrs. Gutleber was appointed to "convey report to Ladies' Aid relative to painting the parsonage". The ladies must have gotten the message promptly, because when they met a few days later they voted "that the Society employ Mr. Lewis Craig to paint the parsonage at $55 and to purchase paint at cost from P. C. Henry & Co. at $3.25 per gallon, also putty". And that's how the parsonage finally got painted.

In May the Official Board voted their approval of the organization of a Boy Scout troop, with the pastor to serve as its leader, and later that summer a

junior choir was formed. There was the traditional Fourth of July dinner and festival, but the attendance wasn't as large as it had been in earlier years, prob ably because it followed so soon after the big Flag Day event. The usual Harvest Home supper was held in October, and the annual Donation Day supper in November.

It must have been about this time that there was trouble with the church tower. One day one of the men happened to be working on the roof near the tower when the bell was being rung, noticed that the tower structure seemed to be swaying, and became concerned. The firemen were called in to make an inspection, and advised that there was a dangerous structural weakness here that should be corrected. The stone columns supporting the arch had been built with internal reinforcement, but the swinging of the heavy bell, over the years, had weakened them.

What to do? There certainly wasn't any money to pay for rebuilding the tower now. But they *could* stop ringing the bell if necessary. For weeks the problem was pondered, while the bell remained silent. Then it occurred to someone that the bell didn't have to be *swung* to ring it; you could attach a rope to the clapper and swing that against the bell, while the bell itself remained stationary. This idea was tried out, and seemed to work pretty well, so was adopted as a temporary expedient. As with so many "temporary" solutions, it was to last a long time. For more than twenty years our bell would be used sparingly and with caution, in this manner, until a later pastor would face up to the problem and have it remedied.

With the coming of fall, efforts were again directed at building up the Sunday evening services, with the result that attendance at these services often exceeded that at the morning services. Beginning in September, Mellberg also initiated a series of "church nights" on the first Friday evening of each month. Another innovation later that year was an early (6 A.M.) candle- light service at the church on Christmas morning, following which sandwiches and coffee were served.

That the ties between the church and the Klan remained strong is evidenced by these items from the minutes of the Official Board's meeting in November:

> "Motion made and seconded that an invitation be made to the 3 Klans of Somerset County and the allied organizations to be present with us in full regalia on the 22nd of November when Arthur H. Bell will be the speaker of the evening".

Klan activities in the area had by now become rather commonplace, and often were not considered newsworthy. One that received front page attention in the paper that fall, however, was a huge Klan gathering at their Owanamassee Country Club in Pluckemin on Labor Day weekend. The crowd of 10,000 or more Klansmen and their families coming from all parts of the state for a weekend of festivities had caused great traffic jams in the Somerville area. But it

was a well behaved crowd; no disorders were reported. The following weekend another large group of candidates was initiated on the Robinson farm in New Providence.

It appears from the records that this was another of those not uncommon periods in the history of our church when there was trouble in making ends meet. The budget for 1925-26 was only $2098, of which $1300 was for the pastor's salary. Still there was difficulty in getting enough money to pay current expenses, and a good deal besides was still owed to Craig. In September the Official Board voted that "$300 be taken from the Cemetery Fund, as this is for the land sold to Moffett", and the following month they voted that "enough money be borrowed from the repair fund to pay the coal bill".

There was some trouble at that time, too, with janitorial services. Some of our older members recall that Mr. Craig had by this time become rather indifferent to his responsibilities, leaving much of the work for his son to do. In view of the fact that the church owed him a lot in back salary, his attitude was no doubt justified.[2] At any rate, there were complaints, and a good deal of friction developed. At its July meeting the Official Board had voted to request that "the president of the Board of Trustees summon a meeting to consider the janitor situation". Apparently this didn't accomplish much, because at its November meeting the Board voted that "Mr. Moore instruct Mr. Craig to get into the church and stay until it is cleaned, outside of digging graves". By way of clarification and reinforcement, the minutes of its meeting the following January record that

> ". . . the past motion as to cleaning the church was to include the scrubbing and washing of the entire church: floors, seats and windows, which is hereby again ordered by the Official Board. The president of the Board of Trustees is authorized to deliver this motion".

Matters must have improved somewhat after that, but still the problem was not resolved. Nine months later, at the September 1926 meeting, the Board again voted to request the Trustees to "take some action on the dilatory of our sexton". After that there is no mention of this matter in the minutes until Craig resigned, a year or so later.

Again in 1926 there was the now-established big Easter morning sunrise service on the Whitnall tract, preceded by the pre-dawn bugle calls, the march to the meeting ground with flags and bands, and with robed Klansmen and their families from near and far much in evidence. After preaching the sermon, Rev. Mellberg performed a baptismal service. The attendance numbered about 3000,

[2] There was a further good reason for his indifference. When, in 1924, Bernardsville had become a borough and the Township government was reorganized, W. Burrows Craig had been elected (on the Democratic ticket) as Township Clerk. He was to most capably fill this office for 23 years, retiring at the age of 81. His minutes of the municipal meetings, with his personal comments injected, all in his beautiful Spencerian handwriting, are a real pleasure to read.

and Mellberg reported later, at the next Quarterly Conference, that "an offering of $292.77 was received". Interestingly, the Bernardsville News of the following Thursday made no mention of this service, which in the two previous years had been front page news. Instead, the paper gave a full account of the young peoples' sunrise service held at Duke Park in Somerville and attended by about 500 people. Maybe the editors had decided that the doings of the Klan should be given less attention and publicity.

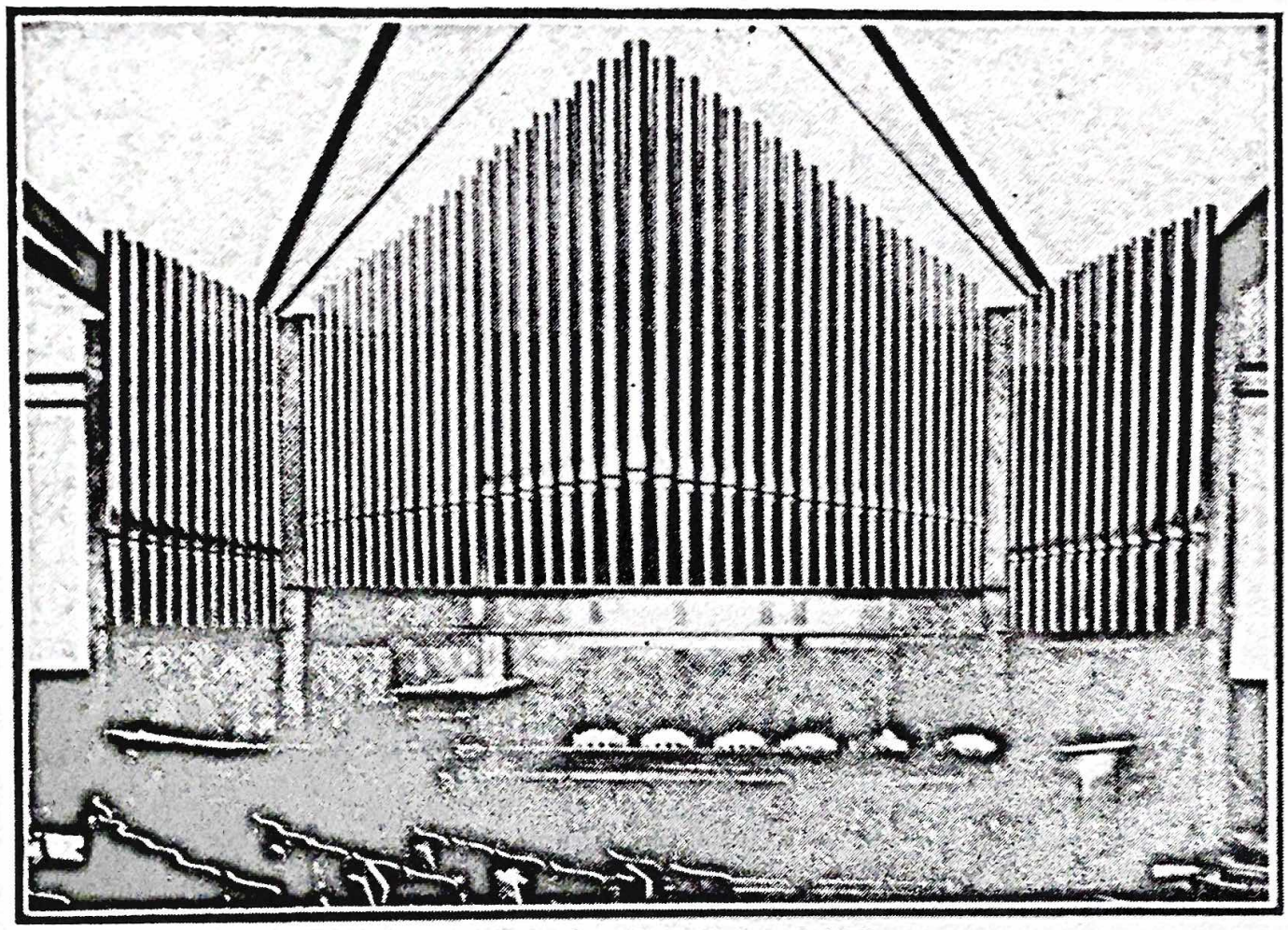
The Ladies' Aid Society, under its president, Mrs. Allen, continued its well-ordered activities. Largely due to their efforts, some of the parsonage rooms were painted and papered that summer, and the front porch got a thorough cleaning. At the Society's July meeting, which drew a record turnout of 25, the committee on furniture reported that it had purchased a "wicker suit" for the minister's home. The Fourth of July dinner that year was an unusual success, netting over $200. At the August meeting Mrs. Arthur Brush was elected their president. In October the ladies held their annual bazaar, charging the higher price of 75¢ for the supper, and the annual Donation Day supper was held in November.

The Pipe Organ

For some time there had been talk about the need for purchasing a pipe organ to replace the old foot-pedal reed organ that had served for decades, and a fund for the purpose had been started. Early in 1926 Mellberg had decided that the time had come for more positive action. Having quietly done some preliminary investigating on his own, he had called a meeting of the trustees in February to discuss the matter. There he advised the officials that he had located a used pipe organ that was available at a very reasonable cost and seemed to be just what we needed. It was a two-manual 14-stop Moehler instrument that had been used in a theater, and it was being offered for sale by a Mr. A. Rockefeller for the sum of $2500. He proposed that the church buy it, and that an additional $1000 be raised to cover the cost of not only the necessary changes to accommodate it but also a much-needed renovation of the 24-year-old sanctuary. After a lengthy discussion the Board agreed, and voted to authorize the purchase "providing the price covers a new casing for the front of the organ, and the price to also include delivery and installation". George Bender was appointed to take charge of the necessary carpenter work.

The trustees met again a week later to make detailed plans for the renovation and repairs, and voted to ask the Ladies' Aid to select and purchase new carpet for the aisles. At their August meeting they made plans for the upcoming organ dedication and took up the matter of engaging Mr. G. Clifford Terry as the new organist. In those days there were no music or worship committees; all such matters were the responsibility of the Board.

The big church event of that fall of 1926 was the dedication of our "new" organ. This occurred on Labor Day weekend, and former pastors and members



had been invited to attend. The actual dedication took place at the Friday evening service in which Rev. Appley, Rev. Clare Baldwin and Rev. Archey Ball, the District Superintendent, participated. On Saturday evening Prof. Alexander McCurdy of Morristown gave a recital on the organ, and on Sunday there were special services both morning and evening. At the evening service Rev. A. M. Young of Jersey City addressed a full house — largely Klansmen and their families — on "Americanism", and an offering of $101.60 was collected. We had our grand new organ, dominating the interior of the church and it sounded fine. Little did the congregation suspect then how demanding and troublesome it was to become in the years ahead.

At the meeting of the Quarterly Conference held in December, Mellberg, in one part of his written report, commended the congregation for its fine support of the project:

> *"A complete harmony has prevailed and every member has proven their whole-hearted cooperation, both financially and physically. Several of our leading men of the church, at the close of a full day, came to the church and completed the platforms, built steps and completed the choir rail with absolutely no cost to the congregation".*

The itemized costs of the project he gave as follows:

14-stop Moehler organ with case and pipes	$2500.00
Painting and varnishing of woodwork	840.00
Carpet for aisles and platforms, cushions, etc.	612.35
Carpenters' labor and materials	126.02
	$4078.37

And continuing,

> *"Of this amount, $2074.80 has been paid in cash, leaving a deficit of $2003.57. A total of $1914.60 has been thus far pledged toward this enterprise, of which $1061.60 has actually been paid in".*

As was generally acknowledged, a large share of the cost of the new organ came from offerings received at Klan-supported meetings and services, and it was commonly said that "the Klan bought us our new organ". Later records reveal that for two or three years there was some trouble in getting the organ to function properly, payments to "Mr. Rockafellow" were deferred from time to time, and it wasn't until three and a half years later that the organ debt was reported cleared.

Shortly after the organ dedication services, in which he had taken part, Rev. Mellberg, Sr. died, and his body was interred in our Evergreen Cemetery. The congregation, of course, mourned his passing. The house on Hillside Terrace was sold, and the pastor's mother moved into the parsonage with her son and his family.

At their September meeting the Official Board voted to authorize Mr. Moore "to purchase coal wherever possible except Conkling Lumber Co., because of Mr. Ellis' cursing the church". Mr. Ellis must have been one of those who spoke out against the Klan, and perhaps it was Mellberg, more than the church, that irked him.

The church budget for the year 1926-27 was set at $2648, an increase of 25% over the previous year's. The $1526 "for ministerial support" was allocated as follows: pastor's salary $1300, District Superintendent $60, Conference Claimants $120, and other Conference funds $46. Current expenses, budgeted at $1122, included these items: light $100, coal $225, water $25, sexton's supplies $10, and "pipe organ necessities" $400. Benevolences, in those days, were not a budgeted item. But there was a benevolence fund, with a separate treasurer, and some members contributed faithfully to that fund, with monthly receipts averaging around $25. Records show that in the 1928-29 year benevolence giving totaled $317.30. Though the church debt was small and the budget very low, still there was always trouble in making ends meet. At their November meeting that fall the Board of Trustees voted to "make arrangements to take a note for $1200, and to draw interest from the cemetery's perpetual care fund to pay interest and principal (on the note) from time to time as needed".

When the Official Board met in December Mellberg proposed, and the Board approved, what he described as a plan for "reviving an old Methodist organization scheme — the class meeting — under a new name". The entire church membership, then numbering 150, was to be divided into twelve groups, or "clubs", each to be named after a month of the year. The intent, as Mellberg explained it, was "to stimulate fellowship and fraternal spirit, and to provide a regular program of inter-visitation, with particular need to those who are ill and in need of help". But there were other objectives too, it seems. Under the rules adopted, each club was required "to provide an event of their own choice, to fall upon the last Friday of each month, their event to be named after their month, and the proceeds derived to be forwarded to the Financial Secretary of the church and disbursed upon present indebtedness". The winning club at the end of the year (the one that turned in the most money) was to be banqueted "by all those who fall short of this honor".

For the next several years this plan worked quite successfully, with the "monthly clubs" sponsoring a variety of money-raising affairs ranging from beefsteak suppers to motion picture entertainments and turning over to the treasury profits ranging from $10 to a high of $243. Records show that in the 1928-29 year total receipts from this program amounted to $531.

Again that year an early morning service was held at the church on Christmas day. As Mellberg later reported,

> *"The entire church was lighted by candlelight exclusively and was well filled. At the close of the hour we circled the church auditorium and sang "Christ for the World We Sing", and then "Blest Be the Tie That Binds". This was undoubtedly one of the most beautiful services to my mind that has ever been conducted since the beginning of my pastorate here".*

At their January meeting in 1927 the Ladies' Aid Society voted to buy new silverware for the church, using money brought in from their "Rainey Day Bags". Two months later the purchase had been made, and the committee responsible was given a vote of thanks for "their good buy". They had bought it all for only $55. It was decided, then, to have each piece monogrammed, and after some discussion it was agreed to use the initials M.E.L.A. In case you're wondering, this stood for "Methodist Episcopal Ladies' Aid".

For some years it had been customary to hold union services with the neighboring Presbyterian congregation on perhaps one Sunday evening each month during the fall and winter months. But it seems that by the winter of 1926-27 some doubts were being expressed as to the advisability of continuing this joint venture. The Presbyterians in general, like most other churches in the area, looked with disfavor on the Klan and its doings, and probably didn't care to be involved in Mellberg's "100% American" meetings. From the minutes of two of the Official Board's meetings we learn what happened:

February 7, 1927: "Motion that the same committee that were put on before to see about continuing the Union Services with the Pres. Church go to see Mr. Bennett personally and state what the feeling of our board is and see what he wishes to do".

Apparently this didn't help matters, for we find three months later:

May 2, 1927: "Motion that we have the secretary write to Mr. Bennett that we, the members of the Official Board of the Bishop Janes Methodist Church, feeling that the spirit of the community services that has prevailed for some time does not warrant continuing of same, and therefore we wish to withdraw from same".

It's not hard to understand why the other churches in the community frowned upon some of the things our church was doing under Mellberg's leadership. And of course young Mellberg himself had his personal detractors in the community, who sharply criticized both his principles and his tactics. But this didn't deter him. It is said that on occasions he even berated from the pulpit his "weak-kneed colleagues" around him.

The Official Board voted in March to request of the District Superintendent that he be returned for another year, and in April the Ladies' Aid held a "reception" for the Mellbergs, celebrating their reappointment. Being still a student, Mellberg had not yet been admitted to membership in the Newark Conference, but he was working on it. The Official Board voted, at their April meeting, that "Mr. Allen be appointed a committee of one, with power to appoint as many others as he may need, to assist him, and that he arrange a meeting between the District Superintendent and the Bishop in reference to the Cross (KKK) and the lack of admittance of our pastor to the Conference.".

It was in the spring of 1927 that the village green in Basking Ridge officially became public property. Finley Avenue in the center of town had been graded, improved and paved — for the first time — the year before. The island green, which had been a part of their property, was deeded to the Township by the Cerino brothers, whose grocery and general store occupied the building opposite, now (in 1983) occupied by Burgdorff Realtors and others. The deed stipulated that a flagpole or a war memorial, or both — but nothing else — might be placed on that plot of ground.

Another step in forward progress that spring was the announcement by the New York Telephone Company that the phone system in the area was being modernized. There would be "no more cranking and carrying of batteries by telephone users". To get the operator and give her the number being called, one would henceforth need only to lift the receiver.

The "fourth annual" Easter sunrise service in 1927 was by far the biggest ever, before or since. It drew an attendance estimated, by the News, at from ten to twelve thousand persons — probably the largest ever assembled in the

Township[3]. And the entire service was under the direction of Bishop Janes Church. Cars filled with Klansmen and their families from all the neighboring states and as far away as Florida, Texas and California began arriving in the village late Saturday night and, with all the excitement generated, most of the young people in town, watching from their bedroom windows, got little sleep that night. There were more than 3500 automobiles (according to the News) parked or still milling about in our town and the neighboring roads and fields. But it was an orderly crowd; no rowdiness was reported. At 4 A.M. bugles sounded in Basking Ridge, Bernardsville and all the nearby towns, and a half hour later the march from the green to "Sunset Hill" on the Whitnall farm began. In the line of march were three or four thousand Klansmen in full regalia, along with thousands of other men, women and children, accompanied by bands and singing groups from Allentown, Perth Amboy, Zarapath and New York City. The principal address at the 5 A.M. service was delivered by none other that Hiram Wesley Evans, the Imperial Wizard (national head) of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, — his first visit to this area. The collection taken up following his address amounted to $1064, and all of it was turned over to the Bishop Janes Church. After the service a free breakfast was served at the church, and the visiting Klansmen then went on to their Owanamassee Country Club, where another Easter service was held.

At the July meeting of the Board of Trustees, W. B. Craig resigned as sexton and cemetery caretaker, stating that the church still owed him $403.07, a debt that was acknowledged but wouldn't be paid in full until eighteen months later. But it wasn't until the following spring that another man was hired for the job.

The Ladies' Aid Society voted again that summer not to hold a Fourth of July dinner. It seems that with all the other interests in the growing community interest in this affair was declining; it was a tradition that had had its day. The Firemens' carnival, held annually early in August had now become the big summer event of the community. The program of events for the carnival that summer included the dedication of the new flagpole on the green, with speeches, band music and singing.

At the first Quarterly Conference, held in September, Mellberg read his usual written report, which included the following items:

> *"In the first six months of this conference year we have met all current expenses, completed payment on last year's coal bill, and have also paid $744.39 on the organ indebtedness. This leaves only $1525 yet to be paid on the splendid renovating program of the year."*
>
> *"Upon discontinuance of the joint community services with*

[3] In his later report to the September Quarterly Conference Mellberg estimated the attendance at "about 20,000", but it is assumed that the lower estimate made by the News reporters may be more nearly correct.

the local Presbyterian church, the Bishop Janes Church began plans for a Community Night Service of its own, to be conducted on a monthly schedule. The real purpose of these Community Night Services has been to reach the non-church-goers of this vicinity."

"The attendance at the regular services has been maintained. Every effort has been made to avoid the customary 'summer slump' but it came just the same. Am pleased to say that our average attendance for morning worship is about 60, and for the regular evening service about 75. The Community Services have been attended by more than double the number at an evening service."

"Our village is showing signs of extensive growth and we, as 'The Church with a Heart in the Heart of the Ridge' (a slogan he was promoting), *are endeavoring to assume our part of this advance. The deepest concern of our constituency and the pastor is to deepen the spiritual wells of understanding and to pray to God to fill them to overflowing".*

For their vacation that year the Mellbergs toured a part of Canada in their "camper". Theirs was one of the first vehicles of this kind in the area, and the Mellbergs, being fond of both auto travel and camping, used it whenever possible. The young pastor was also an enthusiastic and accomplished photographer, taking movies wherever he went. It was no surprise, then, that one of the Sunday evening services that fall featured movies of their Canadian trip.

Another important community event that November was the dedication of the war memorial on the village green. Rev. Mellberg presided at the unveiling ceremony and read a long poem which he himself had written for the occasion — and which was published in the Bernardsville News the following Thursday.

At its January meeting in 1928 the Ladies' Aid Society elected as its president for the coming year Mrs. George Abel. Mrs. Arthur Bush, their beloved former president, had died in December and her death was mourned by the whole congregation. For their other officers they chose Mrs. Harrison Wright as vice president, Mrs. William Zander as secretary, Mrs. Arthur Roff assistant secretary, Mrs. James Baird treasurer and Mrs. P. M. Gutleber assistant treasurer. At the same meeting it was proposed that, as a money-making project, they make a quilt bearing the names of all members of the congregation. Each subscriber would purchase a "block" upon which his or her name would be stitched. The project was quite a success, netting the ladies $104.25. Later, when the Mellbergs left Basking Ridge the quilt was presented to them as a memoir of their years at Bishop Janes. Fortunately, through the kindness and generosity of their daughter Betty (now Mrs. Arthur Reagan), who was born in our parsonage, we now have that quilt as one of our prized heirlooms. It is

displayed occasionally at church functions, and careful inspection reveals that some of the 503 names it carries were not Bishop Janes members. In fact some of the blocks they sold carry names of Presbyterians; and their money was perfectly acceptable.

The Official Board, at its January meeting, voted to recall Carl Mellberg for another year, and further agreed that "It is our desire that the Conference recognize him if he desires to enter the Conference". And when that body met a few months later Mellberg *was* ordained deacon and was admitted to membership on trial. The fourth Quarterly Conference was held later that month, and the large attendance of 120 (about three quarters of the membership) may have been due in part to the fact that it was preceded by a free supper. The meeting unanimously endorsed the Board's request for Mellberg's return and voted him a $200 increase in salary. He would now be paid $1800, including a $300 allowance for parsonage rent.

Later that same month the new high school in Bernardsville was formally opened, though it had already been in use for several months. It was in January, too, that one of our former pastors, Horace Dewey, returned with Mrs. Dewey to pay us a visit. He conducted an Epworth League service, but it seems he was not invited to share the pulpit.

Late in March came the announcement, on the front page of the News, that Rev. Mellberg had again been returned as pastor of Bishop Janes Church. The article also announced that the church was contemplating the building of a "community house" on its property and also planning to build a dining room and kitchen in the church basement. Both of these proposals had indeed been made by our energetic young pastor and were being considered. The Official Board, at its June meeting, voted approval of the concept of a community house "on the basis as extended to us". There was a good deal of discussion about the idea, and Arthur Starin, the son of our Minnie Starin and a promising young architect in town, was consulted about preparing the plans. But the project never got beyond the proposal stage.

The idea of building a new dining room and kitchen in the cellar space below the Sunday School room, though, found much active support. This was something the church had needed for a long time; there had never been any kitchen facilities, as we noted before. This would be a good way to provide them, and most of the work could be done by volunteer labor, with a minimal capital outlay. The Ladies' Aid, of course, strongly encouraged the project, appointing a committee "to look over the basement in view of a kitchen in the future". The "basement" at that time was nothing more than a partially excavated space, with a rough dirt floor. More excavating would have to be done and a floor, ceiling, partitions, utilities and fixtures would have to be installed. Also a new entrance from the outside, as well as an inside stairs down from the Sunday School room, would have to be built. Not a small undertaking. But it was decided to go ahead with the work and the Official Board appointed George Abel,

one of our trustees and an expert carpenter, as chairman of the "basement renovation committee". Work didn't really begin until the following spring, however, and was to continue more or less steadily for two years.

The "fifth annual" Easter sunrise service, in 1928, was held at the usual time and place, but this time the Klan was little in evidence. By now both its influence and its activities throughout the country were on the wane. Again bugles sounded before dawn, and at 4:45 A.M. the march from the church began, with a fife and drum corps from Perth Amboy leading the procession. By today's standards the attendance at the service was still huge, about 2000, but compared with that of a year before it was far smaller. Mellberg addressed the assembly, but the sermon was preached by Rev. H. A. Bente, of Flushing, N.Y. Free refreshments were served at the church afterwards.

The following week the Mellbergs were again honored by a reception given at the church. In May the trustees voted to install a 4-foot wide concrete sidewalk on the Finley Avenue frontage of the church property, to replace the existing gravel walk. The cost would be $1 per running foot.

Our 75th Anniversary

The big Church event of 1928 was the observance of our 75th anniversary. Both our 25th and 50th anniversaries had passed by unheeded, but this one was to be properly honored. Its celebration was a three-day event, held on the first weekend in June, and Rev. Mellberg himself headed the committee arranging it. The Ladies' Aid assembled a museum of memorabilia — "old furniture, pictures, books and a communion set" — which they put on display in the Sunday School room, where they served refreshments to visitors. The Bernardsville News that week devoted several full columns, including one on the front page, to a review of the church's history and the listing of the names of all 620 persons who had, at one time or another, been members of the church. It's interesting to note that, of those whose names were listed then, in 1928, the following are still (in May 1983) on our membership rolls:

Edna Baird Bockoven	Audrey Garrabrant Florio
Howard Brush	John Pope
Dorothy Tingley Brush	Mabel Wickenhaver Pope
Blanche Homler Bornmann	Jessie Brush Reiff
Louis Clark	Marion Dayton Turner

The Friday evening service that weekend was designated as "Past Pastors' Night", and William Coeyman, Mellberg's immediate predecessor, was the principal speaker. On Saturday afternoon at 2:30 there was an organ recital by Professor Lewis Moore of New York City. This was followed by a "reminiscences hour", at which Rev. Appley spoke. Then at 5:30 there was a congregational supper, with a song service led by John Scott of radio station

WAAM, and an address by C. C. Woodruff of Orange, N.J., the son of one of our former pastors. Sunday was designated as "Community Sunday". There was a community service in the morning, an Epworth League Rally at 5:30, and a luncheon served by the League at 6 P.M. At the evening service, which began with a recital by our own organist, G. Clifford Terry, Rev. Mellberg delivered the sermon. All in all it was a most fitting observance of our first 75 years.

* * *

Church finances continued to be somewhat shaky, and at its July meeting the Official Board voted to borrow another $150 from the cemetery perpetual care fund for the payment of bills. Nevertheless it was decided to build a new garage for the parsonage, and at their next meeting they voted "to empower the Trustees to issue a note to cover cost of garage without interest". The invaluable George Abel built the double garage, the same building, but with several major overhauls, that still (1983) stands on our property. The smaller garage that it replaced, built five years earlier for Coeyman, was moved to Evergreen Cemetery, where it was used as a tool shed until destroyed by fire. The cost of the new structure proved to be surprisingly small. The itemized bill that Mr. Abel submitted several months after completing it, covering all materials and labor, amounted to only $369.50. From this he very generously deducted $169.50 as a personal contribution, making the net cost to the church just $200. It appears, however, that even the note covering this bill went unpaid for several years.

Early in August the Ladies' Aid Society surprised the Mellbergs with a party in honor of his 29th birthday. In October they held their customary Harvest Home fair and bazaar, and in November there was the traditional Donation Day dinner. At Thanksgiving time they presented the Mellbergs with a "Thanksgiving box".

The once-a-month Sunday evening community services were resumed again in October. With interest running high, that election year, in the Hoover - Al Smith presidential campaign, Mellberg, in characteristic fashion, chose as his subject for the first service the topic "Why I Oppose Alfred E. Smith's Candidacy for the Presidency". That pretty well insured a full house that evening.

The energies of our young crusading pastor were indeed boundless. Along with conducting the affairs of the church while still attending school he still found time for other extra-curricular activities. In early November a front page story in the News reported that "C. C. E. Mellberg, director of the Sunday afternoon mass meeting in Kenilworth and pastor of Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church in Basking Ridge" had contracted with the New Jersey Broadcasting Corporation to conduct a Union Gospel Hour on station WIBS in Elizabeth daily, from 3 to 4 P.M. And apparently he did this daily stint on the radio until the following spring, when the program was changed from daily to

weekly on Saturday afternoon.

Late in 1928 the caretaker problem was finally solved, at least temporarily, when the Official Board voted to hire Paul Bettler as janitor for six months "for not more or less than $20 a month". At the same meeting the Board voted to again have a service at 6 o'clock on Christmas morning.

Church records and newspaper accounts indicate that 1929 was a relatively quiet year in church activities, compared with some of the preceding years. Contributing to this, no doubt, was the fact that the Klan was no longer a prominent influence and, with its membership rapidly declining, had virtually disappeared from the local scene. The "monthly clubs" of the church had also by now been discontinued, but the Sunday evening community services were still being held, and were well attended. All of the church organizations — the Sunday School, the Epworth Leagues, the Ladies' Aid Society and the Joy Bearers (another womens' organization) — were functioning smoothly, each with their usual program of activities. We find no mention, however, of a Mens' Club. Church membership had been slowly increasing over the past three years, and at the 1929 Conference was reported to be 170, up from 134 in 1924. Finances were still, as usual, a problem. At its January meeting — the only one recorded for that year — the Board of Trustees finally paid off the long-standing debt to Craig, the former sexton and caretaker.

The Easter sunrise service in 1929 was but a faint echo of the spectacles of some of the previous years. There was still a march from the church, with a singing choir, a brass band and a fife and drum corps from Woodbridge, to the 5:30 service on Sunset Hill. But the attendance, as reported by the News, was a much more normal "several hundred persons". The sermon was preached by Dr. Shaefer of New York City, and breakfast was served after the service, at the church.

