SO FIRM

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FOUNDATION

TUCKER METHODIST CHURCH

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A HISTORY OF THE

TUCKER METHODIST CHURCH

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With The Help Of Many Others

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INTRODUCTION

It could be called the "little church by the side of the road." Or it might be referred to as the "Tucker Meetinghouse," or even "The Old Stonepile." But whatever phraseology is used, Tucker Methodist Church, in Hanover Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania, is "Home" to the unnumbered descendants of the old pioneers who endured untold hardships to establish the church, and who have long since gone to their reward.

The old stone meeting house is located on busy Highway 22, halfway between Paris and Florence. A sloping grassy lawn separates it from the world of the hurried motorist who speeds impassively along the highway, without even so much as a passing thought of its very existence. It stands in humble silence, in the midst of today's hurried and bustling throngs, a symbol of the tranquillity of God, unmindful of the everchanging world by which it is encompassed.

The history of the Tucker Methodist Church dates back to the days before the Revolutionary War. Although the building itself was not erected until the year 1824, Methodist meetings were held regularly for nearly forty years prior to the construction of the house of worship. Before the introduction of Methodism into the area, the early settlers embraced the Quaker or the Episcopalian faith with which they had crossed the perilous mountains, and faced the daily hardships of the wild frontier.

Among the first settlers in the area were the Potts, Jackson, Hanlin and Tucker families, who had emigrated from the East. John Tucker, who later deeded the land on which the church stands, was born in Massachusetts, amd moved to Maryland while he was young. There he married, and moved with his wife back to Massachusetts. When she became ill, he took her back to her native Maryland, where she died, leaving him with two small sons, John and Samuel. No record has been left of her name.

He then married a woman whom we know only as Henrietta. It was this little family, John, Henrietta, little John and Samuel, who precariously made their way across the mountains in the company of the other

families, and who gave thanks to God upon reaching the fertile lands of what is now Hanover Township. Official records reveal that this was in the year 1775.

John had made a previous visit here, and had marked out a tomahawk claim of four hundred acres. This he named "Grace Tract." It is believed that he selected this particular spot of ground because of the hardy grove of chestnut trees which grew upon it, indicating fertile land. He had even decided upon a location for his cabin, on the northern side of the watershed, about three-fourths of a mile from the trail, which later became Route 22. There they would be comparatively safe from the observation of the Indians. A spring was nearby, and the land lay to the south and east, making it favorable for crops.

The path where the little family made their way through the brush upon arriving at their new home, is now the lane leading to the Thomas Perkins home. The cabin which they built stood near where the Perkins house new stands. But until the completion of a cabin, they had to be content to live in a tent. Land had to be cleared, crops planted, cultivated and harvested, for themselves and their livestock for the coming winter.

It is believed that the families had made their way west by way of the old Cumberland Trail, which is parallel to what is now Route 40. Since this trail did not come all the way to Washington County, they made their way to what was then the "village" of Pittsburgh, then along the old Indian trail, now known as Route 22.

J. H. Beers' "Biographical Record of Washington County" describes John Tucker as "a large man and as straight as an Indian, a despiser of the lazy man and the rascal, and was an honest Quaker." He carried a staff that was about twice as tall as he. He called it a "vaulting stick," and by clutching it near the top, he could fling himself for a distance of at least ten feet, leaving only a few tracks, thus confusing the Indians.

He was deeply devoted to his work and to his religion. He set up his own family devotions, as did the other settlers, and conducted worship services in his own home. Later, various families gathered for the devotions, making a small group of worshippers in the little cabin.

Among the pieces of furniture brought from the East was a beautiful chest of drawers, of the Hepplewhite design. It was highly prized by Henrietta. During the week, she kept it covered with a horse blanket. On Sundays, the cover would be removed, and the family Bible, contained therein, was opened and read by John Tucker. Those assembled would comment on the readings; thus the family devotions were conducted.

History states that John Tucker hated a liar. Yet, on one occasion, as has been handed down to posterity, he nearly told a lie by keeping silent. It was on a Sunday. He had gone to the "salt spring" not far from the cabin, looking for a deer. Because of his labors throughout the week, Sunday was his only day in which to hunt. When the deer came to the spring, he killed it with one shot. He slung the deer over his shoulder and started for the cabin, where he flung it under the house. As it was nearing time for the Sunday services, his neighbors had already assembled, and were terrified at hearing the shot, fearful that Indians were near. He avoided telling them that it was he who fired the shot, and simply stated, "Maybe they are." No one must ever know that he had been so "worldly" as to fire a shot on Sunday!

Day and night, someone had to keep watch for the Indians. As a further precaution, sleigh-bells were kept on the horses. A quick jingling of the bells indicated that prowlers were near, and the prowlers would probably be Indians. One night the bells jingled, and the warning was given to the sleeping household. One version says that friendly Indians in the area gave the warning to the sentinal on guard, that "warriors from Ohio" were headed this way. It matters not just how the little family received the message. There was still only one thing to do - flee to Vance's Fort.

Vance's Fort was ten miles from the Tucker cabin, and was near where the village of Cross Creek now stands. One or two little girls (accounts vary) had been added to the Tucker family. Together, they made their way through the dark forest, walking all night. By morning they had reached the fort. No account is given of how long they remained, but it was at the Fort that John and Henrietta's first son, Jonathan, was born. Later, upon their return to their cabin, life resumed as usual, with no sign of the Indians having been there.

Years passed into decades, and those decades brought with them many changes. The colonies had declared their Independence; the Revolution had taken place; the United States had been born. The Indians in this part of the country had been quieted forever. Many of the old Indian trails now became highways. Other roads were being laid out and villages began to spring up everywhere. One of these was Bricelands Crossroads, now known as Florence, at a point where two trails crossed. Here, James Briceland opened a general store which offered for sale many of the comforts of life which heretofore the Tuckers had found difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. Sugar and salt, for instance, could now be had without bringing them from a long distance. And a bright piece of calico or some new dishes must have cheered the hearts of Henrietta and her daughters. This store was later conducted by the Livingstones and then by the Clelands.

John and Henrietta's children married and had families of their own. Martha married the miller's brother, Samuel Ralston. Drusilla married Lewis Sadler. Ann's husband was David Johnston. Elizabeth never married. Their four sons married, and John was given a farm where the Tuckers land entered the pike. Jonathan married Miss Margaret Wright, daughter of a pioneer family near Wardville, now called Eldersville. He and his bride shared the home of his father and mother. Thomas and David married sisters, the Misses Eleanor and Christie Ann Hill, daughters of a neighboring farmer. David was given the west end of the tract, while Thomas settled on a newly acquired piece of land on the east, but not a part of the original tract. Samuel, John's son by his first wife, had become a Methodist minister, and had been killed by Indians enroute to Kentucky. This was the first death in the large family, and brought sorrow to all the Tuckers. This family had been considered very fortunate in having lost no children while they were young. Because of the many hardships of the day, lack of medical knowledge, and other adversities, fortunate indeed were the families who raised all of their babies to man and womanhood.

During those years of raising a family, clearing and cultivating the land, and conducting family worship in the various cabins, one of John Tucker's most cherished dreams was the erection of a house of worship. He had already met the circuit riders, and been introduced to Methodism. Prior to this time, he had been respectfully addressed by his neighbors, the Quakers, as "Father Tucker." Upon the arrival of the Methodists, and the conversion of the Quakers to the new religion, his cabin was given the name of "Tucker Methodist Station." They continued to meet there, and later, at the home of Jonathan, as well as in the other cabins.

In the year 1823, a stone church building was begun. Four brothers from Island Creek, Ohio, by the name of Minesinger, were the leading stone masons of the day. They were hired to erect the stone building, which stands today, and in which many generations of the pioneer families received their spiritual guidance. One account states that the cost of the building was $75. Another says it was erected at a cost of $85.

