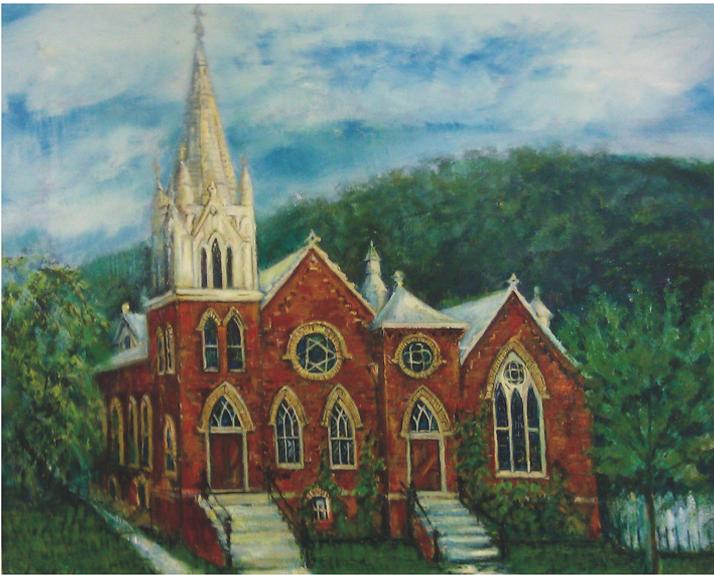


**BRIEF HISTORY OF KEYSER
AND
FIRST METHODIST CHURCH**



**BY
JUDGE F. M. REYNOLDS
(1919)**

Brief History of Keyser and First Methodist Church by Judge F. M. Reynolds

In order to give anything like a complete history of this local congregation or society of the Methodist Episcopal Church of this town that may be understood or appreciated, it will be necessary not only to name some of the persons instrumental in the organization of the society but also to state to some extent at least the situation of this place and the conditions that existed when the writer first became acquainted with it. At the time the present church building was dedicated, December 23rd. 1894, twenty-five years ago, Thomas R. Carskadon was selected to and did read a paper prepared by him giving a succinct history of this society from the time his connection with it began about the time the Civil War commenced in 1861 until the dedication of this building in 1894. It seems this paper has been lost or mislaid. It is to be regretted that it has not been preserved in some permanent form. The writer of this paper has the impression that the official board of the church had caused it to be recorded among the records of the church, but it seems it was not done or if it was the book containing it has been lost, hence it will be necessary for me to go back to the time when my acquaintance with the society in this locality first began. That there was an organization of this society before the Civil War there can be no doubt. My personal knowledge of it began about the year 1866. This vicinity or town was then known by the name of New Creek. At the time the writer first became a resident of this vicinity there was a reliable

tradition current here that this vicinity or a part of it was first called Paddytown. From the best information I could get from the then residents, the business center if it could be called such, was just below the Stone House where Mrs. George E. Leps and family now reside. This point was where the then public road leading from Romney, the county seat of the then county of Hampshire in the direction of Westernport, Maryland, crossed the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad between where the Stone House stands and near where the "Boating Rock" is located, a short distance west of that is sometimes called "Lover's Leap," and sometimes called "Bell Neck." When the road up New Creek into then Hardy County now Grant County, called the New Creek and Hardy Turnpike was constructed it began near the Railroad Bridge across New Creek and it is probable that Railroad Station was then moved up there. The writer presumes that the place called "Lover's Leap" was so called because some disappointed lover at some time jumped off from the top of the high precipice there into the river to drown his disappointment and if it ever happened, I have no doubt he drowned himself as well as his disappointment. This "Boating Rock" was so called because it was a rock that projected above the water when the river was at low stage and when the water in the river rose high enough to cover this rock, then the river was at a boating - stage and rafts and flat boats could navigate the river and did so carrying wheat, lumber, flour, iron and other commerce to Georgetown in the District of Columbia and other ports.

