

HISTORY

OF THE

Methodist Episcopal Church

ON

Port Republic and Smithville Charge

ALSO, A SKETCH OF THE

Presbyterian Church at Port Republic,

AND

The Friends' at Leeds' Point.

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PREPARED BY

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INTRODUCTION.

IN gathering these scattered fragments of church history and putting them in such form as to be easily read and preserved, I have had two main objects. First: I had a desire to make generally known among our members some of the circumstances attending the establishment of our churches and the names of those who wrought so faithfully in the early days, the fruits of whose labor we now so richly enjoy. Second: I hope to encourage the church by the progress made.

The class of twelve members at Port Republic, and probably the same number at Smithville, meeting in private houses, has grown to two hundred and sixty-four members, with two hundred and twenty-five children in the Sunday school. There are two fine churches and a nice parsonage property. The church ought to be stimulated to greater

zeal and faithfulness when we consider the work that yet remains to be done before the church prospers as she should and enters into the possession of the full heritage promised to the fathers and which of right belongs to our Lord and His Christ.

The nation strews the graves of her heroes with flowers and tells the story of their deeds in immortal song. So the church should honor the names of her founders and keep green the memory of their struggles, sacrifices and triumphs ; that, " By adorning the names of men long gone she educate the men that are to be."

A few years since the New Jersey Annual Conference sent out to the churches a list of questions concerning the beginning of Methodism and its progress in the respective charges. Such a paper was placed in my hands by the Quarterly Conference. In preparing to answer those questions I sought out and conversed with the oldest and best-informed persons and heard many things of interest, and learned to love and reverence those workers for God whom my eyes had never seen, but whose very

names awaken thronging memories with the older members of our churches. Before these questions, however, had been sent out Aunt Mary Collins, loving Methodism as she did her life and knowing that she alone was left of those who lived in the early days, and desiring that the church of the present should keep in touch with that of the past, on one of her visits to my father's house, requested me to write down the names of the first class and other items of interest of which there is no record. This I did, not thinking that I should ever put it to the present use. Mrs. Ann E. Cake has told me much of the church in her father's house. Quarterly meeting brought brethren and sisters from Leedsville, Absecon, Mays Landing, Pleasant Mills and intervening places, not only for the services but for entertainment. After the first church was built she and her sisters used to sweep and scrub the floors and scour the candlesticks rejoicing that they could thus help in the service of the God of their father. D. S. Blackman, J. P. Cake and J. W. Johnson of Port Republic, and Mrs. Giberson (the daughter of Richard Leeds), J. Smith and J. B.

Turner, of Smithville, also have given all the information and encouragement in their power.

Rev. C. W. Livezley kindly put in my hands some old Methodist Minutes bearing dates from 1796 to 1820, which were of great interest, and gave me the names of circuits and appointments for those years.

After 1828 the Minutes of Bargaintown Circuit and its subsequent divisions furnish quite full account of passing events.

In pursuing the course of the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church I was led to inquire concerning other branches of the household of faith and found that the Methodist society at Port Republic had been preceded by a Presbyterian church. I am indebted to Rev. Allen H. Brown, to whose zealous labors the church owes much, for the account of that organization, as well as other valuable information concerning the saintly John Brainerd and his work in New Jersey.

The Quakers were by many years the first religious organization in the county. When the Methodist Episcopal Church was first organized in Smith-

ville the Friends' Society was well nigh one hundred years old. So far as I know there is no printed account of their early meetings in this vicinity, but their records are well kept, and through the courtesy of Hon. John Clement, of Haddonfield, and the kindly research of Sarah Nicholson, a Friend of the same place, and information received through members of Japhet Leeds' family, I have been enabled to give to my readers this account of the Friends at Leeds' Point.

I trust these sketches will not be without interest to all, irrespective of denominational preferences, for they are not alone church history, but they tell us somewhat of the character of those who were the first settlers in these communities.

A. C. COLLINS.



THE
Methodist Episcopal Church
IN
Port Republic, N. J.

The first Methodist meetings in what is now known as Port Republic were probably held in the house of Micajah Smith. The first revival occurred in 1796-97, and resulted in the formation of a class with the following members: Micajah Smith, Rebecca Smith, Jesse Leach, Betsy Leach, Henry Adams, Dorcas Adams, Jeremiah Adams, Sarah Adams, Sarah Blackman, Sarah Bowen, Margaret Martin, Rebecca Burnett and Dorothea McCollum. Nehemiah Blackman was appointed leader. The descendants of most of these persons have been influential in the church until this day. Bishop Asbury first introduced Methodism into South Jersey, and Nehemiah Blackman had been converted under his preaching, in his father's house at English Creek.

The first Presiding Elder was Rev. John McClaskey. His district embraced all of New Jersey, and Newburg, Delaware, Herkimer and Albany, in New York. There has been preserved to us a brief account of him (see "Methodism in New Jersey") which I trust may not be without interest. He was a man of influence in American Methodism, and was a member of that wonderful Conference of twenty members that met in the old John Street Church in 1789, when the Methodist Book Concern was founded. John McClaskey was born in Ireland, in 1756, and emigrated to this country when sixteen years of age, and settled in Salem county, N. J. Prior to his conversion, he was rather a wild young man, but, attracted by curiosity, he went to hear the Methodist preachers when they came into his neighborhood, and at length became concerned for his salvation. He earnestly sought the Lord and obtained the great salvation, and almost immediately began to warn sinners to repent. He entered the ministry in 1785 and was appointed to Trenton Circuit. In appearance, he was large and noble looking, with fine flowing locks, and his presence in the pulpit was very commanding. "As a Christian, he was deeply experienced in the things of God. As a minister, he was mighty in the Scripture, orthodox in his sentiments, systematic in his preaching, zealous in his labors; the blessed effects of which were enjoyed by thousands. * * *

In the latter part of his life he was greatly

afflicted and suffered much, in all of which he manifested great patience and confidence in God. He departed this life September 2, 1814."

In 1786, New Jersey was divided into four circuits: Newark, Trenton, East and West Jersey. West Jersey Circuit embraced all that section of the state south of Burlington. In 1788, it was divided, and Salem Circuit formed from the lower part of it. In 1800, there were five hundred and fifty members on Salem Circuit. Rev. Richard Swain and Rev. Richard Lyon were the traveling preachers, and Rev. Solomon Sharp was Presiding Elder over all New Jersey. In the state were seven circuits, with three thousand and thirty members and fourteen traveling preachers. When we remember the fact that in New Jersey there are now two Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with over four hundred and fifty ministers and nearly seventy-five thousand members, we may well exclaim "What hath God wrought!"

There is a peculiar significance in calling these old Methodist heroes "traveling preachers," when we recall the extent of their circuits, generally taking from four to eight weeks to make the round of their preaching places, their way often being through miles on miles of forest, with no path save the Indian trail. They counted not their lives dear unto themselves, if only they might win souls; preaching week days and Sundays; going up to Conference in

Philadelphia with homespun, perchance threadbare and patched garments, but rejoicing that free salvation had been preached and souls had been saved. Is it any wonder that the cause prospered, and churches multiplied? The story of their zeal and sacrifice cannot be too often repeated.