At its April meeting the Official Board elected Mrs. A. Hartman (Blanche) Bornmann to serve as financial secretary and Mabel Clark to be recording secretary. Both of these very capable ladies were to ably and faithfully fill these positions for many years.

Work began in earnest, that spring, on the new dining room and kitchen in the church basement, and it continued through the year, most of the work being done by the men of the church. Meanwhile the ladies busied themselves with renovating and improving the parsonage kitchen. They not only installed a new range and water heater, but had the room painted, laid a new linoleum floor, hung new curtains, and even bought new chairs.

The Official Board, at its June meeting, voted a letter of thanks to "an anonymous friend" who had donated $500 to the church. This windfall came at a most fortunate time; part of it was used later for materials for the basement rooms. At the same meeting the Board voted to "have Mr. Mellberg order 200 pounds of frankfurters, 2000 rolls and 200 cases of soda for the day of the Firemens' 25th anniversary" (to be sold to the spectators at the parade).

It was in that summer of 1929 that construction began on the Lyons V.A. Hospital, located on "Knollcroft", the former Reynolds estate. Electrification of the Lackawanna was well under way, and the Liberty Theater in Bernardsville was entirely remodelled that summer, to show the new talking pictures. It boasted having "one of the best sound equipments in the country". In July the Federal government issued the new smaller paper currency, and a few months later, in October, came the Wall Street crash and the beginning of the Great Depression.

Further light on some of the year's activities is provided by several excerpts from the report which Mellberg read at the First Quarterly Conference, in October:

> *"The spiritual program of the church has been moving forward with casual steps. Divine worship has been well attended, but with no substantial increase during the past year. The midweek services have taken on new life by transforming them into discussion periods, which has enlivened interest and remarkably increased our attendance".*
>
> *"The community efforts of our parish have met with splendid results. Last month the local Fire Company attended our evening service with their families . . . Tonight the problems of our public schools will be presented by the New Jersey Deputy Commissioner of Education. All the teachers of the School District have been invited to participate".*
>
> *"The property itself has received and is receiving considerable attention in making it more worthy of the program this church is advancing. A new furnace has been installed in the basement, which also has been erected by volunteer help. This conference is particularly indebted to John Bailey, George Abel and a score of others who have faithfully worked on this task in order that it might become available for this very day. Many others have assisted in laying the concrete floor which has recently been completed. The side walls and the ceiling will be completed by Mr. Bornmann, Mr. Canning, Mr. Oscar Roff and other carpenters of the church. Mr. Arthur Roff has assumed the responsibility of wiring and installing fixtures in the basement, and Mr. Abel will complete the cellar steps and the main entrance door. Among others who have assisted in the success of this project are: Alfred Smith, Albert Bettler, Paul Bettler, Walter Bettler, William Bettler, James Brush, Benny Larson, Mr. Barnes, Douglas Wright, Charles Brown, William Burd, Fred Reed, J.H. Clark, Chris Emde, David Moore, George Kagan, George Riker and others whom I cannot at this moment recall. The recreation rooms un-*

doubtedly will be completed by the end of this year and then a new effort will be made to reach every young man and young woman of the Ridge for a recreational program.''

The work was not completed by year's end, though, because most of it had to be done nights and weekends, and progress was understandably slow. The Epworth League's oyster supper, held late in February, was served in the ''Chapel'' because the new rooms were not yet ready.

A revealing item is found in the minutes of the Official Board's November meeting. That body agreed, and so voted, that ''as the Cross (KKK) that was in the church has been taken down, to leave it down''. Thus, it seems, the last vestige of the Klan disappeared. And it appears that, with its demise, our relations with neighboring churches were improving. For it was at a union service with the Presbyterians late in March that Rev. Mellberg made the announcement that he was leaving his pastorate at Bishop Janes. A few days later came the official announcement that the Conference had appointed him to the church at Dickinson, on Staten Island.

So ended what was probably the most unique and certainly the most controversial pastorate in our history — a period of remarkable happenings, but one that some would prefer to forget. Carl Mellberg was surely a remarkable young man, energetic, ambitious and unafraid, but just as surely his motives and methods were sometimes questionable. He had his loyal followers, but also his enemies. Some of the latter held that his sermons were ''a small amount of revivalism with a great deal of vituperation''; that ''his proselytizing for the Klan was founded on the fact that he received five dollars of every ten-dollar membership fee'', and that he defiled the pulpit with derogatory racist stories and anecdotes. It was said that at some Sunday evening services ''he would send the collection plates around two or three times if he didn't think the crowd was yielding enough money''. No doubt some, at least, of these criticisms were well founded. But even his worst enemies would have had to admit that he was an able organizer, consistent and indefatigable. We find no reason to doubt that he was sincere in his beliefs, though unorthodox they were. And the improvements made to our church building during his six years must be credited largely to his forceful leadership. It's surprising, in view of all the conflicts and tensions, that there were not more serious fractures within the congregation, and that church membership, instead of falling off, increased by more than a quarter.

The 1930 Conference which assigned Mellberg to his new charge also admitted him to full membership. That same year he received his A.B. degree from Upsala College, and subsequently a B.D. degree from Drew. Five years later he was to be awarded an honorary Ph.D. degree by Webster University in Atlanta, Georgia.

After leaving Basking Ridge Carl Mellberg served for two years in Staten Island churches, then at Woodbridge for four years, High Bridge for three years, and Springfield for two years. Having become, in 1933, a first lieutenant

in the U.S. Army Reserve, he entered active duty as a chaplain with the armed forces in June 1941 (before Pearl Harbor) and served in that capacity until June 1949, reaching the rank of colonel — convincing evidence of his "Americanism". On one occasion he parachuted into a jungle valley in New Guinea to minister to the survivors of a crashed C-47 who were marooned there.

After the war he was assigned as pastor of the Simpson M. E. Church in Paterson, where he served eight years, then to St. Paul's Church in Newark, which was his pastorate from 1954 until his retirement in 1959. Then the Mellbergs, still fond of auto travel and camping, took off for California, in their 31-foot travel trailer and in the following years did a good deal of traveling, living much of the time in this trailer and using the home of their daughter Betty, in San Jose as a home base. Carl Mellberg died on July 2, 1966, and was buried in the Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno, California.

Dr. Raymond Neff, the author of Dr. Mellberg's memoir in the 1967 Conference Journal, attests to the fact that in his maturity he still retained his abilities as an organizer and leader:

> *"It was in the Newark church* (St. Paul's) *that I, as District Superintendent, had the opportunity of witnessing Dr. Mellberg's outstanding ability to organize a city church. It was a joy to hold his Quarterly Conferences and note the new life that had come to the church under his leadership. During his four years of ministry at St. Paul's the budget doubled and 144 new members were received".*

Yes, our thirty-seventh pastor at Bishop Janes Church, in spite of his earlier faults and biases, must have been, like many of our others, quite a man.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DESPERATE YEARS

1930 - 1938

ALTHOUGH there had been a great deal of activity during the Mellberg years — and those activities had been well publicized — this had not been a period of solid growth for the church. In spite of all the flag waving and hoop-la, under the surface there was dissatisfaction and dissension. Though the large majority of the membership had supported — or at least condoned — Mellberg's dynamic but radical philosophies, there were those who did not. Some of the more conservative and conscientious members, unable to accept his actions as consistent with the true intent of the church, refused to participate, and a few had withdrawn their memberships, at least temporarily. So, when he moved on, Mellberg left a church in spiritual disrepair and greatly in need of re-unification if it was to prosper.

This was a time of uncertainty, too — but on a much larger scale — for the country as a whole. The roaring twenties had come to an end, quite fittingly, with the Wall Street crash; the bubble of false prosperity had burst. In the spring of 1930 some city dwellers had already begun to feel the effects of that catastrophe, though most people were still expecting an early return to normalcy. And small rural communities such as ours had as yet been little affected. But not for long would this be the case. Soon the shock waves from the economic eruption would be felt everywhere. Hard times lay ahead, and our church, like most others, would be struggling to keep afloat.

A Personable Young Westerner

E. ALEXANDER GRAY 1930-31

Our next pastor, E. Alexander Gray, has, at this writing, the unique distinction of being our earliest pastor still living. He was a westerner, born in Seattle on February 4, 1904. After three years at Maple Valley High School and a year at Pacific College in that city he enrolled at the University of Washington, where he received his A.B. degree in 1926. While paying his way through college by summer work in logging camps (his father was a lumberman) he had become aware of the desperate need for Christ in the world, and had

decided to enter the ministry. So, while still in college, he was admitted to trial membership in the Puget Sound Conference. He served as student pastor of the Lakeside Methodist Church in Seattle and worked with the City Missions. In June of 1927 he married Gertrude Carlander of that city, and the young couple moved east, so that Gray could attend Drew Seminary. While still a student at Drew he served as student pastor for the "Mount Horeb Circuit", which included Martinsville, Springdale and Mt. Horeb. In 1929 he was ordained an elder and admitted into full membership in the Newark Conference, and the following year he was graduated from Drew, receiving his B.D. degree. It was in that same year, 1930, that the Conference appointed him to the Bishop Janes Church, his first full-time charge.

One of our older members, recollecting Gray's arrival in Basking Ridge, remembers him as "a most personable young man" (he was 26), and that "he brought an attractive young wife to the parsonage, and a very dear baby". This was the Grays' infant first daughter, Leslie Marie, born the previous September. Later, while serving elsewhere, the Grays were to have two more daughters, Janet Susan and Alyce Gertrude.

But this likeable young man was scarcely equipped to deal with the task of rebuilding that had fallen to him; he simply lacked the needed experience. In the opinion of one who had lamented the Mellberg regime, this wasn't to his discredit, for "Jehovah himself would have given up in defeat and moved on to greener pastures". Gray's lack of experience may have been fortunate in a way; he probably didn't realize the problems he faced. In any case, he enthusiastically set about his pastoral duties as an exciting challenge. Our older members also recall, incidentally, that "following the Mellberg pastorate much sorely needed work had to be done in the parsonage, and with no excess of funds the women of the church actually labored — and hard — to get the house ready for occupancy. It was a tremendous job!". However, the affairs of the church seem to have continued quite normally under the new pastor. The Ladies' Aid held frequent bread and cake sales that spring, sometimes in the Cerinos' store and at other times, with the coming of nice weather, on the church lawn.

The Grays soon made friends, especially with the young people, and it wasn't long before the boys of the church discovered that the new preacher was very fond of out-door life and sports. Before he had been here two months he took a group of them for a long hike and swim, and later that summer he led them on a two-day camping trip.

Gray took an active part, too, in the inter-community baseball league which flourished every summer in those days. He became so interested, in fact, that he was made president of the Morris-Somerset Twilight Baseball League, of which the Bishop Janes team was a member. Other teams included Bernardsville, Liberty Corner, Bonnie Brae, Peapack-Gladstone and Brookside. At the close of the season that year the annual banquet of the League, honoring the champions, Brookside, was held in the chapel of our church and served by the

Ladies's Aid. As a special treat for the boys, the speaker of the evening was a "pro" from the National League.

The graduating class at Bernards High, that June of 1930, numbered 64, and 19 students were graduated from the eighth grade at Maple Avenue school.

In August, at Rev. Gray's suggestion, the church sponsored its first clambake, an event that was widely popular in those days but was not yet common in our town. As Gray himself later related,

> *"Rev. Appley, then retired and living in Basking Ridge, was our inspiration for the event*[1]*. A friend, Rev. Greenwell of Middletown, N.Y., spent his vacations putting on clambakes for many groups. I arranged for the bake and did what I could, but he furnished the clams, the fish and the chicken. We dug the pit* (in the church yard) *and heated the rocks* (with a wood fire); *a process that required hours. He was a good organizer; he had the women* (of the Ladies' Aid) *pack the chicken, potatoes, corn, etc. in individual bags. Corn stalks were put over the hot rocks and then clams and fish, with the bags of chicken and vegetables on top, and then this was all covered over. He had asked me the exact time when we wanted to eat, and when he uncovered the pit at that time everything was perfect. He also brought watermelon, which he cut in a jagged pattern to serve first as decoration and later as dessert. It was quite an event."*

Everyone agreed that the affair was a great success, and it was decided to make it an annual event. For several years thereafter the Methodist clambake was an important date on the community calendar. Tickets were widely sold, and all were happy occasions, with one notable exception. We're told that one year someone furnished the wrong kind of stones, and some of them exploded, with sad consequences.

The Official Board met regularly each month that year, with from six to nine members faithfully attending. But the minutes of those meetings record, for the most part, only routine business. Under the new pastor our relations with the other churches in town were again on the mend, and on the first Sunday in October our church hosted a community evening service.

In November the new and nearly completed VA hospital in Lyons received its first patients. Fifty invalid veterans were brought to it, in two bus loads, from a government hospital in the Bronx.

In their report to the Fourth Quarterly Conference in December of 1930, the Ladies' Aid, through its new president, Jessie Zander, summarized its activities for the year:

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[1] Rev. Appley had had little in common with Mellberg, with whose tactics he strongly disagreed but he welcomed and soon made friends with his successor.

"Our Society is composed of 46 members, most of whom are actively engaged in the work of our programs . . . We have papered and painted the parsonage upstairs and down, and laid new floors in the hall and living room. This was made possible by one of our members, Mrs. Shurtz, who so liberally gave the material, and the work was done by Mr. H. Bornmann and Mr. Hicks, who made no charge for doing it. In all we spent $245.65 on the parsonage this year. We have no regular missionary society, but our Ladies's Aid, working with the second vice-president, has raised and paid $10 for the missionary collection. We gave a supper to all members of the church in January and also held a reception for our pastor and wife. We held our fall bazaar, the proceeds of which were $92.01. Besides taking care of our own bills for flowers, and plumbing in the parsonage, we have held bread and cake sales, Donation Supper, supper for the Baseball Boys, and gave two tons of coal. We have earned and turned over to the Official Board very near $200. At present we have no bills, and a balance of $162.51 in the treasury".

At the same meeting the report of the Epworth League was given by its president, Dorothy Tingley (later to become Mrs. Howard Brush):

"Our Chapter was reorganized on September 22nd, when new officers were elected. The present membership consists of 18 active members. We gave a very successful Halloween party and took in $24.06. At a rummage sale in Morristown we made $33.49. The above, with candy sale, dues and collections, brings a total of $87.27. With all bills and church envelopes to date being paid, we have a balance of $47.20. The League has its regular business meetings every month, also good attendance at Sunday evening services. Through the Missionary Department of the League, on November 2nd we gave a luncheon and had as guests Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths, missionaries from India. On December 7th we gave a luncheon and had with us the Christian Endeavor Society of the Presbyterian Church".

A great event in the life of the community occurred on January 6, 1931. It was then that thousands turned out to greet the first train to travel the newly electrified line of the "P & D" (Passaic and Delaware) branch of the Lackawanna. It was a grand, historic occasion — an "epoch-making event", in the language of the local press. A general holiday was declared, and towns all along the line were gaily decorated, schools and many businesses were closed, and everyone turned out to witness this miracle of modern science. It was a train of twelve cars that glided smoothly — and so quietly! — out of Hoboken and was greeted by cheering thousands at each town along the route. Tickets for this

historic ride had been issued to railroad officials, government v.i.p's and the local municipal "brass" all along the line, and the few that remained were very hard to come by. At each stop more of the privileged boarded the train, and by the time it reached the Basking Ridge station it was carrying more than 1500 passengers, many of them standing in the aisles.

Just a month later our church had a memorable occasion of its own, a big dinner celebrating the official opening of the finally completed new basement dining room and kitchen. This project, which had been occupying the spare time of some of the men of the church, off and on, for two years, and more recently had required a lot of the womens' help, too, had now, by dint of a great final effort, been accomplished. The Official Board sponsored a turkey dinner to mark the occasion. Two hundred pounds of prime New Jersey milk-fed turkey were purchased, and were roasted in home ovens and brought to the new church kitchen, where the rest of the feast was prepared. 250 patrons were served at this happy event.

It soon developed, however, that in spite of all the long hours of hard work, the new basement rooms were less than satisfactory. From the beginning there was trouble with water seeping through the walls and floors, especially in wet weather. Not infrequently the women working in the kitchen wore overshoes to keep their feet dry. Later this condition would be largely remedied, but for a year or two, because of the water problem, church dinners were served upstairs in the "chapel", with the food being prepared in the wet but usable kitchen downstairs and carried upstairs by the persevering ladies.

The Official Board, at its February meeting, moved a vote of thanks to the heirs of the Louise Mucklow estate for that lady's bequest of $500 to the church. This was a most welcome gift, and in those days an impressive sum. But it was soon disbursed in meeting some overdue bills and paying for some much needed repairs. As usual, the finances of the church were ailing and, with the depression deepening, the situation was not going to improve very soon. The incomplete financial records remaining to us indicate that in the early 1930's the annual local expenses of the church approximated $2700, including the pastor's cash salary of $1500 and the payment, sometimes delinquent, of $25 a month to our capable organist, G. Clifford Terry. But it was difficult to meet even these modest expenses, and there would be some years of even harder sledding ahead. The budget, when there was one, was made up, in a rather off-hand manner, by the consensus of several of the lay officials; not until a decade or so later would it be made the responsibility of a duly appointed finance committee. And the budget, in those days, did not reflect the philosophy of an expanding church program as it does now; it was hard enough to come up with a workable plan for simply getting through another year on the income optimistically anticipated.

Midweek services had, by this time, been discontinued, but Sunday evening services were held regularly, except during the summer, and often featured special attractions. In February, for example, the retired Rev. Appley gave two

stereopticon lectures, with "an excellent set of slides", on Lew Wallace's "Ben Hur". This, of course, was long before the movie of that story was made. Rev. Appley, as a hobby, had put together several such collections and his interesting presentations were much in demand throughout the area. On a Sunday evening in March the Epworth League presented a Bible play.

The Annual Conference meeting in 1931 came early, but even earlier, it seems, the Grays had decided that they wanted to return to the west coast. Whether or not Gray had become discouraged by the state of affairs at Bishop Janes we don't know. For an inexperienced young pastor he had done a good job at holding things together, and had made some noteworthy advances. According to Conference Journal statistics, our "resident" membership increased from 137 to 150 during his year with us, and Sunday School membership continued at about 110. And both of the Grays were well liked. But when a friend in the ministry in California wrote to him urging him to return west, he asked to be transferred to the Southern California Conference. Complying with his request, the Newark Conference, at its annual meeting, appointed Rev. George Magill as his successor at Bishop Janes, and in March the Grays left by auto for their new assignment in Fresno, California.

Rev. Gray is now (1983) retired, and he and Mrs. Gray are enjoying life in a nice inter-denominational community for retired ministers and missionaries in Claremont, California. Relating their experiences after leaving Basking Ridge, he has written,

> *"When we arrived in California . . . we were sent to Calwa, a railroad junction on the edge of Fresno. Here the church was to be closed, and the former minister had been given the parsonage furniture as part payment of his salary. We lived for a while at the home of the vacationing district Superintendent, then the ladies raised $100, and one way or another we managed to move into the empty parsonage. We had two wonderful years there, with a growing church. Then we were tempted, by a beautiful big brick church, to move to Parlier, California, and we received the appointment. We were there two years, too, but Parlier was a dying community. We should have stayed at Calwa".*

Gray's next pastorates included five years at Melrose Park Church in Los Angeles, eight years at San Fernando, three years at the Normal Heights Church in San Diego and two years at La Mesa. In 1953 he was moved to Phoenix, Arizona, where he was pastor of the Bethel Methodist Church for seven years. Then the Grays moved back again to California, where he served for five years as pastor of the church at Monrovia, near Los Angeles. Then in 1965 he was appointed to serve as Conference Pastor of Retired Ministerial Members and Their Families.

Since his retirement in 1971 the Grays have been enjoying life at Pilgrim

Place, in Claremont, "a religious and cultural center where some 300 men and women retired from Christian service throughout the USA and 26 foreign countries make their homes" on a tract of 32 acres. They are keeping happily busy there. In his most recent letter (October 1982), Rev. Gray reports that he finds time to play a little golf and do a little gardening, and that one of their occupations is the conducting of tours, for their group, to many parts of the world. In 1980 they visited Oberammergau, and in 1981, Alaska. In the summer of '82 the Grays toured Europe for six weeks with "another ministerial couple". Clearly, they haven't lost their sense of adventure.

At this writing Alexander Gray is the oldest of our still living former pastors. To him and his life companion we of Bishop Janes extend our best wishes for many more happy years.

A Patient, Persevering Man-of-all-work

GEORGE CURTIS MAGILL 1931-33

Our next pastor, the Reverend George C. Magill, was a much older man, 62 years of age when appointed to fill the Bishop Janes pulpit. He was born in New Hope, Pa., on August 28, 1868, and was a distant relative of the novelist James Fennimore Cooper. His daughter wrote, in his Conference memoir, that "his education centered around the State of New Jersey, where he attended public and private schools, Cooper Institute, Newark Technical School, and took courses at Rutgers University and Drew Theological Seminary". It seems that his early education was technical in nature, aimed perhaps at a degree in engineering; it wasn't until he was nearly thirty that he decided to train for the ministry. Some who remember him have the impression that he was at one time a stone mason, or at any rate had had experience in building construction.

In December 1897 Magill married Evalyn Beach, and to this union was born one daughter, Ruth Evalyn. Just one week before the wedding he had been granted a local preacher's license. Several years passed, however, before he decided to seriously study for the ministry and began to take courses at Drew, even though his wife discouraged such a move. She was not happy with the idea of becoming a preacher's wife. In 1909 he was ordained a deacon in the Newark Conference, and three years later was made an elder and admitted into full membership in the Conference.

His first appointment, in 1909, while still a student, was as a supply pastor at the Mt. Fern, N.J., church, which he served for one year. In 1912 he began a six-year pastorate in Paterson, where he was credited with having organized and built the Union Church (in Totowa Township). In 1918 he was moved to Grace Church in Newark, which he served for four years. Following that he was pastor for eight years — a long term in those days — at Ferry Church (later Grace Church) in East Orange, before coming to Basking Ridge.

Rev. Magill is remembered as a kindly, patient and dedicated person, altogether "a very fine man", and though lacking in the youthful ardor of some of his predecessors, was well liked by everyone. He drove a 1922 Model T Ford "flivver" and, if it was out of commission for some reason, refused to drive a car with a standard gear shift, preferring to walk instead. But it is said that he was "much encumbered by his family, and did all of his work without any help from them." It soon became evident that Mrs. Magill had little interest in her husband's work, being particularly distressed at having been moved to such a hick town as ours. Obviously she had never forgiven him for deciding to become a preacher. But the fact that their daughter Ruth was working as a private secretary for the Veterans' Administration and had been assigned to the new hospital at Lyons, so could now be living at home and close to her work, was a redeeming feature to this new assignment.

It became apparent, too, that the new preacher's wife had financial means of her own, having inherited from her deceased parents, and didn't have to make do on the meager salary paid by the church. The Magills brought with them their own house furnishings, which were much better and more complete than the rather scanty second-hand furnishings provided in the parsonage. So, before they moved in, all of the parsonage furniture had to be moved out. As one then-member of the Ladies' Aid Society recalls, "This proved almost disastrous to our Ladies' Aid, for after they left we could not locate much of the furniture; it had been sort of 'loaned out' to various parties."

In July, several months after the Magills' arrival, the church held its annual summer picnic at Far Hills fairground. Earlier that month the pastor and his wife had entertained as their guests some friends from one of his earlier charges, the Embroidery Club of Grace Church in Newark.

The trustees, at their July meeting, grappling with the ever-present problem of making ends meet, voted to borrow $200 from the cemetery's perpetual care fund interest account and $55 from the cemetery treasury for use by the church treasurer in meeting bills. By this time this had become an accepted and habitual practice. It seems that without Evergreen Cemetery and its depression-proof income, our church might have had to close its doors during those hard times.

It was in that same month of July, 1931, that the new Veterans' hospital at Lyons was officially dedicated, with about 5000 people attending the ceremonies.

The second annual clambake was held in August, and again was a big success, with more than 200 townspeople patronizing it, and net proceeds of about $150. And again that fall there was another outbreak of infantile paralysis in the area, with the attendant fears and precautions. When school opened, less than half of the enrolled children were in attendance; the others had been kept home by anxious parents. But after a week or so the situation improved and things got back to normal.

With the depression deepening, and more people losing their jobs or afraid

that they might, it was becoming harder to maintain the morale of the congregation, but Magill did his best. Writing later of his pastorate at Bishop Janes, he observed,

> *"I was very disappointed to find that there was no mid-week prayer service maintained at this charge. I tried in the fall to establish such a service, but it was not supported. I even tried cottage prayer meetings, but these likewise were not supported. It may be that the prayer meeting is old-fashioned, but it has always seemed to me that the spiritual life of a church is at a low ebb when a prayer service cannot be supported."*

And the old gentleman was right; our church *was* at a low ebb, not only spiritually but in other respects as well. But the Reverend Magill was not one to give up easily. If his people wouldn't come to mid-week prayer meetings maybe he could attract more of them to turn out at Sunday evening services. In September he initiated a six-month "Church Loyalty Campaign" to "make the services more inspiring". Each month there would be special sermons, stereopticon missionary lectures and, at one service every month, some lodge group or other organization such as the Masons, Eastern Star, school teachers or firemen would attend as specially-invited guests.

These efforts produced encouraging results. Attendance at church services, both morning and evening, began to pick up. But Mrs. Magill and daughter Ruth were not among the loyal supporters. Their attendance, even at morning worship, was by no means constant. This was duly noted and often deplored by the parishioners, especially the ladies. The wife and daughter were criticized when they didn't attend, and not very warmly welcomed when they did. Nevertheless the patient pastor continued to work diligently, albeit with only moderate success, and was gaining friends among the townspeople, many of them members of other churches.

The Ladies' Aid held its annual bazaar in October, and the Official Board sponsored the usual Donation Day dinner in November. It was in November, too, that Magill organized a dramatic society for the young people of the church. The fact that his daughter Ruth was interested in the drama probably had something to do with this; she did some of the coaching. For several years the Society met regularly on Friday evenings and was quite popular with the youth of the church.

For some months, now, there had been trouble with the pipe organ installed several years earlier, chiefly because it was a tempermental instrument, as all pipe organs are, requiring proper housing and "climate". And such a climate our church could not afford to provide. During the colder months in particular, with no heat in the sanctuary except on Sundays, it caught cold, its voice was affected, and strange sounds issued. In an effort to remedy the matter, and not realizing the real nature or full scope of the problem, the Official Board had the

walls behind the organ and the roof over it repaired, and at the Board meeting in December the music committee reported that "the organ is now in first class condition". How over-optimistic this statement was would become obvious over the next few years.

It was in the fall of 1931, only about six months after they had moved their belongings into the parsonage, that Mrs. Magill and Ruth decided they would have to have something better. So Mrs. Magill, probably with her daughter's help, bought a lot on West Craig Street and engaged Robert Gutleber, a local builder, to build a house for them there. No doubt Rev. Magill protested — mildly — but if he did he was overruled. Still, he didn't let it bother him too much.

Early in December the Official Board held a "get-together social" for the congregation in the Sunday School room, the first of a series of such socials to be held quarterly. There was group singing, there were instrumental solos and readings, and there was a treasure hunt. Also featured was the Bishop Janes Quartette: Dave Moore, Art Roff, Hartman Bornmann and George Magill himself. It was a lot of fun. And on Christmas morning, following the custom initiated by Mellberg, a 6 A.M. candlelight service was held in the church.

At the trustees' December meeting their treasurer reported that the cost of repairing the walls and roof enclosing the pipe organ, and having the organ repaired and tuned, amounted to $210. To meet this expense, only $110 had been raised to date, leaving a balance of $100 still "to be funded".

The report of the Ladies' Aid Society presented in December by their president, Jessie Zander, summarized the Society's activities since April 1st as follows:

> "We have held 9 regular and 2 special meetings, with the attendance of 20 to 25. We have a membership of 40 . . . We have been making improvements in the parsonage such as papering, painting, plumbing, electrical work, new shades, laying of a new floor (linoleum) in the dining room and finishing a room off of the kitchen, this amounting to around $200. We also have given to other funds, such as the piano fund, repair fund for the pipe organ, Mr. Gray's financial purse, Official Board two tons of coal, and proceeds of Donation Supper to Official Board, these amounting to around $107 . . . We have been having suppers, food sales, most every month through the year. We are now serving a hot lunch at our regular meetings each month, to the public . . . We have committees to visit newcomers and members, also send flowers to sick . . . We all are planning with the Lord's help on a big 1932."

The pipe organ was not the only thing troubling the congregation in those days; there was also the problem of water in the new basement rooms. The latter

was due largely to the fact that when these rooms were finished off little attention was paid to recognizing that the walls, when originally built, were not intended to enclose an occupied space but only to support the structure above, and consequently were not tightly sealed and lacked peripheral drainage of any kind. Magill, with his experience as a stone mason, no doubt diagnosed the problem. At any rate he, with other men of the church had, the previous fall, set about remedying the fault and by early February, after many hours of tedious manual labor, had completed their task. At its meeting that month the Official Board voted its appreciation for their work on this project to Mr. Smith, Henry Moore, Hartman Bornmann and Rev. Magill. One who was active in the church at that time recalls how "Mr. Magill himself pointed up all the stonework on every wall. His hours of labor there were too many to have been recorded, and I'm afraid much of it was done without any expression of gratitude by the rest of us".

So the basement rooms were, at least, greatly improved. Even before the work was finished the Ladies' Aid, in January, held a pancake and sausage supper there, and early in February, following its completion, was held the annual turkey supper. This was an important event, a George Washington dinner, held on February 17th in "the newly refurbished dining room". Members of the other churches in town were invited to attend, the waitresses were all dressed in Colonial costumes, and an orchestra played while the guests dined in "The Garden Room".

At its February meeting the Official Board voted to have heating pipes (from the steam boiler) installed in the organ chamber, and to keep the church heated. The pipes may have been installed, but in the light of later developments it seems doubtful that much heat was maintained in the church. That cost too much. Another matter of business at that meeting concerned the driveway then existing between the church and the parsonage and extending from Finley Avenue through to South Maple, with iron gates at the front of the church to close it off. This drive had been built thirty years earlier for access to the horse and buggy shed which stood back of the church and which had been removed during the twenties. It was, of course, a private drive, now used for access to the parsonage garage, but was sometimes used by the public as a short cut between the two streets. To maintain private ownership the law required that it be closed one day each year, and this the Board now voted to do, setting January 6th as the closing day. A third matter of business related to the renting of the parsonage. The Magill house on West Craig was soon to be completed and they would be moving into it. So a committee was appointed to handle the rental of the parsonage, a matter with which the congregation had had no previous experience.

What probably was Magill's most important accomplishment while at Bishop Janes was the revival of the long defunct mens' club — the forming of the new "Mens' Brotherhood". The organization meeting was held in early

March of 1932, and was enthusiastically supported. The men chose as their officers: Charles Allen, president; Erie Straight, vice president; Henry Moore, secretary, and George Bender, treasurer. In a business-like fashion, four working committees were also established, with these men as chairmen: Walter Vausse for the Evangelistic Committee, Hartman Bornmann for the Social Committee, Arthur Brush for the Boys' Work Committee, and Art Roff for the Membership and Visitation Committee. It was decided that the men would meet every two weeks, on the first and third Friday of each month, alternating business meetings with social affairs, and for several years that program was followed. They got off to a good start when it was found that there was a balance of $250 remaining from the earlier mens' club, now disbanded. (Fortunate that the trustees hadn't learned of this!) In April, the following month, the Brotherhood entertained as its guests the Men's Club of Magill's previous charge, Grace Church in East Orange, and two weeks later they traveled to East Orange for a return visit with that group.