The reason for giving this place the name of Paddytown was because a man by the name of Patrick McCarty owned and operated an iron furnace a short distance below what is now

called Twenty First Bridge and doubtless his business there furnished most of the commerce sailing from this port at that time.

It may not be out of place to call attention to the fact that people travelled to Westernport a long time before West Virginia and Keyser went dry. You may naturally inquire why I mention this "Boating Rock" in connection with a history of the church. The answer is that our ministers were in the habit of going out on this rock which was in the State of Maryland to marry people under a license issued in Maryland. If the river happened to be at a high stage of water, the parties de-siring to get married, had to wait for a fall in the river so as to stand upon this rock while the minister performed the marriage ceremony so that the date fixed for parties to get married depended upon the state of the weather. Such is no longer the case as they can no go out on the Bridge whether the water is high or low, to perform the solemn ceremony.

I may also state that there was at one time before the Civil War a town site laid out and within what is now the city of Keyser called the town of "Potomac." The tier of lots on the north side of Armstrong Street between Main street and the Baltimore and Ohio Depot or some of them were in the town of Potomac. Where this town began and ended I never could find out. The probabilities are that this town was laid out by James Mosely who at the time the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was built through here in 1851 or 1852 owned nearly all the land now occupied by the City of Keyser and which was later divided among his heirs, one of whom was Sarah McCarty, wife of Joseph C. McCarty, who resided in the house now occupied by Mrs. James A. Sharpless,

and another of whom was Mrs. Elizabeth Long, mother of David Long, Isaac Long, and others and who at the time of her death resided some short distance above the Pottery opposite what is called "Long's Island." It was near there in years gone by we used to have our Sunday School picnics.

The first time the writer was ever in Paddytown, Potomac or New Creek was in the month of June 1865. I came in on a night train and stopped at the only hotel in town then kept by one Thomas A. Keller, situated just below the present silk mill. The Railroad depot at that time was a little one story building. A long wooden platform running along in front of the hotel was where passengers-got off and on the trains. At the time mentioned there were only about fourteen or fifteen dwelling houses in the three cities of Paddytown, Potomac and New Creek. A small shanty used as a post office in the bank of New Creek., just east of the Siever Hardware Building, one blacksmith shop and two store rooms. These constituted with some small temporary buildings about all there was of the city. All that part of Keyser lying north of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was occupied by the tents of Union soldiers. Peace had not yet been officially declared. The army engaged in the Civil War was being demobilized and soon removed from the vicinity.

Based upon this survey of the situation and surroundings of this vicinity you can well imagine the outlook for a young and inexperienced lawyer to begin the practice of law was not very promising, when you consider he was an entire stranger to the people.

The Legislature of 1866 established the county of Mineral out of a part of Hampshire County and made New Creek the county seat of the new county. Henry G. Davis and Janes Carskadon, father of Isaac P., George T., James T., Charles, Lucy, now Mrs. Fetzer, and Alice, now Mrs. H. G. Steorts, were members of the Legislature. James Carskadon was a loyal and sincere Methodist and took a deep and active interest in the church here as well as at his own home.

Henry G. Davis, Col. T. B. Davis, and brother were the owners of most of the land on which the city of Keyser now stands, having recently purchased it of Edward M. Armstrong;, who built the house where Col. Davis afterwards resided and now occupied by the High School. H. G. Davis and brother donated an acre of land on which to build a Court House, where the present Court House stands. The spot on which the Preparatory School building stands was the site of a large Powder Magazine surrounded by trenches, fortifications and breast works, constructed by the Federal Army to defend the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad station and army supplies, etc. All that part of the present city surrounded by main, Center, Water and Alice Sts. was a meadow, except the lot where the McCarty house stood. The place where the M. E. Church now stands was in a meadow and the tall grass in these meadows in the summer time afforded an excellent hiding place for the famous wild and black spotted dog, sometimes called the "wild dog," that for seven years or more slept upon or kept watch near his master's grave after his master's death on what we sometimes called "Graveyard Hill" in the rear of Brother John B. Fetzer's residence. This dog after the death of his master, who was a Union soldier, kept a faithful vigil