The first house of worship was erected near the beginning of the century on property owned by Micajah Smith and was known as Smith's "meeting house." An old burying ground marks the spot. This preaching place was one of the appointments on Salem Circuit, until about 1811, when Gloucester Circuit was formed. The meeting house was a two-story frame building, twenty-five feet square, plain as poverty and primitive Methodism could make it; guiltless of paint and no attempt at ornamentation save a crescent on the gable outside. It was never dedicated, but, as soon as weatherboarded, meetings were held in it during the summer, but in the winter, for several years, services were held in the upper room of Nehemiah Blackman's house. In 1809 windows were put in and a ten-plate stove purchased. Instead of being plastered the house was sealed up with boards. In 1812 they purchased planed boards and had benches made with pieces across the backs to rest the shoulders. Their lights were tallow dips in tin candlesticks. The traveling preachers came once in four weeks and even then could not often make their appointments here on Sunday. In this state of affairs it was necessary for the local

preachers, exhorters and class leaders to care for the interests of the church a large share of the time. To these faithful laborers the church owes a debt of gratitude which I fear this generation scarcely realizes. Their names should be held in reverent memory. The older members of the church will readily recall the names of Richard Leeds, Parker Cordery, Nicholas Vansant, Absalom Cordery, Nehemiah Blackman, Evy Adams and more recently William Smallwood and William S. Blake, who for years served this and adjacent churches. Bro. Blake alone of the number is left on the shores of time.

The name of

John Collins

is associated with the first revival in this place, and as the place of his nativity and residence till thirty-five years of age is within the bounds of our charge, we claim him as among the founders of our church. He was the son of Dr. Richard Collins, the first resident physician in what is now Atlantic county, and was born in 1769 at Collins Mills, about a mile west of Smithville. He was converted in 1794 and was soon licensed as a local preacher. He traveled extensively and helped to sow the seed of the Kingdom through a large part of West Jersey. His wife was Sarah Blackman, daughter of David Blackman, of English Creek.

She proved a loyal and efficient help-meet, greatly interested in his labors for the salvation of men, and when not able to accompany him on his travels was accustomed to spend the hour of his services upon her knees in prayer that God would bless his labors. In 1803 he removed with his family to Ohio and took up an extensive tract of land in Clermont county. He was accompanied by his brother-in-law, Larner Blackman, who was awakened to his sinful condition under the first sermon preached by Mr. Collins. He afterward became an eminent preacher of the gospel in the Methodist church. In those days Ohio was the "Northwestern Territory" and was considered "away out west," and the journey was long and tedious. When Mr. Blackman returned for a visit to his aged parents, upon his arrival among friends in Philadelphia the young preacher's clothing was found to be in such a dilapidated condition that some of the good Methodist sisters met and made him a new suit before allowing him to proceed to his father's house in Jersey. It may be doubted if many of the young preachers of the New Jersey Conference would be anxious to appear in this *home* made and, perhaps, *home* spun suit, but Mr. Blackman seems to have gone on his way rejoicing. This item is from the lips of an aged member of his family who, in her youth, received it from some of these same Philadelphia sisters. In 1815 Mr. Blackman was drowned a few days after the adjournment of Conference at Cincinnati, with one or two others, in

attempting to cross the Ohio. The horses in the open ferry boat became frightened and, running together, pushed several of the passengers into the river. He seemed not to be alarmed and swam some time, but eventually sank to rise no more.

Mr. Collins joined the traveling connection in 1807. He preached the first Methodist sermon in Cincinnati in 1804, and established the first society in Dayton in 1808. He was made Presiding Elder in 1819. As a local and traveling preacher, it is supposed the Methodist church had not in its early days, a more successful preacher than Mr. Collins. The following description of him is given by an eye-witness :

“The occasion was a quarterly meeting in Ohio. The meeting had been opened by a young man who, I was informed, had been recently initiated into the ministry. He was followed by an old man dressed in linsey woolsey. He was tall and thin ; his head was whitened by the frost of years ; his countenance was one that men love to look upon ; there was nothing remarkable or peculiar in his features ; his forehead was high and a little projecting ; his eyes small and sunken ; his nose thin and a little aquiline, and chin rather long. But he had an expression of countenance that is not easily forgotten. His image is hung up in the chamber of my memory, to be contemplated and admired. As he arose, every eye was riveted on him,

and such was the silence of the large assembly that the softest whisper might have been heard. My interest was excited in his first appearance, but when he spoke I felt that I was in the presence of no ordinary man. His voice was rather weak, but its intonation was sweet, soft and touching. It is what we readily conceive as perfection in utterance, though it may not be so easy to describe it. His gestures were few and unstudied. In fine, there was in his whole manner an indescribable charm, which I have not before witnessed. He read the parable of the prodigal son. On coming to these words, 'And when he saw him afar off, he ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him,' he stopped. 'This,' said he, 'is my text.' I had heard it preached on a hundred times; I thought I could preach a decent sermon on it myself. But even his manner of reading it, told me he had discovered something in this passage which was new to me. He proceeded to illustrate the love which our Heavenly Father bears to His disobedient children, by the affection manifested by parents toward their offspring in all circumstances, even when disobedient and unnatural in their conduct, and the joy they experience when they return to their duty. I felt that I had never heard the subject handled in so interesting a manner, and my reflections involuntarily took a retrospect of my early life; and I taxed my memory for an unkind look, word, or action, toward the dear authors of my being. I felt an assurance

that those around me were similarly employed. There was a peculiar solemnity pervading the entire audience. Some eyes began to moisten, and I felt my own do likewise. 'But,' said the preacher, 'I will tell you a story. In the year 1821, I was stationed on the Mad River Circuit. You know, my friends,' said he, 'there are extensive prairies in that part of the state. In places no houses within miles of each other, and animals of prey are often seen there. One evening, late in autumn, a few of the neighbors were assembled around me in one of those solitary dwellings, and we had got well engaged in the worship of God, when it was announced that the only child of a widow was lost on the prairie. It was cold; the wind blew, and some rain was falling. The poor woman was in agony, and our meeting was broken up; all prepared to go in search of the lost child.' He then described the weary, almost hopeless, search in the darkness and storm; and finally the return with the child restored to the arms of the mother. . It was too much; the whole assembly burst into an involuntary gush of tears. 'Such,' said the preacher, 'are the feelings of your Heavenly Father, when He sees His disobedient and wandering children returning unto Him, when even afar off.' I heard him preach the two succeeding days, and with a still more exalted idea of his oratorical powers."

In a letter written to a member of the family in 1819, he

says: "I have just passed the fiftieth year of my age, and I can truly say with the patriarch, 'Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage.' I have passed through a variety of interesting scenes. I have seen a wilderness converted into a thickly-inhabited country; the wigwams of the relentless savage converted into costly dwelling-places of civilized society. Our villages have changed into towns, and our towns into cities. All these changes and their wordly importance are hemmed within the little circle of a few short years; our children are soon to take the stage of action, and we are to pass away; but where and in what country shall we make our permanent residence? I trust where more than brotherly love, more than parental affection, more than all earthly felicity may be ours forever. Some of my friends think strange of my leaving home to travel at so late a period in my life. I can only say, I think it my duty. I hope to thus be of some use to my fellow-creatures, and I trust I shall meet some in heaven, who have taken warning from my poor, stammering tongue, and fled for refuge and laid hold on the hope set before them. I have not been home for three weeks, but my son David lives in Chillicothe, about the middle of my district, so I am often with them. My wife and four little daughters are all my family at home in my absence, but I have three good tenants on the farm, and the care of the stock, milling, fire-wood, etc., all falls upon

them. Religion in this place and state is in a flourishing condition; there were upward of 6,000 increase in the Ohio Conference last year. No preventing Providence, I expect to go to Baltimore to attend the General Conference next spring, and expect to start early and go by the way of Egg Harbor and visit my relatives and friends."

It is presumed this visit was made; and his last visit to Jersey was made about 1835. He passed to his reward at the age of seventy-six in 1845. A marble shaft marks the place of his rest in the little churchyard at Bethel, near the road to Ripley, Ohio. A sketch of his life was published by the Western Book Concern in 1849.