Newark Conference, at its annual meeting in April, reappointed Rev. Magill to our church for another year, and the Ladies' Aid held a "reception" for the parsonage family, honoring their return. Miss Josephine Melick[2] was in charge of the program and gave the welcoming address, and Van Munger[3] led the assembly in the singing of folk songs.

So that spring the Magills moved into their new home on West Craig Street and the parsonage was advertised for rent at $45 a month. When no takers appeared the asking was reduced to $32 and tenants were found. The following January the Ladies' Aid, whose charge it was, agreed to reduce the rent still further — to $25 — during the winter months. Whether or not the higher price was restored the following summer we don't know. But we do know that much to the dismay of the Official Board the Township required that taxes be paid on this income-producing property. No one anticipated at the time that it would continue to be rented most of the time for the next ten years, sometimes to tenants who paid their rent by performing janitorial work in the church. Not until the Richards came, in 1942, would the house again be occupied by a Bishop Janes minister and his family.

* * *

Only the senior citizens of today remember very much about the Great Depression; most of the rest of us have only second-hand knowledge of those

[2] Miss Melick was to become one of our church's staunchest and most generous supporters. She was a Prudential secretary who, after retiring, lived with the Charles Allens, and the Methodist church was her great love. For many years she taught the adult Sunday School class and was much admired and respected. Years later her outstanding contributions would be memorialized when the basement assembly room in the new educational wing of the church would be named Melick Hall.

[3] Van Munger was the father of one of our present (1983) long-time members, Mrs. Ann Forsman. He was another of those valued members who gave most generously of his time and talents to help the church in many ways.

trying years. So, to provide a backdrop for the problems that our church — and most churches — faced in those days, a brief backward glance may be in order.

1932 was the real low point of the depression, the "cruelest year". Nearly 17 million men (out of a total population of about 124 million) were unemployed. Fortune magazine, in September 1932, estimated that 34 million men, women and children — nearly 29% of the population — were without any income whatever. And this did not include America's 11 million farm families, who were in dire straits. Wheat was selling for less than 25¢ a bushel, corn 7¢ a bushel, and cotton and wool 5¢ a pound. Sugar was bringing 3¢ a pound, and apples — if they were flawless — 40¢ for a box of 200.

There was no unemployment insurance then, and no Social Security. When a man lost his job he and his family were on their own, unless they could somehow get on the local relief rolls. Only 25% of qualified families got such help, which, in New York City, amounted to $2.39 a week for a family of four. Most of those without jobs were too proud, though, to undergo the disgrace of being "on relief".

Many of the creature comforts we now take for granted were rare, if not non-existent in those days. There were no frozen foods, no nylons, no Scotch tape, no power mowers, ball-point pens, interstate highways, credit cards or Xerox machines. And of course no TV. But somehow the middle class survived the decade with none of these.

Phonographs, known then as Victrolas or Gramophones — never as record players — had to be wound by hand. Electricity was available to only one American farmer in ten, and 75% of all rural families were without indoor plumbing of any kind. Insects were always a summer problem, both on farms and in cities. There was no DDT; the only preventatives were fly paper and a spray gun. ("Quick, Henry, the Flit!") A nickel could buy a candy bar, a Dixie cup, a loaf of bread, a cup of coffee, a local telephone call, or a copy of Saturday Evening Post, Collier's or Liberty magazine. And for a penny you could get candy, a pencil or a postcard. But wages had shriveled, too. In 1932 hourly rates were 10¢ in lumbering, 6¢ in brick and tile manufacturing and 5¢ in sawmills. In the sweatshops of Brooklyn 15-year-olds were being paid $2.78 a week, and in Connecticut it was authoritatively reported that there were more than a hundred shops paying as little as 60¢ for a 55-hour week.[4]

Locally, The Township Committee had voted, in January, to cut its own pay by 10%, and the school teachers agreed to take a cut in pay, too, so that taxes might be reduced a little. Prices at the grocer's and butcher's (supermarkets were as yet unheard of) were lower than they had been in years or would likely ever be again. The News carried ads for bread at 7¢ a loaf, butter at 29¢ a pound, iceberg lettuce at 10¢ a head, coffee at 25¢ a pound, and sirloin steak at 31¢ a pound. The new Ford V8's were selling for from $460 to $650, f.o.b. Detroit.

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[4] Source: William Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream*, published by Little, Brown & Co., 1973.

So, quite understandably, our church was feeling the economic pinch. Never in robust health financially, the patient was now gravely ill. We were beginning to scrape the bottom of the proverbial barrel. The "stated" cash salary supposedly paid to the pastor remained at $1500 per year, but during his first year with us it appears that Magill had received only about $1100, and during his second year the payments on his salary were spasmodic at best. He was getting paid when and if the treasurer had any money to pay him. Just how bad the situation became is evidenced by the recollections of one who was a member of the Offical Board at the time:

> *"We were wholly unable to meet our financial commitments, including the pastor's salary. At one of the Board meetings he dared to ask for some back salary. The answer given him was sadly shocking and apalling to most of us. It came from a leader in the church and was to the effect that Mr. Magill had a daughter working and she could take care of her father and mother. If ever a low spot was reached it was that night. I don't know how any of us were able to face that man of God again. But he forgave and labored on as before".*

And Mr. Terry, our capable and faithful organist, was not doing much better. His salary was still nominally $25 a month, but his pay too, if any, was usually two or three months in arrears. The records show that in the 1931-32 year he received, in all, only $200. Benevolence giving, in those days, was funded by separate pledges and seldom totaled as much as $300 per year. As for meeting our Conference obligations, during those depression years we never even came close. But our church was by no means unique in these respects. At the 1932 Annual Conference our District Superintendent had stated, in his report, "I regret to report that 9 out of the 52 churches in our district have found it necessary to reduce salaries, but most of these will come back when employment returns". However, the following year he observed that "It is no longer a matter of news to report decreases in salary".

Those were dark days for our struggling small church. It was a situation that would have made many pastors give up in despair. But not the Reverend Magill. He was often discouraged, certainly, but patiently and prayerfully he persevered. In the light of history it seems that we were indeed fortunate to have had such a man as our pastor in those trying times — a tolerant but persistent man of endless patience and undying faith. And fortunately, too, for all concerned, he and his family did not have to rely on his scant salary as a sole means of support.

That summer of 1932 Clifford Terry, our organist, having received no pay for some time, finally gave up in dispair. But fortunately we had among our most active members at that time a young lady, Mrs. Walter (Betty) Vausse, who had had musical training and played the piano. When, in January, Miss

Melick, also discouraged by the way things were going, had resigned as chairman of the music committee, Betty Vausse had been chosen to fill that position. Now, at the request of the Official Board, she further agreed, with some reluctance, to fill in temporarily as organist, doing the best she could to fill the gap until someone else could be found. She was to be paid the generous stipend of one dollar a Sunday. Years later she recalled,

> *"I can't remember being paid anything, but I'm sure that if I was, I left most of it in the treasury. The choir continued, but it was really a waste of time for them, because I could not, in even the smallest sense, teach or even conduct them. I had all I could do to get the right sounds out of the organ. So the choir soon petered out, except for Myrtle Hicks, who was our soprano soloist. She was an amateur like myself, but she had an exceptionally fine voice and she continued gladly to do solo work whenever called upon.*

When she had consented to take over, Mrs. Vausse didn't anticipate that she was to be stuck with the job for years, on a gratis basis and with an organ which was to become increasingly tempermental and unmanageable.

On the happier side, the church acquired, in the spring, at a bargain price, a pipeless warm air furnace that was installed, as an auxiliary heater, in the cellar below the sliding partition separating the Sunday School room from the sanctuary. This provided a much more responsive source of heat than the steam boiler, which was retained as the main source, happily relieving the ever-faithful and indispensable Dave Moore of his self-appointed job of getting the church warm before Sunday morning services. With no sexton to do such work — a luxury the church couldn't even contemplate — Dave had, for many years, been getting up long before dawn on winter Sundays and, regardless of weather, trudging to the church to start the coal fire and get steam up in the old boiler. Now, with a quicker-acting though still coal-fired pipeless furnace, he could sleep longer on cold Sunday mornings.

In spite of all the problems, though, church activities continued much as usual. In June Arthur Brush was again made superintendent of the Sunday School, and the Mens' Brotherhood organized a boys' baseball team. The trustees, at their June meeting, again voted to dig into the cemetery care fund interest account for $130 to pay the premiums due on insurance on church property. To pare costs, they decided to reduce the coverage on the pipe organ to $1000.

In July the annual church picnic was again held at the Far Hills fairground. The Men's Brotherhood and the Sunday School joined in organizing and promoting this affair, and the members of Grace Church in East Orange were invited to attend and participate.

At the Official Board meeting in September the board was informed that

the tenants of the parsonage, now successfully rented, had requested that the cellar walls be whitewashed and that the cellar floor be concreted. The matter was referred to the trustees, and eventually the work was done by several of the loyal men of the church under the expert leadership of — who else? — the Reverend Magill.

At Halloween time the young people of the Epworth League, together with the Epworth League of the Bernardsville Methodist Church, held a party in the Scheuerman house across the street from the church. This house, like others in town at that time, was rental property and was unoccupied at the time. The trustees, at their November meeting, again re-elected Dave Moore as their president, with Charles Allen as secretary and Hartman Bornmann as treasurer. And they voted to loan the church treasurer another $200 from the cemetery moneys. How long could this borrowing go on?

At that fall's elections Franklin Roosevelt defeated the unfortunate Herbert Hoover and the country was now hopefully awaiting the guidance of its new leader to set it on the road to recovery. In the meantime the Township had reduced its annual budget to $67,225, down $4000 from that of the previous year, and the Township school budget had been set at $130,000, which was a reduction of $30,000.

The provision of a much needed facility was initiated when the Ladies' Aid Society, at its November meeting, decided to do something about getting a toilet in the church, and appointed Mrs. Gutleber to "see about installing a rest room". Incredible as it may seem now, never had there been any such facility in the church. When it was built, in 1900, indoor toilets were a rarity indeed, and in the thirty years since, nothing had been done to update the building in this respect. On occasions some of the congregation had had to impose on the parsonage family — who took it as a matter of course — but now with tenants occupying the parsonage that convenience was off limits. So, over the next few months a small "secretary's room" off the rear entrance vestibule to the Sunday School room, was converted into a rest room, and the Ladies' Aid paid for it. It wasn't entirely satisfactory, though, because during the winter months, with little or no heat in the building, the plumbing frequently froze. Still, it served as the only such facility in the building for the next twenty-two years.

The annual Donation Day supper was held in the chapel on December first. The following week, in his untiring efforts to nurture the spiritual growth of the church, Magill held a "preaching mission", with a different out-of-town preacher occupying the pulpit each night of the week, and with special music at every service. The meetings were well attended, and results were encouraging.

The Men's Brotherhood continued its active program through the winter, meeting every other week. In January the Ladies' Aid Society, of which Betty Vausse was now president, served another of its pancake suppers, and in February the Official Board held its annual turkey dinner, another event that had become increasingly popular with the townspeople. Then on March 4th,

following FDR's inauguration, came the bank holiday, an event which even those who were only youngsters at the time will likely remember. Our community, though, was comparatively fortunate. The Bernardsville National Bank — the only bank in the area then — reopened for business just twelve days later.

The Annual Conference in 1932 was held during the second week of May. When the appointments were announced our delegates learned, probably as no surprise, that there was to be a change of pastors at Basking Ridge. Rev. Magill was assigned to the Cokesbury church, and our pulpit would be filled by Dr. James Henry MacDonald, a retired but very capable minister who was living in Plainfield. In view of our church's financial situation it was quite understandable that we were to be served, for a while at least, by a retiree. We had reached the point were we simply couldn't afford a "regular" full-time pastor.

The members of Bishop Janes Church deeply regretted that the kindly George Magill, whom they had come to respect and admire, would be leaving their pulpit. But they were pleased to learn that they wouldn't have to bid him farewell. He had decided — or maybe his family had — that he would continue living in Basking Ridge and would commute by auto to his new charge.

In spite of many obstacles, among them his own admitted limitations, he had done a good job, not only "holding the line" but making some real progress in his two years with us. According to the Conference Journals, both church and Sunday School memberships had shown some increases and, though grossly underpaid, he had managed to inspire the interests of both the men and the youth of his charge. In his own brief account of his Bishop Janes pastorate, found in our records, are these observations:

> *"As I look back at the two years spent at Basking Ridge and then look back on my work at other charges, I feel that very largely I have been marking time. I did, however, organize a mens' club . . . which has done some small things. We plastered, trimmed and decorated the* (church) *dining room in the basement, put a concrete floor in the parsonage basement, and did some other repair work . . . I have tried to organize a Junior choir. This succeeded as long as I offered cash prizes, but when the cash gave out the choir did the same . . . The last thing I have attempted to do was to organize the Epworth League. Just at present the prospects seem good, and my prayer is that the young people will take an active interest in the work of the League and be of great service to the church and to the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . I have had some very loyal friends who have stood by me through thick and thin during my pastorate here. To these I say, God bless you and keep you, and I am sure that they will be just as loyal to my successor, as they are just that kind".*

In the words of one of our most active members of those days, "Rev.

Magill, while with us, was loyal to all of the precepts and programs of the Methodist Church, and led us into all of them with some success. But we never knew whether or not he was disappointed with us, for he just kept plugging in his own devoted way".

After serving a year at Cokesbury he was assigned again, for a second time, to occupy the pulpit of Grace Church in Newark for another year, but he continued living in Basking Ridge. Then he was re-called to the Cokesbury charge and served as pastor of that church for another seven years. In 1942 he retired to his home on West Craig Street, and for more than a decade continued his active interest in the affairs of Bishop Janes Church, helping its young pastors with his advice and counsel. He passed away on March 7, 1955, at the age of 77. Funeral services were held in our church with Rev. Garrison, then our pastor, officiating, and interment was at Restland Memorial Park in East Hanover.

Another Great Intellectual

JAMES HENRY MACDONALD 1933-38

The pastor who was to serve our church for the next five years was another man in his sixties, who had already completed an active forty years in the ministry, including five years as Superintendent of the Elizabeth District. He had retired in 1932 and was living in Plainfield. And he maintained his residence there throughout his pastorate at Bishop Janes, commuting back and forth by auto.

James Henry MacDonald was a New Englander, Born June 2, 1864, in Cranston, Rhode Island. He was educated at East Greenwich (Conn.) Academy and Wesleyan University. Later he took graduate work at Northwestern University where, in 1908, he was awarded his Phi Beta Kappa key, and still later Syracuse University honored him with the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Dr. MacDonald had begun his ministry in his native New England. In 1890 he married Cora Blair Nolen, and to them was born one daughter. In the same year he was admitted to the New England Southern Conference and in the ten years following he served four churches in that Conference. In 1901 he transferred to the New England Conference to serve for one year at the Methodist church in Lowell, Massachusetts. Then he moved to Chicago, became a member of the Rock River Conference, and during the next eight years held important pastorates in the Oakland and Epworth Churches in that city. Coming to the Newark Conference in 1909, he was pastor of Saint Luke's Church in Newark for eight years, and then, for six years, held the pastorate of Emery Methodist Church in Jersey City. In 1923 he was appointed Superintendent of the Elizabeth District, an office in which he served with distinction for five years. From 1929 until his retirement in 1932 he held the position of secretary of the Retired Ministers' Endowment Fund.

If, because of our limited means, our church was now destined to be "supplied" by a non-resident retiree, we couldn't have done better. One might suppose that a retired minister might accept such an assignment with the thought that it would help to fill his spare time, but this was not at all the case with Dr. MacDonald. He gave Bishop Janes his full attention, spending most of his time in our village, conscientiously calling on his parishioners and taking an active interest especially in the young people's activities. One of his constituents recalls that as long as he was with us, he and Charles Allen could never agree as to the shortest route by auto between here and Plainfield.

James MacDonald — "Mac" to his close friends — was a brilliant man, listed in the Newark Conference Centennial History as one of the seven outstanding intellectuals among the great preachers during the first century of the Conference.[5] Those who remember him agree that, though some of the time he preached "over our heads", his unusual abilities were quite evident to all, and they looked forward to hearing his sermons. But he was by no means an intellectual snob. In his Conference memoir he is remembered as " — a natural leader of men. His all-pervading good humor, characterized by witty comments on men and events, made him a welcome addition to any group, whether at an Annual Conference or on the golf course. He was a perfect genius at softening the asperities of debate by the magic touch of whimsical humor".

He had that rare combination of physical, as well as mental skills. At Wesleyan University he had been captain of the football team, and as long as he lived he loved to play golf. And he was good at it. He made a hole in one on a Plainfield course at the age of 70! He even made his own golf clubs. So this new pastor of ours was an all-around "great guy", who had served large churches and was one of the most respected leaders of our Conference. Bishop Janes Church was fortunate indeed to have him as our "supply".

In June of '33, the month following his appointment, the Ladies' Aid held the usual reception for the new minister and his wife. The occasion is remembered by some of the older members as one of the only two times during MacDonald's five-year pastorate when Mrs. MacDonald made an appearance. The other came some time later when, on a Sunday morning she accompanied her daughter who brought an infant child to be baptized by her doting grandfather. Living in Plainfield, Mrs. MacDonald, like Mrs. Magill before her, seemed to have little interest in her husband's church and little desire to cultivate his parishioners. By strange coincidence, of the only two pastors in our history whose wives did not actively support their work, one immediately followed the other.

Financially, the church was, by this time, getting along on a shoestring. The "stated" salary for the pastor had been reduced to a nominal $1000 a year, but he was actually paid less than that. There were periods when he received only $5

[5] One of our earlier pastors, Joseph Owen (1879-80), was also listed in the Conference History as one of the great preachers of the century.

a week — and conducted two services on Sundays! But our church was by no means unique in this respect. In the mid-1930's salary cuts were a common experience in most occupations, and many churches were finding it hard to meet even drastically-reduced budgets. Fortunately MacDonald, as a retiree, had the benefit of a pension of almost as much as the "salary" he was being paid, so somehow he managed.

Though the treasury was dry and there was no preacher's family in the parsonage, it seems that church life went on much as usual, with the Ladies' Aid — bless them — continuing their customary busy-ness. The fourth annual clambake was held in August, and again was well patronized. In October the ladies had their bazaar, with a chicken supper, and the following month they put on the annual Donation Day supper in the chapel (50¢ for adults). Sunday evening services continued, one each month being a union service with the Presbyterians. At Christmas time the Ladies distributed nine baskets of food to needy families of the unemployed, of whom there were many in the area. And they also presented the pastor with a basket of fruit and a purse of $10.

A News editorial in December of '33 reviewing the happenings of the first year under FDR, noted that since the bank holiday in March the New Deal had brought us, in rapid succession, the Agricultural Relief Program, Bank Deposit Insurance, the National Recovery Act (NRA), the Public Works Administration (PWA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Civil Works Administration (CWA). It said that in international affairs, the most important happening of the year had been America's abandonment of the gold standard, and the most spectacular world event with which we were concerned had been our recognition of the USSR ("otherwise Russia"). In Europe the most important event had been the seizure of the German government by Hitler and his followers. Not mentioned was the repeal of prohibition, which occurred in December of that year.

With the continuing depression, many unemployed, and some families "on relief", not only funds but enthusiasms were lacking. But the church did continue to function — though routinely — and under the circumstances this, in itself, was no mean accomplishment. As one of the old-timers puts it, "Our church really *did* struggle — and hard — for many years to literally stay open, and to operate so that new and not-so-new folks would know that Bishop Janes Church was still alive".

As usual, much of the credit for keeping up the morale of the church in those hard times must go to the untiring efforts of the ladies of the congregation. (There is no mention, in the records, of the Mens' Brotherhood; apparently that did not long survive after Magill's leaving). In addition to their bazaar and Donation Day supper in the fall, the ladies promoted a good many other money-raising suppers and socials. In 1934 there was a roast beef supper on Washington's birthday (when it was still observed on February 22nd) and a mothers' and daughters' banquet in April. In October the founding of the

Ladies' Aid Society was celebrated with another dinner. In 1935 there was a chicken supper in January, a chicken-ala-king supper in April, another chicken supper in September and a roast beef supper at the October bazaar. It was in November of 1935 that, in place of the usual Donation Day supper, the ladies staged the first of their Election Day turkey dinners — an event that was to be a popular annual tradition in our town for some thirty years following. They cleared $107.33 on that first dinner. As the president of the Ladies' Aid in those days recalls,

> *"We practically became a restaurant, and were considered as such by many of the town folks, for we just whipped up a meal for the public whenever money was needed. And we always had willing workers and givers for these 'feeding affairs'. For several years we cooked downstairs and served upstairs in the chapel because of the basement water problems".*

The parsonage continued to be rented, but the frequent changes of tenants were causing headaches for not only the Official Board but for the Ladies' Aid Society, which had the responsibility of its maintenance. In October '34 they found that the carpet in the house had been destroyed by moths, and it had to be taken out and burned — and replaced. Nearly every summer the house would be vacant for a month or two, and the "For Rent" sign would go up. Sometimes when it was untenanted Dr. MacDonald would invite the young boys of the church to meet with him there for friendly gabfests or games, and because he shared their interest in athletics the boys gladly responded.

MacDonald's outstanding ability as a preacher attracted a good attendance at Sunday services. His keen wit and good humor, combined with an obviously high intelligence, soon brought him the respect of many townspeople and was regaining for our church the respect of the community. On several occasions he accepted the invitation of the Presbyterians to conduct their prestigous Samuel S. Childs (mens') Sunday School class on Sunday mornings, preceding our own service — a unique honor indeed for a Bishop Janes pastor. And although living in Plainfield, he continued to spend much of his time in and around Basking Ridge, on church business. As one member recalls, "He enjoyed life greatly, and probably was delighted to have something to employ his time away from his home (and family) for at least part of the time during his retirement".

The luxury of a hired sexton or janitor was, of course, entirely out of the question. Consequently Mrs. Hannie Moore, the wife of our perennial and indispensable president of the trustees, had taken it upon herself to try to keep the church presentably clean. But this had become an onerous chore, beyond the call of duty, and finally the Official Board recognized this. At its October meeting it voted to write to the trustees "regarding Mrs. Moore being relieved of part of the work of caring for the church". Not many offered their services, so at its next meeting the Board voted to ask the various organizations of the

church to share the task of keeping the church clean. This must have worked, for we find no further reference to the problem.

It was in October of '34 that our former pastor, Rev. Appley, who was retired (but still busy) and living in his home in the Ridge, returned to the active ministry. He was appointed pastor of the church at Union Village.[6] So now we had three Methodist ministers in Basking Ridge: MacDonald at our church, but living in Plainfield; Magill, his immediate predecessor, living in Basking Ridge but pastor of the Cokesbury church; and Appley, also a local resident serving elsewhere.

Significant of the continuing hard times, the "purse" which the ladies presented to the pastor at Christmas time was only $5 — half the amount of their gift the year before. The minutes of the Society's February meeting, two months later, record a vote to buy two tons of coal for the church (at about $12.50 a ton). This action on their part was a rather common occurrence in those days. And the following December they again distributed baskets of food to needy families, but there is no record of any gift at all to the minister.

In line with the times, both the School Board and the Township Committee decided, in January of 1936, to reduce their budgets for the coming year. The amounts to be raised by taxes would be: for the Township schools, $103,000 ($21,000 lower than the year before), and for the Township, $46,000 (down from $61,500 in 1935). On the whole, however, things were beginning to look up a little. By late February it was announced that Bernards Township, as well as two other townships, was no longer on the County relief rolls. But we were by no means out of the woods yet; there were still a few more hard years ahead.

It apears that, in his five years as our pastor, Dr. MacDonald left us only one record of his ministry. This is a brief hand-written report to the Fourth Quarterly Conference held in March 1936. In it he tersely summarizes matters as follows:

> *"There is very little of change to report. Mrs. George Bender died in March last year, after a long illness. Mrs. Jane Heath, one of our oldest members, died in November 1935 and Mrs. William Burd died last month. Our Sunday School has been difficult to maintain because of the weather conditions. The pastor has consistently attended all Sunday School Board meetings and has lent his influence wherever possible to the interest of our Sunday School work and has visited in the homes of our children.*
>
> *"I have endeavored to call as regularly as though I lived in the village, and the people have been very kind to me in all my work. It looks as though our World Service and Conference collections would be about the same as they have been for the past three years".*

[6] The story of Appley's Union Village pastorate was related in Chapter IX.

At the Official Board's April meeting the treasurer reported a balance of $4.71. This came as no surprise; by that time they were used to scrimping along on next to nothing. Fortunate to have any balance at all. A year hence it would be even lower.

At its May meeting the Ladies' Aid considered purchasing a mimeograph machine to do the church bulletins, but "decided the Society could not afford it at the present time". In that same month the ladies put on not only a dinner but another Tom Thumb wedding, with a cast of 50 children; in June a strawberry and ice cream festival, and in August a peach and ice cream festival, both affairs being held on the church lawn. Then in November came the now-established and popular Election Day turkey dinner.

Our big pipe organ, the source of so much pride when installed seven or eight years previously, was by now unreliable, to say the least, and was becoming the cause of much annoyance — and even some amusement — at Sunday services. Dr. MacDonald, being concerned about it, had already contacted the Leet Organ Co. in Cranford, asking their advice. After inspecting it the company had advised that it was "in a deplorable condition, and to make it permanently satisfactory would require some changes at considerable expense". They offered, however, to make such minor adjustments as were necessary and to keep it in tune, for a fee of $50 a year. The Official Board had considered the matter but, due to lack of funds, had "put it on file for future reference". Instead, they tried to make do with the volunteer services of some of the more manually skilled men of the congregation, among them Erie Straight, Hartman Bornmann, Dave Moore and Walter Vausse. And these stalwarts did their best, from time to time, to keep the organ functioning.

Betty Vausse, Walter's wife, was still struggling with the instrument as the volunteer and unpaid organist, and her recollections of that struggle are both revealing and amusing:

> *"I remember the organ people from Cranford coming up to work on it. One of their men told me that the organ was much too large for the church, and that it was useless to try to keep it working well, because there was no heat in the church. The organ 'workings' were in a room in the cellar below the north side of the sanctuary. The cellar had a humpy dirt floor and it was pitch dark, and you had to duck your head to keep from bumping the floor beams overhead. Scared the life out of me whenever I had to go down there. The organ 'room' was dirt-floored, too, but it did have one electric bulb. The organ was always producing strange sounds, such as cyphers, which no manipulation of the keys or stops would silence. Often, when this happened during a service, Dave Moore would waken from a short nap, go down to the cellar and into that dungeon and do something, and the cypher would*

stop. Usually that did the trick, but sometimes a second trip was required. When our good brother Moore realized that the squeal had been stopped there would come from below the loud — and I mean loud — question, 'Is it working now?' Of course no one replied, because it would be useless, but the congregation could scarcely keep from giggling".

And so it continued during the MacDonald pastorate and until his successor found a solution to the problem.

Two events of importance in the community occurred in 1937. In February the Board of Education, recognizing that the Maple Avenue school was becoming crowded, and that Federal funds for building schools were available, approved the purchase of a 12-acre site for a new school on West Oak Street, for the sum of $7500. They had already filed an application for a grant, and that summer word was received that a WPA grant of $75,000 would be made. Plans for the new school had been prepared, and its cost was estimated at $171,000. In December the Township adopted its first zoning ordinance and formed a Planning Board.

The activities of the church followed their usual pattern during 1937. With next to nothing, more often than not, in the church treasury, the ladies continued their untiring efforts to make ends meet by holding frequent suppers. In May it was announced that Sunday evening services would be discontinued "until further notice". In October they were resumed, but for only a few weeks. The carol sing that Christmas had to be held in the Presbyterian church because of bad weather.

Early in 1938 it became apparent that Dr. MacDonald's health was failing. He was ill, and in a hospital in Brooklyn for two weeks in January, and during his absence our pulpit was occupied by a young student at Drew, Elmer Parks. Mac Donald recovered and resumed his preaching. Then, a few weeks later, there came a relapse and he was re-admitted to the Brooklyn Methodist Hospital where he died on March 24th. Funeral services were held in the First Methodist Church in Plainfield, with Dr. Washabaugh, the District Superintendent, presiding. A memorial service was held in our own church a few days later, with young Elmer Parks officiating. At their meeting two weeks previously the Official Board had voted to request that Mr. Parks be appointed as "our pastor for next year", and the Conference had granted this request. James MacDonald was the only pastor in our long history who died during his pastorate with us.

Thus ended a five-year period of gallant struggling, under an outstanding but tiring leader to hold the line in the face of many hardships and a general apathy brought on by the depression. Considering the meager amount that our church could offer, we were fortunate indeed to have had such a capable, devoted and understanding man as James MacDonald at the helm during that time. Never, in all his years with us, did he receive as much as $1000 in yearly salary, and he maintained his own home in Plainfield, driving back and forth

almost daily at his own expense. During those years the church's annual expenditures (there was no budget) probably never exceeded $2000. True, we had experienced little if any growth in those five years, but neither had we lost ground. Church membership remained at about 170 (including 30 classified as "inactive") during MacDonald's pastorate, and Sunday School membership continued at about 100, give or take a few.

By all accounts, James Henry MacDonald was a remarkable man, an exceptional preacher and a natural leader of men, who gave freely of himself during the last years of a full life. Quoting again from his Conference memoir:

> *"He possessed a kind of intellectual and moral integrity that detested lazy thinking and dishonesty — the dishonesty of deeds as well as words. Linked with this intellectual and moral integrity was a genuine courage. He entertained no fear, except the fear of idleness and uselessness . . . These same qualities that made him captain of his college football team made him a foeman worthy of the steel of any man in the fight for righteousness."*.

CHAPTER XV

OUR RENAISSANCE

1938 - 1947

BY 1938 THERE were signs that at last the worst of the depression might be over; we were beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. There were still millions of unemployed, and their lot would not improve overnight. Some hard sledding still lay ahead, but now the trend seemed to be no longer downward, but slowly upward.

For the past seven years our church had been served by elderly men who, though quite capable, lacked the talent of inspiring enthusiasms. Now we were to have a young — very young — pastor, full of energy, ideas and ambition, and, though of course it wasn't known at the time, there would be more young men to follow. The combination of generally improving conditions and fresh, energetic leadership was to make the coming decade a period of reawakening and renewed vitality in our church's history, notwithstanding the fact that much of it would be darkened by another world conflict.

On the national scene, it was the beginning of a new era for American labor. Following the bitter struggles and strife of 1937, organized labor, under the leadership of John L. Lewis and William Green, was regaining its strength. In June of 1938 Congress, after a long fight, finally approved the Fair Labor Standards Act. That provided for a 40¢ minimum hourly wage, a maximum work week of 40 hours, with time and a half for overtime, and no labor for children under 16. Still, 98% of American families lived on less than $5000 a year; excluding "reliefers", the average family income was under $1500, and most families lived in rented houses or apartments.[1]

Movie-going was the great American pastime. There were 17,000 movie theaters in the country — more than there were banks, and twice as many as there were hotels.[1] And thanks to the Hays Office, there were no films that weren't suitable for viewing by the whole family. There were bank nights and dish nights, with double features, Movietone newsreels and Terrytown cartoons, and with the low depression prices of admission, nearly everyone patronized them frequently.