on or about his master's grave for these many years. The last time I remember to have seen him he came out of the meadow late in the evening, as was his custom, crossed the road near where the Presbyterian Church now stands and went into the grass, in the direction of where this building now stands. Greater love and devotion for his friend and master than was shown by this wild dog perhaps never was known before or since. Many attempts were made to make friends with and tame this dog but they all failed and finally after keeping his long and devoted watch he disappeared.

After this brief history of the town and its physical environments I will proceed to give the organization of the Methodist Episcopal congregation or society in this town after the close of the Civil War. There was an organization of this society before the Civil War began. The society or congregation had built a small church building as a place of worship on a lot across the street from where R. A. Welch resides. Nothing remained of this building after the War but the foundation. The Federal or Union troops took possession of the building, tore out one end and then converted it into a bakery to bake bread for the Union soldiers and while it was being so used the Confederate or Southern soldiers under General W. L. Rosser, made a raid on the town and captured it and burned the church building upon the grounds that they were helping their own cause and weakening the enemy. Frequent and long continued efforts have been made to induce the Congress of the United States to make an appropriation to pay the judgement obtained by the Trustees in the U. S. Court of Claims for the use and destruction of this building but so far all such efforts have failed, although many other such claims in other

localities and states have been paid that were no more meritorious. Now that the Government is so terribly involved in debt on account of the recent war with Germany, it is not at all likely this claim of ours will ever be paid.

The building first occupied as a place of worship by the M. E. Church congregation in this town after the War was a building which stood on the bank of the North Branch of the Potomac River, where the Patchett Worsted Mills now stand or near it. It was a structure made of boards and was put up by the Federal Army as a temporary hospital for treating and caring for sick and wounded soldiers. It was not nearly so elaborate or costly as many of the hospitals built during the recent war. The first term of court ever held in Mineral County was held in this building, presided over by Judge E. C. Bunker, after whom Edward Bunker Reynolds is named. When the present Court House, since added to by a new front, was built and ready for occupancy in the year 1867, preaching and other services were held at the Court House until the building now occupied by the Thompson Furniture Company was erected. This church building was the one formerly at Frostburg, Md. The building there was taken down, removed here and the material used in the construction of the building in question. This building was continued to be occupied until the present building was constructed and dedicated in December 1894.

A history of a local church or congregation would be very incomplete without mention at least of those, no longer with us on earth, who took a prominent and leading part in forming, leading and organizing the society. The writer without hesitation must concede to Thomas R. Carskadon, Uncle Tom as he was

generally called, and his pious and earnest wife, in all good works, as the leaders and chief figures in organizing and supporting the M. E. Church society here for some years after the Civil War ended. Rev. Roland S. Dayton, a local preacher, who resided near here in Maryland and his family and some of his relations, James I. Barrick and family, J. W. C. Miers and family, Mrs. Joseph Ritzell and family, the Long family, the Mosely Gosom family and some few others whose names I cannot at this time recall. Mr. Carskadon and his wife were the chief financial supporters of the church. We of the present day have but little idea of the work and sacrifices of those of that day to raise the money necessary to pay the preacher and other expenses of the church. Mr. Carskadon was the one that paid most, but none were financially able at that time to do much. You will naturally ask as to the salaries of the itinerant preacher. These were not nearly so high in proportion as things to eat, because for a good many years after the close of the Civil War things to eat were high. At that time it was different from the present. It was not near so much the cost of high living as it was the high cost of living. Up until the year 1875 this town was one of the appointments on the South Branch Circuit or New Creek Circuit. A few years after the war it was changed to the New Creek Circuit, if my memory is correct.

