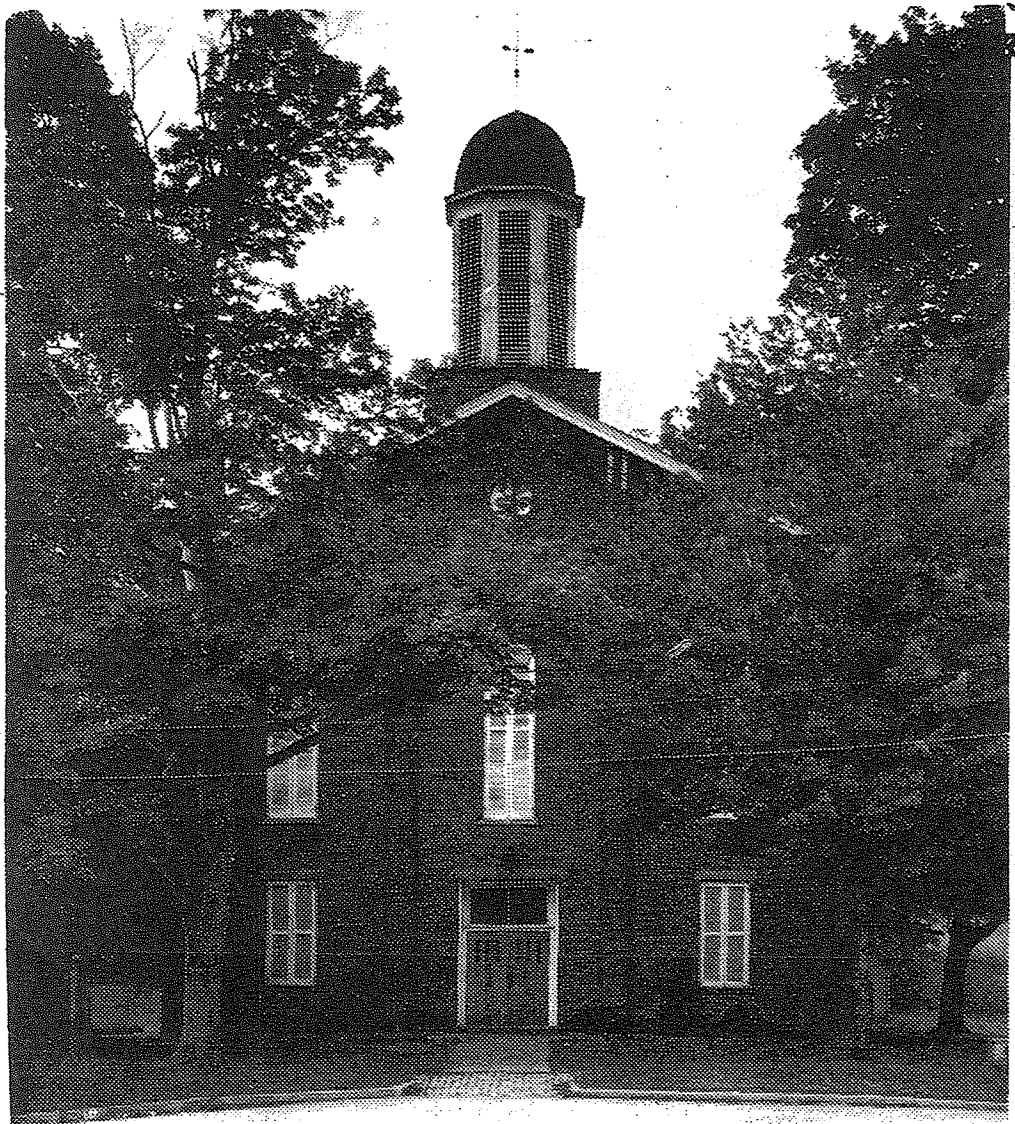


**HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS
OF THE
CROSS CREEK
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**



THE CHURCH BUILDING 1864 – 1964

THE CONGREGATION 1779 – 1964

INTRODUCTION

In the year 1964 the Cross Creek Presbyterian Church marks two important milestones in its long history of Christian service: the 100th anniversary of the present church building and the 185th anniversary of the congregation itself. It is suitable at this time to recall some of the events of this church's history, especially those connected with the building which has served this congregation for so many years. The greatest share of the "historical highlights" contained in this brochure is the work of Mr. A. D. White, retired principal of Cross Creek and Jefferson Township schools and a dedicated historian. To him the Historical Committee is deeply indebted for the preparation of this survey.