The other great family activity was listening to the radio over one of the four networks, NBC Red, NBC Blue, CBS and Mutual. For millions it was a

[1] Source: Wm. Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream*, Little Brown & Co., 1973.

next-to-sacred ritual to tune in every week to hear One Man's Family, Amos 'n' Andy, Kate Smith, Rudy Vallee, the Lucky Strike Hit Parade, and Major Bowes' Amateur Hour. Early in 1938 Americans heard their first coast-to-coast broadcast, featuring Al Goodman's orchestra in New York City and W. C. Fields in Hollywood.

Hitler's arrogant and increasing dominance of Europe reached a new peak in 1938, with the Czech crisis. Britain's Neville Chamberlain would capitulate to his demands at Munich that fall, settling (he thought) for "peace in our time". But to a few realistically-minded and far-seeing Americans, including, fortunately, President Roosevelt, war in Europe now appeared inevitable.

Young Man With a Purpose

ELMER L. PARKS, JR. 1938 - 41

Our new young pastor, again a "supply", might be said to have come in by the back door. He was a student at Drew, who had first come to our church in December of 1937 at the suggestion of Mrs. Moore, who was helping to find someone to fill the pulpit when Dr. MacDonald became ill. He substituted in this way on several occasions during the next few months. Mrs. Moore was said to have discovered him through a friend of hers who was a dietician at Drew, which suggests that he may have been working in the cafeteria to help support himself. Parks' preaching as a substitute had been so well received by the Bishop Janes congregation that the Official Board had succeeded in having the Conference appoint him as our pastor.

When he took up his duties here, there was some question as to where he would live while in town on weekends and during the summer. The parsonage was rented and this income was needed and, being a bachelor, he had no need for a house anyway. After several other alternatives had been considered and discarded as inappropriate, the problem was solved when Mr. and Mrs. Walter Vausse suggested that he might like to stay with them. Parks gladly accepted their invitation, and the arrangement proved to be so satisfactory that he continued to live with the Vausses throughout his stay in Basking Ridge. As Betty Vausse later recalled, "We agreed that he should pay us $5 a week for room and board, but when we found that would take half of his pay that agreement was set aside, and this was a gift that returned us dividends beyond comprehension. His continuing friendship, and later that of his fine family, has been one of our most prized treasures".

Parks himself has told us, "I was very grateful, for the church was the best appointment for a student at that time, and was only eight miles from the Seminary. Mr. and Mrs. Vausse provided room and board for my weekend stays and for the summers, when the Seminary was not in session. Each Sunday, after church, I was paid with a check by Wanda Bettler, the treasurer, who was

an employee at the post office at the time. At first the check was for $10, but later it was raised to $20".

Elmer Parks was a native of Pennsylvania, born in Beaver Falls on March 6, 1916. He grew up in that city, being graduated from its high school in 1933 and entering Geneva College there that same year. While in college he was active in YMCA work and interested in drama, taking the lead roles in several college plays. He took an active part, too, in the youth program of the First Methodist Church, and it was chiefly because of this that he decided, in his Junior year, to prepare for the ministry. He was graduated with an A.B. degree in 1937 and enrolled at Drew the following fall.

Obviously this new pastor was just a youngster, and totally lacking in experience. Only one of our previous forty pastors had been younger; William Searles who served in 1861-62. Quite a contrast to the two much older and widely experienced men who had preceded him. But what this young seminarian lacked in experience he more than made up for in enthusiasm, ambition and determination. He had worked hard to earn money for his education, and he was going to make the most of this golden opportunity to practice what he was learning. It soon appeared that this young man, so eager yet so conscientious, was likely to provide just the kind of refreshing confidence that was needed to revive the spirits of our faltering church, so long in the doldrums.

Parks was particularly well received by the younger adults of the congregation, who had become dissatisfied under the older preachers, feeling that they were out of step with the needs of our growing community. He was honored, in May, at the usual reception for a new minister, and officially welcomed by both Rev. Appley and Rev. Burke White, the Methodist minister at Bernardsville. The program on this occasion included several musical numbers, among which was a solo by John Skonberg.[2] Within weeks many of his new-found friends in the Ridge were on a first-name basis with him, calling him "Jack", as he preferred. He never did care for the name Elmer.

In contrast to some previous years when, for months on end, the church notices in the Bernardsville News contained no mention of Bishop Janes Church or its doings, now there began to appear complete announcements of our church's program of activities for the full week ahead, often supplemented by other items of church news. In this way at least, if not in the headlines, Bishop Janes was again in the news, and people began to take notice.

Jack Parks immediately set to work, devoting all the time he could spare away from his studies to the task of reactivating the church. One of his early concerns was the Epworth League. This organization was just beginning to function again, having been reorganized in February of '38 after disbanding the previous fall. With his help and encouragement the League now embarked on a busy program of activities, more ambitious than it had been for years. That summer the young people scheduled various outings of all kinds — hot dog

[2] John continued as a key member of our choir until 1982.

roasts, hamburger frys, swim parties, picnics and such — and they also held weekly twilight devotional meetings out of doors, on Wednesday evenings. This was the beginning of a program of activities and service on the part of the League that would continue throughout Parks' stay.

Both our church and its young pastor benefited greatly when, in June of 1938, Dr. and Mrs. Earp moved to town and joined our membership. Edwin Lee Earp, D.D., had just retired from the faculty of Drew Seminary, where, for 21 years, he had been Professor of Christian Sociology. Prior to that he had, for 12 years, held a similar position on the faculty of Syracuse University. With his broad knowledge and experience he was to be a great help and valued advisor not only to young Parks but to his successors in our pulpit, until his death in 1950. And Mrs. Earp, too, was to make invaluable contributions to the life of our church, particularly in the womens' organizations, as will be noted later. Jack Parks was very grateful for the good Doctor's wise counsel and assistance, noting on one occasion that both he and the congregation liked to think of Dr. Earp as our assistant pastor.

Several happenings of note occurred in July. In our church a new Mens' Bible Class was formed, and Howard Brush was prevailed upon to serve, temporarily at least, as its teacher. And the Offical Board, when it met that month, was advised that its treasury had shrunk to $1.15 — a new low. At the same meeting it was voted to send a note of thanks to Vincent Masone, a local painter, for his gratis painting of the church doors. (This was the beginning of a custom which the kindly painter continued until his retirement some 35 years later). In Township affairs, there was the vote on the bond issue for the new Oak Street school. The total cost of the project was put at $200,000, and with a Federal grant of $90,000 the balance, $110,000, was to be raised by the bond issue. The proposal was approved, by a vote of 618 to 276, and three months later ground would be broken for the new building.

That was a busy summer and fall on the church calendar, not only for the Epworth Leaguers but for the adults as well. In June a Sunday School orchestra was formed. The Ladies' Aid held a strawberry festival on the church lawn that month, then an "old-fashioned dinner" in July, their bazaar in September, the turkey dinner on Election Day, and a roast beef supper in early December. At its November meeting the Official Board took several measures to improve the Sunday morning services. Mrs. Wright and Miss Melick were appointed as "a welcoming committee to greet people as they come in church", Mr. Moore and Mr. Vausse were asked to be "a committee to see that there are ushers for every service, and that each member has a bulletin and a hymnal", and Messrs. Straight and Vausse were appointed as a committee "to fix the pipe organ". This was by no means a new assignment for these men, and they must have agreed with some reluctance, knowing that it would be a waste of their time. By now there was little hope of "fixing" the old Moehler organ, and everyone knew that some drastic action would soon have to be taken. At Christmas time

the choir appeared in attractive new vestments, presented by the Epworth League with the explanation that they had been made by "a friend of the young people". Also, by that time, a junior choir had been formed. This new pastor wasn't wasting any time!

There is one thing in particular for which the historian is grateful to Jack Parks: he left us, as none of his predecessors had done, complete copies of his interesting and informative reports at each of the Fourth Quarterly Conferences (annual Congregational meetings) during his pastorate.[3] To quote these in full might be enlightening, but in the interest of brevity, quotations will be limited to the more significant highlights. At the first of these meetings, on January 8, 1939, after expressing his gratitude for the cooperation he had received and the progress being made, he continued, in part, as follows:

> *"I devoted my entire time last summer to the work of the church, which consisted mainly in pastoral calls. Up to the present time I have made over 300 calls, visiting most of the members at least twice, the shut-ins twice a month, and any new folks who come to the village to live I visit at least once . . . Seventeen people have been received into the fellowship of the church and five infants have received the sacrament of baptism.*
>
> *"One of our earliest concerns was to make provision for the payment of our Conference assessments. A plan was conceived whereby penny boxes were distributed among the members of the congregation and collected once a month. The plan operates under the leadership of the Epworth League. At the close of this month we hope to have all of our Conference fees paid.*
>
> *"A great deal of work still lies ahead. The church property has suffered from long years of neglect, and we are beginning a program of repair which thus far has included the painting and repair of the outside framework of the windows and the repair of the roof. We had to wait until the roof was repaired before we could do any work on the inside of the church . . . We also plan to purchase new lighting fixtures for the church school vestibule and the primary room and to replace other fixtures when we are able. By far our most serious problem for the future is either the repair of our organ or the purchase of a new electronic organ. The repair of the old organ appears to be almost impossible and it is the opinion of some who have been thinking about the matter that it would be best for us to take the latter course. In any case we hope to have the problem solved within the coming year. Miss Catherine Moore, who passed to her reward last year, generously*

[3] The first formal mimeographed Annual Report did not appear until Rev. Garrison initiated the custom in 1951.

remembered the church in her will to the extent of $100, which we hope may start a fund for the new organ''.

At the same meeting the Financial Secretary reported that the total receipts for the past eight months had been $1159.95. Mrs. Harrison Wright, reporting as the president of the Ladies' Aid Society, stated that the Society had a membership of 29, and that during the year past they had raised $182.74 by ''suppers, sales, etc.'', and had paid ''the $70 balance due to Dr. MacDonald''. Miss Muriel Hicks, president of the Epworth League, reported on that organization's many activities, and the status of the Sunday School was reported by its superintendent, Mabel Clark. She said there were 116 members on the roll, and average attendance had been 75.

Parks' reference in his report to the need for a new organ produced a surprisingly quick response, bringing matters to an early head. The Official Board immediately approved the allocation of the Moore legacy to an organ fund, voted to purchase an electronic instrument ''when half the purchase price is in hand'', and requested the music committee, headed by John Skonberg, to investigate a Hammond organ. And that committee lost no time, either. It arranged with the Griffith Piano Co. of Newark to have a demonstration at the morning service on January 22nd. Just a month later, with sufficient pledges on hand, the purchase contract, at a cost of $1410, was duly signed.

The new organ was first used by our own long-suffering organist, Betty Vausse, on Sunday, March 5th. And what a relief it was to have an instrument that you could depend on! Formal dedication of the new Hammond did not take place until seven weeks later, on April 23rd, and no elaborate program was involved. The Hammond organ served us faithfully, with a minimum of maintenance, for the next 25 years. Though no record of the gifts to the organ fund remain, it was common knowledge at the time and has since been verified that a significant share of the cost was generously contributed by the dedicated and ever-serving Josephine Melick.

Among Miss Melick's many contributions to our church in those years perhaps the best remembered is her teaching of the womens' Sunday School class. This she did with complete devotion and a great deal of ability for many years, earning the gratitude and respect of not only her ''pupils'' but all who knew her. The mens' Bible class, which met in a part of the sanctuary, had some very able teachers, too. George Schwartz in particular is remembered as ''a most interesting man, with an exceptionally brilliant mind, who taught in such a manner that few ever forgot his teachings''. When frequently he was invited to take on responsibilities in other church organizations, however, he respectfully declined.

A most important event in the history of American Methodism occurred that spring, when the Uniting Conference was held, from April 26 through May 10, in Kansas City. At this conference the union of three branches of the church,

some thirty years under discussion, was finally effected. The Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church and the Methodist Church South officially joined to form the Methodist Church. The following October the Newark Conference met in St. Luke's Church in Newark "for the termination of the Conference as the Methodist Episcopal Conference and its organization as the Methodist Conference". This reorganization of the church at large had little effect on the typical local church, however, until the following year, when the womens' and youth organizations were restructured.

The trustees held their only recorded meeting of that year in May. At that meeting Hartman Bornmann was made superintendent of the cemetery "with full power to hire and fire", and it was agreed to increase the charge for digging a grave to $15. Dave Moore submitted his resignation as president, an office he had held for 16 years, but it was "laid on the table". It was not until more than a year later that the Board would act on it.

Both the Ladies' Aid and the Epworth League continued their busy program of activity. In May the ladies, coached by the pastor, put on a play, "Sewing for the Heathen". It was so well received that Rev. Appley asked them to repeat the performance at his Union Village church, which they did. In June they put on a Flag Day Dinner, and later a strawberry festival. In August they served two dinners, on successive weekends, in connection with the Firemens' 30th annual carnival, and in November the customary Election Day dinner. The Epworth League, too, put on a play, under the coaching of Jack Parks and Mabel Clark, at the candle light service on Easter Sunday evening. And throughout the summer and fall they enjoyed frequent outings and occasionally held cake sales at the P. C. Henry store across the street, to raise money for the church.

It was on September 1st of 1939 that Hitler's Wehrmacht infantry marched into Poland, starting the second World War. President Roosevelt, in a fireside chat two days later, announced that "This nation will remain a neutral nation, but I cannot ask that every American remain neutral in thought as well". He knew full well that public opinion increasingly supported the Allies, but he had to use all possible delaying tactics; the country was as yet lamentably ill-prepared to enter the war. Following his initial rapid move, Hitler began playing a waiting game, letting the cooped-up French army on the Maginot Line grow restless and flabby. For several months nothing much happened, and people everywhere were speculating about the "phony war". But this was just the lull before the storm.

It was no secret that Jack Parks didn't intend to remain in the east, but planned to return to his home town area after completing his education. It came as no surprise to the Official Board, then, when he requested that they send a letter to the Pittsburgh Conference recommending his admission to that Conference. The Board complied with his request, and on October 6, that Conference ordained him as a deacon and admitted him to trial membership. And

so, though he contunued to serve Bishop Janes Church, he never was a member of the Newark Conference.

A new organization was formed in our church that fall, for the young married couples. Ray Day was chosen as its first president, and from the start it was an active group, meeting regularly for social purposes. For a while it was known simply as the Young Married Couples' Club, but, perhaps because the Presbyterians also had a group known as the Young Married People, the name was soon changed to the Friendship Club. Under that name the organization continued to have an active part in the social life of our church — a forerunner of our present Open Circle.

The first supermarket appeared in our area that fall of 1939, when the Big Chief market opened in Bernardsville. Among the bargains featured in its ads were: sugar at 5¢ a pound, Campbell's tomato soup 3 for 19¢, Kellogg's corn flakes 6¢, Florida oranges 1¢ each, and large fresh shrimp at 15¢ a pound. And in November the new Oak Street school was completed, two months behind schedule. The PWA project, which had provided many much-needed jobs in our community in those lean years, was formally dedicated on November 21st and opened for classes the following week.

In November our volunteer organist, Mrs. Vausse, asked to be relieved of that responsibility. For nine years she had "filled in" gratuitously, though disclaiming any skill, or even training, as an organist ("I could play the piano to a degree, and so it became my job"), and she had struggled valiantly to make the old Moehler behave. Now that was no longer a problem, but because of increasing personal responsibilities she felt that it was high time that someone more qualified should be found to take over. Such a person was found in Mrs. Lenore Holly of Bernardsville, but it seems that her salary was rather nebulous, too. The minutes of the December meeting of the Official Board record votes "to send a check to Mrs. Holly in appreciation for playing the organ" and to have the secretary send a letter to Mrs. Vausse, "telling her how much we have appreciated her playing the organ for us for so long a time".

The fact that Sunday evening services were no longer being held was disturbing to Parks, and he decided that an attempt should be made to revive them. In January of 1940 he asked the young people of the Epworth League to take over the direction of such services and appealed to the adults of the congregation to attend. So, during the winter there *were* evening services on Sundays, some being held in the "Fireside Room" off the Sunday School around an open fire, but they failed to attract many of the older people away from their Sunday evening radio programs. It became apparent that the day of Sunday evening church services was ending.

At the Fourth Quarterly Conference in January of 1940 there was a unanimous vote to request Jack Parks' return for another year, and to raise his salary $100 (to $1000). The pastor again presented a full report, noting the year's accomplishments, which included the forming of the Friendship Club,

the purchase of the new organ (on which only $50 was still owed), and the remodelling and painting of the church sanctuary. He noted that most of the considerable amount of work this entailed had been done, over a period of months, by three or four men (under Hartman Bornmann's leadership), and that "to them the congregation owes a great debt of appreciation and gratitude". A few further excerpts from his report are revealing:

> *"During the past year our church has been entirely self-supporting. In former years the Board of Trustees has been very generous in supplying coal and in meeting unexpected bills, but this year the church has met its own coal bill in addition to repairing the foundation of the parsonage".*
>
> *"Our Womens' Missionary Society has been very active and has added many new members. Likewise the Ladies' Aid has been very active and a number of ladies have been taken into membership this year. The Joy Bearers Society has just about completed the task of raising some $200 so that the floor of the Sunday School room and vestibule may be covered with linoleum".*
>
> *"As a pastor I have made many calls, more during the summer than in the winter on account of my studies at Drew . . . I have been in the pulpit every Sunday except three, when the pulpit was supplied by a visiting minister. It has been a great pleasure to have Dr. and Mrs. Earp in the congregation this year; their interest and timely suggestions have been very helpful".*

It was in June of 1940 that the property in Basking Ridge known as Cedar Hill, formerly owned by the late Samuel Owen, was purchased by George Lee of Maplewood. This was the 124-acre property on which now (in 1983) stands the Township Municipal Building (built in 1916), the Ridge High School, Cedar Hill School and a number of residences. At that time most of this large estate was a large fruit orchard, with 5000 peach trees and 100 apple trees. Some years later, when a site for a high school was needed, George Lee would make a gift of 60 acres of his land to the Township Board of Education.

At its graduation exercises that spring Bernardsville High School awarded 90 diplomas, and the first class of eighth grade graduates from Oak Street school numbered 20. Our young pastor was a June graduate, too, receiving his B.D. degree from Drew. Naturally, the Bishop Janes congregation didn't let such an important event go unnoticed. On the preceding Sunday afternoon there was a reception at the church in Parks' honor, with his mother and sister from Beaver Falls present. Dr. Earp spoke for the congregation, presenting him with "an envelope of remembrance".

By this time the smouldering war in Europe had burst into flames. In March the German Wehrmacht had invaded Denmark and Norway, and

Hitler's all-out lightning campaign had become a shocking reality. His panzer divisions moved relentlessly through the Lowlands into France, and by June 22nd Paris was occupied and France fell. Two weeks earlier Italy had declared war on France. Here in America, still theoretically neutral, battle lines were being drawn between the isolationists and the interventionists, while our industries were frantically tooling up to bolster our own neglected and sadly deficient defenses.

Again that summer the Epworth League continued its busy round of social affairs and again it held its weekly outdoor devotional meetings. The congregation had its annual picnic at Homestead Park in Gillette, and the Friendship Club picnicked at Hackettstown. At their August meeting the Trustees finally agreed to let Dave Moore step down as their president, and Howard Brush was elected to succeed him.

An article in the Bernardsville News of August 1st, concerning the newly constituted Methodist Church, announced that

> "Following a ruling passed by the General Conference of the Church, the Ladies' Aid Society, the Womens' Foreign Missionary Society and the Joy Bearers Society of the Basking Ridge Methodist Church are uniting in a new organization. The Ladies' Aid and the Missionary Society, after the reorganization, will be known as the Woman's Society of Christian Service (WSCS). The Joy Bearers, a group of ladies who find it necessary to meet in the evening, will hereafter be known as the Joy Bearers unit of the Wesleyan Service Guild".

These changes *were* being made, but the going had not been easy. Many, if not most of the ladies of the congregation who were active in the Ladies' Aid resisted the idea of making any changes in their organization. What foolishness! Things were fine as they were. So Jack Parks had his hands full. He recognized that the changes were well-advised, and felt his responsibility of carrying out his orders from above, but he lacked experience in dealing with stubborn women. He was inclined to not push the matter too swiftly — let things take their course. Battle lines were formed, the argument raged, and telephones hummed. But several of the more conservative level-headed ladies of the congregation, also sensing their responsibilities, and having carefully studied the matter, came to his rescue. They consulted Mrs. Appley, who was still a licensed preacher and a very knowledgeable woman, and together they, in turn, sought the advice of Mrs. Earp, the heretofore rather indifferent wife of the retired professor. She was also highly respected for her intelligence and broad experience; though inclined at times to be a little critical of our neophyte pastor. As one of the ladies later recounted, "We felt that Mrs. Earp might be the one to take us through this trauma if she would. This rather challenged her status, as well as her mind, and she agreed not only that the change *must* be made but that she would lead

the battle. And she did. We *did* form the WSCS as prescribed by the 'powers that be' and the credit is due entirely to Mrs. Edwin (Lina) Earp. It was one of the best things that ever happened to the womens' program in the church''.

The organizational meeting of the Woman's Society of Christian Service in our church was held on September 10, 1940, with Jack Parks presiding. Thirty-three charter members were present, and a few more were later added to this list. As their president the ladies elected — who else? — Mrs. Earp. Mrs. Tingley (Dorothy Brush's mother) was elected first vice-president, and the four other vice-presidents chosen, each with a specific responsibility, were: Mrs. Walter Nagle, Mrs. A. P. Vroome, Mrs. Walter Vausse and Mrs. Harrison Wright. Other officers elected were: Mrs. James Baird, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Edward Mertz, recording secretary; and Mrs. Howard Hyler, treasurer. Under Mrs. Earp's capable leadership the new organization prospered from the start. Its monthly meetings were held at 11 A.M. on the first Thursday of each month, and included a devotional service, a box lunch and a business meeting. The executive committee also met each month, on a different day.

Under the new rules the Epworth Leagues became the Methodist Youth Fellowship and the Sunday School also underwent some reorganization, under the newly established Board of Education.

The minutes of the January meeting of the Official Board record that a finance committee was appointed to prepare a budget. That may not have been the first such committee, but no mention of one is found in earlier minutes. We do know that it was Parks who initiated this business-like procedure, though it took some convincing. Previously the "budget", when there was one, had been rather off-handedly put together by several of the church leaders, and it was never taken too seriously. That was now to be changed. We had a budget that was prepared by an officially-appointed committee and adopted by a vote of the congregation, with the understanding that it was to be met. We have no record as to the amount of that first offical budget — it was probably around $2500 — but we are told that it was adopted with fear and trembling; "it sounded to us like a million".

Franklin Roosevelt had been returned to office for an unprecedented third term. The country had still not fully recovered from the depression; nearly 9 million men were still unemployed, nearly 3 million were on the WPA rolls, and 30% of all negroes were "on relief". In March Congress passed the "Lend-Lease" Act, and soon 3 million new workers were hired by the heavy industries. There was beginning to be war fever now, all over the country, but with the strong isolationist bloc in Congress there would be no declaration of war, barring some unforseen provocation.

At the Fourth Quarterly Conference in March of '41 there was again a unanimous vote requesting Parks' return, a request the Annual Conference later granted. By this time the new Hammond organ had been fully paid for, with even a small surplus, and the basement kitchen was being improved with funds

provided by the WSCS. Included in the pastor's comprehensive report were these items:

> *"We have great reason to be thankful this year. We have few debts and there is every prospect that they will be cleared up in a few days. Our pledges rose over $300 for this year and we are looking forward to a still greater increase for the coming year . . . Our regular benevolences are about the same this year as last, and will amount to over $200. We have contributed to the overseas relief agencies of our church the sum of $85, and on the recent Day of Compassion our people generously gave $50".*
>
> *"A prayer service or some other type of informal meeting is necessary for the spriitual development of our church. It is hoped that within the next year we may be able to have a successful week-day service. Some laymen have already given me the assurance of their support".*
>
> *"Our attendance has not been poor, but it has not been exceptional either. Our average attendance at the morning worship services should be increased by at least 25.* (It was around 50). *This will be another challenge for us this year as a church".*

Two of our neighboring churches observed important anniversaries that spring. In April the Bernardsville Methodist Church passed its first century mark (12 years before we would) and the following month the Millington Baptist Church celebrated its 90th birthday (two years our senior).

In accord with an edict to all churches from the Annual Conference, the Official Board, at its May meeting, voted "that a membership committee be appointed to go over the church books as to active or inactive members. Inactive members to be removed by action of the Board". Again, it seems, the time had come to prune out the dead wood, always a painful process causing some hard feelings, but on the whole a necessary one. As one former member who served on the committee recalls, "We were told that the church rolls had to be 'diligently and carefully examined for delinquent members'. If, of those members in question, any one had given in any way to the church within the past year, no matter how little — even a donation of food to a dinner — that name was left on. Nevertheless, some names were removed, much to the anger of many of them and the objections of other parishioners as well". And though the committee did its best to be fair and impartial in this thankless task, the records indicate that the action resulted in about 40 names being dropped from the (perhaps inflated) church rolls.

By the summer of 1941 the parsonage, with its frequent change of tenants, was showing signs of neglect and in need of repairs. A loan of $600 was negotiated by the trustees, and arrangements were made to have the necessary

work done. At the Firemens' carnival in August — still the big community event of the year — the ladies of the church, with a good deal of help from the men, again served dinner in the church to large crowds on both Saturday evenings of this two-weekend event. Though probably no one foresaw it at the time, because of the disruptions of the coming war years this was to be the last of the annual Firemens' Carnivals in the Ridge.

Early in September Jack Parks introduced another innovation. Following a congregational dinner at the church there was held a "Planning Conference", in which all present participated. The purpose of this, as Parks explained, was threefold: to make plans for the progress of the church, to find the place of the church in the life of the community, and to hear the plans of the various church organizations. It was like an Annual meeting, except that it was a look ahead at the coming year, rather than a review of the year past. Following reports by the church treasurer and the trustees, the officers of the various organizations presented their plans and Parks offered his suggestions for a more effective program. Among the goals that he proposed and the meeting formally accepted were these: to have more tithing and evangelism, to increase to at least 75 the attendance at Sunday morning services, and to work for a 20% increase in all organizations of the church. There was much enthusiasm; the year was certainly off to a good start.

Then, just a few weeks later, there came a shock, when it was officailly announced that Jack Parks was leaving Basking Ridge for a church in Pittsburgh. Being already a member of the Pittsburgh Conference, he had accepted an invitation to become assistant pastor of Emory Methodist Church in that city. The move was not wholly unexpected. He had been considering it for several months, and had discussed it confidentially with some of his closest friends. Still, the decision came as an unwelcome surprise to most, and was much regretted by all. He left Basking Ridge for his new post on October 2nd, with the fond best wishes of a grateful congregation.

In his three and a half years as pastor, Jack Parks had brought stability to our church and a new enthusiasm to its members. Though there was no net increase in membership during his term, because of the purging of the rolls, it had become a far more concerned and active membership. As an inexperienced young neophyte in his first charge he had accomplished wonders. The Epworth League had been firmly re-established, the Friendship Club was formed, there was an active mens' Bible class, we had a new organ, and the church had been repaired inside and out. For the first time in years the church was on a sound financial footing, meeting its Conference obligations and paying its own way. The budget was still small — under $3000, including the pastor's $1100 salary — but it was being met, and there were no debts. Equally, if not more important, Bishop Janes Church had regained the respect of the community, a value that had been eroded during the Mellberg years, and we were again on increasingly good terms with our Presbyterian neighbors. As one of the older members puts

it, 'When Jack left us we were for the first time in many years a unified congregation with a purpose and a program that was to take us more easily into the future''.

As everyone would have predicted, Jack Parks, after such a productive apprenticeship at Bishop Janes, has steadily grown in stature, becoming one of the outstanding ministers in the Pittsburgh area. After serving two years as assistant pastor at Emory he was appointed pastor of the church at Mars, Pennsylvania, and occupied that pulpit for six years, from 1943 to 1949. It was there that he found the right girl, Esther Cupp, and they were married on November 25, 1944. The Parks now have three children, all married, and there are (as of November 1982) five grandchildren.

After Mars, Jack Parks was pastor of the Smithfield Street Methodist Church in Pittsburgh for three years, and in 1950 he was honored by Geneva College, his alma mater, with a Doctor of Divinity degree. In 1952 he was appointed pastor of the Ingomar Methodist Church in Pittsburgh, and he served that church as its pastor until he retired from the ministry in June of 1982. Thirty years in the same pulpit is quite a record in the Methodist church. During his pastorate the Ingomar church increased its membership from 400 to more than 2200, and it's interesting that among them are some former residents of Basking Ridge. While serving that church, Parks was a leader also in both Conference and community affairs. He chaired numerous Conference boards and committees and was Chairman of Admissions of the United Methodist Home at Mt. Lebanon, and Chairman of the North Hills Passavant Hospital Chaplaincy Committee.

For Dr. Parks, retirement from the ministry has not meant slowing down to a life of deserved leisure. Far from it. In the fall of 1982 he accepted a long-standing invitation to take the position of Patient Representative at North Hills Passavant Hospital. He explains that in this work, a relatively new development in health care, "I am a liaison person between the patient and the various departments of the hospital: medical, nursing, dietary and financial. I am the patient's advocate in every respect, and any problem or concern of the patient is brought to me. I have been given access to every area of the hospital and I am learning a lot. The fact that it keeps me in close touch with people is what I like best, and I am grateful for the opportunity to continue serving". So, although no longer occupying a pulpit, his ministry still continues.

Writing of his recollections of his early years in Basking Ridge, Dr. Parks has told us,

> *"I owe my Seminary education — the financial part of it, that is — to Bishop Janes Church and the stewardship of Mr. and Mrs. Vausse. I cannot make the church responsible for my academic record. It was an altogether wonderful experience to come to know and then to love the members of your church. I am*

sure they suffered through many theological ideas which I was bold enough to try out on them."

To Dr. Parks we reply, "We at Bishop Janes are the beneficiaries of your boldness, and are grateful for all that you did for our church in those days. Our very best wishes, always, to you and your family".

* * *

The decade of the thirties, with its hard times and suffering, was now history. Our church had survived the depression, but just barely. At times it had really been a struggle, with not even enough money to pay the preacher — but somehow they kept going. Jack Parks, when he left, was still owed part of his salary, but this — or most of it — was eventually sent to him, in small installments.

By 1941, nationwide recovery was well under way, though unemployment was still high. The 1940 census, which showed a population of about 130 million, also disclosed that half of the children in the country were in families having an annual income of less than $1500; that one-quarter of our population still lived on farms, three-quarters of the farms had no electricity, fully one-quarter of all homes in the country had no running water and only 17% of the married women were working at paying jobs. In 1941 you paid 20¢ to go to the movies, 10¢ for most magazines (but a nickel for the Saturday Evening Post), 5¢ for a hot dog, and 50¢ for a good meal at a restaurant. If you traveled any distance you went by train. The new diesel locomotives were at the peak of their efficiency and popularity, and the trains were good. A meal in the dining car, with its immaculate linen, excellent service and wide choice of really good food, was a pleasure indeed.

But with recovery had come not only the war in Europe but the ominous likelihood that America would be drawn into it. In the summer of 1941, though we were still not officially involved, the national sentiment strongly favored the Allies, and our industries were feverishly bolstering our defenses. During these last months of "peace" most Americans were still going about their business much as usual, vaguely hoping that somehow a miracle might happen. "God Bless America" was No. 3 on the Lucky Strike hit parade, Hildegard singing "The White Cliffs of Dover" was another favorite, and Benny Goodman's orchestra was playing nightly in the ballroom of the Pennsylvania Hotel.