In the years 1873 and 1874 the end of the Second Division of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was established here and the population of the town began to increase. Before that time the end of the Division was at Piedmont. In 1877 there was a great strike among the employees of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and it was said that because of the sympathy shown the striking employees, by the people of the town the end of the Division was

removed by the Company back to Piedmont where it remained for about two years when it was again returned to Keyser where it remained until 1896 when it was taken to Cumberland. The large round house built by the Company at great expense, when the Division was first established here, was torn down and destroyed.

In 1873 the name of the town was changed by a vote of the people of the town in town meeting from New Creek to Keyser, after the name of William Keyser of Baltimore who was then first Vice-President of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, and it was through his influence and that of the late Senator H. G. Davis, and Col. Davis, backed by the aid of the people of the town, that the end of the Division was first established here. You can well imagine how all these ups and downs in the financial affairs of the people of the town affected the financial if not the spiriual condition of the church.

Just here I wish to make note of the fact that it was due to the earnestness and zeal of Uncle Tom that the building on the corner of Main and Center Streets now occupied by the Thompson Furniture Company was built. John Wesley Wells, an earnest and loyal Methodist, was the builder at a cost of about \$3,000.00. You will note that this was in 1869, some years before the Railroad Division was first established here. He individually bought the building and obligated himself personally to pay for it. The building, after a long struggle, was paid for by the congregation. I do not remember myself nor have I been able to find any one who remembers the exact date this old building was dedicated. According to my best recollection it was some time in the fall of 1869. Uncle Tom seems to have thought it was in 1870. If so it has been nearly fifty years ago, and so we can celebrate

not only the 25th anniversary of the dedication of this building but the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the old building and perhaps as much as the seventieth anniversary of the organization of the church at this place, because my recollection is that it was about the year 1852 or 53, about the time the B & O RR was constructed through here, that the first church was built here from having seen the deed for the lot, which is recorded in Hampshire County. I remember that in the latter part of 1869 or the early part of 1870 a revival meeting was held in the church recently completed at which a number of persons including myself and wife joined the church. The dedication sermon was preached by Dr. E. J. Gray and Harrison McNemar was the Pastor and Rev. A. J. Gill the Junior preacher. Rev. W. T. D. Clem, Presiding Elder and Rev. J. S. Davis assisted in the dedication. Dr. Gray preached a fine sermon and this was his text – "And I if I be lifted up from the earth I will draw all men unto me."

When the Civil War ended an unfortunate condition of affairs existed in the South Branch Circuit growing out of the division of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the whole United States in the year 1844. This division arose because this Christian denomination from the time of John Wesley, the founder of it, was opposed to human slavery. Millions of colored people were before the war held in slavery in the Southern States. The one thing that precipitated this division was the fact that one of the Bishops (Soule) whose residence was in the South, held some slaves which he had inherited from some relative. That portion of the delegates in the General Conference of 1844, coming chiefly from the Northern States demanded that the Bishop should either resign his office or emancipate his slaves and he refused to do

either. The General Conference, after a long and able discussion of the subject, finally agreed to divide the Church and in all the territory north of the Mason and Dixon line retained the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the territory south of this line, in the Southern States, took the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The plan for the division of the church provided that what were known as the border conferences, being those conferences bordering on the line of division might take a vote and if a majority favored going into the M. E. Church, South, they could do so. The vote taken in the Baltimore Conference, it being one of the border conferences, was in favor of adhering to the old M. E. Church. Just before the war broke out in the conference held at Staunton, Va. in March 1861, another vote was taken and a majority of the ministers voted to join the Church, South. The Bishop presiding, Levi Scott, who had the power to decide questions of this kind under the constitution of the church, at once declared the vote taken to be illegal and the conference submitted to this decision of the Bishop, accepted the appointments and went to their several stations and circuits. After the war began the members of the conference stationed within the lines of the Confederate or Southern Army could not meet with those within the lines of the Union Army and so a few of those ministers within the Southern lines, held a meeting somewhere in Virginia and formed a conference of their own and called a Bishop of the M. E. Church, South to preside over it and they called this the Baltimore Conference of the M. E. Church, South. The regular Baltimore Conference of the M. E. Church was held regularly in Baltimore and Washington within the lines of the Union Army. There being thus two Baltimore Conferences it resulted in litigation in the courts over the rights to the church