For the first twenty-five years of its history, Methodism in Port Republic owes more to

Nehemiah Blackman

than to any other man. He was in affluent circumstances and freely contributed of his means for the support of the church and the help of the poor. He was class leader and exhorter for nearly fifty years. Though a resident of Port Republic he was honored and beloved in all the societies along the shore. He was an active worker for the cause of temperance in the days when the use of liquors, as a beverage, was almost universal, and nearly every gro-

cery store dealt in the vile liquid. He was the son of David Blackman, of English Creek, and was born in 1770. His father's house was one of the earliest Methodist preaching places on the shore. Bishop Asbury had there found welcome shelter and hospitable entertainment when he first penetrated the forests that lay between the Delaware and the sea.

I have in my possession one of Mr. Blackman's class books, dated 1838, when Jacob Loudenslager and John Spear were the preachers. On the first page is the following entry: "The Fridays immediately preceding the Quarterly Meetings shall be observed as days of fasting and prayer for the revival of the work of Grace on this circuit." Sabrina Bates is the only member of that class who remains with us to-day, most of the others long years ago answering to the roll call beyond the river. I will here give the names of some members of that class whose descendants have helped forward the cause of the church in this and other places: Sarah Blackman, Sarah Ashley, Elizabeth Leach, Mary Clark, Edward and Mary Blake, Gilbert and Eliza Hatfield, Achsa Johnson, Hannah Johnson, Elizabeth Huntley, Martha Sooy, Sarah Smith, Dorcas Adams, Phoebe Kendall.

I notice particularly Lydia Johnson, who was almost helpless for many years with rheumatism; I can count sixty of her descendants scattered through various states from this

Atlantic coast to the Pacific shore, who are in the church. Who can measure the boundless influence of even one Christian life?

Mr. Blackman died in 1847. He was active to the last, and was present at the Quarterly Conference of Bargaintown Circuit held at Absecon in June of that year; but when the Conference was held in August, at Port Republic, he was not, for God had taken him in the seventy-seventh year of his age. His family has been closely identified with all the subsequent history of this church. His grandson, R. A. Cake, though still a young man, has for years been the only local preacher on the charge. One daughter, Sarah Ashley, was for many years a devoted and active member. The only son, Hon. D. S. Blackman, was for years a man of influence among us, serving the church as Sunday school superintendent, class leader, trustee, and in other offices. No one had more sympathy for, nor greater interest in, the young. The evil doer feared him, but for all who were striving upward he had only words of loving counsel and encouragement. Both these sleep in our churchyard and their names are held in loving memory. Mrs. Anna E. Cake, another daughter, has given a long life of active, loving service to the church and now awaits the summons to join the ransomed who have passed to the other side.

The next name prominent in the annals of our church is that of

Mary S. Collins.

She was the daughter of Morris and Sarah Collins, and was born at Port Republic in 1791. She was blind from her infancy, having lost her sight from small pox when four months old. She never knew a father's care. Her mother was a weaver and very poor. Mary said she often went to bed hungry, after her grandfather died, when she was nine years old. She joined the church in 1806, being the eighteenth member. Rev. Samuel Budd was preacher in charge and Rev. Joseph Totten, Presiding Elder. She was fearful of being refused admission as she was so young and very poor, and though a seeker had not yet experienced religion, but in a few weeks she was joyfully converted, and through a long life looked back with gratitude to the hour when Mr. Blackman introduced her to the preacher as "the little blind gal who wants to join the class." Though unable to see she longed to own a Bible, and in 1807 was fortunate enough to secure one, joyfully doing without shoes during the summer that she might save money for its purchase. Her mother died when Mary was twenty-three years old; she then partly supported herself by picking

oakum for calking vessels, but she was assisted by the church, and a long life of Christian usefulness bore beautiful testimony to God's providential care for his afflicted child.

In 1839 the Philadelphia Conference presented to her a copy of the New Testament for the blind. She then learned to read, and in the next ten years read it through by course twelve times, beside much promiscuous reading. In 1842 the New Jersey Conference, in session at Third Street, Camden, presented by the hand of the Bishop a copy of the Psalms. This she also read many times. She became well known to most of the members of the Philadelphia and New Jersey Conferences, and many of the ministers were cherished friends and correspondents to the end of life's journey. She was a welcome guest in most of the prominent Methodist families of South Jersey, beloved by the rich as well as the poor. Mr. Richards' family were affectionate and helpful friends as long as she lived. In her younger days she would walk long distances to attend camp and quarterly meetings. Her pastors always felt that in her they had an appreciative and prayerful hearer, and an efficient helper wherever the battle waxed hottest. She was a sweet singer, earnest in prayer, and at times when moved by the Spirit of God exhorted with great power and effect. She died at Leeds' Point in 1878 at the home of Mr. Job Giberson. A few friends knelt around her bed as she received for the last time

the sacrament from the hand of her pastor, Rev. J. F. Heilenman. Tears of joy rolled down her face as she spoke of God's mercy and the joyous anticipations of soon being at home. She was buried at Port Republic; the pastor officiated, assisted by Rev. W. N. Ogborn. The choir by her request sang "I'm Going Home to Die no More" and "I'm Glad Salvation's Free." Thus in life and death she did her utmost to spread the grand old Methodist doctrine of free salvation.

The writer of this present sketch is indebted to this saintly woman for many items of history prior to 1828. She was for many years the only representative of those early days. At the time of her death she had been a member of the church for seventy-two years.

There are two other names which deserve special mention in the history of this early period of our church: those of Nicholas Vansant and Evy Adams. Mr. Vansant moved to Port Republic in 1825, and Mr. Adams a short time before. Both these men did much to advance the cause of God in the community and, with Mr. Blackman, deserve the gratitude of succeeding generations for their successful efforts to banish from our village the legalized traffic in rum.

Mr. Adams brought up a large family whose influence for religion and morality has been felt in many communities.

Two of his sons entered the gospel ministry at an early age. Daniel L. joined the New Jersey Conference in 1854 and labored most faithfully and efficiently till called to his reward in 1873, while serving the church at Mays Landing, where he was greatly beloved and deeply mourned. John E. Adams has filled some of the most important appointments in the New Jersey, Genesee, and Newark Conferences.

Mr. Vansant also reared a large family that has been a power in New Jersey Methodism. Four sons entered and served with honor in the itinerant ranks, Samuel and James in the New Jersey Conference and Nicholas and Isaac in the Newark. Nicholas was powerfully converted when a youth and was sent out as a supply to Bedford Circuit and preached his first sermon December 6th, 1840, the day before he was seventeen years old. December 4th, 1890, was celebrated in St. John's Church, Staten Island, the fiftieth anniversary of his entrance into the Christian ministry.

Each of these fifty years he has taken his appointment and done his work to the entire satisfaction of the church. For eight years he held the office of Presiding Elder in the Newark Conference. Samuel was licensed as an exhorter in 1843 and joined the Conference the following year. He labored with marked success both as traveling preacher and Presiding Elder. He was an eloquent preacher and faithful pastor. He died in 1881. James was licensed as local

preacher in 1839, and served the church in this capacity till 1856, when he joined the New Jersey Conference, of which he is yet a member. Uncle Nicholas Vansant, as he was familiarly known for many years, lived with his companion to extreme old age. Loved and revered by all, they rest in the little churchyard at Green Bank, N. J., awaiting the resurrection of the just.

Bargaintown Circuit was formed in 1828. "At the Philadelphia Conference," for the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-eight, a new circuit was laid off of the lower end of "Gloucester" circuit and a small part of "New Mills," which included the following places for preaching, viz.: Zion, English's, West's, Absecon, Wrangleboro, Leeds', Simkins', Pine Coaling, Gloucester Furnace, Westcott's, Pleasant Mills, Green Bank, Glass Works, Dutch Mills, Lake, New Friendship, South River, Estell's, Weymouth Furnace, Mays Landing, and the Shore School House."