The Aspiring Extrovert

HERBERT E. RICHARDS, JR. 1941 - 47

Such was the state of affairs when, in October of 1941, less than two months before Pearl Harbor, Bishop Janes Church welcomed as its 42nd pastor,

another young student at Drew, Herbert E. Richards, Jr. He was only twenty-one years of age, having been born in Hazleton, Pa., on December 30, 1919. He had just that fall entered Drew University, having been graduated from Dickinson College the previous spring. But he had already had some preaching experience, having served, while still an undergraduate, two small Pennsylvania churches. One of these was at Boiling Springs, the other at Westchester.

Herbert Richards first occupied our pulpit on October 12, but on the following two Sundays services were conducted by supply preachers, so it wasn't until November that he began his regular duties. He had, however, attended the October meeting of the Official Board. He told the Board that he was planning to marry in the spring, and wouldn't be needing the parsonage until then. (It was still being rented). He also advised that he had no wish to handle the finances of the church, and did not intend "to ask for money from the pulpit". At that same meeting, incidentally, it was reported that Lewis Day had been hired as the new sexton, at a salary of $25 per month.

On the second Sunday evening in November the new pastor was officially welcomed by the congregation with the customary reception. Two other clergymen in town, Dr. Bennett of the Presbyterian church and Rev. Hann, the vicar at St. Mark's Episcopal, were on hand to greet him. And standing next to Richards in the receiving line was Miss Lois Marcey of Lewisburg, Pa., whom he proudly introduced as his fiancee.

Like Jack Parks before him, Richards was necessarily a week-end pastor, attending classes at Drew during the week. But that didn't prevent him from rapidly getting into the swing of things. He was a genial, outgoing young man, a little on the chubby side, decidedly an extrovert and, with seemingly boundless energy, always busy at something. He immediately started calling on his parishioners, and soon had made many new friends in town. He knew most of them by their first names, and they knew him as "Herb". But he had barely become oriented in his new responsibilities when, in the afternoon of that memorable first Sunday in December, there came the devastating news of the attack on Pearl Harbor — the event that would drastically change our way of life for a decade or more.

Later that month came the announcement that our Rev. Joseph Appley would be retiring, for the second time, from the active ministry, on December 31st. He was leaving the pulpit of the Union Village church which he had served for seven years and where he had again accomplished a miracle. He had built that church from practically nothing to one larger than our own.[4] After this second retirement he and Mrs. Appley would continue to live in the home they had built in Basking Ridge, both of them contributing much to the life of our church.

On New Year's Day in 1942 the new pastor and his fiancee were married at a church in Harrisburg. Although it wasn't until six months later that they

[4] See page 140 et seq. for an account of Rev. Appley's pastorate at Union Village.

would be occupying the parsonage, Mrs. Richards didn't wait for that to take up her responsibilities, as the pastor's wife, in the affairs of the church. She pitched in right away. In marrying Lois, Herb Richards had, like Joseph Appley, acquired a helpmate and advisor who would be invaluable to him throughout his career.

At the Quarterly Conference held in February, Richards presented a detailed 5-page typed report, expressing his appreciation for the cooperation he had received and reviewing his accomplishment to date and proposals for the near future. A few excerpts from this report are noteworthy:

> *"We have somewhat changed the order of worship and have printed new 'bulletins'. Once each eight weeks we shall have a 'special' bulletin and service, to keep our worship from getting stagnant and repetitious. The usher staff has seen to it that each Sunday the hymn board is corrected and that men are always ready to assist in receiving the gifts".*

> *"A class in preparation for admission to church membership is being organized by the Pastor, and will begin study on March 1 . . . A Junior Youth Fellowship has been organized for those younger than the Youth Fellowship program. Mr. Van Munger, Miss Mabel Clark, Miss Elberta Day and the Pastor are planning to work out the program for this group . . . The Senior Youth Fellowship has been confronted with transportation problems. With tires and cars being conserved, and the occupation of our young people in business and defense we find this group diminishing in size . . . We hope this may be alleviated soon".*

> *"The Pastor and his wife have made over a hundred calls*[5]*, but still have some of the active constituency to visit. We hope to have visited every member and friend soon".*

Already the war had begun to affect the life of our community in many ways. Local defense units had been organized, and the Bernards Township Defense Council had established its headquarters in an office on Henry Street. There had been scrapmetal drives ("A pound of scrap will kill a Jap"), the Boy Scouts had their frequent waste-paper collections, and the populace was constantly being urged to salvage old rubber, rags and grease for the war effort. Everyone who could was buying defense bonds and stamps. Tires had already been rationed, and soon would come the rationing of sugar and gasoline. Late in April there was the first local blackout (from 10 to 10:15 P.M.), and now all men in the 45-to-65 age bracket were required to register — for non-combatant duty. For more than a year the sewing circle of the WSCS had been meeting

[5] Quite remarkable, in view of the fact that the Richards had been married for only six weeks. Some of these 100 calls must have been made before the wedding.

every Wednesday to sew for the Red Cross, and now this group was stepping up its efforts. They reported 162 "Red Cross garments" made during the month of February alone. At its April meeting the Official Board voted to have a church Honor Roll prepared and put on display.

In June the Richards moved into the parsonage. As the house had been rented for ten years to a succession of tenants, it was badly in need of cleaning and repairs. So the WSCS, with a lot of help from the men of the church, had spent a good deal of time and money getting it back in shape. The floors and woodwork were refinished, new grates were put in the furnace, Howard Brush donated an electric range and Mrs. Shurts gave a new dining room suite.[6] The parsonage committee of the WSCS had reclaimed what they could of the parsonage furniture that had been stored for years in Dave Moore's blacksmith shop and had disposed of the rest.

In spite of the troubled times, the life of the church continued much as usual in 1942. The Friendship Club kept up its monthly schedule of social meetings, and the ladies of the WSCS had their occasional food and bake sales in P. C. Henry's general store across the street. There were the usual church suppers; a roast beef supper in May, a ham supper on the Fourth of July and the Election Day turkey supper in the fall. In August the church picnic was held on the church grounds, minimizing travel because of the gas and tire rationing. Each family brought its box lunch, grilles were set up for cooking, and there were softball, croquet and horseshoe games.

In September the new Township service flag, bearing 100 stars, was unfurled from the flagpole on the green, with the announcement that already there were 26 more stars to be added. And the number would continue to grow. In the same month the old Dayton Hall on North Finley was demolished to provide parking space for the Presbyterian church, "thereby removing all automobiles from parking on the public streets". How times have changed! At an evening service in October our church unfurled its own service flag, bearing 17 stars.

At the November meeting of the Official Board the treasurer reported a balance of only $11.75, but we *were* managing to pay the pastor his salary of $1100 and were slowly paying back salary owed to Parks, so things were looking up. On Thanksgiving Day our congregation joined with the Presbyterians in a union service.

An item appearing in the News in February of '43 is of particular historical interest to many of us now, though unrelated to church affairs. It reported that Millicent Fenwick, our nationally-respected Congresswoman of the '80's, had been re-elected as vice president of the Township Board of Education.[7] She was on her way!

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[6] This was only one of the many generous gifts made to the WSCS and the church by Mrs. Marvin Shurts during the 1930's and '40's.

[7] The Township School District still included the Bernardsville schools, though Bernardsville had long been a separate borough.

Earlier in 1943 rationing had been extended to include meat, butter, cheese, coffee and "processed food", and of course this posed problems for the ladies in putting on church suppers. But by clever planning they did manage them occasionally, and they continued their periodic food sales at the Henry store. Shoes, too, were added to the list of rationed goods, and it became mandatory to have the tires on the family car inspected periodically for wear. Gas rationing was tightened; if you had an A sticker, as most people did, three gallons a week was the limit.

A happy event occurred in April, when their first child, a son, was born to our pastor and his wife. He was christened Herbert Charles, and soon became fondly known to the doting ladies of the congregation as "little Herbie".

Under the energetic leadership of this young couple in the parsonage the health of the church continued to improve. Both Herb and Lois liked people, and they welcomed all, singly or in groups, into their home at all times. The parsonage became the regular meeting place of the Official Board and other church organizations. Some members of those days recall that Richards had "a booming voice", and that he liked to sit on the screened front porch of the parsonage greeting acquaintances passing by, though they might be on the other side of the street. In keeping with this genial spirit of hospitality the Richards invited all of the men of the church to a breakfast at the parsonage on a Sunday morning in May, before church. There was a good turnout, and most of the men felt obliged to remain for the service, though for many it wasn't their custom. In those days relatively few men attended church; the congregation of 50 or 60 was mostly women.

Among the various organizational reports given at the Quarterly Conference held in July we find one for the MYF, given by its president, Elberta Day. Included were these items:

> "For the most part, we have our meetings Sunday evenings at various homes or in the Church School room, but for the summer months we are meeting during the mid-week. Sometimes the meetings begin with devotion, followed by a social, and sometimes the program is reversed; other times the social is eliminated. The youth themselves make up their own worship service, picking their topics and hymns and arranging them to suit their own tastes."
>
> "We have about 12 active members, of which three-fourths are girls, and about 6 associate members who attend at times. We are ably advised by Miss Mabel Clark, Mrs. Richards and our Pastor, who give readily of their time".
>
> "During the year we have held a hayride, hot dog and hamburger roasts, before the rationing, fellowship suppers at the homes of members, a game party, two showers for the parsonage,

bowling and a "Come As You Are" party, and, with the assistance of the Church School we are sending two delegates to Blairstown Institute".

Again that year, with gasoline and tires in short supply, the church picnic in August was held on the church grounds, and it was well attended as usual. A softball game was staged on the grounds of the by-now deserted Maple Avenue school across the street.

In mid-November the ladies of the church put on a congregational dinner in honor of the pastor and his wife. The Richards were presented with an album containing the signatures of all the church members, and the "capable and well-liked young minister" was presented with a generous "purse" of $440, all in silver dollars. It weighed 27 pounds. This, from a congregation of such modest means, was convincing evidence indeed that the church liked its pastor and his wife and what they were doing for them.

In January of 1944 Mrs. Earp stepped aside as president of the WSCS, having served in that office for three years and having so capably directed the affairs of the Society through its critical first years. Mrs. Vausse was elected to succeed her, with Mrs. Richards as vice-president, and several changes were instituted. The membership was divided into five circles, each to have its own monthly meetings in addition to the monthly meetings of the Society, which would henceforth be held in the evening rather than during the day. A general budget of $250 for the coming year was adopted, and each circle was expected to raise $50 on its own initiative. The sewing committee, under Mrs. Homler, was energetically continuing its weekly efforts, turning out "utility bags" and Red Cross garments by the dozens. At its February meeting the Society voted to buy a pulpit gown for the pastor, and shortly thereafter Rev. Richards proudly began wearing it at Sunday morning services. Probably this was the first time that a Bishop Janes pastor had appeared in the pulpit clad in clerical garb. When Richards left, several years later, the Society reluctantly agreed, after some debate, to sell him the robe for $35, and he took it with him.

In retrospect, it's hard to see how Herb Richards was able to accomplish all that he did, in view of his busy schedule. He was not only a third-year student at Drew, but was also attending classes at Columbia University, working for his Master's degree. Still, he somehow found time to fulfill his pastoral duties — with a great deal of help from his wife. But with a 6-month old child to care for, she didn't have much spare time either. Herb is remembered as "bubbling with wit and humor. He always had a good story to tell, and he told it well, and sometimes these stories crept into his sermons". But "he was a worrywart, too". With so many irons in the fire, he sometimes became "terribly upset and emotional" if things didn't go just as he intended. He could preach very good sermons, if and when he could find the time to properly prepare them.

Lois, the indefatigable and ever-present helper in all of his endeavors, is

remembered as "a very able, brilliant, personable and talented young woman". She participated actively in the WSCS as vice president and program chairman, and shared in the leadership of the Youth Fellowship. And for several years, to augment Herb's meager salary, she worked part-time as an assistant to Dr. Edgar, her neighbor, who was then the only dentist in town. The Edgars lived in the old pre-Revolutionary house just north of the church, which later became the Presbyterian church house, and served as such until 1967, when it was replaced by the present brick structure. Being a young couple relatively new in town, too, they had become close friends of the young parsonage family.

The personable Mrs. Richards was also a good housekeeper, and an expert seamstress. The ladies of the church considered her the best-dressed preacher's wife — let alone student's wife — that they had ever known. And she liked to tell that Herb chose her wardrobe, and even bought clothes for her. That this was a habit of his is verified by an incident recalled by one of his friends. On one of Herb's frequent trips to New York while attending classes at Columbia, he saw in a store window some item of womens' apparel that he just couldn't resist. So he went in and bought it, not realizing that it would take nearly all of the money he had with him. He didn't have enough left to pay his train fare home. But that problem was easily solved; he simply walked up to a traffic cop, explained his predicament, and negotiated the loan of a few dollars (which he repaid on a subsequent trip).

On June 6, 1944 came the stunning news of the landing of Allied troops on the beaches of Normandy. That evening our church, like most other churches in the area, held a service of prayer, "asking God's blessing on the Allied armed forces". And a week later the drive for the 5th War Loan was launched.

It was also in June that Rev. Richards reached three of his early goals. He not only received his B.D. degree from Drew and was ordained as a minister and member of the Newark Conference, but also was awarded his M.A. degree by Columbia University. And he decided that he wanted to continue at Drew as a teacher. He advised the Official Board, at its next meeting, that he had been offered a post as assistant professor in the Department of Homiletics and asked permission to accept. Tentative approval was granted, provided, of course, that this work would not conflict with his duties at Bishop Janes. And apparently he succeeded in managing that, with Lois' help, because he continued as a member of the Drew faculty for the remaining three years of his stay with us.

It was that spring that a group of clergymen from churches in the area met at the Bishop Janes parsonage to form the Ministerial Association of Somerset Hills. They decided to meet monthly thereafter at their various homes to discuss matters of mutual concern, and that each member of the group would in turn prepare a paper to be presented at these meetings.

Our community suffered a great loss when Dr. Lauren G. Bennett, the beloved 13th pastor of the Presbyterian church, died on July 16th. He had been pastor of that church for thirty-one years. During that period a succession of

fifteen different pastors had served our church, and he had befriended all of them. His was not the longest pastorate at that church, however; both the Rev. Dr. Samuel Kennedy in the latter 1700's, and the Rev. Dr. John Rankin, a century later, had had longer pastorates.

In the fall of 1944 the Newark Conference launched a campaign to raise funds for a ministers' pension fund, and our Official Board voted that our church would accept its assigned quota of $936, to be paid over a two-year period. And the following month came some added claims on our meager financial resources. Not only had the Methodist Church begun another national money-raising drive, the World Crusade for Christ campaign, but we had some urgent needs of our own. The church badly needed a new furnace, which would cost $451. So the Board decided to borrow $2000 and satisfy all of these demands. And this was promptly done. The furnace was purchased, and at the Quarterly Conference in January of '45, Van Munger proudly presented to the District Superintendent a check for $936 in premature payment of the pension fund pledge, then Mrs. Moore gave him another check for $692, representing our share of the Crusade fund. What a rare occasion that was! Of course we were now in debt, but in the glow of renewed confidence there wasn't much worry about that. The debt would be paid off in the not-too-distant future.

The WSCS, at its January meeting in 1945, decided to reorganize in three circles, rather than five, with a larger membership for each. The total membership at that time was about 75. Mrs. Kenneth Mitchell, Mrs. T. Gibson Smith and Mrs. Harrison Wright were chosen as the circle leaders. The treasurer reported a balance of $322 in the treasury, and it was voted to give $100 toward the church debt. A budget of $500 for the year was approved, each circle being asked to raise $100 on its own.

The Official Board, when it met in April, took up the matter of our crippled church bell. Since 1925, when the tower structure was found to be dangerously weak, the bell had not been swung in the usual manner, but was fixed in a stationary position and was sounded only occasionally, by means of a rope which swung the clapper against it. Now the Board voted "to start an investigation about the church bell, to see if it is possible for it to be fixed so it will ring". Shortly thereafter the committee in charge was advised by a contractor that the job could be done, and in due course the work was authorized.

When it met in June, the Official Board voted to request that Richards "remain here (for another year) on the same basis as last year, and to hold his position at Drew". The following month the Board was advised by its investigating committee that a number of repairs to the church were badly needed. In addition to the work on the tower and bell, the roof was leaking, the chimney needed fixing and something had to be done about the windows. A contractor had been consulted and had estimated that the total cost would be about $2500. And again they took the bull by the horns. It was decided to borrow more money and proceed, and a committee was appointed to organize a campaign to underwrite

HONOR ROLL - WORLD WAR II

Members of our church or
of church families who served

Begley, John F.*
Begley, Richard B.
Bettler, Albert R.
§Brush, George E.*
Brush, James A.
Conger, Winifred V.
Crafferty, Fred W.*
Fennimore, Ellsworth W.*
Garrabrant, Robert B.
Gilman, Leonard
Hasselman, Norman*
Hasselman, Walter*
Hicken, Guy R.*
Hicken, Roger R.*
Hoagland, Robert*
Kunzman, Elwood*
Mertz, Robert E.
Perkins, Robert H.*
Petty, Harry*
Petty, Ransford
Pope, Alyce I.
Powell, V.M., Jr.
§Richardson, Robert E.*
Richardson, Wilbur*
Riker, Robert G.
Scheuerman, William L., Jr.
Scheuerman, Willis F.*
Snyder, Charles H.*
Snyder, Raymond H.*
Snyder, David N.*
Stewart, Allen J.*
Stewart, Robert T.
Swartz, George A.*
Turner, Kenneth A., Jr.
Vausse, Stanley F.*
Wolfe, Raymond V.*

§ Died in the service

* Not listed on our membership roll

the repair fund. By September the work was well under way.

Now that the Allies were on the offensive, local air raid wardens were relieved of their duties and there were no more blackouts. We were over the hump, and the activities of the church, like those of the community, were getting back to normal. The WSCS had its mother and daughter banquet in May, a strawberry festival and food sale in June, its picnic at the Earp's in July and the customary bazaar and Election Day supper in November. Its hard-working sewing group continued to produce piles of garments for the Red Cross. The MYF kept up its busy program, gradually increasing its membership, and the Friendship Club was prospering.

The church budget for the 1945-46 fiscal year reflected the war-time effect on the economy. Money was becoming less scarce, and prices were rising. So too did the budget, which totaled $3811, providing $1600 for the pastor's salary, $175 for the organist's salary and music, and $1000 toward reducing the debt. The pastor's salary was now back to where it had been 18 years earlier, in 1927, but was still below the pre-depression high. The budget made no provision for benevolences, which were supported by additional contributions amounting to perhaps $300 a year.

It was on August 6th and 8th that atomic bombs were dropped on Japanese cities. The following Sunday the topic of Rev. Richards' sermon was, quite appropriately, "The Moral and Religious Implications of the Atomic Bomb". In this sermon, one of his best, he declared the bomb to be "the greatest physical achievement since Archimedes repelled the Roman fleet, embracing the potential to destroy civilization." On the 14th the Japanese agreed to surrender, and "V-J Day"[8] was celebrated with parades and general rejoicing. That evening there were services of prayer and thanksgiving in the churches.

In October our congregation and the community as well were saddened by the death of our beloved former pastor, Joseph Appley, at the age of 79. The funeral service was held in our church — the church he had built — on October 23rd, and conducted by Rev. Richards. Assisting him were District Superintendent Lambdin, former District Superintendent Washabaugh and Dr. Earp. Burial was in Evergreen Cemetery, in a plot presented to the family by our church.

The minutes of the Official Board's meeting in November record that payment to "the new organist, Miss Dorothy Howell" was to be $10 a week. It is apparent from the records that there had been quite a turnover in organists since Betty Vausse had resigned in 1939 and Mrs. Holley had been engaged to take over. Much of the time since then Mr. G. Clifford Terry had held the post, at a salary which gradually increased from $2 to $3 a week, but we find mention also of Miss Howell having previously resigned the position in the fall of '43, when both Mrs. Kraus and Marion Nagle substituted temporarily. Now Miss Howell was back again, at a substantial increase in salary.

[8] The official date for V-J Day is September 2nd, the day of the formal surrender.

Among the customary reports at the 4th Quarterly Conference in January 1946 was one by Larry McKee, the capable and devoted Director of Religious Education. He reported that the Sunday School enrollment, students and teachers, numbered 97, and that average attendance had increased from 54 to 60. In those days attendance at Sunday School numbered about the same as that at the church service. The concluding paragraph of his report reveals that:

> "Our Primary Department, with three large classes, bids fair to overflow the small room it is now using, and we are looking forward anxiously to the time when we can take advantage of the basement room, which now appears to be dry and usable. The new entrance way (to the basement) invites us, but we realize that we must wait until the new heater has been tested and proved satisfactory before we can move downstairs to these larger accommodations".

The WSCS, meeting later that month, adopted a budget of $680, nearly three times as large as that of two years previous. Mrs. Homler, the untiring chairman of the Red Cross sewing group, reported that in 1945 this group had completed and turned in 305 kit bags, 80 utility bags, 42 boys' shirts, 72 baby shirts, 20 boys' sleepers and 23 pairs of boys' pants. The ladies of the Society were collecting regularly for "the Goodwill truck", which made several pickups each year, and their program included occasional luncheon meetings with the ladies of the New Providence Methodist Church.

The repair work on the church had now been completed and, more importantly, the bell tower had been remodeled. The upper ten feet of the structure, including the arch, had been removed and the bell had been remounted so that it now could safely be swung in the proper manner. And on the last Sunday morning in January our bell, which for 21 years had been used very sparingly, was really rung again, and at the service which followed it was re-dedicated. As we now know, there would later be another long period, in the '60's and '70's, when that splendid bell of ours would be out of use and in storage, and it would be mounted and dedicated for the third time about thirty years later.

There was good news for the Official Board at its March meeting, when the treasurer reported that the $2000 loan had been repaid and all Conference obligations had been met, too. Church repairs, which included new wiring and lighting fixtures, had also been completed. Though we were still in debt for these and other improvements, things, on the whole, were indeed looking up. And, as an expression of gratitude, the pastor was voted a well-deserved increase in salary.

On Palm Sunday evening in 1946 there was a special music program, when our choir was joined by the Bernardsville Methodist choir and the choirs of four Somerville churches in singing "Olivet to Calvary". The large chorus was assembled and directed by Mrs. Kingsbury (Mabel) Davis, with our own organist, Dorothy Howell, accompanying. Mabel Davis, a resident of Bernardsville,

THE CHURCH AFTER BELL TOWER WAS REMODELED

(Compare with photograph on page 133)

was then organist at one of the Somerville churches, was later to become our own organist and musical director for a number of years.

Rather surprisingly, the anniversary of our church's origin — its 93rd — was observed that year. In many churches such events occur at 25-year intervals. Our 75th anniversary had been celebrated during Mellburg's pastorate, but our 25th and 50th had passed unheeded. Now, for some reason, it was decided that we should mark the end of our 93rd year as an organized church. On the first Sunday in June there was a "social hour" for the congregation from 3 to 5 in the afternoon, and a special evening service at which the District Superintendent, the Rev. George Flint, was the speaker. There were also dedication ceremonies for the church's Honor Roll and for the recently installed new lighting.

That fall there was another change of organists, when Miss Howell again resigned, after serving for less than a year. And again Mrs. Kraus filled in temporarily until, early in December, Robert Heath, a music director in the Township schools, was engaged to fill the position.

At the January meeting of the WSCS in 1947 Mrs. Louis Reitz was installed as the Society's new president. The treasurer reported that in 1946 the Society had realized, from its various activities, a total of $1206.52 — a new high — and had paid out $1300. Of this amount, $254 had been spent on parsonage improvements and $626 had been given to the church. Among the gifts to the

church had been a new oil burner for the furnace; the days of stoking a coal fire were finally at an end. At their February meeting the ladies decided to spend another $191 to have the outside of the parsonage painted.

At the 4th Quarterly Conference, held in February, there was again a unanimous vote requesting Herb Richards' return for another year, and the invitation was underlined by raising his salary to $2200, — twice what it had been six years earlier, but still not very big.

An important event occurred in February of 1947, when a Mens' Club was again re-organized. But this time the organization would be a lasting one; it was the beginning of the Tower Club which, 36 years later, is still going strong. Eighty-four men attended this organizational dinner, and fortunately we have in our archives a photograph of this assembly, seated around tables in the old "chapel". As their first president the Club elected George Ritter. Kenneth Turner Jr. was chosen vice-president and Walter Vausse treasurer.

On St. Patrick's Day the Richards' second child, a daughter, Marcey Linn, was born, — a happy event not only for the young parsonage family but for the Bishop Janes family as well.

During the war years, due to the scarcity of materials, there had been very little building and new people moving into the community found very few houses available. Yet the community was beginning to grow; it was the beginning of a period of growth that has continued ever since. In May of '46 the Township Committee hired our first full-time policeman, Robert Moore. Until then what policing service we had was provided by one or two men working on a part-time basis. But Bob Moore, who had had special training and some previous experience, was now to devote full time to the job, and was to be paid $200 a month.

As a rule the officials of the church — and the congregation, too — awaited with some anxiety the meeting of the Annual Conference, to learn whether or not the pastor would be returning for another year. But that was not the case in 1947. The Conference didn't meet until June of that year, and before that Richards had advised the Board that he had been offered an associate professorship at Drew and had agreed to accept it, effective July 1st. While he regretted very much leaving Bishop Janes, the opportunity to work closely with his mentor and idol, Dr. Lynn Harold Hough of the Drew faculty, was one that he couldn't resist. So — after long deliberation with Lois, of course — he had decided to leave the pulpit for an academic career. It came as no surprise, then, when the Conference confirmed this move and announced the appointment of John Esaias as his successor at Bishop Janes. At the Sunday morning service on June 15th he bade his farewell to the Basking Ridge congregation.

Herb Richards' six-year pastorate had been, in spite of the hardships and uncertainties of the war years, a happy and contented period for our church. It was a period of continuing recovery and healthy new growth following the depression; a time when the foundations of the church were being further

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strengthened for the greater growth that was to follow. He had served us very well, inspiring renewed confidence and enthusiasms, and enhancing our stature in the eyes of the community. As he himself pointed out, however, much of what he accomplished was due to the ground-work so capably laid by his predecessor, Jack Parks. Together, they had worked wonders. And, as with Parks, the practical down-to-earth training that he had received in his neophyte years at Bishop Janes — an apprenticeship that was by no means easy — had provided a strong foundation upon which to build his subsequent career. Conference records show that during his pastorate church membership increased by about 40%; the 1947 Conference Journal credits Bishop Janes (when he left) with a membership of 212. And during that six-year period the membership of the Sunday School also increased.

Herbert Richards' subsequent career has indeed been an outstanding one, as attested by his listing in *Who's Who in America*. We shall not attempt to enumerate here his many honors and achievements, but a capsule summary of the highlights will indicate the scope of his activities.

He was a member of the Drew faculty for four years, serving as associate professor and Head of the Department of Homiletics, and as assistant to the dean. Then in 1951 he moved west, transferring to the Oregon-Idaho Conference, and was appointed senior pastor of the First Methodist Cathedral Church in Boise, Idaho. He served this large church for 18 years, and during this time three more children, Robyn, Frederick and Mark, were born to the Richards family. During his pastorate there he added more than 2000 members to the church's rolls and raised several million dollars in support of its local and missionary programs. In 1955 the College of Idaho awarded him the Doctor of Divinity degree in recognition of his outstanding work.

In 1969 he was appointed senior pastor of the First United Methodist Church in Eugene, Oregon, at the edge of the University of Oregon campus, where he again substantially increased the membership and retired a debt of more than half a million dollars. After nine years at that church he became, in 1978, the senior pastor at the Tabor Heights United Methodist Church in Portland, and he still (in 1983) occupies that pulpit.

While his long pastorates at several large churches are indeed noteworthy, it is probably his extra-curricular activities that have made Dr. Richards one of our well-known ministers in the northwest. Chief of these has been his continuing deep involvement in radio and television broadcasting. In 1954, with the financial support of some of his wealthy parishioners, he established Inspiration Incorporated, a non-profit corporation serving in the fields of education and community service through the media of radio, television, publications and public forums. Since its founding he has been the president of this organization and Lois a vice-president. Now headquartered in Portland, its weekly broadcasts have for years been carried, at one time or another, by all of the major networks, chiefly in the western states. He and Lois have also produced and

released many TV programs on behalf of the Red Cross, both here and abroad, and have done other radio and TV programs in Europe, Asia and the Orient. The busy-ness of their early years in Basking Ridge has by no means diminished, and Lois continues to be the indispensable helpmate. As Herb recently observed, "We have done everything in our lives together".

In church work, Dr. Richards has held numerous positions of responsibility at the Conference level, and in 1965 was named "Clergyman of the Year" by the Religious Heritage of America, a national distinction shared by only a few ministers of all faiths.

He has also been a leader in civic affairs. He has served on Red Cross boards in several states, and in 1958 received that organization's twenty-year service award and was designated as "Mr. Red Cross". He has been a committeeman of the Boy Scouts of America, and has an active interest in the YMCA, Rotary Club and Masons (as a 32nd degree Shriner). While in Idaho he was, for several years, chaplain of the Idaho senate, and has for many years been Wing Chaplain of the Civil Air Patrol, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. With all this, he has still found time to write numerous articles for various religious publications and to compose and publish several oratorios.

Clearly, Dr. Richards is one of those alumni of the Bishop Janes training school of whom we may well be proud. He and Lois have achieved great things, and they will do a lot more. But to their friends in Basking Ridge this is not surprising; they always knew they "had a lot on the ball", and we all wish them continued success and happiness.

CHAPTER XVI

COUNTRY VILLAGE TO SUBURBAN COMMUNITY

1947 - 1953

OUR CHURCH had now again come to life. Two young student pastors, one following the other, with their youthful enthusiasms and energy, had revived lagging spirits, restored confidence, and rebuilt a faltering fellowship. We had indeed been fortunate to have had these young men assigned to us at this critical time; it's unlikely that older and more experienced men could have done any better.

A decade earlier our membership had officially been listed as 165, including 31 who were classified as inactive. And now, in 1947, though Parks and Richards had both pruned the roles, removing most of the dead wood, our membership stood at 212, and not one of them was considered inactive. Also, during the past nine years the church budget had increased from under $2000, with a doubtful $1000 for the pastor, to about $5400 and a salary figure of $2200. This increase reflected, in part, the changing state of the economy; with the post-war inflation, wages and prices had been steadily rising. But chiefly it evidenced growing interest and dedication on the part of a growing congregation.

Not all of the credit for this healthy state of affairs belonged to Parks and Richards, however; another contributing factor was the emerging growth of our community. In 1940 the Township population (including patients and staff at Lyons Hospital) had been 4,512; the next census, three years hence would show a corresponding figure of 7,489. Following the war, many industries were beginning to move their research facilities, if not their headquarters, from the city to the suburbs, and the Somerset Hills area was attracting many new would-be residents. Finding a home, though, was not an easy matter. With building curtailed during the war, there were few houses for sale, and no longer any for rent. Now that materials were becoming available again, there were some new houses being built, particularly in the recently opened Homestead Village and Fairview Acres tracts. And you could still build a nice six-room house for $12,000 — maybe less. Soon the big old peach orchards around us would become sites for housing, too.

These early post-war years marked the beginning of a new era of unprecedented change and growth. Neither our town nor our church would ever be

the same again. No longer was Basking Ridge a sleepy little rural village; it was becoming a commuters' suburb. And Bishop Janes Church, during the next decade, would grow even faster than the Township. Its prospects for the future appeared promising indeed.