The stone was quarried on the grounds below the church, cut and squared by hand, and artistically formed into a building measuring 33 by 44 feet. It was completed in the following year, 1824. The ground on which it was erected was a part of the original Tucker tract, which John Tucker had set aside for that purpose, on the north side of the highway. In the year 1822, he had deeded the ground for religious purposes, and also stated in his will, that it was to be used for no other purpose.

John Tucker died on April 6, 1830, only six years after the completion of his beloved "meetinghouse." At the age of 100, he was laid to rest in the church yard near by. His wife, Henrietta, died two years later, at the age of 96. Her body was laid beside that of her husband. Plain sandstone slabs mark their graves today.

By this time, many of the Tucker grandchildren were married and raising families of their own. Following the death of John and Henrietta, the spirit of unrest again became prevalent in the family, and many of them decided to move to "greener pastures." No record was left of John Tucker II, the eldest son, who moved to Ohio. Thomas moved with his family to the Muskingum Valley in Ohio. David the youngest son, had died, leaving eight children. They too, followed

the trek to Ohio, after his widow had remarried. Thus with the beginning of the Tucker Methodist Church, came the wide dispersal of the Tucker family. Several of them, however, remained in the area, and were some of the chief contributors to the church. Jonathan, for instance, raised all of his family here, and it is from him that many of the residents of today are descended.

The motto of the Tucker family, incorporated in their coat of arms, is the Latin phrase, "nil desperendum," meaning "never despair." And in the lives of these ancestors, who were exposed to the dangers and hardships of their time, we may suppose that this sound bit of philosophy, even though unuttered and perhaps never realized, was bred in them, and became a part of their very being.

SAMUEL TUCKER

Samuel Tucker was the son of John Tucker I and his first wife, who died in Maryland before the family's emigration to Hanover Township. Land Records, Yonogania County, West Virginia Library, show that the year of his birth was 1771.

As a small boy, he had long curly hair. He was also quite a sleepy-head, and the only way he could be awakened was to pick him up by his long hair and drop him to the floor. An Indian alert one night sent the family fleeing into the forest bound for Vance's Fort, near Cross Creek, ten miles from their cabin. After Samuel was aroused and dressed, it was he who led the cow, as the little family made its way through the darkness, on horseback. The cow was to provide milk for Samuel and his little sister(s) during their stay at the Fort. It was in the Fort that Jonathan was born.

These informal notes on Samuel Tucker have been passed down by word of mouth to present-day descendants of the Tucker family. But it is official that Samuel eventually became a Methodist minister, and preached the Gospel in Kentucky. In the year 1790, during the April conference, Samuel was admitted on trial, and was appointed by Bishop Asbury to the New Limestone (Kentucky) Circuit, which had sixty-six members.

Arnold, in his "History of Methodism in Kentucky," says that Samuel had made a number of rounds

on his circuit, as the Limestone records show that money was paid to him.

Likely in the Fall of 1790, during a return trip to Kentucky by boat on the Ohio River, the company was attacked by Indians, and Samuel was killed. Although his ministry lasted only a few months, he was listed as being remarkably successful in preaching the Gospel. Lewis Garrett, in the "Western Methodist," December 6, 1833, wrote: "He was indeed a herald of the cross and in him was exemplified that prediction, 'His ministry shall be a flame of fire.' Under his labors there was a mighty turning to God, and these were days of grace, and times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. But his race was short and his work soon accomplished. Perhaps about the close of the year, he had occasion to return to the old settlements to assist in moving some of his relations or friends; in descending the Ohio River, the boat laden with emigrants to Kentucky was fired on by the Indians - Mr. Tucker received a mortal wound - but report said that he fought with valor and much presence of mind, so that the boat was saved - but he died soon after rejoicing in God. Thus this useful promising young man was cut off."

Jacob Young, in his "Autobiography of A Pioneer," Cincinnati, 1857, states an eye-witness account of Samuel's death. Mr. Young's uncle owned one of the boats that was attacked.

"He became pious when he was very young, and before he was twenty years of age, commenced preaching the Gospel. Although reared on the frontier by close and constant application, he acquired a pretty good English education. He bore a very active and successful part, in trying to civilize and Christianize the people in the country where he resided. His zeal increased with his years; and while he was yet a young man, he volunteered as a missionary to go to Kentucky; he well knew the danger to which he would be exposed - for the Indian War was raging at the time in its most dreadful forms - but a desire to save souls elevated him above the fear of death. While he was going down the Ohio River, the boat in which he descended was attacked by a large company of Indians, and as he was well acquainted with the mode of Indian warfare, he took the supervision of all the boats in the

company, and had them all lashed together with ropes. Taking his stand in the middle boat, that the whole company might hear the word of command, he ordered the women and children to keep close to the bottom of the boats, lest the Indians might shoot them, and directed the men to arm themselves with axes and bars of iron, etc., so that if the Indians attempted to come on board they might mash their fingers and hands. In this way they crippled many of their warriors and defended themselves for a long time. At length the cunning Indians found out where the commander stood, and in a canoe, got round to the end of the boat where the steering-oar works, and shot him through the hole. He saw that he had received his death wound. He advised them all to get into one boat, leave their property, and try to save their lives. Having given them the best direction he could, he kneeled down, made his last prayer and expired. They made their escape from the Indians, and landed at Limestone (now Mayville, Kentucky) where they buried their beloved minister. I have looked at his grave with mingled feeling."

It is believed that Samuel probably heard Bishop Francis Asbury when he preached at Doddridges, (near what is now Independence, Pa.) in June, 1786. He attended the Quarterly Conference at Doddridges in July, 1788, and again heard Asbury preach. This may have been when he talked to him about becoming a preacher. He was also likely influenced by George Callauhan, Ohio Circuit preacher, 1787-88 and 1789-90.

WILL OF JOHN TUCKER

In the will of John Tucker, specific instructions were given for a spot to be set aside for religious purposes. That spot has served that sacred purpose since that day, and is still known as the Tucker Methodist Church. The will also stated various inheritances to be received by each of his children. It reads in part:

"I give and bequeath to my beloved wife, Henrietta, one horse, saddle and bridle, to the value of seventy dollars, one cow worth fourteen dollars, and the chest called her chest, all her own clothing, one bed and bedding, one pot, one table, and half of all the pewter furniture, the house tea kettle, and all the

tea ware of every description, six sheep, and the whole use and privilege of the mansion house where I now dwell, while she remains my widow, two chairs, one third of both my orchards, forty bushels of grain, viz. fifteen bushels of wheat, fifteen of rye and ten of corn, and to have her said horse, cow and sheep taken care of and provided for in hay, grain, straw, pasture and whatever may be further necessary for the safe-keeping of the said creatures, shall be jointly provided by my sons Thomas and David in manner hereinafter named, which property and privileges shall be at the absolute disposal of my beloved wife during her natural life, except the privilege of occupying the mansion house if she should not continue and remain my widow."

(An interesting sidelight to some of Mr. Tucker's provisions should be noted. The "Mansion house" of which he spoke could have been a two-story log structure which was later built near the cabin, or the house that is now occupied by the Thomas Perkins family. The phrase, "while she remains my widow," referring to his wife, Henrietta, takes on a humorous significance, as she was almost ninety years of age when John penned his will.)

Other provisions of the will bequeath both land and money to his sons, daughters, grandchildren, and a daughter-in-law. John received 115 acres of land. Jonathan's share was 115 acres, plus the sum of $90 to be paid by David, and $90 to be paid by Thomas. Thomas received 100 acres, and was to provide one-half the expense of his mother. David's eight children received 100 acres "more or less" minus a few claims against it. Even though David had passed away, his children were instructed to pay to Jonathan the sum of $90. David's widow was to have one-half the profits from the land bequeathed to her children.

