

HISTORY

— OF THE —

FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

— OF THE —

CITY OF LANCASTER, PA.,

— FROM —

1807 to 1893.

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF EARLIER EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH
METHODISM IN LANCASTER.

— ALSO AN —

APPENDIX

CONTAINING A SKETCH OF ST. PAUL'S M. E. CHURCH, BY THE
PASTOR, AND "CONESTOGA'S" NOTES ON THE
CONFERENCE OF 1855.

— BY —

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APPENDIX.

ST. PAUL'S METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

C. LEE GAUL, A. M.

IN a history of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of the city of Lancaster, it is appropriate that there should be included a brief recital of the principal events in the life of the church that sustains to her the relation of a daughter, and that for more than forty years has sought to maintain, in unity with the parent church, the cause of Christ, teaching the truths of his kingdom as understood by the people called Methodists. Taking advantage of the kindly offered opportunity to preserve in durable form what must be gathered while the memory of a few was available, much valuable record being lost, the following sketch has been prepared to constitute a part of this appendix.

The appointment of Jacob Dickerson to the Second Church, Lancaster, in the spring of 1851, following, as it did, the action of the preceding Fourth Quarterly Conference of the First Church, related in the main portion of this volume, may be regarded as the beginning of the independent church life of what has since become known as the Saint Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, Lancaster, Pa.

During his two years pastorate the winsomeness of the preached Word attracted many into the fellowship of the society, and at its close the members and probationers, as found upon the record of the three classes, led by the minister, John Beam and David Cloud, numbered eighty-eight. J. H. Alday was pastor of the little flock the succeeding year. He was followed by G. W. Brindle, who led in negotiations with the trustees of the First Church for the control of the German Street Chapel. This chapel was not adequate to the needs of the Second Church, and was sold in 1855 to the Reformed Mennonite congregation.

The following transcript from the records of the First Church sets forth the transaction. Benj. F. Shenk, president of the trustees, reporting to a meeting held June, 1855, says: "Brethren I would report that * * * I executed and delivered a deed for the property in German street, and received \$1,250, the purchase money, \$800 of which was paid for a lot on South Queen street for the use of the congregation of the Second M. E. Church, and the balance, \$450, was paid to the treasury of the church," meaning doubtless the First Church, as the minutes of the Board show its retention to cancel certain obligations against the German street property.

The pastor of the following year, James L. Kilgore, and David Cloud and Thomas Holt were at the First Quarterly Conference held on May 26th, 1855, appointed a special committee to procure a properly executed deed for the new church site.

That the society during the summer of this year was houseless appears from the following abstract from the "minute book of the Second Wesleyan Sabbath-school," relating the business of a meeting held July 7th, 1855. "On motion a committee was appointed to procure a place to meet, when Bros. Cloud, Hershey and Johnson were appointed." The committee's success is evident for the next "stated meeting * * * was held in Mr. Krotel's school-room on Duke street." Mr. Krotel was pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church.

In their precipitated extremity the people resorted to the erection of a temporary frame building, on the rear of the lot, now traditionally known as "The Plank Church." Of this it is related that on a Sabbath morning, while Presiding Elder William Cooper was preaching, a portion of the roof was blown off by the wind. It appears, however, that during the latter half of this year the foundation for a more permanent structure fronting on South Queen street was laid, and subscription lists were opened. Henry H. Bodine supplied the charge the last quarter of this conference year.