THE CHURCHES AT CROSS CREEK

The Cross Creek Church has had five different houses of worship since the organization of the congregation in 1779. In the summer of that year, after the call had been made out for the ministerial services of the Rev. Joseph Smith on June 21, a committee consisting of Major William Vance, Robert McCready and Henry Graham selected a site, on or near where the present building stands. It is recorded that Mr. McCready drove the stake indicating the site, and Mr. Graham donated the land from a part of his farm, whereon to locate the new church. This building was quickly erected, of un-hewn logs, and was twenty-six by twenty-two feet in size, barely the size of a modern house.

It soon became obvious that the church building thus hastily thrown up and of such restricted dimensions would not long suffice for the needs of a growing congregation. Besides, it probably had no windows, except for holes cut in the logs for the admission of some light, and in winter, of too much cold air. It probably had no means of heating the building, and few, if any conveniences. To better provide the need for a substantial house of worship, the congregation, in 1784, erected their second church. It was of hewed logs, sixty feet by thirty feet in size, more than three times the size of the first building. This was at first of one-story only, but later a second story with a gallery was added. This building served the new congregation for about nineteen years. On the morning of April 20, 1803, the church was found to be afire and it quickly burned to the ground. Years after, a man formerly of the community who had moved to Ohio, confessed on his death-bed, that he had set fire to the church.

On that fateful morning it is told traditionally that Mr. Hugh Lee, ancestor of the present Lee family of Cross Creek, on hearing that the church was afire, started to run to the village to help quench the fire. Being an aged man, he soon became exhausted, and kneeling down where he was, he uttered the prayer that "as long as the sun and stars shall shine, may there always be a church at Cross Creek." As we look gratefully back on the history of this church.

and also, as we look hopefully forward, may that also be our prayer today.

Immediately after the burning of the second log church, the congregation met and opened a subscription paper for "building a new house." This, the third church building, was constructed of stone, was fifty-six feet square and was completed by November 17, 1804, on which day the congregation met, adopted rules and regulations, and "appointed Aaron Lyle, Thomas Smith, Samuel Fleming, William Wallace, John Wilkin, Hugh Edgar, and William McKibben a Board of Trustees." The subscription list contained one hundred thirty-two names pledging \$2,303.89. Help came from other quarters: from Philadelphia \$320.77; from Virginia \$70.00; from Pittsburgh \$13.70 and from a number of different persons \$456.47. Women of the church donated linen of their own making which was sold for forty-eight pounds, three shillings and four pence, this being used for the purchasing of stoves, glass and paint for the new house.

In 1830, the congregation decided to replace the stone structure with one of brick. This house was seventy-six feet long by fifty-six feet wide, with a gallery on three sides, and erected at a cost of between \$3,000 and \$3,500. This church was built in the third year of Dr. Stockton's pastorate and was made necessary by the rapid growth of the congregation during the early years of his ministry. It was to be used until 1864, when, on account of the cracked condition of the walls, it was declared un-safe and was taken down.

On April 11, 1864, at a meeting of the congregation, it was decided to build a new "meeting house" as churches were then called. Accordingly, the first brick church was razed and a contract made with Mr. Alexander Davison of Hickory for the erection of the present church building. The contract price was \$9,460.00. The building was not completed until early in 1865, and on May 12 of that year, it was dedicated with appropriate ceremonies at which the Rev. David R. Campbell, a former Cross Creek Township boy, delivered the dedicatory address. This day, Friday, had been declared a Fast Day by the pastor, Dr. Stockton. On the following day, Saturday, Mr. Campbell preached a sermon of preparation for the Sacrament, and on the Sabbath he assisted with the Communion Service, and finally, as was the custom then, preached again at a post-communion service on

Monday morning. Thus was set aside for the worship of Almighty God, this house which has been the home of the congregation for almost one hundred years.

A CENTURY OF CHANGE

As we look back today upon a hundred years of history of the Cross Creek Presbyterian Church, what changes do we behold! The church building still stands on the same hill-top where the first church was located 185 years ago. The village here at Cross Creek is probably of about the same population as it was in 1864, but one hundred years ago it was a place of considerable commercial importance, for it had two stores, a tailor shop, operated by Andrew McFarland, a gun-smith shop, a black-smith shop, a wagon-maker's shop operated by David Robertson, a saddle-and harness-maker's shop operated by Greer M. Campbell, a cabinet-maker's and chair-shop operated by William Donehoo. In the village lived a surveyor, Mr. Walter Craig, and a physician, Dr. J. M. Dungan. There was a post-office, two public school buildings: Bunker Hill and Cemetery, an Academy, then dormant however due to the Civil War, and there were several retired farmers living in the village "to be near to church." Also, there was another church in the village at that time, a Methodist Episcopal congregation, which met for worship in the building later used by Mr. Frank Adams as a black-smith shop.