A daughter, Ann, wife of David Johnston, was bequeathed the sum of $80. Drusilla, wife of Lewis Sadler, became the recipient of $13.33, while a granddaughter, Henrietta Ralston, was left $26.67. Elizabeth, Martha (Ralston) and Ann, received all that would remain after expenses were deducted. However, a clause stated that Martha's husband, from whom she was separated, was to receive nothing.

After all the children had been duly provided for, the will further stated: "I give and bequeath to my

son Jonathan Tucker and my grandson Samuel Tucker, one acre of land, it being a part of the tract I now live on, whereon a meeting house is erected for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and for no other purposes whatsoever, but to be and remain for the use of said church, and the congregation therein assembling for the worship of God without rent or any other reward whatsoever."

Thus the Tucker "meeting house" still stands, a memorial to the man who, through firm adherence to noble principles in the past, paved the way for an upright way of life for countless generations to come.

LAND TITLES

The settlement of Western Pennsylvania by the early pioneers followed the treaty by the English with the Iroquois Indians in the fall of 1768. By the terms of this treaty, the English purchased the land south and east of the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers, thus opening Western Pennsylvania to legal settlement. Before this time there had been no land titles granted in the region. The few hundred families who had settled prior to this were "squatters;" however, immediately following the treaty, between four and five thousand persons crossed the mountains into this area, and it was said that all Spring and Summer, the roads were lined with wagons moving to the Ohio.

Life on the frontier was a constant hazard throughout the entire time of the Revolutionary War, because the British encouraged the Indians to attack the frontier settlements and paid them for scalps of the American pioneers. In addition to troubles with the Indians and the constant battle for survival, there was the dispute over the boundary line between Virginia and Pennsylvania. A small war almost resulted from this dispute as some settlers had received their land titles from Virginia and some from Pennsylvania, each land-holder fearing he would be dispossessed of his claim. By 1786, the Mason and Dixon Line had been completely surveyed and an agreement was reached between the two states concerning the boundary. Pennsylvania agreed to recognize the claims of those who held Virginia certificates to the land which now became a part of Western Pennsylvania.

John Tucker received his land title in Western Pennsylvania from William Penn; however, records show that Mr. Tucker was a man of extreme foresight. Not only did he register his land title with the province of Pennsylvania, but he personally made a journey to Virginia's seat of government and registered his title with that province as well. This guaranteed his right to the land regardless of which might finally win the dispute. This registration is on file in the Land Records at Morgantown and is signed in John Tucker's own handwriting.

THE EARLY CHURCH

With the advancing pioneer, the church also moved westward; however, not the Congregational nor the Episcopalian Churches of the eastern seaboard ministered to the needs of the American on the frontier, but rather, the new evangelical movements known as the Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist and Lutheran faiths. To understand the place which Methodism played in the lives of the early settlers in the Tucker area, one must understand a little of the background of the Methodist Church in the world at this time.

The Methodist Church began in 1729 as a spiritual movement within the Church of England under the leadership of John Wesley. Wesley's preachers were laymen who were not ordained and who went about preaching in the fields to the common people. The doors of the church were closed to these men because of their unorthodox views. The followers of Wesley banded themselves together into "Societies" and often met in homes or in chapels which they built for the purpose of worship. Wesley considered his religious movement to be merely a part of the Church of England and refused to set up his Societies as a separate church. It was not until after his death in 1791 that the Methodist Church in England became a free and separate body.

The Methodist movement in America began when some of Wesley's followers migrated to the New World from England. It was with this move to America that one of Methodism's largest problems arose - namely, the difficulty of administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. In the Church of England at this time, only an ordained man might administer

the sacraments. In England, the Methodists received the sacraments from John Wesley himself. As there were no ordained men in America, the Methodists in the New World were left without baptism and the communion service.

As Methodism spread westward, the people cried more and more for their ministers to take it upon themselves to administer the sacraments. It was only the strong leadership of Francis Asbury who prevented this from happening. He encouraged Methodists to adhere to Wesley's rules, but at the same time, he advised Wesley of the crying need to send ordained men to the colonies.

In the Church of England, only the bishops of the church had the right to ordain. Wesley, however, believed that as a Priest of the Church, he had as much right to ordain as he had to administer the sacraments. After much careful thought, Wesley took it upon himself to ordain two men as Elders to be sent to America with authority to administer the sacraments. One of these men, Richard Whatcoat, later served as Elder on the Ohio Circuit in the year 1788. Tucker preaching point was a part of the Ohio Circuit that year, and it is undoubtedly true that the people in the Tucker area had the honor of receiving the sacraments from this man who was ordained by Wesley's own hand.

Wesley also appointed Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke to be joint superintendents over the flock in the states. On December 24, 1784, at what later became known as the Christmas Conference, sixty of the eighty-three American Methodist preachers assembled at Baltimore and organized the Methodist Episcopal Church of America. At the conference, Wesley's appointment of Coke and Asbury as superintendents was approved by those present. Men to be ordained were nominated by the superintendents and elected by the conference. By the close of the conference, twelve men had been ordained Elders and thus were given the authority to administer the sacraments. Of these charter members of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America, two of the twelve men ordained at that memorable conference, Thomas Foster and Enoch Matson, served in the Tucker area as its first two presiding Elders in the years 1785 and 1786 respectively.

This would lead one to believe that the Tucker family and those in the Florence area received communion in 1785 for the first time since their long and dangerous journey to Western Pennsylvania by the hand of Thomas Foster, one of the founders of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Such an honor cannot be taken too seriously. Undoubtedly the Tucker children born in Western Pennsylvania were also baptized by him that year at the Quarterly Meeting of the Redstone Circuit of which the Tucker preaching point was a part. Comparison of dates shows that John and Henrietta Tucker had been residing in the wilderness for ten years without benefit of baptism for their children or Holy Communion for themselves. Little wonder indeed that records show that these early settlers traveled long, dreary miles, over mud-bed roads, arriving by the hundreds at the Quarterly Meetings, starved for the Bread of Life.

JOURNALS OF AYRES AND ASBURY

The reader should be aware of the sources from which the information herein discussed has been obtained. Chief among these sources have been two first-hand accounts of life in Western Pennsylvania during the rise of Methodism. The following paragraphs describe these documents briefly.

The group of people who later developed into the congregation of the Tucker M.E. Church originally met in the home of James Holmes, of near Florence. The Holmes cabin was one of thirty preaching points on the Redstone Circuit from 1784-87. On the third year in the life of the Redstone Circuit, one of the traveling preachers was a man by the name of Robert Ayres. Ayres kept a day-to-day diary or journal in which he recorded some event for each day of his year on the circuit. This journal is still in existence and has been read by the writer in the process of carrying out the research necessary for the compilation of this history. It is in the possession of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania in Pittsburgh. It is a small book, sewn together by hand and altogether legible when one considers its age and the conditions under which it was written. It is the best first-hand account of the beginnings of the church

in the Tucker area. Excerpts from the journal are quoted later in this work and the reader is urged to bear in mind that the information contained in it is an indisputable record of life in the 1780's.

The second source of information concerning the rise of the church in the eighteenth century is the journal of Francis Asbury. Asbury was the undisputed leader of Methodism in America until his death. When he arrived from England in 1771, there were less than 400 Methodists in America. When he died in 1816, there were more than 214,000. His leadership, both spiritual and administrative, has been unparalleled in churchmanship. He began his journal before he left England and continued it until within four months of his death. According to his journal, he visited Western Pennsylvania twenty times. He visited the Redstone Circuit (of which Tucker was a part) each year from 1784-87. During his first such visit, he preached at four places, having come in over the Braddock Road which later became Route 40 from Cumberland to Uniontown. This journey was made within two months of the time when he first put the Redstone Circuit into operation with the assignment of John Cooper and Samuel Breeze as preachers. (Cooper was a veteran preacher of ten years and Asbury paid the Redstone Circuit an honor by this appointment.) The following is a direct quote from Asbury's Journal.