Christian Walters was appointed in the spring of 1856, and he, with the trustees, after abandoning the erection of a frame building for which a contract had been signed, wisely decided on building the present brick church, the corner stone of which was laid about the 1st of August by D. W. Bartine, pastor of

the First M. E. Church; J. W. Mecaskey, then pastor at Columbia, preaching to the people assembled beneath a tent. From an extract made by A. I. Collom, from *The Daily Evening Express*, of Lancaster, we learn that on Sabbath, December 14th, the "basement" was formally opened for worship; J. D. Curtis, of Harrisburg, preaching morning and evening, and D. W. Bartine delivering an eloquent address in the afternoon. The congregation assembled in this lecture room during the pastorates of Joseph Smith and Levi B. Hughes, who each served a year. The Church was chartered under the name of St. Paul's, in 1857. Great uneasiness was caused by sheriff's threats during the year 1858, but in September all the creditors were called together, better terms were made, and time gained together funds. During this year a mission Sabbath-school was started at what is known as "the old factory," but after a number of years of labor it was abandoned.

So much faith in God and in themselves had been summoned that with the appointment of J. L. Heysinger, in 1860, came the determination by the members of the society to finish the main audience room, and during this conference year over thirteen hundred dollars were raised for that purpose. The church was dedicated in December by Bishop E. S. Janes, assisted by T. A. Fornley.

George Heacock succeeded as pastor in 1861, and he and Thomas Kirkpatrick, who was appointed in

the spring of 1862, were greatly distressed by the financial burdens of the church.

John F. Crouch came in 1864 as the next shepherd of the flock, to which many additions were made during his ministry, and about two thousand five hundred dollars raised on the debt. The revival spirit continued during the ministry of George T. Hurlock, who came 1867, and the church had additional ground for rejoicing in gaining entire freedom from debt. A Young Men's Christian Association was fostered during these two pastorates.

In 1869 E. T. Kenney became pastor, and continued as such for a part of the following conference year, 1870, when the pulpit was supplied by J. Richards Boyle. During the latter year the architecture of the church was much improved by raising the front wall and surmounting it with a neat cornice. Other repairs were made. The people must have evinced a special desire to linger in the courts of Zion, for the trustees passed a repressive order, that "The services be closed when the pastor pronounces the benediction."

Large crowds waited upon the ministry of John C. Gregg. Twenty-two hundred dollars were made by a fair. The lecture room was resented and a parsonage brought on Conestoga street during his term of service.