A Gentle but Forceful Young Leader

JOHN R. ESAIAS, JR. 1947 - 50

Our next pastor was a young man, too, but he had completed his education and had some experience. He was about the same age as Herb Richards, having been born, in Baltimore, Md., on September 25, 1920, and, like Richards, his father was a Methodist minister. But in temperment the two men differed considerably; Richards was decidely an extrovert, Esaias quiet and reserved.

John Esaias received his high school education in Morrilton, Arkansas, where his father was then stationed, then for two years attended Asbury College in Kentucky. He completed his college training at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, receiving his A.B. degree there in 1941. He then enrolled at Drew, where he received his Bachelor of Divinity degree. While a student at Drew he served as pastor of the Mt. Hope Methodist Chruch, and later as pastor to the young people at the Morristown church. After his ordination he returned to Maryland as a member of the Baltimore Conference and served a year as pastor of the Mt. Nebo church. Then, in January of 1945, he joined the armed forces and served until September of the following year as a chaplain in the Navy, with the rank of lieutenant, junior grade. After the war he returned to the ministry, became a member of the New York Conference and, while taking refresher courses at Drew, served as pastor of Wesley Methodist Church in the Bronx prior to his appointment to the Bishop Janes pulpit. So, within a period of four years he had served not only as a Navy chaplain, but as pastor of four churches in three different Conferences.

John Esaias brought with him to Basking Ridge his lovely young bride of six months, the former Ruth Ann Dodsworth. They had been married in New York the previous January. She, too, came from a Methodist minister's family. She had been born and raised in Malaya, where her parents were missionaries, had come to the States in 1940 to complete her education, and was a graduate of the College of Puget Sound. After receiving her degree there she had come east for graduate study at the Hartford Foundation in Hartford, Connecticut, and at the time of coming to Basking Ridge, held the position of National Chairman of the Commission on Missions and World Friendship of the Methodist Youth Fellowship. Obviously a very capable young lady, and a very friendly one. The congregation took to her immediately.

This engaging young couple — John and Ruth Ann, as they soon came to be known — were welcomed by the congregation at the usual reception, and

moved into the parsonage in mid-June. John was rather small in stature and somewhat retiring in nature, but he had a ready smile and a firm handshake. His first sermon in our pulpit, on June 22nd, was impressive and well received. In those days Sunday morning worship was at 11 A.M., with Sunday School convening an hour earlier, and on Sunday evenings the Junior Youth Fellowship met at 6:30, the MYF at 7:30.

The usual schedule of activities continued under the new pastor, with the WSCS holding its frequent bake sales at Howard Brush's store[1], a strawberry festival in June and the young peoples' peach festival in August. To get things off to a good start in the fall a congregational "get-together supper" was held early in September, and the WSCS had its usual fair and supper in October. Tickets were now $1.25, 75¢ for children, and there was a profit of $358.76. On Election Day in November there was the traditional turkey supper, another good money raiser, and both the Tower Club and the Friendship Club entered on their usual schedule for winter activities.

At its September meeting the Official Board appointed a committee "to see about a heater for the church basement". At its next meeting it was reported that Mrs. MacDowell, Rev. Appley's daughter, had made the church a gift of a spotlight, so placed as to illuminate from within our window of the Good Shepherd, the memorial to Bishop Janes, facing Finley Avenue. When the Board met in November another committee was appointed to see about repairing leaks in the walls of the basement rooms and improving the drainage system around them. It was almost twenty years, now, since these basement rooms had been built, and there were still moisture and leakage problems, though not nearly as bad as they had been earlier.

It was in that October of 1947 that Bernards Township, after a good deal of debating, pro and con, voted, by a count of 607 to 468, to establish its own school district and Board of Education, independent of Bernardsville and Far Hills. And in the following month the Township Kiwanis Club was formed, with John Esaias as one of its charter members.

The minutes of the December meeting of the WSCS record that there was a discussion concerning "a problem which many of us have been thinking about for some time, the matter of making the parsonage living room more livable". They voted to "put $100 — not to exceed $125 — at the disposal of the parsonage committee for improving the appearance of the living room and taking care of other needed items such as door chimes, porch light and additional pieces of furniture". Mrs. Esaias said that she had been offered the use of a small piano, which would need some attention, "especially tuning". This would help to give a more home-like appearance to the room and would be very useful when groups such as the MYF met there. The ladies agreed that the piano should be accepted. John and Ruth Ann were most hospitable, carrying on the open house policy of the Richards before them, and they wanted to make their

[1] Howard had taken over the former P. C. Henry Store early in 1946.

home a suitable meeting place for any group desiring to use it. Both of them were already making great progress with the young people of the church.

On Christmas eve the MYF, led by the Esaiases, went caroling to the homes of some of our shut-ins, and at 11:30 that night there was a worship service for all, at the church. There may have been Christmas eve services such as this at our church previously, but this was the first that we find mentioned in our records.

That holiday season brought some of the heaviest weather in memory. On the day after Christmas there was a snowfall of 18 inches. Scarcely had we dug ourselves out of that when, on New Year's Day, came a very bad ice storm, said to be the most crippling in the history of the area. Everywhere large tree branches and utility lines were down, and everything was brought to a standstill. In the days that followed, emergency crews were brought in from South Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York to clear the roads. Many homes were without power for a week or more, but fortunately temperatures were moderate.

In February the church budget for the 1948-49 year was set at $5174, about $300 less than that for the previous year. Of this amount, $2200 was allocated for the pastor's salary, $500 for the organist and $1325 for payment on bank loans and interest. It appears that the church debt at that time was around $2500. In a letter sent to the membership by the Finance Committee it was stated that, of the 99 pledges received the previous year, 43 had been for 25¢ or less per week, and only 19 were for more than $1.50 a week. We certainly had no big givers in those days. No one pledged more than $4 a week, and there was only one member who gave that much.

At the Fourth Quarterly Conference in March, Howard Brush was appointed lay leader. There was a unanimous request that John Esaias be returned for another year, and to underline this request his salary was set at $2400, — an increase in the budget. Larry McKee, the Sunday School Superintendent and Director of Religious Education, reported that there were now 12 classes in the Sunday School, with a total pupil enrollment of 111 and an average attendance of 70. He also stated that:

> "An important development of the past year has been the establishment of a Junior Youth Fellowship under the leadership of Rev. and Mrs. Esaias and Mrs. W. R. Shauger. This group numbers about 12 active members and meets every Sunday evening at 6:30 for worship and recreation . . . Another important step, to us, is the new arrangement for heating the basement. We have three classes meeting down there and two in the smaller of the Sunday School rooms. One of our immediate projects is to cooperate in any possible way with other organizations of the church in cleaning up and decorating the basement to make it more pleasant and more usable".

Mrs. Reitz, reporting as president, said that the WSCS was meeting monthly, except in July and August, and the Executive Board also met monthly; that the Society was comprised of three circles, each having its own monthly meetings, and that during the past year the Society had contributed $584 to local church expenses and some $200 to missionary and social causes. George Ritter reported a very satisfactory first year for the Tower Club, which had about 65 members, and Louis Reitz reported on the active social program of the Friendship Club.

When the Official Board met in April it voted to "put cracked stone on the lot behind the church and use it for a parking lot". By this time so many people were driving their cars to church on Sunday mornings that parking in the streets was getting a little crowded. There were a few far-sighted citizens who predicted that if the town kept on growing the way it was, parking in town might become a problem. How right they were!

On one Sunday in April the sermon was preached by Mrs. Esaias' father, Dr. Marmaduke Dodsworth. He was on leave from his missionary work in Singapore to serve as a delegate to the Methodist General Conference meeting in Boston, and of course had included Basking Ridge in his itinerary. With Ruth Ann's background in missionary work and John's interest also in this field, there was already evidence that under the Esaiases our interest in this aspect of the Christian ministry, often lacking in the past, would be strengthened.

New robes had recently been purchased for our choir and, to help pay for them, the choir sponsored, late in May, a rather unique event at the Oak Street School auditorium. It was the showing by Rev. Carl Mellberg, one of our former pastors and then pastor of the Simpson Methodist Church in Paterson, of movies that he had taken twenty years earlier in Basking Ridge[2]. The show was a double feature; in addition to the Basking Ridge film, Rev. Mellberg also showed a film of the New Guinea jungles that he had made, while in the Army, for the Australian and Dutch governments. A few days later Circle 3 of the WSCS also put on a show of their own in the same auditorium. This was a fashion show under the direction of Mrs. Esaias and Mrs. Isenberg, staged with the help of 21 WSCS ladies and children, and a Morristown department store.

One Sunday in June our pulpit was occupied by the pastor's father, John R. Esaias, Sr. John's parents were visiting them from Atlanta, where the elder Rev. Easias was Chaplain of the Veterans' Administration Hospital. And on a Sunday in July, while John and Ruth Ann were on vacation, Carl Mellberg was our preacher.

It was in August of 1948 that the old Brick Academy on West Oak Street, a historic structure built in 1809 and serving for 50 years as a Township schoolhouse, was purchased by the Township. A purchase price of $6500 was paid to the former owners, the Junior Order of United American Mechanics. For the next quarter century this building was to be used as our Township Hall

[2] An effort has been made by the local Historical Society to locate and perhaps acquire this film, but the Mellberg family advises that it has apparently been lost.

and the seat of our municipal government.

That fall the whole community was stunned by a tragic accident. It was the last Saturday in August, a beautiful fall day, and the young people of our church were holding their traditional peach festival on the church lawn back of the parsonage. This was a popular event with the townspeople and, as usual, it was well patronized. Among the patrons was Paul Hausel, the manager of the local airport on Lord Stirling Road, and with him was 20-year-old Janet Fish of South Orange, a licensed commercial pilot who was employed at the airport in a promotional capacity. They had stopped by on their way to work to enjoy some refreshments. After introducing themselves to the young people they lingered to chat a while with them and, before leaving, made their contributions to the MYF's fund for missionary work. Of course these experienced pilots were the object of near hero worship by many of the younger people. In those early days of commercial aviation theirs was an enviable and still rare occupation.

One of the young girls who served them, and was much impressed, was 15-year-old Janet Shauger, a vivacious and attractive high school student and a popular member of the MYF. Her sister Carol was also active in the youth group, and her parents were active members of the church. Mrs. Shauger was one of the adult leaders of the new Junior Fellowship, and Mr. Shauger frequently volunteered his truck and his service to transport the young people on their various outings.

Late in the afternoon, when the festival was over, John and Ruth Ann were helping some of the young people clean up, and were discussing what should be done with the leftover cake. Janet had an idea; why not take some of it down to that nice Mr. Housel and Miss Fish at the airport? They *had* been generous, and this would be a good way to thank them again. John Esaias agreed that this would be nice, since they seemed to have been so interested, and said he would drive Janet down in his car if she wanted to go. Sure she did, so they wrapped up a few pieces of cake and off they went.

It was after 6:30 when they got to the airport, and Mr. Housel and Miss Fish were delighted to be remembered with another piece of cake. So grateful were they, in fact, that in turn they offered to take John and Janet for a short plane ride — on the house. They weren't busy at that time of day, and wouldn't it be fun? Janet was thrilled. A plane ride — free! But John held back. Probably neither of them had ever been up in a plane before; in those days that was still a rare and heady experience. But this *was* a rare opportunity, and with an experienced pilot, too. And what a thrill it would be to see Basking Ridge from the air! Somewhat reluctantly John agreed that it would be all right to take a ride, — but only a short one. They had to get back to the church.

The only planes on hand were two-seaters, for a pilot and one passenger, so they couldn't go together. But that was no problem. Miss Fish would take Janet in her plane and John would go in another plane, piloted by George Lewis, her fiance. The two men took off first, followed soon after by the two girls in the

other plane. After circling a few minutes the first plane landed and John thanked George for a delightful ride. He had enjoyed it immensely. Leaving their plane, they stood waiting for the girls to land. But in her approach for landing Miss Fish somehow miscalculated, the landing gear struck some utility lines bordering the field and, as the two men looked on, horrified, her plane crashed. There was a frantic call to the First Aid Squad, which immediately rushed to the scene and worked feverishly to rescue the girls from the wreckage. But Janet Shauger had died almost instantly. Miss Fish was rushed to the hospital, accompanied by her grief-stricken fiance, but died a few hours later. It was the first fatal accident in the 15-year history of this small airport.

John Esaias' feelings, in the face of this staggering tragedy, can scarcely be imagined. How could he have been so irresponsible, so stupid! If he hadn't consented to taking the ride, this wouldn't have happened! And stunned as he was, he still had to break the news to Janet's parents, who didn't even know that she had gone to the airport. Unjustly, though quite understandably, he felt that he was to blame for what had happened, though a weeping Ruth Ann, many of his close friends, and even the bereaved Shaugers, argued otherwise. Somehow, though he slept little if any that night, he managed to conduct the Sunday morning service the next day without betraying his inner turmoil. In this, as on other occasions, John Esaias displayed his great inner strength. Many in the congregation shared his suffering that morning, and did their best to console him. But the mental wound suffered by our conscientious young pastor in this tragic experience would be a very long time healing.

When the MYF met that Sunday evening, the saddened and sobered group of young people decided to honor their lost friend and companion by establishing a Janet Shauger Memorial Fund. It may have been at Ruth Ann's suggestion — we don't know — that they further agreed that the fund would be used to purchase a portable field organ for a small mission church. With earnest dedication the young people pursued this resolve during the next few months, and at an evening service the following November the Janet Shauger memorial organ was dedicated. Shortly thereafter it was shipped off to a little church on Culebra Island in the Caribbean.

That fall seems to have been a busy season in the life of the church. Some organization or other was having a meeting of some kind on most days and evenings of every week. In October there was another "get-together supper", and the WSCS had, in addition, its annual fair and supper. On election day came the customary turkey supper, and later in November the Somerset Hills Ministerial Association was revived, with John Esaias being chosen as its chairman. The group included clergy of various denominations, from churches in Bernardsville, Liberty Corner, Stirling, Millington and Basking Ridge.

By the beginning of 1949 it was obvious that the Township population was growing. The recently formed Township Board of Education appointed a special committee to make a house-to-house census as an aid to its planning.

They counted a population of 3974*, an increase of one-third over the 1940 census figure. The Township was then sending only 17 students to Bernards High, but would be sending about four times as many the following year, and probably within five years the number would be about 375. Already the feasibility of a regional high school was being "actively considered" by the Board.

Our church membership was growing, too; in Esaias' first year about 25 names had been added to the rolls. The young pastor and his wife were both well liked. John was a deeply devout, sincere and modest young man, conscientious and hard-working, and always congenial. Considering his age and limited experience, he was a very fine preacher, too. His sermons were well prepared and scholarly. However, as one member recalls, "he was quite a strong-willed person, too, and though he tried to be understanding, sometimes he became impatient. Some of our church programs held little interest for him, but if he didn't always support them with his presence, his energetic and delightful Ruth Ann would be there in his place.". She too was a capable public speaker and, with a great deal of poise, and a charming British accent, was equal to any situation. On one occasion, by some accident she broke a front tooth just before a scheduled meeting at which she was to speak. But even with that conspicuous deficiency, and with no apparent qualms, she carried it off beautifully.

Since the previous fall the men of the church had again done a lot of work in renovating and improving the dining room and kitchen in the church basement, under the Sunday School rooms. A special fund had been established for the purchase of necessary materials, and with the aid of this fund and a small bank loan about $3000 was spent on the project. New foundation drains and a floor drain were installed, the walls were plastered and the rooms re-painted. As with many such projects in the past, the ever-helpful Hartman Bornmann headed up the property committee in charge of the work. As a skilled carpenter and craftsman he was, for many years, the person who could always be depended upon for the necessary repairs or improvements of the church or parsonage. He was also a long-time member of the Board of Trustees, serving for many years as its secretary. In his report on this project, at the annual congregational meeting in March, he stated, with typical modesty, that "These things have all been made possible by gifts, and the installation thereof by the men of the church and the pastor, who also received blisters on his hands". Rev. Esaias, in his report, spoke of the project as "the most important single achievement we have made towards improving the church property".

Several other items of interest are found in the records of that annual meeting. The church budget for the 1949-50 year was set at $5945, providing a $2800 salary for the pastor and $600 payment on indebtedness. Mrs. David (Hannie) Moore, the Benevolence Treasurer, reported total receipts of $548.49 for the past year. Pearl Reitz, president of the WSCS, reported that the Society had given $500 toward the church debt, had bought a movie projector and

[3] This count, of course, did not include the Lyons Hospital population.

screen for the church at a cost of $333.70, had contributed $70 toward the cost of the new choir robes, and had given about $200 for various parsonage improvements. Altogether, its contributions to the church and parsonage amounted to $1527.17. And, in addition, $295 had been given to missionary and social work. This had indeed been a banner year for the Society.

Larry McKee, the Sunday School Superintendent, reported an enrollment of 130 and an average attendance of 81; further encouraging signs of a healthy growth. His report also included these statements:

> "At present we are using space in the parsonage for two classes, but the church basement renovation will very soon be finished, and we can then move several classes down there and relieve the worst of our over-crowding . . . With constant growth taking place in our community and in our church and Sunday School, however, we cannot afford to forget that we shall have constantly increasing need for more space — in other words, a new building".

Whether or not it was so recognized at the time, this certainly was a forecast of things to come.

On behalf of the MYF, its president, Margaret Sutton, reported a growing organization of "at least 20 to 22 at every meeting",and reviewed the many activities of a very busy year, including frequent meetings with other youth groups and a full schedule of social events. The Tower Club reported that because most of its members had been busy with the basement work all winter, only three dinner meetings had been held, with about 60 men in attendance at each of them. The Friendship Club, too, reported a full schedule and robust good health.

The three circles of the WSCS continued their frequent bake sales at Howard Brush's store across the street. There was a sunrise service on Easter Sunday morning, sponsored jointly by our MYF and the young people of the Presbyterian church. Early in May the WSCS held its customary mother and daughter banquet. Sunday morning service was still at 11 o'clock, with a "junior church" for small children. Sunday School had been moved ahead to 9:45, and at 10 o'clock there was an adult Bible class, taught by the pastor.

At its April meeting the Official Board took up the perennial matter of insurance on the church property. Indicative of the values and frugality of those days are the values placed, for insurance purposes, on our various assets. The church building was insured for $10,000, the organ for $2400, the parsonage for $5000, parsonage contents $1000 and the parsonage garage $1000. It's interesting — even astounding — to compare these figures with those established by an independent appraiser some 30 years later, in 1981. Those later valuations for the church and parsonage, including land, furnishings and equipment in both cases, were $849,200 and $126,500 respectively. Of course much of the difference is due to inflation, but a large part of it reflects our growth during those

three decades.

On Memorial Day in 1949 the new war memorial monuments on the village greens in Basking Ridge and Liberty Corner were unveiled and dedicated. Large crowds looked on as wreaths were laid by eleven different veterans', civic and church organizations. Our church was represented by a delegation from the MYF. In June the largest class to date in Township history, numbering 72, was graduated from Oak Street school, and the Bernards High graduating class of 140 was also the largest ever. Then in July Basking Ridge got its first bank, when the Somerset Hills National Bank opened a branch office in what is now the Werring building on South Finley Avenue.

In August Rev. Esaias, along with Father Draus of St. James Catholic Church, were elected directors of the Bernards Township Police Athletic League. This organization was sponsoring an athletic program for community youngsters. Over a hundred children had registered, and they would be meeting two evenings a week at the Oak Street and Liberty Corner schools for supervised sports and games. In accepting this honor, John, who was a sports enthusiast himself, observed that "Nothing produces better citizenship than good clean athletic events, properly supervised".

That fall the Township Kiwanis Club embarked on a new venture in community service when it held its first Labor Day Fair on the Oak Street school grounds. It took place on Labor Day (only), and featured a display and sale of baked goods, canned goods and needlework by the P.T.A., games for all ages, and refreshments served by the Boy Scouts. There was also a free picnic supper, buffet style, followed by dancing in the school gym. It was considered quite a success — more than a hundred townspeople attended! — and the Club decided to make it an annual event. Thus the modest beginning of what has grown to be one of the community's prized traditions, now attracting thousands.

On October 16th came one of those happy events in the life of our church, when baby John Dodsworth Esaias appeared on the scene. He was the first of three children to be born to this young parsonage family, and of course he was showered with affection by the ladies of the congregation.

In November Robert Heath, our organist for the past three years, resigned, and Mabel (Mrs. Kingsbury) Davis became our organist and choir director. Under her competent and inspiring leadership the musical program of the church would flourish and expand during the next two decades.

Further evidencing the town's growth, it was announced in December that the Postal Service had approved the establishment, in Basking Ridge, of a city delivery system "through a mounted carrier". This service would not begin, however, until 85% of the residents had placed street numbers in front of their homes. (There were no such numbers then). It would cover the principal streets in town, supplementing the post office's present Rural Route 1, which would be rearranged, and would require the hiring of one additional man (not "person" then). Our post office would continue to be housed in the small room at the

front of the home of William Scheuerman, the postmaster, across the street from the church.

Early in February of 1950 the congregation was saddened by the death of one of its most highly respected members when Dr. Earp passed away, at the age of 82. Funeral services were held in the Madison Methodist Church, his church home for so many years, and the burial was in the Valleau Cemetery in Ridgewood.

As we entered the second half of the twentieth century Bishop Janes Church continued to prosper in all respects, and our membership was growing. At the Fourth Quarterly Conference in March a church budget of $8344 — an increase of more than 40% over that of the previous year — was adopted. This budget, as it had been clearly presented in an attractive folder mailed out by the Finance Committee, is shown on the next page. Note that it does not include an item for benevolences. These were funded by separate pledges and gifts, which generally amounted to around 12% of the regular budget figure. Hannie Moore, the benevolence treasurer, reported that in the past year the amount received had been $703, a new high.

There was again a unanimous vote to request the pastor's return. His salary was to be $2800, another new high, and in addition, for the first time appearing in the records, an expense allowance of $400.

Larry McKee reported a Sunday School enrollment of 162 and average attendance of 77, noting also that "the completion of the basement project last year enabled us to take all of our older classes downstairs, leaving the upper two rooms for the Nursery, Beginners and Primary classes". Robert McKee, president of the MYF, gave an excellent report of that group's many activities, and expressed its gratitude for the help of their adult advisors, Mabel Clark and Mrs. Esaias. Ann Forsman, reporting as vice-president of the WSCS, said that during the year the Society had contributed $262 to missionary causes and $1010 to church and parsonage expenses. Albert Gratke, president of the Tower Club, reviewed the year's activities of the club and stated that "While we have not accomplished much in providing funds for the church, the Tower Club has served to foster acquaintances among the men of the church and as an aid to the pastor in his work".

Though the church was in better health than it had enjoyed for years, and progressing nicely on all fronts, John Esaias was troubled. On occasions his more intimate friends noticed that he seemed to rather resent the fact that our neighborly Presbyterian church was so much larger and more influential than Bishop Janes. Our relations with them were increasingly cordial — there were many joint services — but John, being a proud young man, seemingly suffered from an inferiority complex and found it difficult to enjoy and encourage this relationship. He had, in fact, confidentially revealed to one of our church leaders that he just could not accept the fact that the other church was so much larger and stronger than ours, and growing faster, and he thought that he would

WHAT THE CHURCH WILL COST IN 1950

PASTOR'S SALARY AND EXPENSE ALLOWANCE	$3,200
(Includes a $400 allowance to Pastor toward cost of telephone, automobile, and fuel for parsonage—for church business.)	
ORGANIST'S SALARY	600
OTHER MUSIC EXPENSES	210
(Includes supply organist, soloists, music, hymnals, and maintenance of organ and pianos.)	
SEXTON'S SALARY	650
(For services of part-time sexton for general duties and for lawn care and snow removal.)	
CHURCH SCHOOL	300
(Contribution toward cost of regular and Daily Vacation Bible School supplies.)	
GENERAL EXPENSES	800
(Includes fuel ($400), electricity, water, stationery, postage, printing, publicity, etc.)	
EMERGENCY REPAIRS	500
(For our *must* repairs—replacing broken ceiling, replacing rotten timbers and painting sash and trim.)	
NORMAL MAINTENANCE	400
(For maintenance of furnace, plumbing, wiring, and general repairs of church and parsonage. Also includes a reserve of $300 to be set aside each year to meet major repairs as necessary.)	
INSURANCE	325
(Coverage includes $49,900 on church, $13,000 on parsonage and garage.)	
COST OF CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATION	651
(This is our share—as determined by the Newark Conference.)	
SPECIAL GIFTS	180
(Includes Christmas gifts and proceeds from four plate collections for benefit of: Methodist Home for the Aged in Ocean Grove, Methodist Student Day Fund, Rally Day Fund and World-wide Communion Fund.	
REDUCTION OF CHURCH DEBT	428
(Includes principal of $400 and interest of $28, leaving a loan balance of $400 as our only indebtedness.)	
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE	100
TOTAL COST IN 1950	$8,344

have to leave. That confidante recalls, "This admission, from such a fine young man with so much potential, came as a shock. Ruth Ann talked with me about it, too, and shed tears. She wanted to stay, and felt that John was showing weakness. I could only advise her, however, that she should go with him to a happier location, if they could find one". Apparently what John needed was a church in a town where there weren't any larger churches.

And John Esaias did find what he was looking for. Most of the congregation, however, unaware of his inner qualms, were taken quite by surprise when he announced, about the middle of April that, subject to approval by the Newark Conference, he would be returning again to the Baltimore Conference to accept appointment to a church in Maryland. When it met the next month our Conference confirmed this move, and it was with a great deal of regret — and some bewilderment — that the Bishop Janes congregation bade farewell, at the end of May, to this young pastor and his family whom they liked so much.

John and Ruth Ann Esaias had served us well indeed. Under his pastorate the church had accelerated the steady growth begun under Parks and Richards. During these three years our membership had increased about 25%, passing the 300 mark.for the first time. The youth groups had prospered under their active leadership, the Sunday School had grown, and the Tower Club and Friendship Club had both flourished. The church budget had increased about 60% during this period, and though several thousand dollars had been spent on church improvements, our debt, as stated in the 1950 Conference Journal, was only $800.

His accomplishments since leaving Basking Ridge are convincing evidence that, in moving to Maryland, John Esaias made the right move. He has served long pastorates in two churches in that state; North College Park for sixteen years (1950-66) and Oxon Hill, where he is now (1983) in his seventeenth year. And he's still going strong. It was during their early years at North College Park that two daughters, Ann and Martha, were born to the Esaiases. John and Ruth have been happy and characteristically constructive in both of these charges. During their stay at North College Park the membership increased ten-fold, and in 1958 a new church was dedicated. At Oxon Hill, too, the church has been expanded to keep pace with its growing membership.

John has written and published four books, "Reality Power", "Optimistic Realism", "Spiritual Adventures" and "Reality Hope Today". At least two of them have already had their second printing. He and Ruth Ann have made missionary visits around the world, for missions are still among their prime interests. And early in 1983 they traveled to Israel, so that John could extend his research on the locale of the Transfiguration.

In a note he wrote to us not long ago, John confided, "Through some of my spiritual frustrations and failures at Basking Ridge I developed skills that have enabled me to lead hundreds of persons to Christ. I thank God for my experiences at Basking Ridge". And we shall always be grateful to you, John, for what you did for us at Bishop Janes.

The history of any organization is more meaningful when viewed against a background of contemporary events. So here let us again digress briefly to recall what was happening as we entered the last half of the twentieth century.

With the post-war recovery the economy was in pretty good shape. Employment was fairly high, people were buying, and prices were rising. In 1949 General Motors had paid a Federal income tax of over $444 million. New York City was building the world's largest airport at Idlewild, and President Truman and his family were living temporarily at Blair House while the badly deteriorated White House was being gutted and rebuilt, at a cost of $5.4 million.

On the world scene, the NATO alliance had been signed in April of 1949, and by the end of the year the Chinese Communists had taken over that country, forcing Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalists to flee to Taiwan. Now there were two Chinas. And Russia, thanks to a phenomenal spy network and the treachery of a ring of Anglo-American traitors, had acquired the bomb. It was a time of international tensions on many fronts, and soon the stress would increase. For it was in June of 1950 that the North Korean army invaded the Republic of Korea, igniting another conflict that would last for three years.

In America, it was a time of suspicion and distrust, especially in government circles. 1950 was only a few days old when Alger Hiss was convicted of treason, and the junior senator from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy, was about to embark on his nefarious witch hunt, beginning one of the most disgraceful episodes in our nation's history.

As for social influences: in 1949 a thirty-year-old North Carolina evangelist, "Billy" Graham, had drawn more than 300,000 Californians to his canvas shrine in Los Angeles, and converted 6,000 of them. In the closing months of that year "South Pacific" was just beginning its four-year run on Broadway. Movies were still a social force, though thousands of marquees had been darkened in recent years. Now television had come; as Time magazine declared, it "became a major industry and cultural force in 1950". For several years more TV sets than radios had been sold, but it wasn't until mid-1950 that TV evening audiences began to outnumber radio's. Milton Berle's comedy, Ed Murrow's newcasts, Jack Webb's "Dragnet", "The $64,000 Question", "Studio One", and other shows, were attracting millions of enchanted viewers. Of all the events of the early '50's, it appears in retrospect that the coming of the tube was to have the greatest effect on our society and its mores.

The Fundamentalist

JOSEPH A. SCHARER 1950 - 51

The minister whom the Conference appointed to succeed John Esaias was another young man of about the same age. He was Joseph A. Scharer, born on July 11, 1921, in Toledo, Ohio, where his father was a distribution manager for

the Fuller Brush Co. He attended high school in Toledo and then, like John Esaias, went on to Asbury College, where he received his A.B. degree in 1943. It was during his senior year there that he felt "the definite leading of the Lord into the ministry". He enrolled at Drew University where, three years later, he received his B.D. degree and was ordained by Bishop Oxnam. Meantime, in May 1945, he had married Miss Helen Jean Rhudy of Street, Maryland. Again, by coincidence following in Esaias' footsteps, he became a member of the Baltimore Conference, and in 1946 became a chaplain in the armed forces, serving with the U.S. Naval Reserves on Guam. Later he returned to Drew to continue his studies. While working for his M.A. degree, which he received in 1949, he served for two years as pastor of our churches at Neshanic, Centerville and Mt. Zion prior to his appointment to Bishop Janes. It was while serving these charges that the Scharers' first child, daughter Joyce, was born.

The young pastor and his family were welcomed by the congregation in the usual manner, and on June 4 Joseph Scharer preached his first sermon in our pulpit. He was a handsome, well groomed young man, and made a good impression on his listeners.

The Sharers' move into the parsonage, however, gave rise to a few problems for the ladies of the WSCS. They had brought with them a complete set of house furnishings. So, as for the Magills nineteen years earlier, the ladies had to scurry around and — with the help of the men, of course — remove and find temporary storage places for most of the parsonage furniture. As one of the women recalls, "They had nice things, and they made a beautiful home of our old house", but there wasn't the congenial hospitality they had become accustomed to. If the ladies had known how short was to be the Scharers' stay they would have been even more displeased.

It soon became evident that Joseph Scharer was a most dedicated, sincere and earnest person, with a solid determination to preach the gospel. In a letter to our historian, Edward Schroeder, ten years later, he explained his philosphy this way; "I don't know what your thinking is in the matter, but I'm telling you that I believe the church has a unique ministry to perform, and we're frittering away our time on the outlandish schemes of men". But he was not adamant or demanding; on the contrary, he was gracious, understanding and tolerant. He simply was firm in his convictions and hoped to help others to see the light. Little Mrs. Scharer completely shared his views but, as we later learned, was somewhat less tolerant of those who didn't.