Thursday, July 9, 1784: "....Since last Friday we have ridden one hundred and sixty or more miles, on rough roads, through a rough country, and with rough fare. I trust our labor will not all be lost."

It was on this journey that he states he is going to the frontier to take a peep in to Indian land. He reports that it is a fruitful district and hopes it will prosper in religion.

Much of the information on the early history of the Tucker Church region has come from Asbury's Journal.

LIFE AS AN EARLY CIRCUIT RIDER

To better understand the growth of the early church, one must have a passing knowledge of the life of the early American Circuit Rider. As has been previously stated, there is still in existence the day-to-day diary of

happenings in the life of Robert Ayres in the year 1786-87 when he rode the Redstone Circuit. (The reader will recall that Tucker's preaching point was a part of this circuit at that time.) This first-hand account is invaluable in aiding us to understand life as it existed on the early frontier.

Ayres describes the section of the Ohio Valley in the Redstone region as being the most fertile he had seen since crossing the mountains. At one point he states that since his arrival in the area, he had not seen four consecutive days without rainfall. At times he had great difficulty swimming his horse across Buffalo Creek, and there were instances when he found it completely impossible to cross. He tells of severe cold in the winter, when upon one occasion while traveling from Beech Bottom to the Holmes cabin at Florence, he placed a silk handkerchief over his nose to keep it from freezing. When he arrived at his destination, the handkerchief was frozen stiff and his breath through it had caused an icicle to form which was as long as his hand.

He seems to have had great difficulty in finding his way, for his journal often states that he missed his road and traveled many miles out of his way, arriving late for appointments, and extremely weary. He describes mud-bed roads and swift streams which plagued him at every turn of his journey. In one description he talks of a hard bed and many fleas; in another, he tells of eighteen or twenty men sleeping in one long bed. On one occasion, his horse was stolen. Many times his horses would run away. He tells of being detained three days on his circuit rounds on one such occasion. After great difficulties he was able to continue but was forced to make up the lost time in order to keep appointments. Yet at the conclusion of this description, he wrote in his journal that despite the testing of his patience, he was confident that all things work together for good.

Since there was no provision made for food or shelter for the Circuit Riders, they were dependent upon the hospitality of the settlers. Ayres mentions having stayed overnight at the home of John Tucker. With Mr. Tucker's religious fervor, it might be presumed that his home was always open to these early ministers of the Gospel. They survived chiefly on

corn bread, venison and bear meat. They rode on horseback with their possessions in their saddlebags. There was no salary, but accounts state that "the bond of fellowship was strong."

Thomas Scott, who preached in the Tucker area in 1793, tells of trackless forests, no bridges or ferries, snakes, wild animals, and Indians. Ayres tells of preaching in the woods, in cabins, and in the few little chapels in existence. He preached to as few as ten in a little cabin, and to as many as one thousand at a Quarterly Meeting. He tells of classes meeting at sunrise, followed by worship and the sacrament. In February of 1787, he stated that one thousand persons stood in the cold and listened to three sermons, such was the thirst for the Word of God. During his year on the Redstone Circuit, Ayres traveled 2654 miles on horseback and preached 259 sermons. The Circuit had at that time 523 members.

Bishop Asbury also told in his journal of the trials and tribulations of the early Circuit Rider. We find in his wirtings from 1792 the following description.

"Both men and horses traveled sore and wearily to Uniontown. O how good are clean houses, plentiful tables, and populous villages, when compared with the rough world we came through! Here I turned out our poor horses to pasture and rest, after riding them nearly three hundred miles in eight days....."

Asbury often speaks of his personal suffering caused by a severe rheumatic condition. His physical discomfort seems to have influenced his mental outlook for he often makes such statements as:

"We hasted away to a little town called Washington - wicked enough at all times, but especially now at court time."

Other comments from Asbury's Journal follow.

December 2, 1802: "I have had a powerful rheumatic shock, such as I never had in my life, and that by being exposed in the wilderness. But I must try it again and take my tent with me....."

The following is from Asbury's last tour across Western Pennsylvania just before his death in Virginia on March 31, 1816.

August 11, 1815: "We reckon that since the 20th of June we have passed through New Hampshire, Ver-

mont, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Ohio, making nine hundred miles; Two hundred of which, ought, in our opinion, to be called the worst on the continent."

As one might well imagine from the description of life as an itinerant preacher, the early Methodist Circuit Riders were nearly all unmarried young men. The constant traveling made it impossible to provide for a family. The extent of territory covered also meant that each rider visited each preaching point as few as six or eight times in one year, and appointments were made in the beginnings of the church for periods of only a year. This might lead one to believe that the people would not become emotionally attached to these men who ministered to their spiritual needs; however, some accounts show that this is not altogether true. One such account states that when the men assigned to the Redstone Circuit during its second year, 1785-86, took their leave, it was with much sorrow and many tears on both sides, as the people had come to love them dearly, so greatly did they appreciate their services of bringing to the wilderness the Word of Truth. As the reader inspects the names of preachers listed elsewhere in this history, who served the Tucker area from the very beginning, he is urged to remember that although it may be merely a list of names to those living today, it was the list of prayers which had been answered to those who knew and loved them. As Dr. Raymond Bell stated in his address at the 175th anniversary of the Redstone Circuit, these men preached a million sermons and influenced thousands upon thousands of persons.When one considers the hardships of their existence, it is little wonder that they died at forty.

ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

To better understand the history of the Tucker Church, one must have a knowledge of the Methodist system of organization in America. The following paragraphs are an attempt to point out the six main features of Methodism in America during Asbury's lifetime, and to relate each to the local situation in the Tucker Church region.

CLASSES AND SOCIETIES: Locally, the organi-

zation of the Methodist Church was into Classes with a Class Leader, and the formation of two or more Classes into a Society. One such Class was held in the home of James Holmes, of near Florence. It was this class which included the family of John Tucker among its members, and which later developed into the congregation of the Tucker M.E.Church. Robert Ayres, who preached at the Holmes home in 1786-87, recorded the following in his diary:

Sunday, January 7, 1787 - "Set out with Brother Doddridge and rode 14 m. to James Holmes and preached to a small congregation with difficulty."

Sunday, May 13, 1787 - "Rode 13 or 14 m. accompanied by James Holmes and preached with liberty to a large congregation."

THE CIRCUIT SYSTEM: Organization in the early church included the Circuit System with twelve to thirty-six preaching places, manned by one to three preachers, traveling constantly from one place to another and following each other at regular intervals. The Tucker congregation, meeting in the home of James Holmes, was one of thirty preaching points on the Redstone Circuit in the years 1784-87. (The Redstone Circuit holds the honor of being one of the two pioneer circuits in the great central valley of America and the Mother Circuit of the Pittsburgh Conference.)

The east to west range of territory covered by this circuit was from Uniontown to Wellsburg, and the north-south range was from Pittsburgh to Fairmont. One round of the circuit required about three hundred miles of travel. It was a six-week circuit and was ridden by three preachers. Each of the three preachers covered the entire circuit each six weeks and followed each other at two-week intervals, so that preaching was held at each of the preaching points every two weeks. By 1786, there were only four chapels out of the thirty preaching points on the Redstone Circuit, the other services being held in homes. Robert Ayres Journal indicates that he reached the Holmes cabin near Florence on Raccoon Creek during the fifth week of each six-week trip around the circuit. He made eight such journeys during the year. In 1787, the Redstone Circuit split into three circuits. The part including the Holmes-Tucker congregation became the Ohio Circuit. It extended from Wheeling to Pittsburgh,

encompassing the ground south and east of the Ohio River. That year Charles Conaway and George Callauhan were appointed circuit riders. Joshua Monroe, who rode the Ohio Circuit in 1811 has left an excellent account of it. He states that "It was then counted as one of the best circuits west of the mountains." It had twenty-four preaching points with a membership of five hundred whites and thirty-seven colored. He described the people as a "noble band of faithful, zealous men and women."