Although the Civil War was still in progress one hundred years ago, and while many in this community were branded as dis-loyal to their government in that struggle, yet the unity of Cross Creek Church was not seriously shaken, as is proved by the fact that the people were able to build this church during those troublous times. And the building was soon paid for, since Dr. Stockton in his Fortieth Anniversary address in 1867 stated that the congregation was then out of debt.

In 1864, the membership of the congregation was about 300 persons. Additions to the membership in 1864 and 1865 were the lowest of any years during Dr. Stockton's pastorate with eight in 1864 and only four in 1865. (The average number of accessions per year during Dr. Stockton's pastorate was twenty-eight.) But the attention of pastor and people was on building the church, and

following that effort, the church again turned her attention to bringing lost souls into the fold of God.

Benevolent and missionary giving and the support of Christian Education were emphasized all during Dr. Stockton's pastorate, but no supporting organizations had been formed until March 6, 1872 when the Women's Foreign Missionary Society was organized with the following serving as the first corps of officers: President, Miss Mary Edgar; Vice President, Mrs. Mary Gault; Secretary, Miss Jane Dinsmore; and Treasurer, Mrs. Jane Lyle.

A Home Missionary Society, the "Annie Graham Band" was organized in 1879, the Loring Band in 1882, and the Earnest Workers, a children's group, at a later date.

The Ladies Aid Society, organized in 1906, with Mrs. Edith Rhodes as the first president, has been very active over the years since in earning money for the maintenance of the manse and the church. This organization served its first "chicken and waffle supper" on December 8, 1908, and this event has been carried on in a somewhat modified form since, being an important feature in the social life of the Church.

On June 20, 1877, the long pastorate of Dr. Stockton came to an end with his retirement from the active ministry. The event was suitably observed with a mammoth picnic held at a grove on the farm of Mr. Hugh Lee, a short distance north of the Church. A program of addresses testifying to the long and useful service of the aged minister was carried out.

Succeeding ministers over the years since Dr. Stockton's retirement have faithfully served their Lord and Master in this congregation, but the average length of the seventeen pastorates which have followed his has been only about five years in comparison with his tenure of fifty years.

With the coming of the pastorate of the Rev. William H. McCaughey in 1877, the congregation found it necessary to provide a parsonage for the new minister. Revs. Smith, Marquis and Stockton all owned farms and thus had provided their own living quarters. Temporary housing was provided for Mr. McCaughey for most of his first year at Cross Creek, but in 1877, a lot was purchased from Mr. David Robertson and the first parsonage ever owned by the congregation was erected on this

new property in 1878 at a cost of about \$2,500.00. This had served as the home for the Cross Creek ministers until the pastorate of the Rev. Richard Buterbaugh, when the present brick 'manse' was erected on a part of the lot owned by the congregation, and the older "parsonage" was sold.

Over the years since 1864, it has been found necessary or desirable to repair and remodel the church building on a number of occasions. For some years after the church was erected, the choir was located on two platforms at the rear of the sanctuary. Later, during the pastorate of the Rev. J. P. Anderson, the location of the singers was changed to the front of the sanctuary and to one side of the pulpit. This move resulted in making more seating available for the congregation in the rear of the "audience room." In the early 1900's, another change in location was made for the choir to the present location just to the rear of the pulpit platform.

In the early days of the Church, the "lining out" of the hymns was used. The names of some of the "clerks" during the middle of the 19th century were Ezra Lyle, Andrew McFarland and James Walker. If this practice was used in the new church in 1864, it was probably soon abandoned during the partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Co-incident with the moving of the choir to its present location about 1900, a rear stairway was built from the Sabbath School room to the sanctuary thus providing easy entrance for the minister and members of the choir to their places for the worship service. During the pastorate of the Rev. Ralph E. Kaufman, the church was renovated and re-decorated and a new carpet purchased and installed.