When the Official Board met in June, Rev. Scharer questioned the advisability of closing the church for a month in the summertime, as had often been done in recent years. This was against his principles; it was a sign of weakness. With some reluctance, perhaps, the Board agreed that it would be kept open. Whether or not the Scharers took a vacation that summer is not clear, but there were services every Sunday, though attendance was small.

There were the usual summer church activities that year — a strawberry

festival in June, occasional bake sales sponsored by the WSCS circles, and the peach festival in late August. At the August meeting of the Official Board the treasurer reported a deficit of $446 in unpaid bills. Rather than seeking a bank loan, though, six of the Board members offered to contribute $275 toward this deficit and asked that the balance be solicited from other members of the congregation.

At that same meeting Rev. Scharer expressed his concern about the fact that Sunday evening services were held only infrequently at Bishop Janes, and there hadn't been any mid-week prayer meetings for years. He felt strongly that such services were essential to the spiritual growth of the church, and urged that the Board authorize their re-institution. After some discussion and, as a gesture of cooperation, the Board granted its approval. And so, on the first Wednesday evening in September, the first of a new series of weekly meetings for Bible study and prayer was held. As expected, they weren't very well supported, but Joseph Scharer was not easily discouraged. As he recalled years later, "Needless to say, my concern for a midweek prayer meeting wasn't shared by all the members of the Official Board, but they gave me permission to hold the services. Personally, I felt that they were extremely profitable. Not many attended, but there seemed to be a real desire on the part of some of the leaders in the church to see the church grow spiritually".

On September 7th the WSCS celebrated the tenth anniversary of its organization. Rev. Scharer led the devotions and Mrs. Scharer played the piano for the hymn singing. The guests of honor, of course, were the four past presidents: Lina (Mrs. Edwin) Earp, Betty (Mrs. Walter) Vausse, Pearl (Mrs. Louis) Reitz, and Mildred (Mrs. George) Pentico.

Regular Sunday evening church services began again on the first of October. As might be expected, they were evangelical in nature, with a good deal of hymn singing. They were billed, in fact, as "Singspiration Time" services. Quoting again from Scharer's reminiscences, "We also started a Sunday evening service, which wasn't looked upon with too much favor at first. Then some of the 'one-time-on-Sunday' folks started coming out on Sunday evenings, and lo and behold, it began to catch on. Before long we were averaging fifty or more people on Sunday evenings".

On the surface, things seemed to be going quite nicely. Sunday services were pretty well attended and there were the usual fall activities — the WSCS "fair" in October and the Election Day dinner in November. But there were divided feelings about the new preacher's ideas and policies. They liked him personally — he was friendly enough, and certainly good-looking — but somehow he didn't seem to be quite the kind of pastor Bishop Janes needed. There were some who thought of him as a square peg in a round hole. The enthusiasm experienced under the other young pastors before him was lacking.

The Scharers, too, were sensing a lack of unaminity in their congregation. Toward the end of the year there occurred an incident which, though not reveal-

ed until years later, probably helped to clear the air and bring matters to a head It has been recounted by one who was then one of our church leaders — one who will be identified here simply as a parishioner.

This person was asked by Rev. Scharer to stop by at the parsonage when convenient; he wanted to discuss some matters relating to the church. The conference took place shortly thereafter, with Mrs. Scharer also present. Sharer revealed his concern that the attendance at Sunday service seemed to be dropping off. And why was it that so many failed to bring their Bibles to join in the congregational reading at the morning service? After thoughtfully considering, the parishioner explained that ours was not, and never had been an evangelistic church, and that the newer members in particular had little or no interest in that style of worship. It was suggested that, in view of the congregation's attitude, a compromise might be advisable. Why not keep the morning service as it had been, and have the Bible reading at the evening service only? Scharer thought this a reasonable suggestion, but Mrs. Scharer strongly disagreed. The Bible reading, she declared, would continue at the morning service, and at all services, even if it meant a split in the congregation! This belligerent stance was too much for our parishioner, who well remembered how long and hard our people had worked to hold the church together. After recovering from the shock the parishioner replied, "Only over my dead body will that happen!"

Then, as the story continues, "I tried to briefly review our past struggles, both within the church and with the other churches and the community at large. And finally I repeated that I would not be a party to such a move as they proposed, and would fight it to the bitter end. Rev. Scharer then asked if I thought he should consider moving on. I summed up my thought by telling him what a fine young man he was, with so much on the ball — and this was true, every word — and that before his spirit was broken by disappointment he *should* try to find a place where they could labor with the emphasis on their chosen kind of leadership and worship. He was gracious, and thanked me for coming. And it wasn't long after that that he announced his leaving."

In January the weekly church notices in the News included no mention of Sunday evening or mid-week service at Bishop Janes. And it was in that month that Rev. Scharer announced that he would be leaving Basking Ridge. He was transferring to the Ohio Conference — his home state — and would be going to the Methodist church in Quincy, Ohio, a small town about 50 miles northwest of Columbus. On January 28 he preached his last sermon in our church.

So Joseph Scharer became the third in our long succession of pastors who was with us for less than eight months. In this short time many of our members scarcely got to know him, and it is understandable that the memories of him are rather vague. It had been a case of misfit. As subsequent developments have proven, however, the Rev. Scharer *was* a young man of great potential, though his ways were not our ways. He just wasn't the type of pastor for a growing suburban community in a metropolitan area such as ours was. Fortunately,

though, he did find his niche, and has been eminently successful in a more fertile field.

The Scharers served the Quincy church for only a year and a half, then in 1952, moved to Florida. It seems that Joseph Scharer felt that he could be more useful in the Presbyterian church, for he became a member of the Presbytery of South Florida, and for four years served happily as Associate Minister to Dr. H. Lawrence Love in the Bethany Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale. It was during the Scharers' first year there that their son Philip was born.

In 1956 Joseph Scharer began to realize his dreams. As a mission work of Bethany Church he established "from scratch" the First Presbyterian Church of Plantation, Florida. Under his leadership ever since, this church has steadily grown and flourished. As of 1982 it had a membership of more than 600 and an annual budget of some $400,000, one-quarter of which goes to missionary work. Its Sunday evening services are enthusiastically supported and well attended, as are its *two* services for Bible study and prayer on Wednesday evenings. The church building is an attractive large modern structure, but plans are well under way to build a larger church on an adjoining ten-acre tract which the congregation has purchased. And assisting Rev. Scharer in his busy program are a young Associate Minister and an older Minister of Visitation.

In a recent communication (Nov. '82) Rev. Scharer advised that he and Helen now have five grandchildren, and that he is completing work on his doctorate at the Columbia Theological Seminary at Decatur, Georgia. And he says, "The opportunities are fantastic here in South Florida. Our people are generous; many tithe their income, and this accounts for our large budget. One of the blessings of our years of ministry is that to date we have *fifty* of our youth in full-time Christian service or related fields. We praise the Lord for the way He has been pleased to honor our ministry".

So the Scharer story has, indeed, a happy ending, and we rejoice with them in their great achievements. Bishop Janes Church can't take much credit for helping, but some of our members *did* see that the young man had great potential.

A Daring Young Man With Ideas

R. BENJAMIN GARRISON 1951-57

Our church was no longer being "supplied" by retirees or undergraduate students at Drew, though the latter, in particular, had served us admirably. True, our last two pastors, Esaias and Scharer, had been young men still in their twenties, but they had come to us as ordained ministers with some — though not much — previous experience. Our next pastor, our forty-fifth, was another young man in his mid-twenties and was similarly qualified.

Richard Benjamin Garrison was a native of Indiana and the son of a Methodist minister, born in Kokomo on February 26, 1926. After attending

high school in Auburn and Mishawaka he served briefly in the 51st signal Batallion of the Army. Then he enrolled at DePauw University, where he received his A.B. degree in 1947. In that same year he married his college sweetheart and classmate, Elizabeth Martin. Already, while in his freshman year, he had decided that he wanted to be a minister, like his father, and so, not long after the wedding the young couple moved east and he entered Drew University. In 1949 he was ordained a deacon, became a member of the Northern Indiana Conference and was assigned to supply the pulpit of the Methodist church in New Foundland, New Jersey. He served as that church's pastor until early in 1951, when he was called to succeed Joseph Scharer as the full-time pastor of Bishop Janes Church. In the meantime he had received his B.D. degree from Drew in 1950, and in 1951 was ordained an elder and transferred to the Newark Conference. He came to Basking Ridge with the understanding that he would be continuing with graduate work at Drew, working for his Master's degree.

The new young pastor and his wife — Ben and Betty, as they soon came to be known — moved into the parsonage on Lincoln's birthday, and he preached his first sermon in our church the following Sunday. A week later they were honored at the usual reception. It soon became apparent, not only to the congregation but to many townspeople as well, that the Garrisons were another unusual young couple. Ben was small in stature, and with his "butch" haircut, popular with the young men of those days, looked even younger than his 25 years. He had an engaging, outgoing personality, a sharp wit, and was full of enthusiasm and energy. And his preaching was most impressive; his sermons scholarly, well prepared and thought-provoking. To some of our older members his manner at first seemed rather brusque, perhaps even a little cocky, but generally these were only first impressions. Under these surface mannerisms they soon found a warm, friendly, caring person with an ever-inquiring mind, sincerely devout, but not inclined to conservatism. Betty, too, was a warm, friendly person, more retiring in nature and seemingly an ideal mate for Ben — a governor and balance wheel for her energetic and venturesome husband. And she was a very capable young lady, taking an active but inconspicuous part in church affairs, and an ever-present helpmate to her busy spouse.

Under the stimulating new pastor the program of the church continued much as before, but there were no further efforts to continue Sunday evening services or the mid-week prayer meetings. Their day had passed. Competing with evening radio programs had been hard enough, but now that more and more people were buying television sets, even the most faithful found it hard to leave home in the evenings.

Ben Garrison was full of ideas, not only for his sermons but for strengthening and broadening the work of the church, and he lost no time in putting some of them into effect. At the March meeting of the Official Board he advised that he was planning to start a small church paper. It would be mailed to the membership quarterly and would contain notices of coming events, a pastor's

THE BISHOP JANES BULLETIN.

Vol. 1 September 8, 1951 No. 2

BISHOP JANES METHODIST CHURCH ANNOUNCES AUTUMN PROGRAM

PROF. HAAS OPENS WSCS SERIES

The WSCS convened in its 1st session of the fall on Thursday, September 6th. Professor A. B. Haas of Drew, presented a sympathetic and moving portrait of "Our Methodist Ancestors".

The October meeting, to be held on the 4th at 12:00, will feature Mrs. Franklin Reed, President of the World Federation of Methodist Women. She will use as her topic, "My Travels in Latin America."

Consult the calendar (back page) for times and places of the circle meetings. The October meetings will be conducted by Mrs. George Crabb, using the study booklet, *We Americans – North and South.* Other programs for the year are listed in the society's booklet prepared by Mrs. George Pentico, vice president and program chairlady, and Mrs. John Lytle, Jr., spiritual life secretary.

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JUNIOR HIGH FELLOWSHIP PLANNED

The pastor has announced that a new form of activities for junior high youngsters will be inaugurated this fall.

ANNOUNCE TOWER CLUB NITES

John Infanger, the genial and corpulent pastor of Grace Church, Dover, will open the Tower Club programs on Tuesday, September 11th at 6:30. A dinner meeting served by the ladies of circle 2 ($1.25), it is the first in a full series announced by the interim committee appointed at the May reorganization meeting and consisting of Messrs. Van Munger and Joseph Walden and the pastor.

Mr. Infanger (variously known also as the Bishop and as Jack), it will be remembered, was to have spoken at the May meeting, but was prevented from doing so because of a tragic death in his own parish. All the men will long remember, however, the able and stirring message brought by Fidel Gelang, ex-major in the Philippine guerrillas.

Every attempt is being made to maintain the same high quality programs. A speaker from the Hoover Commission is booked for October 2nd. Other programs include a Communion breakfast and a ladies nite.

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letter and general church news. The first of these quarterlies, the "Bishop Janes Bulletin", a modest little 4-page paper, appeared a few weeks later. After a few issues it became a monthly, except in summer. And still later, in May 1965 its name would be changed to "The Tower Bell", which it has remained ever since, growing in scope and size, over the years, with the congregation.

The Fourth Quarterly Conference was held on April 31st, preceded by a congregational dinner, and at this meeting another innovation appeared. For the first time at Bishop Janes Church there was a mimeographed booklet containing the annual reports of all the church organizations, the various treasurers, and the pastor. Copies of the 16-page document were available to all who attended. What a good idea! — so logical — why hadn't this been done before? Needless to say, there *has* been a printed Annual Report for our church every year since, and what a boon to the historian!

A few highlights of some of the reports in the first collection should be noted. Larry McKee, Sunday School Superintendent and Chairman of the church Board of Education, reported a total enrollment, including staff, of 180, and an average attendance of 82. The WSCS president, Mildred Pentico, reported a membership of 147 organized in three circles, each meeting monthly, in addition to the monthly meetings of the Society and of its executive board. Grace Allen, president of the MYF, reported that group's activities. There had been an average attendance of 20 at its weekly Sunday evening meetings, and the "loyal and helpful guidance" of Mabel Clark as their advisor was gratefully acknowledged.

Some excerpts from the pastor's 3-page report at the meeting will indicate his attitude and concerns:

> *"I am not reporting to a District Superintendent primarily; I am reporting to you, my people. Neither is this simply my report. The words are mine, but the facts have been supplied and given life by a corps of loyal men and women without whom I should be merely a captain without a ship. So we, captain and crew, present our annual report of the inspection of the ship".*
>
> *"The ship personnel, the people of the village and church, accepted their new captain and first mate with an enthusiasm that has made our task a warm privilege . . . Because the crew has expected so much of us and given so much to us, we are already beginning to love you".*
>
> *"Having spent slightly more than two months now among New Jersey's friendliest people, it is to be hoped that some things will function better in the year to come. Some committees are merely paper committees: we resolve that this year they will carry out the duties for which they have been appointed. It is primarily the pastor's job to inform these groups what is expected of them*

and to help them carry out these duties. To this he pledges himself".

"Very shortly we are going to have to face frankly the bleak fact of the paucity of educational space. At this point to do nothing is to retreat. And Methodists, who claim the whole world as their parish, cannot afford to retreat by failing to face with vision the needs of this parish too".

". . . One hundred thirteen calls and sixteen new members, as of next Sunday, represent only a paltry beginning. But it is a beginning".

Rather a different tone to this pastoral report than that of some which had been offered in the past!

At that meeting also, a budget of $9348 for the coming year was approved. It provided a salary of $3200 for the pastor, $1060 "to support World Service" (benevolences), and "to provide music", $960. Nothing was budgeted for payments on indebtedness, for we had no debts at that time.

That summer our church joined with the Bernardsville Methodist Church for union services on Sunday mornings. During July they were held in the Bernardsville church, with Garrison preaching, and in August in our church, with Rev. Frank Wade Smith, the Bernardsville minister, occupying the pulpit.

It was on the first Sunday in July that our neighbor Presbyterian church welcomed to its pulpit its new young minister, the Rev. William H. Felmeth. Though of course it wasn't foreseen at the time, his coming to Basking Ridge at this time was to have quite an impact, indirectly at least, on our church. For Ben Garrison and Bill Felmeth soon developed a close and lasting friendship. These two young ministers had much in common. Not only were they close neighbors, but they were about the same age, were both newcomers to our community, were both ecumenically minded and, in general, shared the same philosophies and convictions. Both were sincerely dedicated to their ministries and their service to God, but open-minded and progressive. And their friendship proved to be a great blessing for both churches. Our relations had been steadily improving in the recent past, in spite of Esaias' uneasiness, but now the friendship between the two churches began to flourish, to our mutual benefit.

An article in the Christian Herald that summer presented some interesting statistics on church membership in the United States. It was reported to have reached a new high, totaling 85,705,280 or 55.9% of the population. The Methodist Church was the largest Protestant denomination, with 8,935,649 members. The second largest, but growing at a faster rate, was the Southern Baptists, with 7,079,889. Roman Catholics at that time numbered 28,470,092.[4]

[4] Comparable figures for 1979: Total church membership in the U.S. — 123,748,776 (60% of the population); largest Protestant denomination — Southern Baptists, with 13,191,394 members; second largest, United Methodists, with 9,731,779; Roman Catholics, 49,602,035.

In September a new adult Bible class was formed. It met at 10 o'clock on Sunday mornings, an hour before the church service, and its teachers were Betty Vausse and John G. Lytle III. John and his wife Jane, and their three young sons had just recently become members, along with his parents, the Rev. Dr. and Mrs. John G. Lytle II. Dr. Lytle had just retired, after 40 years as a Methodist minister, and was highly respected in the Newark Conference. For nineteen years he had served, along with his ministerial duties, as the Conference Historian, and through his efforts the Conference archives had been greatly enriched. With retirement he had relinquished that post, but maintained his active interest and would later serve on the commission which organized the Newark Conference Centennial in 1957. Our church was fortunate indeed when the Lytles became members. For John and Jane, it was the beginning of a long and (in 1983) still continuing period of unparalleled devoted service, in many different capacities, to Bishop Janes Church.

In October the Tower Club was reorganized. It had not been very active during the previous year but Garrison, recognizing its great potential, inspired its revival, and the men responded with enthusiasm. Ray Waldeck was elected as its president, Van Munger as vice president, Robert Haycock secretary and Ed Belt treasurer. Now the club was off to a fresh start, with some great plans for the future.

Though Ben Garrison had been on the job for only a few months, he had already become much concerned about two matters in particular: the obvious need for more Sunday School space, and the run-down condition of the church building itself. At the September meeting of the Official Board a committee of three — Larry McKee, chairman, William Keeler and Wayne Koppes — was appointed to examine the need for more Sunday School space, explore ways of providing such space, and make recommendations. Also, a property committee, under Ray Waldeck, was appointed to "look over the church property and report his findings to the Board". Ben had already done some investigating of this matter on his own. He had contacted the Newman Company, a contracting firm in South Orange, which had inspected the property and had provided an estimate of $2490 for making the most needed repairs to the walls and roof of the building. The property committee was now charged with reviewing this proposal and recommending a course of action. At the next board meeting they submitted a formal report enumerating the many items requiring immediate attention, and an estimate of $2100 as the likely cost. The report was accepted, the work was authorized, and the Finance Committee was instructed to "get money for the project". Which they did. They negotiated a loan of $2000 from the Trustees, confident that it could be paid back out of current expense funds.

Also, at that October meeting, Garrison introduced another "first" — the need, in view of the growing membership, for a student assistant pastor. He outlined what the duties of such an assistant would be: working with the young peoples' groups, making calls on newcomers to town, and helping with the

Bishop Janes Bulletin. He said there were Drew students available for such work on weekends, and that a reasonable remuneration would be $25 a month, or $200 for the eight-month school year. The Board agreed to his proposal — how could they turn down such a bargain? — and Ben was authorized to proceed with the necessary arrangements. So, within a few weeks our first assistant pastor, George Furnival, an upperclassman at Drew, began his official duties, and he served us admirably for the next two years.

At a special Quarterly Conference held in November the pastor announced the formation of a Junior Choir, which would soon be taking part in the Sunday worship services. He said, too, that a church library had been started, and called for donations. (What had become of our former libraries no one seemed to know). The main business of the meeting, however, was the consideration of the report of Larry McKee's committee on space needs, a typed document of five pages. It stated that, on the basis of present enrollment in the lower age groups, there was an urgent need for at least six additional classrooms. Already several classes were using the church sanctuary. "Obviously, if we don't grow with the community we shall stagnate". Several approaches to meeting the need had been explored: borrowing or renting space in nearby buildings, converting the parsonage to Sunday School rooms and buying another parsonage elsewhere, having double sessions of Sunday School on Sunday mornings, or building additional space. Having studied all of these options carefully, it was the committee's opinion that additional building was the only feasible solution of lasting value. It might be provided either by erecting a temporary Quonset building or "by excavating on the lot in the rear of the church and building a large basement, temporarily roofed over but suitable for the building we would hope to erect some time in the future". It was the latter of these two alternatives that the committee favored, and they recommended that the Official Board consider engaging an architect to advise in the matter.

The report was accepted with thanks, and after some discussion the chair (Garrison) appointed a building committee of six men and two women, with Dick Shears as chairman, "to make a detailed study of church school and other miscellaneous space needs, and to check with one or more architects regarding plans". This committee got right down to work, holding its first of many meetings the following week.

The Election Day turkey dinner that fall was, for the first time, sponsored jointly by the WSCS and the Tower Club. Its patronage had by now become so large that it was served at three "sittings" and reservations were required. On Christmas eve the now-customary 11 P.M. candlelight service was held in the church, and on New Year's eve the MYF held a "semi-formal dance" in the church basement room.

The sermon at the morning service on the last Sunday of the year was preached by Charles Allen, a divinity student at Southern Methodist University. Charles was the son of our Ned and Dorris Allen, and grandson of Charles

Allen, who had been one of the strong pillars of our church in the early 1900's. The congregation — and his parents, of course — were rightly proud of this young native son and his obvious talents — one of the very few who had grown from childhood in our church to enter the ministry.

When the Official Board met in January 1952, Ray Waldeck's property committee reported that essentially all of the urgent repairs to the church structure had been completed, at a total cost of $2043.40. The committee advised, however, that there was other repair work, such as interior patching and painting that should be attended to, and urged that provision for this should be made in the next year's budget. Larry McKee, who was now our Lay Leader, submitted his resignation as Sunday School superintendent, the position he had so capably filled for more than nine years. It was accepted, with regrets of course, and Richard Richards was appointed as his successor. The pastor reported that he had made 330 pastoral calls (in a little over ten months), that 33 new members had been received, and that average attendance at Sunday morning services was now 122. And just a decade earlier Jack Parks had been trying so hard to make it 75!

On February 9th there occurred a happy event when their first child, a baby boy, was born to the Garrisons. He was named after his father, Richard Benjamin, but almost immediately became identified as "Rickey". And it was by that name — never as "Junior" — that he soon became affectionately known by most of the ladies, at least, of the congregation. The nickname even appeared in some of the pastoral reports. When Rickey was just six weeks old he was baptized at a Sunday morning service by his doting grandfather, Dr. Claude G. Garrison, pastor of the King Avenue Methodist Church in Columbus, Ohio.

During the Lenten season that spring Ben arranged a series of six special services on Wednesday evenings. Each was addressed by a guest minister from out of town, and among these was his own father, here on a visit. It was an excellent program, but attendance was rather disappointing. The sunrise service on Easter morning was conducted by the youth groups of Bishop Janes Church, the Ridge Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Chapel in Bernardsville. The latter was still a small fledgling congregation under the wing of the Basking Ridge church, and served by Rev. Felmeth.

In May the Tower Club made a bold venture when the men offered to put on the annual mother and daughter banquet. And they did it, quite successfully. The men themselves did all the cooking, serving and subsequent cleaning up — and there was no dishwashing machine then. All the customers seemed well satisfied, and the ladies loved it.

At the Fourth Quarterly Conference Dick Richards, the Sunday School superintendent, reported an enrollment of 193 (up 20% in two years), a staff of 24 teachers and officers, and an average attendance of 100 (up 30% in two years). He said the daily vacation Bible school, held for the first time jointly with the Presbyterian church, had been a pronounced success, and concluded

his report with a plea for an early solution to the space problem. Jean Keeler, the new president of the WSCS, reported that during the past year the Society had held its Harvest Home supper and a bake sale, and had co-sponsored the Election Day dinner, and that each circle had completed various other projects. Total receipts had been $1556, most of which had been expended on the church, the parsonage and gifts to social agencies. Ray Waldeck reported that the Tower Club, with a membership of 61, had held nine monthly dinner meetings (tickets $1.50), with an average attendance of 44, that it was sponsoring a Cub Scout pack, the mother and daughter banquet, and a bowling team (in the church league), and was planning to sponsor also a boy's baseball team.

Pastor Garrison's characteristically provocative report included the following observations:

> *". . . An interested outsider watching the organizational life of this church might be prone to ask, 'Who's running the show?' The individual programs of most of our organizations and committees are excellent, but often one group is functioning in blissful unawareness of another and few have the least idea how the whole drama fits together. This being so, your charge lay leader and pastor have called a church-wide planning conference,* (when) *all committees will meet to formulate plans for the coming year. A coordinating committee will then be set up to iron out conflicts in dates and overlapping in programs".*
>
> *". . . I feel that the pastoral relations committee ought not to restrict its activities to trouble-shooting; getting rid of one pastor and helping select another. There are times when I feel the need of mature and friendly guidance from consecrated laymen on problems too big for me to handle. I have therefore asked this committee to consider itself henceforth as a pastoral advisory committee, in addition to its usual functions. The committee on records and history is being asked this year to begin the classification of materials and records so that an accurate parish history can be written.*[5] *The library and literature committee, having made a praiseworthy start, will be exploring means of increasing the size and usefulness of our library. We are asking, in addition that you elect a centennial committee to begin now to lay specific plans for a celebration either in 1953 or 1954, depending upon which of several dates they recommend that we observe".* (This would be an anniversary that we would **not** overlook).
>
> *"One of the greatest joys of being a minister of the gospel is the fact that people seek you out for aid in their personal and*

[5] This undoubtedly was the move which later, with some additional urging by Ben, led to Edward Schroeder's beginning this history.

family dilemmas. As we get better and better acquainted this is becoming more and more the pattern. I call this a joy, but it means sorrow, too. But how can one 'report' these hours spent, with Roman Catholics and Protestants alike? One cannot report a heartache. One can only pray that its issue will not depend alone upon his spiritual reserves, but that it rests against the loving heart of God".

Several other matters that came before that Quarterly Conference should be noted. A budget of $10,340 for the 1952-53 church year was approved — a 10% increase over that of the previous year, and four times that of a decade earlier. The building Committee reported progress; two architects were being consulted and by fall some specific recommendations would be presented. And a change was made in the church's administrative procedures. It was voted that henceforth, instead of meeting as a Fourth Quarterly Conference, at which only designated members of the Conference could vote, there would be held an Annual Charge Conference, at which all church members 18 years of age or older would have voting privileges.

The growing population of the Township included an increasing proportion of children. The crop of "war babies" was beginning to reach school age, and our three schools — Oak Street, Maple Avenue and Liberty Corner — were becoming a little crowded. The Maple Avenue school, after standing vacant for a decade or more, had been put back in use several years earlier, being rented from the Township, and space in the Presbyterian church house was also being rented for kindergarden classes. An enrollment of 1100 was expected in the Township schools the coming fall, in addition to the 240 Township youngsters attending Bernardsville High School (at $320 tuition each). So, as a first step in expanding its facilities, the Board of Education proposed the addition of eight rooms to the Oak Street school. In June the voters approved a $265,000 bond issue for that purpose. Shortly thereafter the Board announced that the bonds, rated AAA, had found a ready market (at 1.7% interest) and that construction would soon begin.

Our church joined with the Bernardsville Methodist Church again that summer for Sunday morning services. As before, they were held in Bernardsville during July, with Garrison preaching, and at Bishop Janes, with Rev. Smith preaching, during August. And it was during the latter month that the Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church observed its 115th anniversary.

Late in July the Memorial Hospital in Morristown moved from its old building on Morris Avenue to its grand new quarters on the 21-acre site on Madison Avenue. Sixty adult patients and ten new-born babies were carefully moved into the commodious new 236-bed facility.

That fall there occurred an interesting episode in our church's history — a happening which, had it ended otherwise, would radically have changed the

course of our history, and which, in retrospect, now seems quite improbable. It began at the September meeting of the Official Board when the secretary surprised many of those present by reading a letter which had been addressed to our trustees by the trustees of the Bernardsville Methodist Church. It suggested that a formal union of our two churches might be mutually beneficial, and requested that the matter be seriously considered. It would be appreciated if our Board would appoint a committee to meet with a like committee from the Bernardsville church to explore the idea. Although some questioned the reasons for this proposal — the Bernardsville church wasn't growing at the rate ours was — it was generally agreed that it merited consideration. So the pastor was authorized to appoint a committee of three — Larry McKee, Howard Brush and Ned Allen — "to confer immediately regarding the contents of said letter". Dick Shears, speaking for the building committee, said that an architect was already at work on sketches for our proposed building addition, and he was directed to promptly advise the architect to "hold further plans in abeyance".

The two committees met several times during the next few months, with both pastors and the District Superintendent, Dr. Hallock, also in attendance. Pros and cons were carefully considered. It was agreed that neither church building was presently adequate, that neither location provided adequate parking space, and that the resources were lacking to "maintain two churches on a scale to best serve the community". They concluded also that a united church should be in a new location, possibly adjacent to Evergreen Cemetery, and that if both present properties could be sold at reasonable prices the net cost of a new building would likely be no greater than that of "improvements now contemplated".

So, with prospects for a merger looming large, Garrison called a special meeting of our Trustees, the Official Board and all church officers late in November, advising that "full, frank and free discussions of the salient issues will be necessary if we are to make an intelligent and democratic decision in this matter". As a result of this meeting the Offical Board adopted, on December 1st, a resolution approving the idea of unification with the Bernardsville church and instructing the committee "to proceed in drawing up specific merger agreements".

But then the negotiations struck a snag. The Bernardsville church Board, almost at the same time, adopted a resolution to the effect that, although it was felt that the merger would benefit both churches, the cost of a new building would likely exceed by $200,000 the proceeds to be realized from the sale of the present properties, and such a financial burden would be unbearable. If — and only if — the combined congregations could arrange to use the Bernardsville church, at least for a while, adding such educational space as needed, further consideration of the matter would be welcomed. Of course such a stipulation was quite unacceptable to our Board and pastor, and deliberations on the question of merger came to an abrupt end. And it's questionable that there were

many at Bishop Janes who really regretted it.

In the meantime, while negotiations concerning the merger had been in process, several things of note had happened. One was a sad event; Miss Josephine Melick, that beloved spinster who had contributed so much of herself and her substance to our church, passed away on October 12th, at the age of 92. Her many friends, both within and outside of the Bishop Janes congregation, mourned her passing. And it came as no surprise to learn that, true to form, in her will she had left the church a legacy of $1000.

Also, at the October Board meeting Ben Garrison, acting temporarily as chairman of the property committee because he hadn't yet found anyone else who would take the job, called attention to two maintenance items requiring early attention: the perennial problem of water seepage in the basement, and the painting and repair of the stone walls of the church. It was agreed that action should be taken on both matters. And it was announced that Howard Hyler had been hired as a part-time janitor, at $40 a month.

That fall a series of Friday night covered dish family suppers was initiated. These happy gatherings were held each month during the fall and winter, except in December, when a scarlet fever scare in town interfered. There were the usual Harvest Home and Election Day dinners, and the young adults group known as the Methodist-Presbyterian Young Adult Fellowship held its weekly devotional meetings on Sunday afternoons, alternating between the two churches, with Ben Garrison and Bill Felmeth sharing in its leadership.

At the Official Board meeting in January the building committee reported that, with the merger no longer pending, the architect had been advised to resume work on preliminary plans for the new addition, and the centennial committee advised that plans for the anniversary celebration were being finalized. At the March meeting an Abiding Memorial Fund for the church was established, "for people who wish to give memorial gifts to the church, rather than buying funeral flowers for the deceased".