THE QUARTERLY MEETINGS: The Quarterly Meetings were two day union meetings of all the Classes on a Circuit and were held on a Saturday and Sunday. It was at the Quarterly Meetings that the sacraments were administered because it was the duty of the Presiding Elder to be present at all Quarterly Meetings for that purpose. It was at the first Quarterly Meeting of the Redstone Circuit of which Tucker was a part that Thomas Foster, Presiding Elder, first administered the sacraments to the early settlers of this area. It is not known exactly where this meeting was held; however, records show that in the following year (1786) a Quarterly Meeting was held at Doddridge's between West Middletown and Wellsburg. (Doddridge's wife was a full cousin of James Holmes.) This meeting was held on October 28 and 29. By 1788, both Tucker's and Doddridge's preaching points had become parts of the Ohio Circuit. This year on July 19 and 20, the Quarterly Meeting was again held at Doddridge's. Bishop Asbury was present at this time and it was at one such meeting that Samuel Tucker heard Asbury preach and talked with him about entering the ministry.

THE PRESIDING ELDERS: Each Presiding Elder headed a number of Circuits. This group of Circuits became known as a District. Outstanding Elders who served in the Tucker area have been named in a previous section of this history. Two additional men with unusual abilities were Thornton Fleming and Daniel Hitt. Fleming was considered the chief leader of Methodism in Western Pennsylvania during the first half of the nineteenth century. He served the Tucker area as Presiding Elder in 1818 and 1819. Daniel Hitt served in 1792. He later became Asbury's traveling companion. Hitt lived to see four generations embracing eighteen families. He gave to the ministry three sons and a grandson.

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE: Districts headed by Presiding Elders were grouped geographically for purposes of holding an Annual Conference. The Tucker Methodist Episcopal Church was a part of the Pittsburgh Conference when the first session was held on September 15-21, 1825. The presiding officer of this first meeting was Bishop Enoch George, one of the most effective preachers of his day. It is interesting to note that the average salary of preachers in the Pittsburgh Conference in 1860 was $426. In 1876-77, the preacher of the Tucker-Holliday's Cove Circuit, which consisted of four churches with a combined membership of two hundred, received a salary of $700.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE: The highest law-making body of the entire denomination is the General Conference which has met every four years since the first such meeting in 1792. Major issues have always been discussed at the General Conference. In the 1830's, The Methodist Protestant Church arose out of the Methodist Episcopal Church over the controversy concerning how the church should be governed. The Methodist Protestant Church took away some of the power of the Bishops. In May of 1939, the split was healed and the two denominations, along with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, became one united church known as The Methodist Church. Tucker Church remained Methodist Episcopal throughout the entire existence of the Methodist Protestant Church.

The preceding paragraphs describe the six main features of Methodism in its beginnings. One other feature which grew out of these beginnings was the Campmeeting. Since meetinghouses were small and inadequate for Quarterly Meetings, the congregations usually assembled out of doors. This led to the development of the Campmeeting. These meetings were very hard on the Presiding Elders who were expected to attend all of them and to preach and administer the sacraments for long periods of time. They lived in hot tents, subjected to night air, damp atmosphere, and wet ground. For months on end they lived in the woods. Yet in spite of the hardships which these meetings brought about, thousands were brought into the church as a result. James B. Finley, Presiding Elder of the Ohio District in 1819, told of a Campmeeting attended by five hundred persons, and described it as "heaven on earth."

In 1804, Noah Fidler wrote in his Journal:

"Fri. Aug. 24. Campmeeting began near the Old Fort...The meeting continued until Tue. in the afternoon, day and night without much intermission. There were 34 preachers, 490 odd took the sacrament - 66 tents and 62 wagons. It was supposed that about 10,000 were present...It was the greatest time that I ever saw..."[3]

PREACHERS BEFORE THE REDSTONE

Before the summer of 1784 when Asbury sent Cooper and Breeze into Western Pennsylvania to form the Redstone Circuit, a few other men had taken it upon themselves to ride among the people and preach the Gospel. No history would be complete without mention of them, for they laid the cornerstones upon which the others built.

Methodist preaching in Western Pennsylvania began in the vicinity of Washington, before the Revolutionary War. As far as we know, the first Methodist to cross the Allegheny Mountains and settle in the Ohio Valley was Reason Pumphrey. In the summer of 1772, Mr. Pumphrey made a tomahawk claim near the Indian village of Catfish which is now known as Washington, Pennsylvania. Pumphrey's tract of land covered 308 acres in what is now the Tylerdale section of Washington. He later moved to Beech Bottom where his home became one of the regular preaching points on the Redstone Circuit after its establishment. Pumphrey brought with him his wife, eight sons, four slaves, other property, and a young man known as Eli Shickle, who preached to the new settlers in the area. Shickle was not considered a circuit rider since this was before Asbury organized the Redstone Circuit. There is no official record that Shickle organized any classes, but it is probable that he did so.

Shickle, however, was the first Methodist minister in the area and preached strongly against the manufacture of intoxicating beverages. He was threatened by the distillers, and when he continued to reprove them, they dragged him from his horse and beat him unmercifully. In 1776 he returned to Maryland and soon afterward died. The following has been written concerning him:

"Eli Shickle made his appearance among us like the rising of the morning star.....His theme was Jesus and Him crucified...I doubt not that many bright gems from the west will adorn his crown in heaven."

Three firsthand accounts of the region, including Asbury's Journal, assert that another preacher known as Robert Wooster also conducted services before the regular traveling preachers arrived. In the autumn of 1777, Asbury's Journal shows that Wooster traveled to Uniontown, Washington, Short Creek and Buffalo, preaching to the flock in the wilderness. Another account records that his hair was as white as wool in 1799 and that he preached a "pure and powerful gospel sermon."

In the 1780's he settled along the Braddock Road east of Uniontown and his home became a regular stopping place for the later preachers who came over the mountains. Robert Ayres indicated in his Journal that he stopped overnight at Wooster's. Wooster left the Redstone country after 1800, journeying to Kentucky and eventually to Indiana where he died. It is believed that Wooster's discussions with Asbury concerning the sheep in the wilderness who had no shepherd convinced Asbury to organize the Redstone Circuit and appoint Breeze and Cooper as its first circuit riders.

The third preacher in the area was John Todd. Ayres reports that Todd preached at the Quarterly Meeting at Doddridge's in October, 1786. He was described as a tall, large-boned man, with a very dark complexion and sour, morose countenance. The writer of this description said that he could not recall ever having seen him smile.

The fourth preacher was Richard Owings who was a second cousin of Reason Pumphrey, the first Methodist in the area. Rev. Owings was also related to a number of other families in the region. He was six feet tall, slender, stooped in the shoulders, with sandy hair and florid complexion. Many of the settlers in Western Pennsylvania had known him before they left Maryland and welcomed him with great joy. He was the pioneer of Methodism for he first rode the Redstone Circuit before Cooper and Breeze arrived.

Accounts which have been handed down from generation to generation state that James O'Cull was the first circuit rider to preach at the Holmes cabin where the Tucker family worshipped. He was a converted

Catholic and had come from Uniontown. These accounts by word of mouth also claim that Wilson Lee organized the first Methodist Class at the Holmes cabin in 1785. Others say the honor goes to Thomas Jamison. Regardless of which is true, one thing is certain, these men had a tremendous influence on the lives of the early settlers. They were the most respected citizens in the community, and they were so important to the early pioneers that their names have been handed down to posterity as the answers to prayer, such was the need and longing of the people in the wilderness for someone to preach the Gospel.