In the early days Port Republic was known as Wrangleboro. The origin of the name antedates authentic history, but the supposition is that it was suggested by the character of some of the residents who were frequent visitors at the six public houses in the neighborhood. By this name it was at first designated in the Minutes of Bargaintown Quarterly Conference, but when the seeds of genuine piety had germinated in this seemingly unpromising soil, it bore

blessed fruit and old things passed away and for many years the church was known as Union Chapel, Unionville. The church at Smithville was known in the Conference Minutes as "Leeds'," but since 1865, when the last division of the circuit was made, the two have been Port Republic and Smithville Charge. The first Quarterly Meeting of Bargaintown Circuit was held at a camp meeting at Bargaintown in June, 1828. The first Presiding Elder was Charles Pitman, and the veterans love yet to tell of the wonderful power that attended his preaching. The first preachers in charge were Rev. Waters Burrows and Rev. James Moore.

In warm weather the quarterly meetings were generally held in groves near some of the villages on the circuit and were occasions of great spiritual power. The people came for many miles, and from adjoining circuits. Many yet live who first tasted the joys of salvation on the old camp grounds of Gloucester and Bargaintown Circuits. And Gospel truths ne'er fell on human ear with sweeter sound or greater power than as they came from the lips of Ezekiel Cooper, Charles Pitman, Father Lummis and other holy men in these first temples of the living God, in South Jersey. The places for holding the camp meetings are given in the minutes as near Pleasant Mills, Wrangleboro, Absecon, Tanners' Brook, Zion, Price's Grove, near Bargaintown, and at Joslin's and Weymouth.

At the first quarterly meeting, with thirty-eight mem-

bers present, it was agreed to purchase heavy articles of furniture for the "parsonage house." Interest attaches to some of the articles bought, as they bring to mind the primitive times of which we write. A pair of andirons, a bedstead and cord were purchased and \$1.12½ were expended in re-bottoming chairs.

There was then no railroad to connect the shore with the rest of the world. A stage line run to Philadelphia, and business was carried on with New York by means of sailing vessels. The preachers made their journeys on horseback with their wardrobe and library in their saddle-bags.

In 1829, when Revs. Ayars and Walker were on the circuit, a class of twenty, mostly young people, were received into the church at Port Republic. Mrs. Ann E. Cake and Mrs. Sabrina Bates were among the number and, so far as known, are the only ones now living. During youth and middle life they were faithful attendants at public service and cared for the interest of the church as they did for their own households; now weak in body, though strong in faith, they await the summons to join the band that have crossed over.

It was not until April, 1837, the Methodist Society at Port Republic became an incorporated body with the following persons as trustees: Nehemiah Blackman, Nicholas Vansant, Gilbert Hatfield, Ralph Ashley, Joseph Garwood, Levi D. Howard, and Abner Gaskill; their incorporate

name being "Trustees of Methodist Union Chapel at Blackman's Mills." The society now decided to build a new church. An acre of land was accordingly purchased for ten dollars from Felix Adams and Sarah, his wife, for this purpose. A part of the ground was used as a cemetery. A two-story brick building was erected; most of the brick were made from clay found on the land of Jesse McCollum. The lower room of the church was for many years used as a public school room.

Hammonton and Winslow first appear as appointments on Bargaintown Circuit in 1835; after 1839, these two places, with Gloucester Furnace, Westcott's and Pleasant Mills are not mentioned in the Minutes, and it is presumed they were formed into a separate circuit. After 1851, Mays Landing, Weymouth, Catawba, Shore School House, Joslin's, and Estleville disappear from the record. In 1855, Absecon Circuit was set off with Absecon, Oceanville, Smithville, and Port Republic as preaching places. Isaac Felch was Presiding Elder, and David Teed, pastor. In 1862, Salem was added to Absecon charge, and so continued for three years. During this brief time, the charge was again served by two ministers; previous to this, each appointment had been filled every other Sunday, at least by local preachers, and in the very early days much oftener than that. Under this regime, the cause prospered, and new societies were formed.

At a quarterly conference, held at Port Republic, September 23, 1854, J. F. Morell, J. P. Cake, and John F. Doughty were appointed a committee to look after the interests of our church at Atlantic City. Next meeting this committee reported in favor of establishing an appointment there. Rev. David Teed, who succeeded Mr. Morell as preacher in charge, informs us that he used to preach in Atlantic City, in the house of Mr. Chalkley Leeds, before any church was built on the Island.

In 1865, the last division was made, and this has been since known as Port Republic and Smithville Charge.

In 1868, the trustees of the church purchased from James B. Johnson and wife the present parsonage property for twelve hundred dollars, giving a mortgage for over seven hundred dollars. This was subsequently paid, and the whole church property is free from debt. Prior to this date, the preacher in charge had resided at Absecon in a rented house.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

David S. Blackman informed me that he remembered attending Sunday school in a barn opposite the house of the late Jas. L. Endicott, in about the year 1820. A school had previously been organized by John Whedon. The church seems to have slowly recognized the importance of

this branch of work. The first Sunday school report recorded on the Quarterly Conference Minutes was by Rev. Joseph Atwood, in 1841; each of the twelve preaching places had well-organized Sunday schools, but all closed in the winter. In 1845, Port Republic and Smithville each reported one hundred members in their schools.

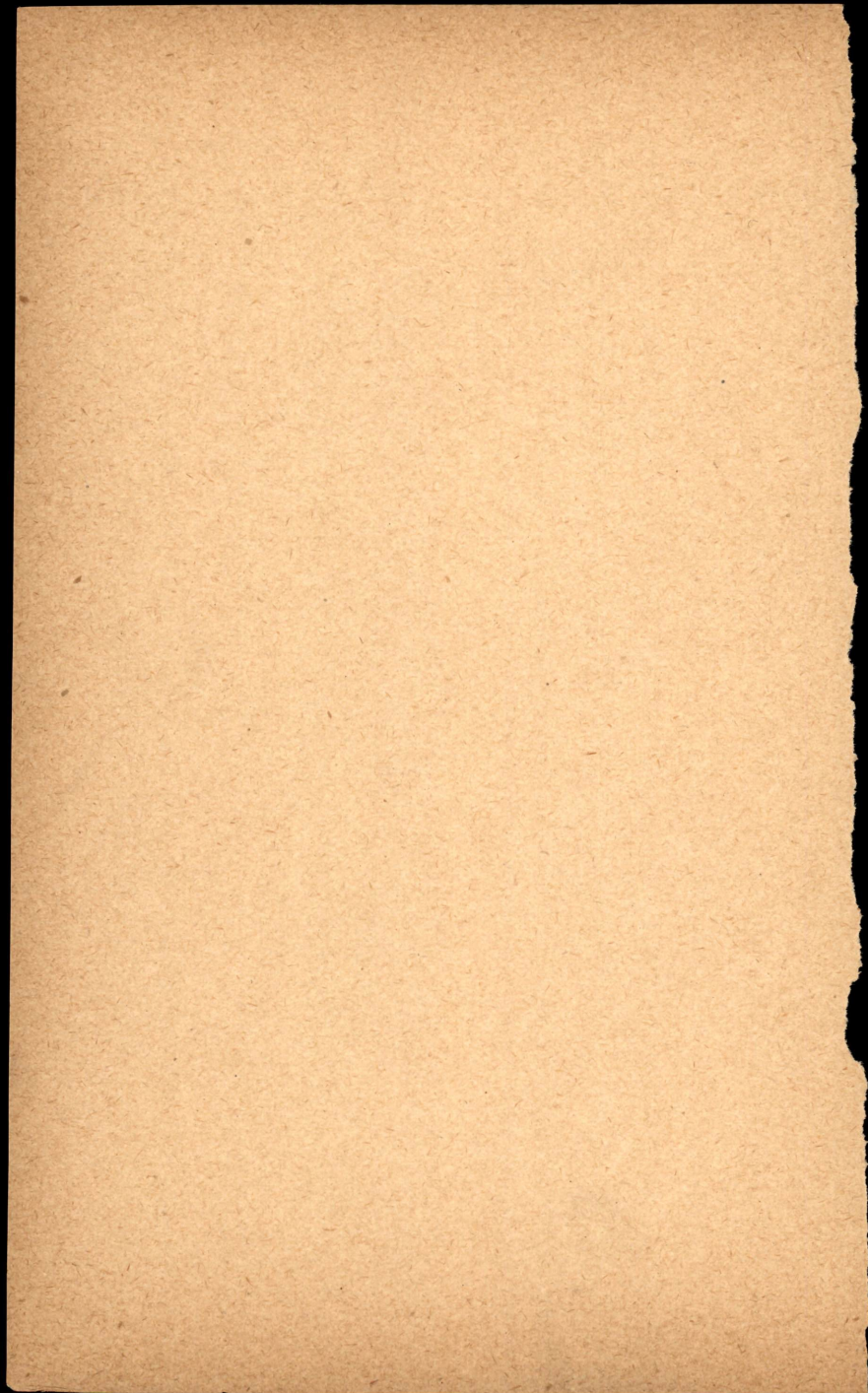
During the years of its history, the church has been blessed with many revival seasons, when the members have been greatly quickened, and souls have been saved. During the pastorates of the following men of God, there have been unusual displays of divine power in the salvation of sinners: Rev. David Duffell and Rev. Wm. Gearheart, in 1840. This revival reached all classes and ages. John W. Johnson, then a little boy, David S. Blackman, and John Collins were converted at this time, as well as many others, whose names are not known, who have been influential for good. Rev. David Teed, in 1855-56, had extensive revivals both at Port Republic and Smithville; Rev. Wm. C. Stockton, in 1860; Rev. M. C. Stokes and Rev. Willis Reeves, in 1865; and Rev. W. F. Randolph, in 1870, when one hundred and thirty-seven were added to the church at Port Republic. During his pastorate, in 1870, the first organ was purchased for the church, much to the sorrow of some of the older members, who considered a musical instrument in a Methodist meeting house as a very grave departure from old-time