and parsonage property along the border. The plan of division in 1844 provided that neither church should intrude on the territory of the other. On account of and as result of the war, this part of the agreement has not been kept by either patty to the agreement. There was no other church organization than the M. E. Church in this town until about the year 1874 or 1875, when the M. E. Church, South was organized here. A man by the name of Simon Rudolph and Rev. Henry Hoffman who was formerly a member of the Baltimore Conference, and Jakob Markwood took a leading part in forming and organizing the M. E. Church, South here. Inasmuch as the institution of slavery, the rock on which the M. E. Church split, was abolished as a result of the war, it has been exceedingly unfortunate that the two churches up to this time have been unable to agree upon some plan for again uniting the two churches which have a common faith, common doctrine and practically the same church polity.

I have made this brief history of this division of the church because a great many people of the present generation do not understand why there is at this place an M. E. Church, North, as some improperly call it, and an M. E. Church, South. Let us all hope that this condition will not continue much longer as the effect of there being two churches of practically the same faith, doctrine, church polity and name is to weaken the moral and religious forces of both especially in the small towns and rural districts.

The Methodist Episcopal Church has worked for the uplift and betterment of mankind in obedience to the will of God. One of the things they have labored and prayed for during these many years was the doing away with the excessive use of intoxicating

liquors and the liquor saloon, claiming that the saloon was one of the great national evils that should be abolished and for which we should all be thankful as the saloon will soon be a thing of the past if the friends of prohibition remain true and faithful until prohibition is not only an accomplished fact in this as well as in other countries. Here again much credit is goes to Thomas R. Carskadon as a pioneer in the advocating of the abolition of the saloon and we believe we can truthfully say that the membership of the church here at Keyser stood with him, perhaps without an exception upon this important question. And may we not claim without boasting that this church in this town had much to do with the doing away with the saloon in this town much sooner than many other towns similarly situated. While some of us differed with Uncle Tom as to the best methods to be used to accomplish the desired object, no one doubted his sincerity. I cannot pay him the doubtful compliment by saying he made no enemies by the radical views he would express on this as well as other moral and religious questions and because of this he gave to his home the name of "Radical Hill." Uncle Tan believed this object would only be accomplished through a political party called the "Prohibition Party." While some of us believed this object would only be attained through the instrumentality of some organization that was non-sectarian and non-partisan and it drew to its aid all men who were true believers in temperance and the abolition of the saloon. Uncle Tom was also a true believer in the strict observance of the Sabbath Day. He was the first man to make the effort to stop railroads from running coal trains and compelling their employees to labor on the Sabbath Day. He caused the first indictment to be found and prosecuted against the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company for, running its coal

trains on Sunday. The case was twice taken to the Supreme Court of Appeals where his contention was finally sustained to the effect that it was a violation of the law of the state. After the Supreme Court had declared it illegal, the Legislature of West Virginia passed a law permitting the trains to be run on Sundays, but this law did not make the thing right.