METHODISM VS. PRESBYTERIANISM

As a matter of interest, it is worthy of note that one of the preachers who served the Tucker preaching point holds the honor of having participated in one of the three outstanding debates between the proponents of the Methodist and the Presbyterian faiths. The debates came about in somewhat the following manner:

The lack of education on the part of the Methodist Circuit Riders, together with certain Methodist ways of conducting services, brought about a controversy between the more established denominations and the new Methodist movement. As a result, Methodists came to be held in low esteem by many of the ministers of the older faiths. The Methodists and Presbyterians in particular were at odds over these issues. On one such occasion, Thomas Scott, then only twenty-one years of age, and a Circuit Rider on the Ohio Circuit of which Tucker was then a part, (1793) preached in the Court House at Washington, Pennsylvania, with the result that many in attendance became greatly interested in the Methodist movement. This gave rise to alarm in the mind of the Rev. James Welsh, the minister of the Washington Presbyterian Church. Rev. Welsh, a man of great learning, made announcement that on a set date, he would publicly expose the errors of Methodism. The young Methodist Circuit Rider, Thomas Scott, published a statement that he would be there to defend his belief. An account of the debate was described later by James Quinn, who was present at the time. The following quotation from Quinn perhaps best describes the results.

"The day came, and not the courthouse, but the courtyard was filled with people, many of whom had come from afar. Mr. Welsh exerted all his natural, moral and literary ability, in a most desperate effort to abolish Methodism, and tear it up, root and branch. Then came the youthful Scott, with his gospel sling and smooth stones. He used soft words, but there were hard arguments in the logic, and they sank deeply into the understanding of the hearers. Time has told well of the day's work, and no doubt eternity will tell more."

The influence of the three chief debates, of which this is one, was felt throughout the region for more than a generation, and greatly aided in establishing Methodism for all time. Tucker Church may be justly proud to have been served at the time of this debate by its undisputed winner, Thomas Scott. Scott later became a lawyer and eventually the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in the state of Ohio.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Tucker Church has had a number of special events in its history which have been worthy of celebration. One was in the year 1925, and was called the "celebration of the beginning of the second century." Having been built in 1824, the edifice was one hundred years old the previous year. According to a transcript from the "Official Record Book," it was held "on the first and second days of August, 1925."

The celebration opened by the "gathering of six or seven hundred people from about twenty different states of the Union on the morning of the first, and after an extensive lunch served to all, the lunch including ice cream and chicken as well as the other foodstuffs that accompany a picnic, a service of greetings and messages progressed for over two hours.

"Those who spoke were R. C. Lawrence, Rev. Dr. J. V. Wright, L. Z. Robins, Rev. Lester, of Florence, Rev. Hamilton, of Eldersville, Rev. Leeland, of Pittsburgh, Rev. Graham, who presented the history of the church, and Rev. Hays, of Burgettstown. Following the service, at which several selections by R. C. Lawrence were given, the Fourth Quarterly

Conference of the charge, including Pleasant Valley and Colliers, was held, Dr. Wright presiding.

"On Sunday morning, Rev. Dr. J. D. Wright conducted a general communion service and preached an inspiring sermon on "Hills." In the evening, Dr. Leeland preached a helpful sermon, concluding with a consecration, which was a fitting close to the celebration."

The account further stated that almost $180 was received, which greatly helped in clearing off a debt of a couple years' standing. Pastor of Tucker at that time was Rev. William Gilbert Nowell.

The next record of a celebration was on August 15, 1949. Members of the Tucker clan gathered for a reunion, which marked the 125th anniversary of the church building. Descendants of the family, whose settlement pre-dates the Revolutionary War, held both morning and afternoon services at the historic old meetinghouse. Rev. William Shaffer, pastor of the Tucker and Midway churches, conducted the services.

Although family reunions were held annually for a number of years, special anniversaries and dedication services are worthy of note. No doubt a special service was held each time a new improvement was added to the old stone church. Accurate records on such events have not been kept. It is known that a man by the name of John Hays cut the windows to twice their original size. At that time, also, new pews were placed in the church, the pulpit was remodeled, and the old-time heating stoves were replaced by a furnace.

Other steps in keeping up with the times were the introduction of the kerosene lamps, and later, the installation of electricity. These improvements made the days of the individual tallow candles quite antiquated indeed.

Painting and plastering of the interior was done at necessary intervals. At one time, prior to 1938, the man who refinished the interior offered the sum of $4000 for the building. He had intended to tear it down and clean up the debris, because he wanted the particular type stone used in the walls. But the membership stood firm in keeping the building intact. This repudiated the quote made in 1861 by the Rev. Thomas M. Hudson, "It is a large and durable stone structure,

and at the time of its erection, was considered a superior building. In all its internal arrangements, however, it partook largely of the imperfection and discomfort of the church architecture of that day, and unfortunately, it can never be improved."

He also stated, "Its location is good, being in the midst of a densely populated neighborhood. All the interests of the Church demand that this old edifice give way to a more modern and comfortable church building."

Still another improvement, of which Rev. Hudson probably never dreamed, was the addition of a basement. On April 11, 1954, Dr. F. O. Christopher, District Superintendent, was the guest speaker when the church was re-dedicated, with the new basement being the latest project to be completed at that time.

As this material goes to press, more improvements are under way. A louvered steeple, designed by Frank Dimmack, and built in three sections by John Selmon, has been raised to the top of the newly constructed stone vestibule. A historic old bell, owned for many years by Grover Fulton, and donated by him, has added a touch of nostalgia, as at last, the plain rectangular building with the simple gable roof, has taken on the true appearance of the little country church that it is.

New doors have been added; a new carpet has been laid up the center aisle and on the platform; and attractive drapes have been hung at the plain glass windows. With a new coat of beige paint on the walls, and a fresh coat of varnish on the pews, the interior has been brightened considerably. The ends and the backs of the pews were painted white, giving the seats a "New England" touch.

Stone for the vestibule was donated by William Phillips, of Weirton Heights. It was cut to match the old stone finish on the church proper, and is an attractive addition to the building. It was laid by Harry Krausslach, stone mason, who also gave Tucker church its first donation toward the remodeling project.

Those who gave freely of their time to help in the recent remodeling process were Ernest Lewis, Victor Wright, Sam Reed, Mr. Wright's two sons, Victor and Larry, John Selmon and Frank Dimmack. The ladies who did the painting were Mrs. Ernest

(Arlene) Lewis, Mrs. B. L. (Mildred) Boocks, and Miss June Campbell.

Pastor at the present time is the Rev. Glenn A. Dague, of Washington. Dr. James A. Gaiser is scheduled to be the principal speaker at the Dedication Services, for which this history is printed, and which will be held on Sunday afternoon, October 3, 1965. Dr. Gaiser is Superintendent of the Washington District of the Western Pennsylvania Conference of the Methodist Church. Mrs. John Moore is Sunday School Superintendent and youth director.

It is of course impossible to list the names of all those persons who have helped to keep the doors of Tucker Church open for worship through the years; however, in the minds of those living today, certain names remain outstanding. Some of these have given of their talents through teaching or singing. Some have gone out into the world to bring the wandering back to the fold. Others have given or bequeathed money for the preservation or improvement of the church property. All have given of themselves.

John Hanlin served as steward and class leader for many years in the Tucker Church, and is known to have greatly aided the Methodist movement in the area. Part of his duties was to preach to the congregation at various intervals, which he did for a number of years. As class leader, he led the flock as a supplement to the field covered by the located minister.

Lester McCreight installed the electricity in the church at his own expense. Laura Hanlin left a legacy of $8700, the interest from which has helped support the church since she passed to her reward. Both were instrumental in keeping the church alive over a period of more than twenty years.

Laura Ramsey bequeathed $2000 for the erection of a vestibule. George W. Pogue and Robert Criswell set up the cemetery board for the new Chestnut Ridge Cemetery and had it chartered. Each was influential in the work of the church over many years. Others who kept the fires burning when attendance was poor and finances scarce were Mr. and Mrs. R. P. Gardner and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Perkins.