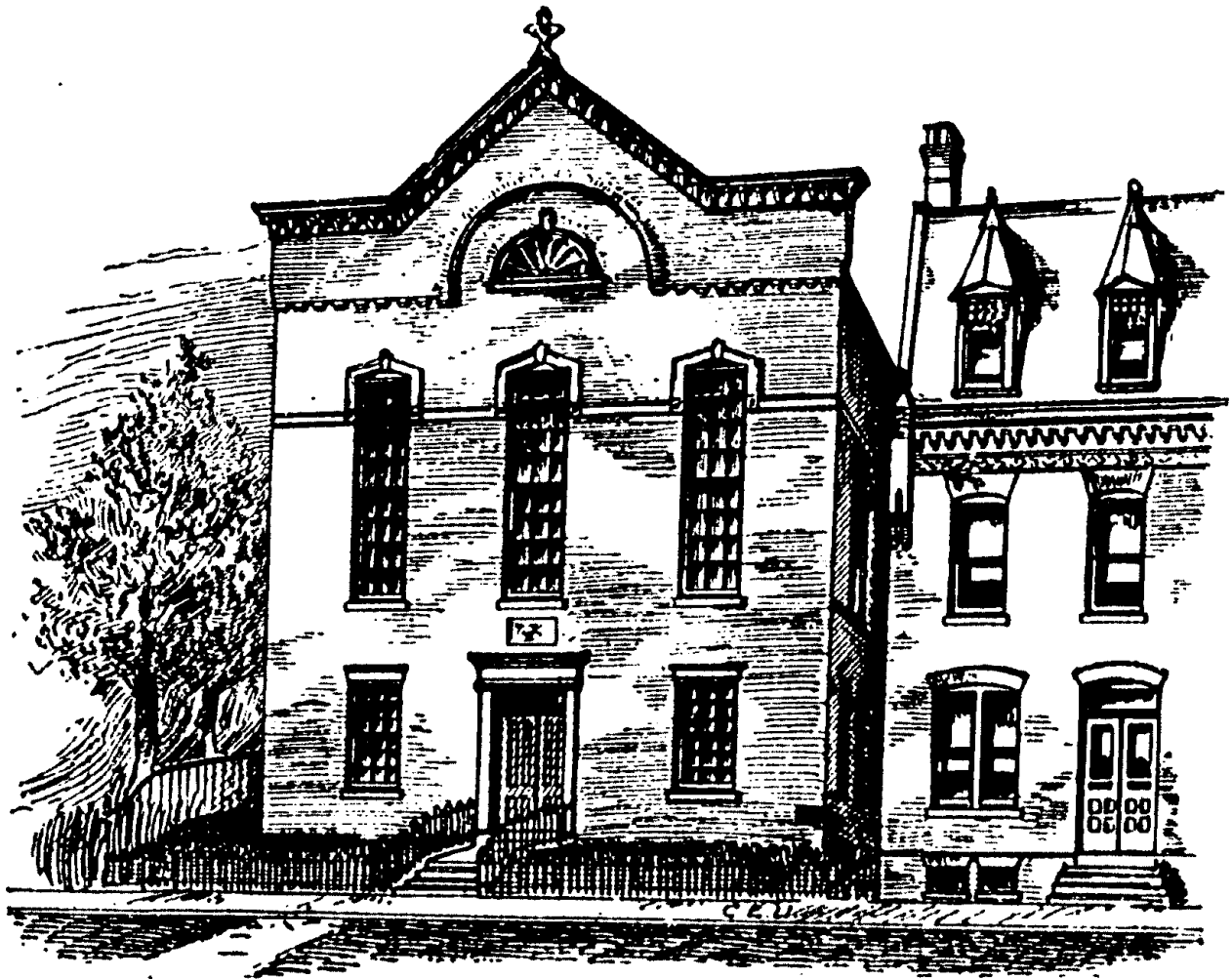
Henry R. Calloway and John Stringer each preached the precious Gospel of Christ for two years, and not without fruit.

During the year Thomas M. Jackson served the church the renting of the pews was seriously debated.

Early in 1880 Jerome Lindemuth being pastor, it was thought expedient to change the seating of the lecture room, and the present convenient chairs were substituted. On the pastor's return for the second year plans had been matured and subscriptions taken to renovate the interior of the church, changing the style of the ceiling, altering the gallery and opening the class rooms into the lecture room. These improvements cost \$2200. After serving about six weeks of a third year J. Lindemuth was appointed to the pulpit of Asbury, Philadelphia, and Absalom I. Collom was sent to St. Paul's.

The thrifty and increasing Sabbath-school necessitating greater accommodation during this administration, a plan was presented and executed, furnishing an infant room and house for the sexton in the form of a north wing in the rear of the main building. This addition cost about \$1200.

The Conference of 1884 appointed George Gaul pastor, who found a floating debt of about \$1100. This the Ladies Aid Society, organized in 1876, was successful in entirely liquidating, and during this two year pastorate a goodly number were added to the church. A large revival characterized the ministry of Charles Roads, appointed to the charge in 1886. This interesting meeting originated in the early Sabbath evening prayer-meeting, and attracted



ST. PAUL'S CHURCH AND PARSONAGE.

such crowds that services were held in both main and lecture rooms at the same hour. Important improvements were made. The front plot of the church was neatly fenced, the entire exterior of the building repainted, and the organ moved from the gallery to the side of the pulpit.

The parsonage on Conestoga street was sold for \$1,850; the lot adjoining the church property on the south side was purchased and the present comfortable parsonage was built, which, together with the site, cost about \$3,000.

Elwood C. Yerkes, appointed pastor in 1889, was the first to occupy the new parsonage, and his preaching of the word of life greatly edified the church in the faith of Jesus Christ.