custom, and a device of the devil to entice souls unto himself. One or two even refrained from attending service for a time, to show their disapproval of anything so un-Methodistic.

Through the influence of the revival and the indefatigable labors and zeal of the pastor, a new church enterprise was undertaken and carried through successfully. The trustees were: John Collins, Jos. P. Cake, Lardner Clark, David S. Blackman, Oliver P. Hickman, Cornelius Garrison and Wm. A. Johnson. The lot on which the present church stands was purchased from three different parties, viz.: Jeremiah Endicott, John York and Felix Adams. The Building Committee for the new church were: David S. Blackman, Jos. P. Cake, John W. Johnson and Lardner Clark. The whole community was deeply interested, and contributed liberally. It is a handsome two-story frame building, eighty-two feet long by forty feet broad, with spire and bell. It cost about \$15,000. The upper room is beautifully frescoed. The Ladies' Aid Society raised \$1000 toward its furnishing. It is yet a wonder how so handsome an edifice could have been built by a church having so few wealthy members, but the poorest gave what they could, and all were blest in their giving. The men who contributed the largest amounts were David S. Blackman, Joseph P. Cake and Mark Johnson. Mr. Johnson gave the name of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church to the building. A debt was on the church for

ome time, but by a united effort, all obligations were met and the property is free from encumbrance. The cornerstone of the new church was laid July 4th, 1871, and the basement was formally dedicated July 11th, 1872, the Presiding Elder, Dr. J. B. Graw, and Rev. Samuel Vansant, officiating. The audience-room was dedicated by Bishop Matthew Simpson in May, 1873. He was assisted in the services of the day by Rev. J. W. Jackson, of Philadelphia, Dr. J. B. Graw, Rev. W. F. Randolph and the pastor, Rev. J. J. Graw.

Since the erection of the church nothing of special interest or history has occurred, save the usual changes that time brings in its course. Only one member of the Building Committee, Bro. J. W. Johnson, remains with us, Brothers Blackman, Cake and Clark having each entered into their reward, but their works are held in grateful remembrance. During the last twenty years many others have left the ranks of the church on earth, and during the various pastorates many have joined, but the membership at this time is not as large as it was a few years ago, on account of the change of residence of quite a number and their withdrawal by letter; thus while lost to us they swell the number who help forward the cause of God in other places.



Smithville Methodist Episcopal Church.

About 1790 the first Methodist class was formed at Leeds', as it was called on the Quarterly Conference Minutes prior to 1844, when it took the name of Smithville. Richard Leeds was the first class leader and continued in that office till enfeebled by extreme age when John Smith was appointed assistant. The first meeting house was built where Joseph Turner's house now stands. At a short distance on either side was a house of public entertainment and the worshipers were often disturbed by the music of the violin and the merry feet of the dancers. Measures were soon taken to provide a place of worship in a more quiet neighborhood. No deed could be found for this property but it was sold to Mr. Baremore for \$300, as a lot in charge of the trustees of the Methodist Society, and the very room that had been used for worship was transformed into a ball room. The property was afterward purchased by Jas. L. Turner and the voice of prayer and praise was again heard as these early Methodists used to gather at times for

a prayer meeting in the large old-fashioned kitchen of the good brother.

A new lot was purchased about a half-mile west of the present site from Richard Higbee and wife for the sum of fifteen dollars. The trustees were Robert Leeds, Richard Leeds, William Newberry, Jos. Endicott and Jos. Parker. The purchase was made June 15th, 1811. The deed was recorded in the clerk's office of Gloucester county May 13th, 1820. Richard Leeds, Joseph Endicott and Elias Conover each gave \$100 toward building the church, and others contributed as they were able. Two houses were erected on this site. The last one was a small unpainted frame building, vacated in 1870 when the present church was built.

Richard Leeds, we have already stated, was the first class leader. He was also the first local preacher. The itinerant was always welcome at his home. His daughter, Mrs. Job Giberson, remembers many who used to travel the circuit in the early days. Especially vivid upon the walls of memory is the picture of the venerable Father Lummis, mounted on a white horse, with his saddle bags at his back, as he made his appearance at her father's door. The services by the preacher in charge were held on Monday afternoons at intervals of four weeks and sometimes longer. Mrs. Giberson remembers the day of the famous September gale in 1820. The preacher, Rev. Richard Petherbridge,

took dinner at Mr. Leeds' and then the family wended their way to the church. On their journey the gale reached home before good Mrs. Leeds, and she found the house unroofed, articles of furniture and wearing apparel flying before its fury and the children in terror.

For many years the religious people were greatly annoyed by a rough class of young men from this and adjacent communities who delighted in disturbing their services. But times have changed and the majority of the young men in the vicinity are staunch supporters of the church.

Mr. Leeds was born in 1774. He was a local preacher forty-five years and a local deacon thirty-three years, having been ordained by Bishop George in Philadelphia in 1824. He attended church and assisted in the services until prevented by extreme old age. He died May 11, 1857, aged eighty-three years and was buried by his own request directly back of the church and near to the old pulpit from which he had so often proclaimed the Word of Life. Rev. Noah Edwards preached his funeral sermon, and in the obituary states that "Few men have had stronger sympathy with, or more fearlessly and ably maintained, the doctrines and discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

Half a century ago the older and more influential members were Richard Leeds and wife, Elias Conover, Jos. Endicott and wife, Benj. Smith and wife, Paul Sooy, Adam and William Conover, Rebecca Smith and Absalom Higbee.

All these have passed to their reward, and many to whom their memory is precious with feeble steps now press near to the banks of the mystical river. Thus quickly do the years of life pass and the young take up the burdens that have been borne by the middle-aged, and those so lately in their prime crowd the ranks of them who sit in the gathering shadows of life's evening hour awaiting the dawn of the morning of the eternal day.