The list is not exhaustive, for the writers are well aware that the names of many persons instrumental in keeping the light of the Gospel alive at

Tucker have been lost in the dust of obscurity. Concerning those whose contributions are not herein acknowledged, it can be said with certainty that there is One with whom nothing is ever forgotten - One who remembers the cup of cold water given to the stranger, the box of ointment, and the widow's mite. He who has numbered the very hairs on the heads of each of His children whom He has created since the beginning of time, will not fail to reward those who remained loyal to His name. Only eternity can make the list complete.

This is a picture of the Tucker Methodist Church as it stood many years ago, and is in the possession of Miss Alice G. Melvin, a descendant of the Hanlin family, one of the pioneer families who settled here with the Tuckers. In her own brief "History of the Tucker Church," written many years ago, she stated, "Two giant oak trees, centuries old, stood until recently, within the yard before the church, in almost perfect symmetry, reminding one of the pillars that Solomon "reared up before the Temple, one on the right hand, the other on the left, and called the name of that on the right hand, Jachin, and the name of that on the left, Boaz."

SIDELIGHTS

Many sidelights to the history of the Tucker family and the church can be written, that are of the human interest variety. With no foundation other than the memories of those who remain, who are of advanced years, and who have had the Tucker family and church history uppermost in their minds for a lifetime, specific dates and accounts may not be strictly accurate. But if not recorded now, they will be lost for all time.

Miss Alice Melvin, of Youngstown, Ohio, described many features of the church in a poem which she composed in 1942. She referred to the "wheezy foot-tread organ," the "head elder's cuspidor," the "mourners' bench," the "hitching rack" outside the fence, and the "mud-bed roads" over which came the "horse-drawn rigs." She told of the days when each member brought his tallow candle to the "Protracted Meetings" and of the "lengthy and emphatic" prayers. She also spoke of the "chestnut burrs which the frost had dried and browned."

Since one of the Tucker babies, Jonathan, was born in Vance's Fort, after the family's all-night journey there on foot to escape the warring Indians, it is believed that a few words should be mentioned concerning the Fort.

Vance's Fort was a point of safety from the Indians, and was located one mile north of the village of Cross Creek. It was here that the first Gospel sermon was preached, in what later became Smith Township. It was on September 14, 1778, and the Rev. James Powers was the minister. The sermon was delivered outside the Fort, under an oak tree. After the sermon, twenty-one children were baptized, including the oldest son of Rev. Thomas Marques, who was later to become the second located pastor of the Cross Creek Presbyterian Chruch. He was an ardent preacher, leading many revivals in the area. He was a natural orator, and because of the musical tones of his voice, he was commonly called "Silver-tongued Marques."

Before Rev. Marques preached, a call was sent out to Joseph Smith, of York County, in the Fall of 1799. Rev. Smith had visited at Vance's Fort during the previous Spring, and had preached several sermons.

Among those who signed the call for Joseph Smith, who was to become the first located preacher in the Cross Creek Presbyterian Church, was John Tucker, the Quaker, who was to become a leader of Methodism in the area. This fact reveals that the pioneers were of a pious nature, with a burning desire to hear the Word of God from a devout and called man, one who could baptize their children, and to whom they could look for spiritual guidance.

One of Mrs. Butler's memories concerning services at Tucker Church, takes her back to the age of eight. It seems that an organist was not always present to play the old foot-tread instrument at the services. Rev. Hough, pastor at that time, brought with him a sort of pitch pipe, on which he sounded the opening note of the hymns. The congregation then proceeded to sing without music.

Another story passed down to Mrs. Butler pertained to the days when John Tucker made the two-day journey to the mill to have wheat ground into flour. While he was gone, Henrietta took her children to a large hollow log not far from the cabin, and it was there that they spent the night, comparatively safe from the Indians.

The story is told of David J. Tucker, son of Jonathan II, who left home at an early age "because his father didn't like the way he worked."(He had been helping to chop wood.) His mother was "busy canning cherries" when he announced to her that he was "going west." He "struck out" for Kansas, became a Deputy Sheriff in Arizona, and eventually found his way to Australia.

Mrs. Butler remembers hearing the story of the day when George Washington stopped at the Tucker farm to "borrow a horse," after his own had "fagged out." It seems that George Washington often passed through the Hanover Township area, and was aware of the Tucker home, where the doors were always open to the traveler.

MRS. SARAH TUCKER BUTLER

Mrs. Sarah J. Tucker Butler, of Eldersville, was born in Hanover Township, in the Tucker area, on June 30, 1876. She is a great, great granddaughter of John Tucker, who made his way with his little family across the mountains, and braved the dangers and hardships of pioneer life in the wilderness. She clearly recalls, at the age of 89 years, many stories handed down to her from past generations. A number of events she remembers from her own experience, having always been greatly interested in the Tucker family's activities and traditions.

Her great grandfather was Jonathan Tucker, who was born in Vance's Fort, near Cross Creek, during an Indian raid, when the family was forced to flee their cabin for safety. Her grandfather was Martin Tucker, son of Jonathan. She was six years of age when her grandfather died, but remembers distinctly of his flocks of 800 to 1000 sheep, and of the processes used in preparing the wool for market. Her father was Oliver Tucker, son of Martin.

Mrs. Butler was a teacher in the Smith and Jefferson Township schools for a number of years. She and her husband, the late Frank Butler, raised three sons, Marion, John and George. She now has three grandchildren and a great grandson, David Butler.

SHURLEY T. BRUCE

Shurley T. Bruce, of Burgettstown, is a great great grandson of John Tucker, for whom the Tucker Methodist Church was named. His great grandfather was Jonathan Tucker, who was born in Vance's Fort.

Shurley Bruce was born in Florence. He is a retired mail carrier, having walked the streets of Burgettstown twice a day for 37 years, delivering mail from the Burgettstown Post Office. He retired in 1955.

He has always been considered the family historian, because of his interest in the historical events of both his family and the neighborhood where he has spent his entire life. He has done literary work for Carnegie Institute, including the Library and the Museum.

He has taken pride and pleasure in retaining relics of the past, such as the original will of his great great grandfather, the deed which set aside the acre of ground for the Tucker Church, and various newspaper clippings of historical significance. He is a member of the church founded by his ancestors, and remembers distinctly the pew in which he sat with his grandmother, Mrs. Elizabeth Tucker.

Mr. Bruce is fond of traveling, and has been to Europe a number of times. On his latest trip a few weeks ago, he visited the house in Lincolnshire, England, where John Wesley, founder of Methodism, was born.

THE OLD CEMETERY

The old cemetery is located to the left of the church. Its graves contain the dust of many of the forefathers of the area. The remains of venerable old servants of the Gospel found a resting place in the quiet acre of God for a number of years before the church building was erected.

The storms of time have erased the identities of many whose names were carved on the sandstone slab markers. The years have taken their toll, and never again will it be known whose dust lies beneath the sod.

Mullein, Queen Anne's Lace and blackberry vines abound, choking out the very memory of those gone before.

Among the plain slabs near to the church is one marked John Tucker. Inscribed on it are the words, "Aged 100 years." According to most historical accounts, his death is listed as April 6, 1830, not 1831, as is stated on the tombstone.

His beloved wife, Henrietta, lies beside him "Aged 96 years, Died November 29, 1833." A small initialed footstone marks the foot of each grave. Others of the family are laid to rest nearby.

One marker not far away draws the observer's attention. Near the top is an open arch, in which is cradled, carved in stone, a tiny boy and a girl lying side be side. This unique marker is mute evidence of a deep tragedy which struck the third generation of the Tucker family. For buried beneath this stone is a double casket, containing two small bodies, those of Margaret and Wesley Tucker, who died less than twenty-four hours apart, of Scarlet Fever. They were the children of Jonathan Tucker II and his wife, Elizabeth Johnston Tucker.