That spring of 1953 was a busy time for many Bishop Janes members. Plans for the new educational wing were coming to a head, and preparations were under way for our centennial observance. The building committee was planning its fund-raising campaign, and early in April the preliminary sketches for the new "educational building" were shown to the Official Board. These had been prepared by Harold Waggoner, a Philadelphia architect who had been retained by the Presbyterian church to plan the much larger addition being made to that church. The committee's proposal was received with enthusiasm and the Annual Charge Conference, when it met later that month, also approved the plans and voted to authorize "a finance drive to raise the money for the religious educational building and to build same if we can raise the money through pledges and mortgage if necessary, to carry it". In other words, if we can raise the money, we'll build it.

Some weeks earlier Ivor Nicholls, the chairman of the centennial commit-

tee, had found it necessary, because of business pressures, to relinquish that position. Jack Gibson had agreed to serve in his place, and plans for the June weekend were well in hand. But, in preparation for the event the church sanctuary badly needed cleaning and redecorating. At the recommendation of the trustees, it was voted that the late Josephine Melick's generous bequest be used for this purpose. Late in March a painting contractor was engaged to paint the walls and ceiling of the room, and while this work was in progress Sunday morning services were, for two or three weeks, held in the Oak Street school auditorium. And Van Munger generously offered to scrape, sand and refinish the sloping wood floor, providing the seats were removed and the necessary materials — and a little volunteer help — were supplied. Needless to say, his offer was gratefully accepted, and on one weekend that spring some of the men of the Tower Club spent more time on their knees in church than they ever had before.

At the Annual Charge Conference in April we found that we were again without a janitor; Howard Hyler had resigned the job. Dick Richards reported that the Sunday School membership was larger than ever, and still growing. Attendance in March had averaged 126. And the school staff was regularly meeting at least one evening a month to participate in a teacher training program.

It was because of our exemplary Sunday School, in fact, that Bishop Janes Church had just recently, for the first and only time in its history, received national recognition in a popular weekly magazine. The April 11th issue of Collier's[6] had carried a two-page picture story, with full-color photos, portraying the various activities of Ann Forsman's primary class. Entitled "Sunday School Teacher", the article told what was being accomplished by a devoted young teacher — and her pastor — working with limited advantages in a small, but growing, suburban church. Of course our church was proud of this unsolicited publicity, and the local supply of that issue of Collier's was soon exhausted.

But back to that April Conference: In view of the upcoming fund drive for the new building, the church budget for the coming year had been studiously shaved to the bare essentials, resulting in an 8% reduction from that of the previous year. Allowances for current expenses were cut, and the $300 for a student assistant pastor was eliminated, but the amount budgeted for World Service was increased somewhat.

A few excerpts from Ben's pastoral reports at that Conference are both interesting and revealing:

> *"The growth of our youth program has not been merely numerical (though they have grown some in numbers) but rather in the quality of their program and, above all, in the vitality of their fellowship. I wouldn't trade them for any other gang of In-*

[6] Collier's Weekly, a popular family magazine, was still, like the Saturday Evening Post, a fixture in many homes, at 15¢ a copy.

dians on earth! They are an asset to their church and a credit to their parents. As an indication of this, their officers were invited to Drew Seminary during March to conduct a forum for the senior class on 'Planning a Year's Youth Work''.

''The pattern of my ministry in your midst is gradually emerging, to the despair of some and — it may be — to the delight of some. (I believe that) *one reason for Methodism's greatness is the fact that her ministers are not ministers exclusively of a local church, but of the Methodist Church as a whole. Accordingly I have agreed to serve as the director of a summer youth conference and* (have served) *as advisor to the Elizabeth-Plainfield sub-district MYF. I also like to think of myself as available to the town . . . so I have given time to the first aid squad — not exclusively because I like to blow the siren — and as secretary of Civilian Defense, certainly not at all because I like to write letters''.*

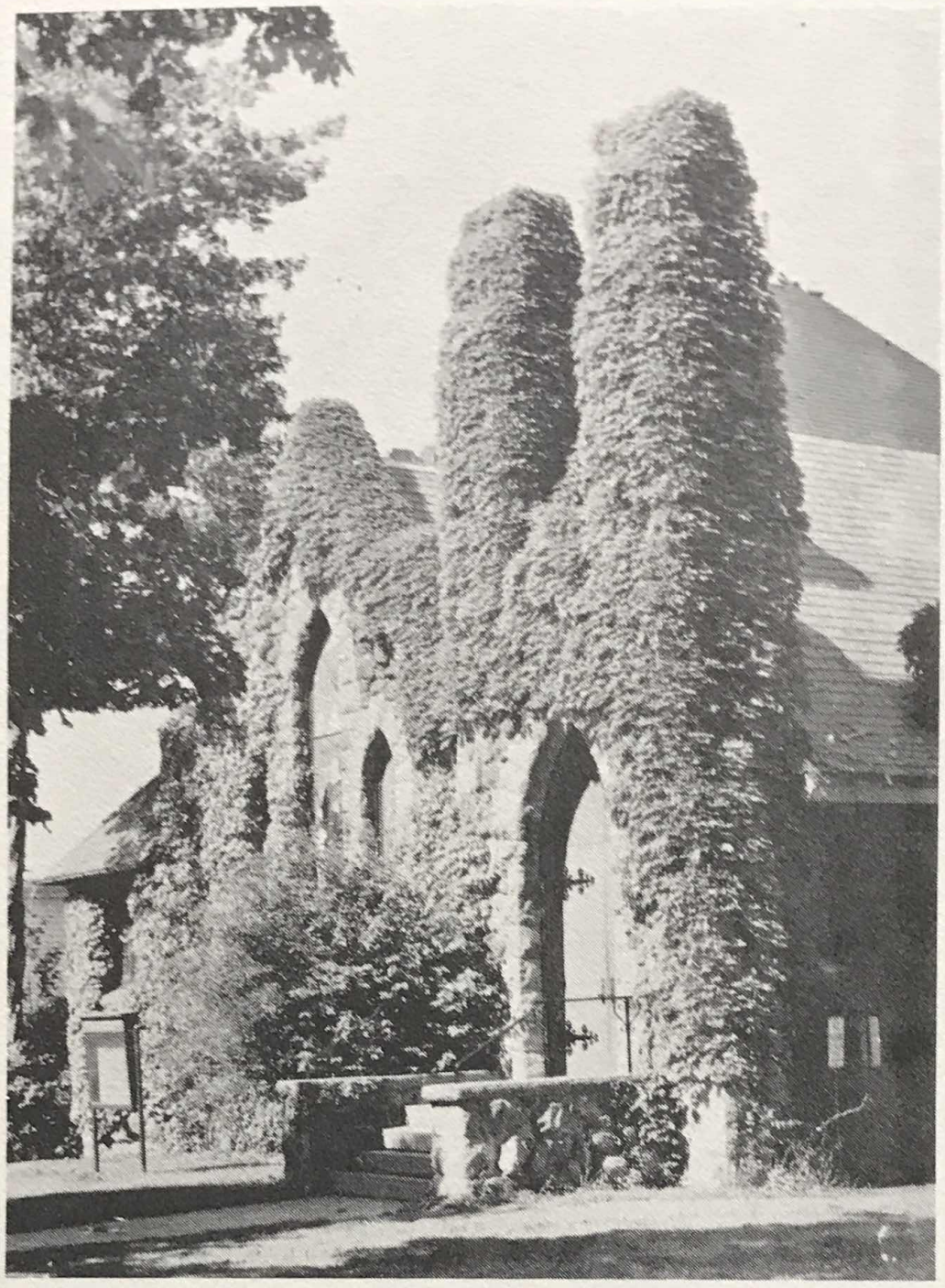
''I am a young man and a very inexperienced pastor and preacher. I thank you for bearing with my youth and for aiding me in my inexperience . . . it was necessary for me to give much more time to 'program' and 'organization' during the first two years than I should have preferred . . . But if 'program' is our chief concern, preaching becomes 'Saturday nightish', one's private devotional life wooden, and one's role as a shepherd and counsellor neglected. Accordingly, with your permission, I intend to concentrate during the next years — assuming that God and His chief administrative assistant in the Newark District — and you — are willing — on preaching, praying and pastoring''.

Early in May the building committee mailed out its attractive and impressive prospectus and solicitation of pledges for the new educational building. Based on the assumption that much of the interior construction and finishing would be done, during the winter months, by the men of the church (and by now they were experienced in such work), the estimated cost of the project, and the pledge goal, was $34,000. Sunday, May 17, was designated as pledge Sunday, when pledges would be received and dedicated, and canvassers would make calls. By early June the pledges received totalled about $26,000 (payable over a three-year period), and plans were underway to explore the possibility of some additional support from certain funds administered by the Newark Conference. In any case, the success of the project was now assured, and it was ''full steam ahead!''. Our 50-year-old church building was, for the first time, to be expanded — and about time!

INTERIOR OF SANCTUARY

The large sliding doors on the right separated the sanctuary from the Sunday School room or "Chapel".

OUR CHURCH IN



THE IVIED TOWER

The Finley Avenue entrance. The gable end with its stained glass windows is part of the present structure.

THE EARLY 1950'S

Our Centennial — And a Look Back

The Centennial of Bishop Janes Methodist Church was observed on June 13 and 14, 1953, just 100 years and 11 days after its first Board of Trustees was organized, on June 2, 1853, at the home of Isaac Keeler. Jack Gibson and his committee had done a fine job in preparing an appropriate program for the event. To mark the occasion, a souvenir pamphlet was published. It contained a resume of the church's history prepared by Mrs. George Crabb, a picture of our first church, an appropriate message from Pastor Garrison, and greetings from several of our former pastors.

On Saturday afternoon that weekend a family picnic was held on the church grounds back of the parsonage, and many of our former members returned to enjoy a happy reunion. There were games in the afternoon, and a picnic supper later, followed by movies and group singing.

At the Sunday morning service the next day the guest speaker was Lawrence Appley, the son of our revered former pastor, Joseph Appley, who had built our church fifty-three years earlier. The younger Mr. Appley was then president of the American Management Association and a well known leader in the business world. He spoke in the crowded newly-decorated sanctuary, that centennial Sunday morning, on the topic "The Inevitability of Progress".

* * *

Our church had now completed its first hundred years as an organized congregation. It seems appropriate, before writing finis to this first volume of its history, to look back over those years and summarize briefly its life up to this point.

There was Methodism in Basking Ridge for more than a century before our church was established. Its seeds were sown long before the American Revolution, by a contemporary of John Wesley, but they were slow to sprout. As far as we know, there wasn't a Methodist congregation in our area until 1786, and it wasn't until the great outdoor revival meetings of 1841 that the first Methodist Society was formed here.

It was in 1851 that the remarkable Bishop Edmund S. Janes, our patron saint, bought that fledgling Society its first meeting house and then, two years later, gave the land for, and manually helped with, the building of our first church. Our congregation was one of four constituting the Bernardsville circuit, which had a total membership of 68, and it was known as the Basking Ridge Methodist Episcopal Church. A few years later our church, along with the Pleasant Plains congregation, became a separate charge, and this connection continued until 1897. It was our second church, built in 1900, that was dedicated as the Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1939, with the change in Methodism's structure, it became the Bishop Janes Methodist Church.

Over the years our successive congregations had had their ups and downs,

— periods of growth and periods of decline — and, in between some rather long periods when neither was apparent. There had been times of victory and rejoicing, as when that first frame church was so proudly dedicated; in 1900, when the new stone church with its stained glass windows replaced that outgrown wooden structure, and again in 1926, when the pipe organ was installed. And there had been some very trying times, as when Joseph Appley's relentless struggle to build the new church brought divided loyalties, and when, during the painful years of the depression there wasn't enough money in the treasury to pay the preacher — scarcely enough to buy coal to heat the church. For forty years our charge was held in such low esteem that it was "supplied" either by young Drew students or by elderly pastors of retirement age. But, on the whole, the good times had won over the bad, and we could now view with pride what our predecessors had accomplished.

During these first hundred years we had been served by forty-five different pastors, ranging in age from 21 to 71. Two-thirds of them had been younger men, not yet in their forties, and eighteen, including some of the best, were still in their twenties. Their pastorates ranged in length from six month to six years; fifteen had been with us for no more than a year. Their backgrounds had been widely diverse, varying from Indian-fighting soldier or tugboat captain to ministers' sons and illustrious savants. With perhaps a few exceptions they had all been capable and devoted ministers, and many were outstanding men; two were listed among the Conference greats. And the younger men who had served us in the recent past were now succeeding nobly in their far greater responsibilities.

As for membership, there had been little growth until after the Civil War when during a 20-year "Golden Era", it had increased steadily, passing the 200 mark in 1886. After that the trend was generally downward, though there were periods of recovery, until, in the early 1900's, it reached a low of 75. Then again the rolls slowly grew and by 1920 had again nearly reached 200. But it wasn't until after the Second World War that that number was again exceeded. In large degree, this 60-year period of little if any net growth reflected the small growth of the Township during that period. But in 1944, as the population began to increase, so too did our membership, and at a faster rate than ever before. This was the beginning of a 23-year period of unprecedented increase; in just five years our membership had grown from 200 to 300, and it was still growing.

Yes, our church had come a long way from that first little nucleus meeting in Bishop Janes' house across the road and bravely planning to build a church of its own. There had been many long years of struggle, with seemingly little progress, but now we were ending our first century on a big upswing. Our church was being enlarged, not only to meet the need for more space but to support its expanding role in the life of our community. We were beginning our second century with grateful thanks for our many blessings and with confidence unlimited, for the prospects looked bright indeed.

APPENDICES

A. OUR DAUGHTER OF THE SWAMP

Pleasant Plains Methodist Episcopal Church

by William L. Scheuerman, Jr.

B. IMPORTANT DATES IN OUR CHURCH HISTORY

C. BISHOP JANES PASTORS 1853 - 1983

OUR DAUGHTER OF THE SWAMP
Pleasant Plains Methodist Episcopal Church

By William L. Scheuerman, Jr.

While the Bartine-Lippincott revivals at Childs Grove in 1841 and '42 developed a Methodist congregation in Basking Ridge there was also a stirring of Methodism among a small group of our neighbors in Logansville and Pleasant Plains. In 1848 a revival meeting was conducted by the Reverend E. M. Griffith at the Logansville schoolhouse and this was the real beginning of the congregation later to be known as the Pleasant Plains Methodist Episcopal Church, and commonly referred to by former Bishop Janes pastors as "our daughter of the swamp".

A look at the 1868 map of Passaic Township (next page) reveals that that township then included all of what we now know as Harding Township. The areas designated District No. 3 Loganville and District No. 5 Pleasant Plains are those in which lived the families which formed the nucleus of this small congregation, — the Baker, Leonard, Baird, Elston, Robinson, Spinning, Weir, Bender, Benbrook, Horne, Meeker and Faulkner families.

In the spring of 1855 the old New Jersey Conference approved recommendations that the congregations be regrouped and an additional minister be added to our area. As a result of this change Reverend William Day was assigned to the Basking Ridge and New Vernon churches plus the Pleasant Plains congregation that had started meeting in the Pleasant Plains schoolhouse. This schoolhouse is today (1982) a home at the corner of Pleasant Plains Road and Lord Stirling Road. The latter was then known as Building Lane in deference to the fact that it led to the large manor buildings on Lord Stirling's plantation.

Early in 1856 the then Basking Ridge Methodist Episcopal Church purchased a record book and began keeping minutes of the Quarterly Conference of both that church and the Pleasant Plains church. The relationship between the two congregations remained very close for many years; in fact during most of our early history we were considered one charge.

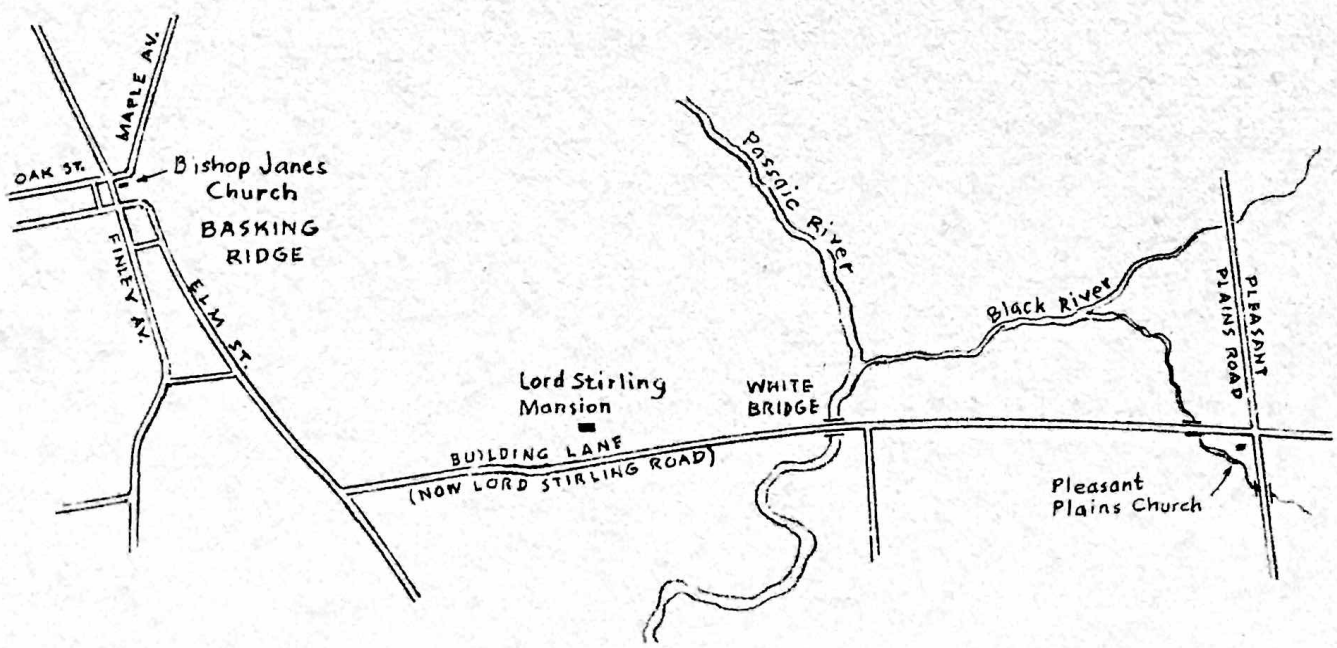
In May 1857 a Methodist by the name of Samuel W. Leonard purchased a farm in Pleasant Plains and joined the congregation. His previous training led to his appointment as their class leader almost at once. Samuel Leonard conducted weekly meetings and classes, and at times when mud and high water isolated this group he would also conduct the Sunday worship service. Poor road conditions and flooding forced many winter closings of the Pleasant Plains Sabbath School throughout the history of the congregation.

During the Civil War period the Pleasant Plains congregation was dropped from the Newark Conference records for two years, but it continued to be served by the pastors from Bishop Janes Church. Charles Barnes, who was serving as assistant pastor of our circuit, wrote that during this period he lived in New Vernon and the feeling was very strong against Union men. The Copperhead vigilantes threatened him, and there was strong evidence that anti-slavery and opposition to states rights were not universally popular in our neighborhood.

In 1870 a man named Nicholas Bowers, with his wife Mary and daughter Mary, bought a farm on what is today the site of Lyons Veterans' Hospital. Later he moved to Elm Street (today known as South Maple Avenue). Nicholas Bowers was a licensed preacher who assisted several pastors at the Bishop Janes Church, and helped even more with the Pleasant Plains congregation.

When Reverend Charles Woodruff arrived in Basking Ridge in August 1870 he wrote, "I found the Reverend Bowers preaching at the Pleasant Plains schoolhouse very acceptable to the people and I allowed him to continue, I holding the oversight". Obviously Reverend Woodruff quickly recognized what other pastors here would have to learn, and this was that Bowers was very useful, but exactly who was boss had to be established at the outset or he would take over.

At this point in time a piece of property was donated to the congregation by Joseph Blake. The property was bounded on the north by Lord Sterling Road, on the east by Pleasant Plains Road, and on the south and west by an attractive wooded elbow of the Black Brook. In the spring of 1871 the Bishop Janes Church of Basking Ridge learned that it would missionize a new church. On April 8, 1871, George Baker, Silas Leonard and Joseph Blake were appointed as a building committee for the new church in Pleasant Plains.



SKETCH MAP SHOWING THE TWO CHURCHES

The cornerstone of the new Pleasant Plains Church was laid on May 23, 1871, and the building was dedicated by Bishop Edmund S. Janes on February 15, 1872. The church was a traditional white frame country church, sixty feet by forty feet, which was larger than the original wood frame Methodist Church in Basking Ridge. In spite of this and the Civil War caused inflation the new church cost only $3,800.

Due to local water problems no cellar was built under the church, but a balcony was built in the rear and this was used by the women as a kitchen for various social fund-raising affairs. The building was heated by a large pot-bellied wood-burning stove. We may assume that the lumber mills in the Great Swamp provided much of the heavy structural timber on a gift basis. To the east of the church building stood a row of horse sheds.

There are no records available as to how much of the $3,800 was raised by the Pleasant Plains congregation or how much the parent church was asked to contribute. The Newark Conference Journal that year stated, "There will be no embarrasing debt upon it". The Bishop Janes Church records indicate that its debt that year amounted to $1,000.

The first notice of a pastoral appointment to the Pleasant Plains Church appeared in the Conference Journal of 1872, which listed Nicholas Bowers as supply minister. This arrangement lasted for seven years, when the Newark Conference decided to end the church's independence and again made it a charge of Basking Ridge. During this period the records indicate that the membership at the Pleasant Plains Church grew to fifty-four members, with a Sunday School of about the same number. The church remained a charge of Basking Ridge until the year 1897, when Reverend Joseph Appley requested the Conference to combine it with Union Village Church, whose membership conditions were similar, and Luke Davis, a supply preacher, was assigned to both churches until April 1900. At this time G. S. Thomas was appointed to the double charge until 1903, when the Union Village Church was closed. C. Bechtel followed as supply minister at Pleasant Plains from 1903 to 1905.

During the period of 1903 to 1905 the membership at Pleasant Plains had dwindled down to about ten members, who again looked to Bishop Janes Church in Basking Ridge to provide them with a minister. In the summer of 1905 Reverend John Hancock, a great-grandson of the famous Revolutionary War hero and former minister at the Basking Ridge Church from 1884 to 1887, returned to Basking Ridge to enjoy retirement in the town he loved so much. Within weeks after his return the District Superintendent and the handful of Pleasant Plains Church members prevailed upon him to take over the church. He not only continued Sabbath preaching but in effect became their full-time minister. There is no mention of salary until the year 1908, when they raised $90 for his yearly salary. In the following year they raised $194 for pastoral support, even though the Conference did not recommend any amount in their approved budget. Although in his seventies, Hancock worked hard for five years in

holding the church together, but on November 14, 1910, he died suddenly of a stroke. His second wife, Jennie Hancock, continued to help at the Pleasant Plains Church until her death in 1921.

During the eight years following Hancock's death six different ministers were in turn assigned to the Pleasant Plains Church. G. A. Hill, L. H. Jones, E. A. Whitten and F. J. Huxthall each served one year. They were followed by W. H. Hertzog and H. E. Coe, each of whom served both the Pleasant Plains church and the reactivated Union Village church for two-year periods. During this period some of the Logansville members that held their membership in the Basking Ridge church made a practice of attending services at the Pleasant Plains church along with their neighbors. We do know,from those few people still living (in 1980) who attended the Pleasant Plains Church, that their chief fund-raising events were a strawberry festival held each June and a peach festival held in September. A large tent was set up on the church lawn and people came from miles around to partake of the food and to socialize with friends.

At the 1918 Conference Pleasant Plains Church was again, for several years, made part of the Basking Ridge charge, and Ira Ketcham, the Bishop Janes Church pastor at that time, conducted services there. The church continued to struggle along with the help of its mother church, holding Sunday afternoon services in good weather, but was often closed during the winter months. Reverend T. J. Clark, Ketcham's successor at the Bishop Janes Church, was also assigned to minister to the Pleasant Plains congregation, but when he moved on, in 1921, the church in the swamp was again "on its own". The records show that when Clark left there were twelve full members and a Sunday School of twenty-one students, with an average attendance of twelve. For the next three years a Mr. Charles F. Oehley, who had bought a small farm on Pleasant Plains Road, took over as supply preacher. Mr. Oehley had originally been appointed a supply preacher at the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church in Brooklyn. In recent discussions with his two sons who still (1980) reside in this area, they both recalled their father driving to Basking Ridge with his motorcycle and a side-car to pick up Reverend Ketcham, and bringing him back to preach a Sunday afternoon service. They further recalled that the church membership dwindled away during this period and remembered their father preaching one Sunday service when only four members of their own family were in attendance.

Sometime during the year 1925 the Pleasant Plains Church was closed down and the building soon began to go into disrepair. An article in the Bernardsville News informs us that on October 17, 1931 the church burned to the ground, and two men were subsequently jailed for starting the fire.

In the December 17, 1931 issue of the Bernardsville News an article written by the Reverend George C. Magill of Basking Ridge told of a group of seventeen people meeting at the home of Arthur Leonard at Pleasant Plains to witness the opening of a little zinc box that had been placed in the cornerstone of the Pleas-

ant Plains Church. Byram P. Baird, a grandson of George Baker, removed the small box from its resting place and handed it to Charles Faulkner, the only living trustee who had witnessed the laying of the cornerstone. As the box was opened the people stood about with much expectancy and excitement, as though they were about to have opened to them one of the sealed chambers of King Tut's tomb. When at last the box was opened a cry of disappointment went up, for nearly all the contents had been damaged beyond recognition by dampness.

Before the people left for their homes Mr. Charles F. Oehley, the last of the preachers at the church, made a few remarks. In substance he said the following:

> *"Friends, we are gathered here today to witness the last relic of a church that has ceased to be. Nearly all who took part in the building of the church have passed on. The building has been destroyed by fire. The congregations that have met year after year have been scattered and God alone knows where they are. To us this is the end, and some may think that it has been a failure. I am sure none here will doubt me when I say that it has not been a failure, for from this church have gone hundreds who have taken their places in town and city, and have built up the Kingdom of God, and have scattered seeds of righteousness wherever they have gone".*

Today the members of the Bishop Janes United Methodist Church in Basking Ridge are most grateful to Mrs. Bertha Baird Leonard for returning to us the various silver alter pieces from the Pleasant Plains Church, along with two photographs. One is a picture of the church, and the other is a picture taken on the lawn, with Reverend John Hancock, his wife Jennie and son Emory, along with other members of the congregation, in front of their tent at a strawberry festival. These items may be seen in the historical display case in the narthex of our church, and provide us with some insight as to the history of "Our Daughter of the Swamp".

Sources: Edward Schroeder's research and writings
Newark Conference Journals
Bernardsville News

IMPORTANT DATES IN OUR CHURCH HISTORY

1703 John Wesley born on June 17

1740 First Methodist sermon preached in Basking Ridge, under the old oak, to a crowd of 3000, by George Whitefield

1771 Francis Asbury arrived in the United States

1773 First American Conference of Methodist preachers, in Philadelphia

1784 Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, at Baltimore (60 preachers) . . . Francis Asbury consecrated as Bishop

1786 Ezekial Cooper, circuit rider, preached occasionally at the home of Captain Thomas Hall in "Baskinridge"

1801 First meetings of separate Methodist Conferences

1811 East Jersey and West Jersey Districts of Philadelphia Conference formed

1828 Methodist Protestant Church formed

1836 ***New Jersey Conference formed***

1841 Methodist Episcopal Society formed in Basking Ridge

1844 Methodist Episcopal Church South formed (split over slavery issue)

1851 Meeting house purchased by Bishop Janes for the Basking Ridge Methodist Episcopal Society

1853 Methodist Episcopal Church of Basking Ridge organized (remained a charge of the Bernardsville circuit until 1856)

1854 Our first (wood frame) chruch built in Basking Ridge

1857 ***Newark Conference formed (separated from the New Jersey Conference)***

1858 Evergreen Cemetery established

1867 Our first parsonage purchased, on Elm Street (now South Maple Avenue)

1872 Church built at Pleasant Plains, then our charge. (Congregation disbanded and church abandoned in early 1920's)

1889 Epworth League organized nationally (Bishop Janes chapter formed five years later)

(continued)

1891 Our second (Finley Avenue) parsonage purchased
1894 The Parsonage Aid Society formed; became the Ladies' Aid Society two years later
1896 Under Joseph Appley, all church debts paid off
1900 Our second (stone) church dedicated as the Bishop Janes Methodist Episcopal Church
1920 Church mortgaged burned, and again all debts cleared
1926 Pipe organ installed
1928 Our 75th anniversary celebrated
1939 Hammond electronic organ replaced pipe organ

1939 The Methodist Episcopal Church became the Methodist Church, uniting the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church South

1944 In a Crusade for a New World Order, Methodists hold 90 mass meetings in support of the founding of the United Nations

1953 Our 100th anniversary celebrated
1954 New educational wing of church building dedicated

1956 First woman ordained in the Methodist ministry

1957 Our third (present) parsonage purchased on Spencer Road
1964 Dedication of our rebuilt and expanded (present) church

1965 *Newark Conference became the North Jersey Conference*

1968 The Methodist Church became the United Methodist Church, uniting the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Bretheren Chruch. The Woman's Society of Christian Service (WSCS) became the United Methodist Women (UMW)

1968 Our present Allen electronic organ installed
1975 Bell of the 1900 church re-installed
1978 Our 125th anniversary celebrated and mortgage on the church building retired.

BISHOP JANES PASTORS

1.	William Day	1853-57
	(Bernardsville circuit)	
2.	Edwin A. Day	57-58
3.	George F. Dickinson	58-59
4.	Solomon Parsons	59-60
5.	George W. Sovereign	60-61
6.	William N. Searles	61-63
7.	William C. Nelson	63-64
8.	Charles R. Barnes	63-64
9.	John Wesley Young	64-65
10.	Sylvester N. Bebout	65-67
11.	Albert Clement	67-70
12.	Benjamin F. Simpson	70
13.	Charles S. Woodruff	70-73
14.	Samuel P. Lacey	73-76
15.	Joseph W. Dally	76-79
16.	Joseph A. Owen	79-80
17.	Cyrenius A. Wombough	80-83
18.	Josiah R. Daniels	83-84
19.	John E. Hancock	84-87
20.	Jacob P. Fort	87-89
21.	George T. Jackson	89-91
22.	Jeremiah Cowins	91-94
23.	Wilson F. Randolph	94-96
24.	Joseph E. Appley	1896-1902
25.	William M. Johnson	1902-03
26.	Eleander S. Jamison	03-05
27.	Wahington I. Dice	05-09
28.	William M. Nesbit	09-13
29.	Albert Cain	13-15
30.	George H. Ketterer	15-16
31.	Edmund J. Guest	16
32.	Horace E. Dewey	16-18
33.	Ira L. Ketcham	18-20
34.	Thomas J. Clark	20-21
35.	William H. Hudson	21.22
36.	William S. Coeyman	22-24
37.	Carl C. E. Mellberg	24-30
38.	E. Alexander Gray	30-31
39.	George C. Magill	31-33
40.	James H. MacDonald	33-38
41.	Elmer L. Parks	38-41
42.	Herbert E. Richards	41-47
43.	John R. Esaias	47-50
44.	Joseph Scharer	50-51
45.	R. Benjamin Garrison	51-57
46.	Raymond Harrison Jr.	57-59
47.	Elmer W. Wilkins	59-67
48.	Wilbur A. Thomas	67-