Rev. David Teed states that among the most active members, when he was on the charge in 1855-57, were Jonathan Smith and wife, John Smith, and Enoch Johnson and wife. This church has recently sustained a severe loss in the death of Mr. and Mrs. Enoch Johnson. Converted in early life, for many years they were faithful and efficient workers, planning and laboring for the success of the church until called to the rest above. Mrs. Johnson died in October, 1888, and Mr. Johnson in the following February, greatly esteemed and deeply mourned. The present church was built in 1870, during the pastorate of Rev. Henry G. Williams, and cost \$4,500. The building lot was purchased of Thomas Bowen, adjoining the old Quaker Meeting House lot. In 1890, during the pastorate of Rev. Charles W. Livezley, the inside of the church was greatly improved and beautified at an expense of between \$400 and \$500, the last dollar of which was subscribed on the day of re-opening. Revivals have occurred during its

history; some have been of great power and extent, notably that in 1856, under the labors of Mr. Teed, when the house was crowded nightly for weeks, and many hardened sinners were powerfully convicted and converted. He was gravely told by some of the members that it was impossible to hold services there at night on account of the rough element who attended to disturb; but the boys soon learned to respect his muscular Christianity, and declared that Mr. Teed was not afraid of man or devil. Extensive revivals occurred also during the pastorates of William C. Stockton in 1860; J. H. Payran in 1875, and W. B. Osborn in 1888.

This charge has been greatly blessed with faithful, efficient servants of God, as her ministers. Bargaintown Circuit, in 1828, contributed to the Presiding Elder's support, \$40.00. The senior preacher received \$347.50, and the junior \$111.64, and the circuit had twenty-one preaching places. In 1850 the Presiding Elder received \$60.00, and the two preachers respectively \$357.00 and \$307.00. Under these circumstances there was surely little danger of young men choosing the Methodist ministry as a profession where large salaries could be secured for positions involving little labor. When we remember what the church owes to the heroic labors of these veterans of the cross, surely she should give ungrudgingly of her wealth to provide them comfort in their old age.

The following is a list of the ministers, as far as it has been possible to name them, that have served this charge from its beginning to the present :

SALEM CIRCUIT.

CIRCUIT PREACHERS.

PRESIDING ELDERS.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1796. Anthony Turk. | |
| Richard Sneath. | |
| 1797. R. Sneath. | John McClaskey from 1796-'99. |
| Sylvester Hutchinson. | |
| 1800. Richard Swain. | Solomon Sharp (1800) over all |
| Richard Lyon. | New Jersey. |
| 1806. Samuel Budd. | Jos. Totten. |

GLOUCESTER CIRCUIT.

CIRCUIT PREACHERS.

PRESIDING ELDERS.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1813. Daniel Ireland. | |
| Wm. Smith. | Michael Coates. |
| 1817. Solomon Sharp. | |
| Wm. Smith. | James Smith. |
| 1819. David Bartine. | |
| Thos. Davis. | Lawrence McCombs. |
| 1820. David Bartine. | |
| Richard Petherbridge. | |

BARGAINTOWN CIRCUIT.

CIRCUIT PREACHERS.

PRESIDING ELDERS.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1828. Waters Burrows. | Charles Pitman. |
| James Moore. | |

1829. John Walker.
James Ayers.
1830. John Walker. Henry White.
Wm. H. Stevens.
1835. } Jacob Loudenslager. Richard Petherbridge.
1837. } John Spear.
1837. E. Page. Thos. Neal from 1837 to 1844.
Z. Gaskill.
1839. Thos. Christopher.
David Duffell.
1840. Abram Gearhart.
David Duffell.
1841. Joseph Atwood.
Abram Trewitt.
1843. Thos. Christopher.
John Fort.
1844. Thos. Christopher.
James White.
1845. James White. John S. Porter from 1845 to 1848.
Levi Herr.
1846. Jacob Loudenslager.
Levi Herr.
1847. J. Loudenslager.
Brumwell Andrew.
1848. W. C. Nelson. Richard Petherbridge.
John W. Barrett.
1850. Philip Cline. Richard Petherbridge.
Wilson Stokes.
1851. Philip Cline.
Josiah F. Canfield.
Robert Sutcliff.

1852. J. F. Canfield.
Fred. B. Nixon.

I. N. Felch from 1852 to 1856.

1853. John W. Hickman.
Jas. F. Morell.

ABSECON CIRCUIT.

CIRCUIT PREACHERS.

PRESIDING ELDERS.

1854. Jas. F. Morell.
Wm. Darrow.

1855. David Teed.

1856. David Teed.

G. F. Brown from 1856 to 1860.

1857. Noah Edwards.

1859. Wm. C. Stockton.

1860. Wm. C. Stockton.

A. K. Street from 1860 to 1864.

1861. Thos. Wilson.

1862. Thos. Wilson.

W. E. Greenbank.

1863. M. C. Stokes.

Willis Reeves.

1864.

S. Y. Monroe.

PORT REPUBLIC AND SMITHVILLE CHARGE.

PREACHERS IN CHARGE.

PRESIDING ELDERS.

1865. T. C. Carman.

J. B. Dobbins.

1867. James White.

Samuel Vansant from 1867 to 1870.

1868. H. G. Williams.

1870. W. F. Randolph.

1872. W. F. Randolph.

J. B. Graw.

1873. J. J. Graw.

J. B. Graw.

1875. J. H. Payran.

S. E. Post from 1875 to 1878.

1877. J. F. Heilenman.

1880. C. K. Fleming.

1883. Levi Larew.

1884. W. N. Ogborn.

1886*. Wm. E. Perry.

1887†. W. B. Osborn.

1888. C. W. Livezey.

1891. C. W. Livezey.

C. E. Hill from 1879 to 1881.

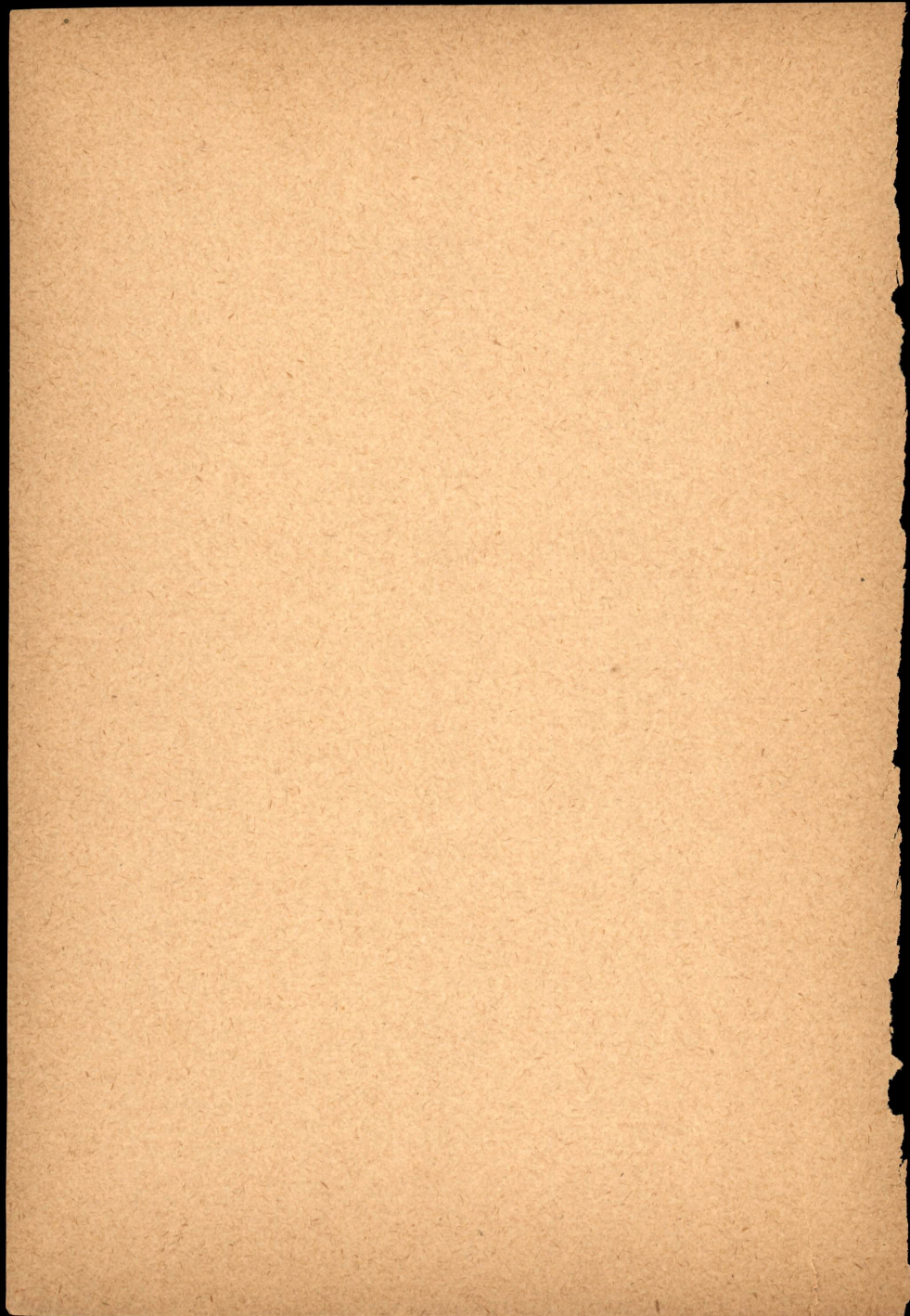
J. B. Graw.