Several more children were subsequently born to the couple, two of whom they named Margaret and Wesley, thus retaining the custom of naming later children for those who had passed away. This Margaret Tucker became the mother of Shurley Bruce, of Burgettstown.

As the decades passed, the little cemetery plot became filled. In the year 1903, an organization was formed to buy land for another burial ground. This organization was chartered a short time later, and

is known as the Chestnut Ridge Cemetery Association. The plot of ground is the Chestnut Ridge Cemetery, and is located directly across the road from the old Tucker Church.

Its first directors were R.W.Crisswell, C.E.Fulton, George Jackson, F.B. Jackson, A.L.McConnell, R.C.Tucker, H.B.McCarrell, H. Tucker, H.M.Hanlin, C.S.Ewing and George W. Pogue.

John Crisswell, a young man who died in his early twenties, was the first one buried in the new plot. At the time, he was the Sunday School Superintendent at Tucker Church.

David S. Tucker, one of the descendants of the pioneer family, was the first caretaker of Chestnut Ridge.

MINISTERS

The number of dedicated men who have devoted a portion of their lives to preaching the Gospel at the little church by the side of the road is quite lengthy. The list is possibly not complete, as records are not absolutely accurate for the entire time that Tucker church has withstood the storms of life. One fact is definitely known - Tucker has never had its doors closed in the near century and a half of its existence. Even before the church was built, worship was held regularly for more than fifty years in homes of men such as John Tucker, his son, Jonathan, and in the Holmes, Potts, Jackson and possibly other homes of the original pioneers of the area. These figures combined proclaim nearly two hundred years of worship to God.

Though many of these names, especially those in the early history of the church, will not have any significance to us today, at one time each man was a part of someone's family. Each one no doubt has descendants somewhere, who can be proud of the fact that they had a man of God in their midst, who was not afraid to go out into the world to "preach the Gospel." The latter names, also, will take their places in history. Those of us today, in 1965, who have been fortunate enough to have any one of them as a friend and minister, will place them in a special corner in our book of memory.

Those known to have preached before 1800 were:

Wilson Lee
John Fidler
Peter Moriarty
Robert Ayres
John Smith
Stephen Deakins
Charles Conaway
George Callauhan
Richard Pearson
John Todd
John Simmons
Jacob Lurton
Daniel Fidler
William McLenahan
Thomas Haymond
Isaac Lunsford
Lasley Matthews
Daniel Hitt
Thomas Scott
Robert Bonham
Samuel Hitt
Andrew Nicholls
John Seward
Shadrach Johnson
Jonathan Bateman
Nathaniel B. Mills
Jacob Colbert
Soloman Harris
Jesse Stoneman

Between 1800 and the erection of the building, 1824:

Joseph Rowen
John Cullison
Benjamin Essex
Joseph Hall
Joseph Chieuvront
George Askin
Jesse Stoneman
Lasley Matthews
Thomas Doughaday
Joseph A. Shackleford
David Stevens
James Watts
William Knox
Adam Burge
Rezin Hammond
William Page
Thomas Church
William Lambden
John West
Jacob Young
Joshua Monroe
Jacob Dowell
James M. Hanson
Francis A. Monjar
James Reiley
William Shanks
John Bear
James Francis
John White
Thornton Fleming
Amos Barnes
Joseph Carper
Thomas Beaks
Richard Armstrong
William Brandebarry
French H. Evans
George Brown
Thomas Jamison
John Connelly
James Moore

From the erection of the building to 1900:

A. McElroy
G. W. Robison
T. Beeks
G. S. Holmes
J. West
A. Coleman
D. C. Merryman
R. C. Hatton
G. McCaskey
H. Gilmore
J. H. McMechen
J. Spencer
R. Armstrong
W. Smith
W. Knox
W. C. Henderson
J. N. McAbee
J. Knox
S. Lauck
J. Boyle
J. P. Kent
J. Dallas
H. Bradshaw
E. P. Jacob
E. Hays
W. P. Blackburn
C. H. Jackson
B. F. Sawhill
J. Gibson
J. Monroe
J. Gregg
R. Jordon
G. Jones
G. A. Lowman
J. N. Dorsey
W. M. Worthington
D. Hess
George McKaskies
Hiram Gilmore
Wesley Smith
George L. Sisson
G. Foster
William Hanlin

L. J. Dales
G. B. Hudson
D. A. McCready
A. J. Rich
J. Borbidge
J. D. Turner
G. W. Dunlap
W. Long
J. Hollingshead
M. B. Pugh
J. L. Stiffy
J. W. Kessler
J. J. Hays
A. Baker
T. M. Hudson
J. A. Boyle
J. V. Yarnall
J. J. Jones
J. W. Weaver
C. McCaslin
J. A. Williams
W. Gamble
G. A. Sheets
M. M. Sweeney
E. R. Jones
E. M. Taylor
M. S. Kendig
D. K. Stevenson
J. W. Hough
E. B. Griffin
G. B. Hudson
M. G. Potter
J. W. Garland
Alfred Turner
J. W. Cary
W. G. Barron
E. L. Nicholson
Charles Thorn
John P. Kent
J. Wright
S. H. Nesbit
A. W. Galbreath

From 1900 to the present, 1965:

P. M. Phillips
W. C. Strohmeyer
J. Fornear
E. V. Shotwell
J. A. Hamilton
G. E. Letchworth
W. L. Crawford
J. F. Yeckel
C. E. Will
E. F. Field
J. F. Pry
R. C. Lawrence
Alden Blosser
P. K. Corley
Wm Gilbert Nowell
C. B. Pugh
Fredrick Spillman
Arthur Sellers
Lawrence Whitfield
Roy A. Beggs
Charles Young
F. P. Boyce
W. A. Linaberger
Wm. Gladden
James E. Lutz
H. P. Smith
W. E. Shaffer
H. W. Jennings, Jr.
Francis Connor
Robert P. Veydt
Ralph Ryan
Glenn A. Dague

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No history is ever complete. Many written records and much valuable data have no doubt been lost for all time. Some happenings of interest have never been recorded and thus are gone forever. This account of the rise of the Tucker Methodist Church is merely an attempt to bring together the bits of information concerning it which have been available to the writers, in such a manner as to give to the reader a picture of the dauntless individuals who built and sustained the church through the years. It does not in any wise profess to be a complete and totally accurate record; however, it is believed to be as nearly complete as existing information may allow. Except where incidents have been listed as word-of-mouth accounts, the bulk of the material contained herein is based on documentary fact and can be substantiated as such.

The writers have drawn heavily on the extensive research work into the history of Methodism in Western Pennsylvania by Dr. Raymond Bell, Professor of Physics, Washington and Jefferson College, Washington, Pennsylvania, and Dr. W. G. Smeltzer, Historian for the Pittsburgh Conference of the Methodist Church. Dr. Smeltzer's book, "Methodism on the Headwaters of the Ohio,"

has been an invaluable source of information and has provided the over-all view of Methodism in the area which was necessary as a background upon which to build the local history of the Tucker Church. It is highly recommended to the reader who is interested in delving more deeply into the background of Tucker Methodism, and to any persons concerned with the organization of the Methodist Church. The writers are deeply indebted to these men for their cooperation and encouragement, as well as for their permission to use these valuable researches.

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It is to be hoped that readers of this volume whose names are on the present membership roll of the Tucker Methodist Church, will be aware that they are currently writing the next chapter, and will therefore strive to do so with the humility, devotion, and industry which prompted their forebears to lay so firm a foundation. May they be constantly mindful of the dreams, the hard labor, and the sacrifice which went into the building and maintaining of the "little stone church by the side of the road," and thus be ever conscious of the rich heritage which is theirs.