Bishop Fowler appointed the writer of this sketch to St. Paul's at the Conference of 1891. During the summer of that year a project was formed for cancelling the debt on the church property, incurred by building the sexton's house and the parsonage, and amounting to twenty-nine hundred dollars, by receiving subscriptions payable in four semi-yearly instalments. This plan included the observance of the fortieth anniversary of the Church, concluding, after a week's exercises, on Sabbath, November the 1st, at which time the balance of subscriptions necessary to cover the entire indebtedness was received; and there is every prospect of its complete liquidation this coming spring.

During the early part of the past calendar year it became evident by the large attendance of the Sab-

bath-school, which frequently has had three hundred and forty or fifty present, that changes must be made, either in the division of the school, causing part to assemble in the audience room, which was deemed a dangerous experiment, or by increasing the seating capacity of the lecture room. The latter was possible by building an annex in the form of a rear south wing to the main building. The trustees of the church gave consent to the requested privilege of the Sunday-school to build the first story of such annex to be used as an infant room, and to the Epworth League, organized in the spring of that year, to build thereon a second story and thus provide itself a suitable reading room. This annex was completed, and with furnishing cost over five hundred and fifty dollars, of which amount but two hundred and fifty remains unpaid, and was dedicated to its special service on Sabbath, June 5th, 1892, by Presiding Elder J. H. Hargis, who preached in the morning. The sermon of the evening was preached by Prof. G. W. Hull, Ph. D., of Millersville State Normal Scholl.

The people of St. Paul's hold tenaciously to the spirit of primitive Methodism; they sing heartily in the congregation, love the class-meeting and work and pray for conversions. The church has enjoyed continuous showers of blessings during the past year, forty persons having been converted in the regular means of grace and joining the church on probation. The church is at this writing favored with special revival interest.

PASTORS OF ST. PAUL'S.

- 1851-3 Jacob Dickerson.
1853-4 J. H. Alday.
1854-5 Geo. W. Brindle.
1855 Jas. L. Kilgore.
1855-6 Henry H. Bodine.
1856-8 Christian Walters.
1858-9 Joseph Smith.
1859-60 Levi B. Hughes.
1860-1 J. L. Heysinger.
1861-2 George Heacock.
1862-4 Thos. Kirkpatrick.
1864-7 John F. Crouch.
1867-9 George T. Hurlock.
1869-70 Edward T. Kenney.
Three months in '71 J. Richards Boyle.
1871-3 John C. Gregg.
1874-6 Henry R. Calloway.
1876-8 John Stringer.
1878-9 Thos. M. Jackson.
1879-81 Jerome Lindemuth.
1881-4 Absalom I. Collom.
1884-6 George Gaul.
1886-9 Charles Roads.
1889-91 Elwood C. Yerkes.
1891-98 C. Leo Gaul.

SUPERINTENDENTS OF ST. PAUL'S
SABBATH-SCHOOL.

- 1848 Geo. M. Clawges.
1849-50 James Geidner.
1850-51 Henry Stoek.
1851-2 William Murray.
1852-3 Jacob Dickerson.
1853 J. H. Alday.
1853-4 Benjamin Wilson.
1854 Henry Shubert.
1854 George Miller.
1854-5 Henry Kitch.
1855-6 Solomon Hershey.
1856-9 Henry Shubert.
1859-60 George Loman.
1860-62 John W. Boyes.
1862 William Johnson.
1862-3 Thos. Kirkpatrick.
1863-5 Isaac K. Ryan.
1865-6 George Loman.
1866-7 Israel F. Abele.
1867-8 George Loman.
1869-72 Israel F. Abele.
1872 Jos. B. Wisegarvor.
1872 Israel F. Abele.
1874-7 George W. Killian.

- 1878 Amos S. Urban.
1878 John R. McMichael.
1879-81 George W. Killian.
1882-3 Dr. B. F. W. Urban.
1884 J. L. Keller.
1885-93 George W. Killian.