J. S. Gaskill.

Milton Relyea from 1887 to 1891.

* To November, 1887.

† From November, 1887, to March, 1888.



Presbyterians at Port Republic.

The first church in the village of Port Republic was built by the Presbyterians about a mile west of the present site of the Methodist Episcopal Church and was known as "Clark's Mill Meeting House." A burying ground, in which a few headstones are yet in a good state of preservation, marks the location. Like most of the societies of that time and this part of New Jersey, it claims the saintly John Brainerd as its organizer and spiritual head. In his journal, a precious fragment of which has been preserved, he makes the following statement:

"FEBRUARY 23d, 1761.

"Preached a lecture at Chestnut Neck. After sermon stayed the heads, or principal members of the congregation, to discourse about building a meeting house."

This conference doubtless resulted in the building of the "Clark's Mill Meeting House," as there is no evidence of any other having been built in the

vicinity, and the neck of land between Nacott creek and Mullica river was called Chestnut Neck. Rev. Philip Fithian, a Presbyterian minister who visited Egg Harbor in 1775, mentions preaching at "Clark's Mill Meeting House," to an attentive assembly on Monday, February 27th, 1775, and a dollar was raised toward his support. He gives the names of twenty-six Presbyterian preachers who occasionally, and some of them very often, preached as supplies to the scattered societies organized by Rev. John Brainerd through this sparsely-settled section of New Jersey. Among the noted names in the list are those of Brainerd, Tennent, Dr. James Sproat, Boyd, and Green.

Rev. Allen H. Brown, a zealous minister of the same denomination, in 1850 discovered and published many valuable facts concerning these churches founded by Brainerd; and to him we are indebted for these few facts concerning the first house of worship in Port Republic. In his published account he says:

"An aged member of the Clark family who remembers in his boyhood to have seen John Brainerd, has informed us that this house was about twenty-five feet broad and thirty long, and was covered with shingles, and having been neglected for a long time was blown down about the year 1820. Here was an organized Presbyterian church and Robert Doughty and Thomas Clark were the ruling elders."

In grateful remembrance of what the church owes to John

Brainerd it is proper that we give some particulars of his remarkable life and labors. In 1759 he was appointed as missionary to the Indians and took up his residence at Brotherton in what is now Shamong township, Burlington county. Hon. Joel Parker says of him: "This man, who was fitted to shine in any society, however cultured, was so imbued with the missionary spirit and possessed of such zeal for the Master, that for years he buried himself in the then forests of the eastern section of New Jersey and lived among the Indians without even the comforts or conveniences of life."

"It comes down to us by tradition that when Brainerd first told the Indians that Jesus came to earth to save Indians as well as whites, and described his suffering and death, they fell upon their faces, sobbed aloud and wept."

"The instrument with which Mr. Brainerd convened his congregation was not the church-going bell, nor the horn sometimes used for camp meetings, but was a conch shell. It is still in existence and bears evident marks of age by its smoothness."

"He was at that time the only resident preacher in all the region between Mount Holly and the sea. He solemnized marriages, baptized children, visited the sick and afflicted, and officiated at the funerals of both races. He usually preached three times on Sabbath at places many miles apart, and often in the evening during the week. He

was active in planting churches and quite successful in raising funds to sustain them from year to year."

To have an idea of the hardships he endured, let us remember that the settlements were many miles apart and separated by streams and marshes, dense swamps and forests, which were traversed only by the Indian trail or bridle path.

These Presbyterian societies, organized by Brainerd and scattered through this large expanse of country, flourished for a time under the supervision of the Synod of Philadelphia.

Prof. Macloskie, of Princeton, in an "Introduction to the Journal of Rev. John Brainerd," assigns as one reason for the subsequent neglect of this sparsely-settled district the long, desolating war of the Revolution. The church was impoverished in men and money; the stronger churches secured the ministers who survived the war and some of the feeble churches in which John Brainerd labored became extinct, and other denominations gathered some of the fruits of his labors.

These early laborers have long years ago entered into their rest, and "sower and reaper rejoice together."

The Friends at Leeds' Point.

A history of the Friends' Society of Leeds' Point takes us back to the early days of the settlement of "The Province of West Jersey." In 1676, this tract of land passed under the exclusive control of William Penn and his associate Friends, who completed and published a body of laws for the province. Goodrich says: "This simple code enacted by the Friends in America, rivaled the charter of Connecticut in the liberality and purity of its principles." Before the end of the year, over four hundred families of Friends had arrived from England and found homes in West Jersey. Thus in the lower counties of the state, the Friends antedate by many years all other religious societies, and many of the best families, with justifiable pride, claim descent from these first Quaker settlers.

For nearly a generation, the Friends, as a Society, have ceased to exist at Leeds' Point, but a few of our oldest inhabitants can remember the generous hospitality, sturdy integrity, quaint, gentle manners of some of these families

of seventy years ago, when the society was in a prosperous condition. Its most influential members at that time, probably, were Japhet, Barzillai and Samuel Leeds, Richard Risley, Jeremiah Higbee, and John Shourds; others of the Leeds, Higbees, Risleys, Smiths, Sculls, and Collins were members.

The date of their first meeting for worship is not known, but the Hon. John Clement, of Haddonfield, an authority upon local history, says: "Daniel Leeds was an important man in the early history of West Jersey. He was the first Surveyor-General. In 1698, he made several surveys in Egg Harbor, and removed there, about which date I suppose the Friends' Meeting, at Leeds' Point, was established. In 1704, he published the first Almanac published in America, and continued the publication until 1716. He then lived in Egg Harbor." It is probable he was among the first to choose this lovely spot for a settlement. It is beautiful for situation, being the highest point of land on the coast, from the Highlands to the capes of Virginia. What we know as two villages, Smithville and Leeds' Point, seems to have been known under one name. In the Minutes of the Methodist Conference it was called Leeds', till 1844.