The construction of the present church building was begun when brother C. A. Jones was pastor of this church in the year 1893-94. The subject came up before the official board of building a new church building. Among other reasons for this was the fact that the old one was not well suited for the purpose. Being located on the most prominent business corner of the town, it had become so noisy that it was almost impossible to conduct services there, and besides the building was too small for the growing congregation. Many perplexing problems had to be solved in order to build a new church building. First the question of location so as to secure a more quiet place for the church. It happened that the writer owned three lots and brother Carskadon one lot adjoining on Davis Street, making four lots. It was agreed by the owners to donate these lots for the site of the church. In order to have the necessary space to give light and air to the new building it was necessary to have this much ground on which to erect a suitable building. The second and most important problem was to raise the money with which to construct the building as it was ascertained that it would cost about Ten Thousand Dollars to construct such a building as would afford sufficient room to accommodate the then congregation and to provide for the needs of the congregation for several years to come. Then there were other problems. The lot on which the

old building stood had been donated by Col. T. B. Davis and brothers but with a provision in the deed that if the lot ceased to be used for church purposes then the ground should revert to Col. Davis and brother or their heirs. It was necessary before the old church property could be sold to obtain a release from Col. Davis and brothers of their right in this reversion. This was accomplished without much difficulty as it must be said to the honor of Col. Davis' memory that he was liberal in these matters and was always willing to do something for the town and its people and he was a regular contributor to the support of the churches without regard to the denomination. The next problem was to get a purchaser for the old church property. No one at the time seemed to want the property. The people were not as eager at that time to buy property on Main Street as they are at the present time. At this time what was called the Banker's panic prevailed in the country growing out of the question of the unlimited coinage of silver as money. Prices of everything were extremely low as compared to present prices. Finally the writer agreed to buy the old church building and lot at a price fixed by the official board viz, \$2,400.00. Not very long afterwards an opportunity offered itself to trade this property for another property with a small sum given as boot money. This was where the writer made a mistake perhaps and the other party got the best of the trade. The plans for the new church building were obtained from an architect in Philadelphia and the new church building was commenced. Brother C. A, Jones set to work to get the money subscribed and a considerable part of the money so subscribed before his time expired when he was moved to another charge and Brother C. T. Weede succeeded him. Arrangements were made for laying the corner stone and Governor George Wesley

Atkins was secured to make the address under the auspices of the Masonic Lodge. This address by Governor Atkinson was made on Col. Davis' lawn and was listened to with rapt attention by the people present. Finally the building was completed by W. A. Liller who was contractor and builder. On the 23rd. day of December 1894, the new building was dedicated. Bishop Cyrus D. Foss preached the dedication sermon and took the subscription to finish paying for the building. He was ably assisted by Rev. John F. Goucher of Baltimore whose benefactions in this and other lands have been boundless and he also made a donation toward paying the indebtedness on the building. Strange to say I cannot remember the text from which Bishop Foss preached, but I do recall that he preached an able and inspiring sermon. You may think strange that I cannot remember the text of Bishop Foss twenty-five years ago, and can remember the text of Dr. Gray almost fifty years ago on a similar occasion. Bishop Foss was the third Methodist Bishop who has ever visited and preached in this town within my recollection. Bishop Ames well on to forty years ago, preached in the old church and I can in my memory still see the venerable man of God sitting in his chair (he was too feeble to stand so long) and preaching a sermon that was not only inspiring but edifying. He took for his text the words of Christ spoken to the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well when he said to her these words, "But whosoever drinketh of the water I shall give him shall never thirst but the water I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The other Bishop who preached or rather lectured in the old church was John P. Newman who was a warm friend of General U. S. Grant. His subject was "Palestine" which he had

lately visited. It was intensely interesting and well delivered as he was a polished orator, etc. Among other distinguished ministers who preached in the old church were Rev. John R. Thompson, then president of West Virginia University and Rev. Thomas Guard of Baltimore, both of whom were accomplished preachers as well as orators.

At the time the present building was dedicated the subscriptions were made in shares of \$12.00 each and when they were fully paid certificates were issued to each contributor and I presume many of these certificates are still to be found. I still have mine. May we not confidently hope that this was the most valuable stock in which we ever invested. The certificates were issued on the 14th. day of February 1897 when a public jubilee service was held to rejoice over the full payment of the church debt. The certificates were signed by the Finance Committee consisting of Charles T. Weede, James A. Sharpless, J. D. Gelwicks, T. R. Carskadon, George T. Carskadon, and R. G. Richardson. These certificates set forth that the church was begun in March 1894, dedicated in December 1894, but the exact date is not given. During the year the church building was being erected the official board consisted of:

The Building Committee consisted of Rev. J. O. Thompson, F. M. Reynolds.