On Sunday, November 24, 1946, following the worship service in the early afternoon, the belfry of the church was found to be afire. An alarm was sounded and the crowd who gathered were able to bring the fire under control and to save the building from extensive damage. An inspection following the fire revealed some structural weaknesses in the upper part of the building which were corrected along with making repairs to the damaged belfry and roof.

CHURCH MEMORIALS

Over the years, the appearance of the sanctuary and its usefulness as a place of worship have been enhanced by the donation of pieces of fine furniture and other accessories. Following the death in 1902 of Mrs. H. Thomasine Lee, her husband, W. Craig Lee, presented to the congregation in her memory the present beautiful and substantial pulpit desk and chair. The smaller pulpit chairs in matching finish were presented by Mary Duncan and Jennie D. Vance in memory of their parents, Mr. and Mrs. John S. Duncan.

In 1937, the children of the late Mr. and Mrs. James T. Marquis presented the granite baptismal fount which stands to the right of the pulpit platform. The older pulpit Bible was given some years ago by the late Mr. Samuel S. Dunbar. In 1946, the Ladies Aid Society purchased the newer pulpit Bible during the pastorate of the Rev. Robert Shane. In 1948, Mr. Charles M. Rea established a \$1,000.00 memorial in memory of his wife, Mrs. Clare Cooke Rea, and in 1952 Mr. Rea installed a Carillon Bell system and presented it to the Church. Also in 1948, Mr. John P. McNelly of Somerset, Penna. gave to the congregation an electric organ, presented in memory of his father, Mr. C. W. McNelly and in honor of his mother, Mrs. Mary J. McNelly.

Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Zaebisch, in 1954, presented the communion table as a memorial to Mrs. Zaebisch's parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Sharp and family. Beautiful organ chimes were given by Miss Mary Patterson in memory of the Robert M. Patterson family. In 1958, new entrance doors to the church were purchased and installed with donations from various church organizations. The cross and candle sticks in the sanctuary were donated by the Misses Sarah Marquis and Anna Lyle.

The downstairs Sunday School room has been beautified by the pulpit desk and altar table presented in memory of Mrs. Clover Matthew by her nephew, Mr. C. W. Englander. The Holy Bible in the Sunday School room was presented in memory of Walter C. Lee by Mrs. Walter C. Lee and William H. Lee on December 30, 1962. The cross, candlesticks, and bud vases on the altar table in the Sunday School room were purchased with money donated in memory of Walter C. Lee.

THE CEMETERY

About the time of the organization of the Church in 1779, the death of a child in the family of David Vance made necessary the opening of a graveyard near the church. So came into existence the old Cross Creek graveyard, located just across the road from the Church. During all the years of the Church's life, until 1939, this ancient burying ground was under the control of the trustees of the church. In that year, transfer was made from the trustees to the Cross Creek Cemetery Company which, in 1894, had opened the new Cemetery on the hill just north of the old graveyard. In the old graveyard reposes the dust of many of the pioneers of this old community, including that of at least thirty veterans of the Revolutionary War as well as many of those who took part in other struggles of the nation.

Here rests the body of the venerable Dr. Stockton, the only minister of Cross Creek Church who is buried in this community. Here lie the bodies of at least ten physicians who ministered to the physical ills of the people of this area, and these include two sons of the Rev. Dr. Stockton. The Cross Creek Church has thus ministered to the living, and the old Cross Creek graveyard has provided a last resting place for the dead of this old community for one hundred eighty-five years.

In addition to the thirty veterans of the Revolutionary War above mentioned, thirteen men buried here participated in the Indian Wars; one, John Johnston, belonged to the army sent here to quell the Whiskey Insurrection; twenty-four veterans of the War of 1812 and at least twelve of the Civil War have found sepulture here.

As patriotic men of old from the Cross Creek region acquitted themselves well in battles fought for their beloved country, so in the later days many young men from this community and the Cross Creek Church answered their country's call to duty. The Honor Roll of the Church in World War I contains seventeen names, while that of World War II has a total of seventy-three names inscribed; and for the post war period and the Korean conflict we find twenty-nine names on the Honor Roll. We point with pride to these records of patriotic duty on the part of our men from this area.

ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE

The organizational life of the Cross Creek Church has sought to meet the changing needs of the area, and to further the mission of Christ in the world. THE WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY, for example, was instrumental in organizing a home mission band whose object was the support of a girl living with missionaries in Ft. Wrangle, Alaska, where the "Sheldon Jackson College" was later established. This band was begun before the Washington Presbyterian Society was organized. Among later organizations formed by the parent society was the Young Ladies Foreign Missionary Society, out of which arose the present organization. Today the Society, with a membership of forty-one, supports the program of the United Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., by contributing to National Missions, Ecumenical Missions, Christian Education, and the other Boards of our Church. It sponsors "Family Night" and will be hostess to the Presbytery Spiritual Life Retreat in September of 1964. Two former members of the Society have served with their husbands in foreign fields: Mrs. Harry Rhodes in Korea and Mrs. Donald Phillips in the Philippines.

THE LADIES AID SOCIETY was organized on September 1, 1906 with nineteen charter members and Mrs. Harry Rhodes elected as the first president. Their purpose is to earn money to be used for the maintenance of the manse and to assist in the upkeep of the church building and furnishings. A sum of over \$4,600 has been given toward the payment of the new manse. At this time the society has a membership of thirty-two women. Many successful suppers have been served by the society since the first one held at the Foster home in 1908. There are now three annual suppers which have provided fellowship in a worthwhile cause and opportunity for service to many who might not be able to contribute as much in other ways.

THE EDITH RHODES GUILD was organized in the late 1920's and named for Mrs. Edith Rhodes who was supported by the church under the Board of Foreign Missions. There are now sixteen members, and their purpose is to become better acquainted with and parti-

cipate in the various phases of our church's mission. One of the former members, Miss Elizabeth Wilson, is now serving in the mission field in New Mexico, as a lab technician in a National Missions hospital. The group sponsors an annual Mother and Daughter Dinner. A Halloween Party is held and greeting cards sold each year to provide funds for their apportionment to the mission boards of our Church.

THE YOUTH FELLOWSHIP, another group for youth, both boys and girls, traces its origins back to 1890 and an organization known as "Young Peoples Society of Christian Endeavor." This group was joined in its mission efforts by neighboring communities, and three act plays were presented for fund-raising during the period around 1924. Many youths were active in the Pennsylvania State Christian Endeavor projects and offices. The Junior Mission League succeeded Christian Endeavor in 1952 and an extensive camping program was started. As "Westminster Fellowship" the group initiated the Christmas Eve Candlelight and Easter Sunrise Services. Youth groups, in various forms, have been a definite religious and social influence in the community, allowing many young people to serve in church and Presbytery activities.

THE FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE was started in 1947 by Rev. Robert Shane and is now a group for all ages which gathers monthly for an evening of fellowship. Their activities have included pantry showers for the new ministers, providing flowers for the sanctuary and for shut-ins, and recently a new water heater for the rest rooms.

THE MARINERS were started in 1956 by Rev. Thomas Conboy who saw the need for a young married couples group in the church. To qualify for membership a couple's age must not exceed ninety years. Affiliated with the National United Presbyterian Mariners, they meet monthly for thought-provoking speakers and discussions and also enjoy evenings of fun in a congenial group who share many common interests. The Mariners' latest project for the church was a new mimeograph machine.

The CHURCH CHOIR and SUNDAY SCHOOL have been mentioned already in this all too brief history. These two organizations have added immeasurably to the life of Cross Creek Church in their long histories

Talented voices have always blessed the choir with a capacity equaling and surpassing that of many larger churches. In later years, a children's and youth choir have served well. The Sunday School, originally founded in 1821 with twenty members and against some opposition, studied first the Book of Proverbs. In later years a summer Vacation Bible School has provided new and different forms of Christian Education. The most important element in the church school, dedicated teachers, has not been lacking.

The forms change: Sunday evening services and weekday prayer meetings have been replaced largely by Presbytery study events and seasonal meetings. The goal remains the same, however; to spread the good news of the Gospel. Even in groups organized for purely fellowship and recreational purposes, such as the Men's Dartball Team (and in the past, bowling and softball teams), people have been reached and drawn more closely into the life of the church.

We have recorded here a few of the happenings in the life of our beloved Church. We exult in a glorious past! We stand now upon the threshold of what we hope and pray may be a blessed future. Cross Creek Church today is composed of good Christian people: Many of them are worthy descendants of the people of whom we have been speaking; some of them have fairly recently come within the bounds of this congregation, but all have a keen appreciation for the past and a sense of hopefulness for the years ahead. With a fine church building good for many more years, with fine equipment lovingly given here for the glory of God and for the purpose of better worshipping Him, with these good people whose eyes are set confidently to the years ahead, may we not pray with that saint of old: "As long as the sun and stars shall shine, may there always be a church at Cross Creek!"