We gather from the Minutes of the Haddonfield Quarterly Meeting that as early as 1726 there were three places for holding Friends' Meetings in Atlantic county, namely:

Japhet Leeds', Peter White's, and John Scull's. Joseph Leeds, doubtless, lived at Leeds' Point,* and was the son of the Daniel Leeds before mentioned. Peter White, in 1699, purchased of Susanna Budd, widow of Thomas Budd, 1000 acres of land at Absecon.† So this second preaching place was in all probability at or near Absecon. John Scull's‡ was in the vicinity of Somers' Point. He was one of the five men, who, in 1695, purchased land and probably formed the first settlement in what is now Atlantic county. The names of the others were John Somers, Jonathan Adams, Jonas Valentine, and Peter Conover, "whalemen" from Long Island, New York. Capturing whale to secure the "oyle and bone" was profitable in those days, they being so numerous and coming so near the shore that nothing but small boats were needed.

In 1726 several Friends of Great Egg Harbor and Cape May, having for some time been under considerable inconvenience for want of a monthly meeting among them for the well-management of the business of the affairs of the church, addressed an expostulatory letter to the quarterly meeting of Gloucester and Salem, which convened in Had-donfield, 7th mo., 16th, asking that such a monthly meeting be established. Their request was granted, and it was

* As early as 1693, a ferry was established by act of the legislature, between Somers' Point and Beesley's Point.

† Leah Blackman's History of Little Egg Harbor.

‡ John Clement.

ordered to meet alternately at Richard Somers', on the Egg Harbor side, and Rebecca Garretson's, on the Cape May side. This union of Great Egg Harbor and Cape May in their monthly meeting for business of the church continued till 1804, when Cape May was joined to Maurice River and became a branch of Salem Quarterly Meeting. After 1806 the Friends on the Egg Harbor side held their monthly meeting alternately at Egg Harbor and Galloway, and were a branch of the Haddonfield Quarterly Meeting.

The first monthly meeting for Egg Harbor and Cape May met at Richard Somers' on the first Second Day of 9th mo., 1726. Richard Townsend was appointed clerk. Peter White and Jonathan Adams were appointed overseers of the meetings held at Japhet Leeds', Peter White's and John Scull's.

At a monthly meeting held at Richard Somers', 3d mo., 6th, 1728, Deborah Leeds asked that a week-day meeting be established at Upper Egg Harbor, but her request was not granted. All we know of Deborah Leeds* is that she was a widow and lived at Leeds' Point. And though we know but her name, her residence and her widowhood, yet this record of her request tells us of a woman who, bereft of husband, away from early friends, perchance bearing heavy burdens and the privations of life in a new country, kept her faith in God and cared for the spiritual interests of her neighbors.

* John Clement.

We have no other item of interest till 1740, when the meeting which had been kept at Japhet Leeds' was removed to Robert Smith's. In 1744, Friends at upper end of the shore make request to build a meeting house. This, probably, was the first public house of worship in Atlantic county, and was situated directly west of the present site of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The lot reserved for the burial of their dead, adjoining the meeting house, is yet used for that purpose, and goes by the name of the Quaker Burying Ground. An old gentleman of over four score years of age remembers, when a boy, attending meeting in this building. It was then very old in appearance; most of the seats were without backs, and when no one was moved to speak, as was sometimes the case, the service seemed very long to the active boy.

We do not know the names of their earliest ministers, but doubtless preachers from distant places used sometimes to visit these settlements on the coast. In 1758 testimonies were issued concerning the following-named ministers or elders of this monthly meeting: John Somers, Rem. Garretson, Hannah Somers, Ruth Ireland, Elizabeth Smith and Edmund Somers. In 1784, William Murphy was recorded a minister; Vincent Leeds, also, was a minister belonging to this meeting. He was the great-grandson of Daniel Leeds, the first. His father, John Leeds,* was a Public Friend, and made ministerial journeys to various places; Vincent, also, was a Public Friend, and traveled extensively. Marjorie Leeds was appointed an elder in 1801. In 1797 Hannah Andrews and Catharine Leeds were appointed ministers.

*Leah Blackman, History of Little Egg Harbor.

Hannah Andrews was probably the wife of Peter Andrews, and resided at Leedsville.*

True to the instincts of the founders of American liberty the Friends espoused the cause of education. As recent a date as the first quarter of this century the only schoolhouse in the vicinity adjoined the meeting house, and was under the control of the Friends, and their preacher at this time, Samuel Leeds, was the school teacher part of the time. He kept a store at Leeds' Point near the present residence of John Anderson. He was universally respected and honored for his noble character, intelligence, and Christian zeal. Services were held every First and Fifth day. He was far in advance of his time in temperance principles, for his was the only store in the neighborhood which did not sell intoxicating liquor. He was a brother to Japhet and Barzillai Leeds. Japhet was for many years a prominent man in Galloway township affairs. The point called "Swimming Over," on the Mullica or Little Egg Harbor river, was so designated because in these primitive days the devout and sturdy Friends used to swim their horses across the stream, here about an eighth of a mile wide, when on their way to and from the Yearly Meeting at Tuckerton.

Leah Blackman in her History of Little Egg Harbor says: "Friends followed crossing Mullica river in this way until some of them were drowned during their watery journey, after which they relinquished that dangerous mode of going to meeting. Many of the young men of Little Egg Harbor used to go on courting expeditions to Atlantic county, and Atlantic county 'boys' came to Little Egg Harbor on the

* Leah Blackman, History of Little Egg Harbor.

same errand, both parties swimming their horses across the river. Several wedding parties crossed the river in the same inconvenient way, when they had been to and were returning from the 'Old Meeting House,' whither they had gone to be married according to Friends' ceremony. When travelers reached 'Swimming Over Point' they came across the salt marsh to the 'Oliphant' farm and then pursued their way along 'Old Meeting House' road to Tuckerton."

The grant of King George III. defining the boundaries of Galloway township bears date of April 4th, 1774, and in a few years all records in the Minutes of the Friends meeting here are designated as being at Galloway. From 1806 to 1840 the monthly meeting was held alternately at Egg Harbor and Galloway, but after this last date, on account of the removal of part of their number, and the number remaining being very small, the monthly meeting was discontinued at Egg Harbor, and met in future at Galloway. An indulged meeting was held at Egg Harbor on First day mornings.

After 1825 no new names appear on the minutes as officers in this meeting, so time must inevitably soon carry the remnant from their places of usefulness to their reward beyond.

In 1843 the monthly meeting at Galloway was discontinued and the members were attached to Haddonfield monthly meeting, but the meeting for worship on First and Fifth days was continued as heretofore. This continued till 1865 when Galloway preparative meeting was laid down and an indulged meeting on First and Fifth day was kept up for a little time longer. After the first meeting house had served its day a new one was built about a mile east of the

old site on a wooded eminence overlooking the bay. When it was no longer needed for a house of worship it was rebuilt into a dwelling and is now owned and occupied by Absalom Higbee. Thus after an honorable history of over one hundred and fifty years, the last of the Friends' meetings in Atlantic county was closed. One has, however, since been established at Atlantic City. We cannot but regret that this worthy division of the church should have ceased to be numbered among us. Perhaps some of the causes are not difficult to find, while Friends were among the very first inhabitants they were not the only settlers. Some Presbyterians from the eastern states early found homes in Gallogway township. Rev. John Brainerd in his Journal of 1761 speaks of preaching at John English's, and William Reed's on the seashore; at Chestnut Neck and Elijah Clark's. Besides these no doubt many pioneers with no special religious preferences or opinions came to this new land. The Friends were not aggressive, and their order of service not being attractive to the wordly minded, they failed to reach this outside class and made few accessions from this source. The old members died and many of their descendants moved away and some joined other denominations. Samuel Leeds, their last important preacher, was silenced by the church because he was too noisy and earnest in his sermons; he afterward moved away. It is possible that the heresy of Elias Hicks, which caused a division of the Quaker Church in 1827, might have helped in the dissolution of this meeting, as I have been told that the Hicksite doctrine was much discussed for some time; but the weight of opinion is that the members of this meeting remained orthodox.