The pipe organ was not installed until a later period during the pastorate of Rev. J. O. Wrightson, about the year 1898 or 1899.

The following is a list of the pastors in charge of the work here at this town while it was a part of the South Branch or New

Creek Circuit, up to the time Keyser was made a station in 1875, just before the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Division was first established here:

Rev. George Crosfield	1866 to 1868
Rev. William McWalsh	1868 to 1870
Rev. J. N. Davis	1870 to 1873
Rev. John Edwards	1873 to 1875
Rev. Henry Nice	1875 to 1876 Keyser Station
Rev. J. J. Largent	1876 to 1878
Rev. Robert Bishop	1878 to 1881
Rev. W. C. Griffith	1881 to 1882
Rev. George E. Maydwell	1882 to 1885
Rev. W. E. Curley	1885 to 1888
Rev. F. G. Porter	1888 to 1891
Rev. C. A. Jones	1891 to 1894
Rev. C. T. Weede	1894 to 1897
Rev. J. O. Wrightson	1897 to 1900
Rev. L. A. Thirlkel	1900 to 1904
Rev. W. A. Koontz	1904 to 1907
Rev. Frank H. Havenner	1907 to 1915
Rev. V. A. Lonier	1915 to 1916
Rev. H. V. Givler	1916 to 1919
Rev. A. H. McKinley	1919 to 1925

The Junior Preachers while this appointment was in a circuit were as follows, but Z cannot be sure of the years they served:

J. St. Clair Neal	A. J. Gill
John R. Walsh	John B. Hall
H. R. Saviage	Robert Bishop

The Presiding Elders and District Superintendents were as follows but I am not sure of the years, except the first was Dr. W. T. D. Clem, father of J. B. O. Clem, who for many years was the efficient leader of the choir and organist:

W. T. D. Clem- 1866	W. H. Holliday
George W. Cooper	George W. Hobbs
George C. Baker	J. R. Wheeler
L. T. Weiderman	W. I. McKenny
W. L. McDowell	F. M. B. Rice
George C. Bacon	B. F. DeVries - 1919

The pastors before the Civil War were James Beatty, Henry Hoffman, and Archibald James Porter.

The first funeral service conducted in this church building was that of Captain John W. Perry, who was buried on Sunday evening of the same day the church was dedicated and the first marriage ceremony performed in this church was that of Mr. Grant McIntire and Miss Mollie Hilleary.

I cannot undertake to go into details with reference to the Pastors, Junior Preachers, Presiding Elders and District Superintendents who served this congregation for considerably more than a half century. It would be little less than a miracle if this long list of ministers could have quit their charges here with the most cordial feeling toward them on the part of all the laity or with the most cordial feelings on their part toward the entire laity of the church, but I can truthfully say that with very few exceptions the work done, the good accomplished and the

sacrifices made by these ministers of God have been appreciated by the laity of the church and if these exceptions on the part of some existed, I believe the mistakes or faults, if any there were, have been covered with a mantle of charity as they should be on the part of all of us.

It is with feelings of sadness that I look back over the years that are past and consider how many of the ministers as well as the laity of the church with whom we have labored in the cause of the Master have crossed the river and we shall see their faces no more in this world, but may we hope to see them again when all the strife, contentions and troubles of this world will be forgotten and only the joys of salvation will be remembered.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday School was organized and held its first meeting in the Hospital Building on the bank of the river. Brother T. R. Carskadon was the first Superintendent and he continued to hold that office until 1870 when the writer was elected to take his place, and I have been elected successively each year since that time. This is the only office I have ever held that came to me without the asking. I am led to believe that much good has been accomplished by the Sunday School during these Fifty years I have been Superintendent. How much good has been done can only be known fully in the great hereafter. I believe and I am the only one now living in the town who was a member of the School fifty years ago. Mrs. Mollie Clem was for many years the efficient and faithful Superintendent of the Primary Department of the School.

CAMP MEETINGS

This Church society was connected with two Camp Meetings. The first one began about the year 1866 or 1867 or 1868. It was held on the Henry Homan farm about two miles south of Ridgeville and was called the "Homan Camp Ground." Camp Meeting was continued to be held there for several years. About the year 1876 the trustees of this Church leased a plot of ground from the late Nimrod Alkire, situated on the left side of the road leading from Keyser to Headsville, and just beyond the cemetery. After meetings were held here for a year or two the grounds immediately surrounding the tents were enclosed with a high board fence. These meetings were continued for several years and were finally discontinued. The ground was leased for perhaps as long as thirty-six years but the lease expired some years ago. The chief reason for discontinuing them was that they resulted in considerable disorder and confusion and especially on the Sabbath Day being so near this town and Piedmont.

REVIVALS

During these fifty years several notable revival meetings have taken place. Those most notable were the ones already alluded to which occurred in the Winter of 1869-70 during the pastorate of Rev. Harrison McNemar and A. J. Gill as Junior Preacher. Another one which took place in the year 1882 during the pastorate at this station of Rev. W. C. Griffith. The meeting was still in progress when Rev. George E. Maydwell was appointed as preacher in charge. When he first appeared in the Church the altar was crowded with penitents and he was so overcome with emotion that he could scarcely speak. This meeting was conducted chiefly by the Misses Jennie Smith and Addie Sherman.

One during the pastorate of Rev. J. O. Wrightson. Another one with which most of you are familiar was the one held at what was called the tabernacle during the pastorate of Dr. H. V. Givler. As a result of these revivals many were converted and joined this and other churches in the town.

PARSONAGES

The building first occupied as a parsonage is the one now owned by Dempsey Rice on East Piedmont Street. This building belonged to T. R. Carskadon and my recollection is he never received much rent for it while occupied as a parsonage. In 1875 the present parsonage was built but has been added to and materially improved since it was first constructed. Doubtless the Ladies Aid Society will be able to give some account of this as the Official Board generously allowed them to raise the funds to take care of the parsonage and furniture.

The addition to the church now used for the Primary Department of the Sunday School, dining hall and other purposes, was built in the year 1901 . The Official Board graciously consented that the Ladies Aid Society might raise the money and construct this addition, which they did. I presume they will show their appreciation of the kindness shown them by the Official Board in allowing them to do this, in their report.

CLASS MEETINGS

For many years, this church and its membership was divided off into classes and regular class or experience meetings were held and were regularly attended by the members, but they

gradually declined until within recent years no pretense is made of holding them and they have entirely lapsed into a state of desuetude. At one time a Methodist Church without class meetings would have been considered very non-Methodistic. No doubt they served a good purpose especially for new converts in their day. If for no other reason it taught the members to speak in public and was a means to a large extent of the class leaders and pastors keeping a close watch on their conduct and it was undoubtedly an aid to the spirituality of the members. It is a serious question in this progressive age, whether the church in some respects is not progressing backward instead of forward. At one time the candidate to join that Church had to pledge himself to attend the Class Meetings but I do not understand that this is now necessary.

I should be glad indeed to give here the names of all the members of this Church from the time my knowledge of and connection with it. Many of them however have crossed over the river and it is believed and hoped that all are enjoying the rewards for their toil and sacrifices in the cause of the Master. May we not express the confident hope that those who still remain, will faithfully and zealously continue the good work until the time shall come, which cannot be long, with some of us, to lay down the burdens of life and enter into the rest that remains to the people of God. Let us believe that we have a mansion prepared for all of us who shall continue faithful until, called up higher.