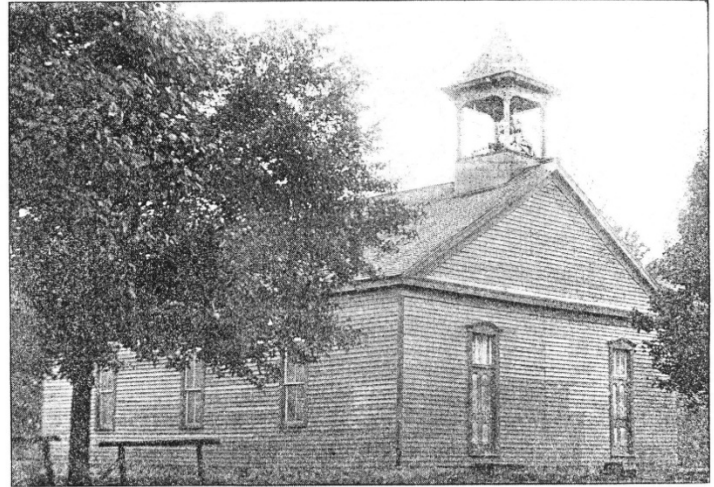


HISTORY OF FOUNTAIN CITY (OLD NEWPORT) WESLEYAN METH-ODIST CHURCH OF INDIANA

Today we look back over records of the past century, not with remorse or regret; but with praise and thanks to our Heavenly Father, who keepeth His hand on His own and cares for them, not for the day alone, but down through the years that have made a century for the Fountain City Church.

As another document relates, so we begin: "The Society of Wesleyan Methodists at Fountain City, Indiana, one of the foremost anti-slavery organizations in America, and one of the few that now dares to stand up for a pure gospel and cry out against the popular evils of the day occupies a church building of its own which was erected in 1843-44. The cost of the building was \$1200.00."



Fountain City, Indiana Wesleyan Methodist Church

On August 17, 1845 the church was dedicated by Rev. Orange Scott while the Miami Conference was in session. Orange Scott, first President of the Connection, says in his "Memoirs": "The conference in this place has excited an interest which I never witnessed before on any similar occasion. The house in which we met (a new Wesleyan Chapel, all paid for but fifty dollars) was filled with spectators most of the time. Though the population in this region is thin there were present at our love feast Sunday morning, not less than five hundred persons. And it was a love feast indeed."

The class itself, according to historical accounts, withdrew over the question of slavery from the local Methodist Episcopal Church, and Aaron Worth so aptly points out concerning Brother Harvey Davis, saying: "His union with the Wesleyan Methodist Church dates back to the origin of the Connection in 1843. He was the first one to take his seat on the bench as a charter member in the organization of the Wesleyan Church in Newport."

Early members, as recorded by Wayne

County History were: Josiah and Emily Bell, Francis and Miriam Root, Joseph and Hannah Curtis, Andrew Meredith, Harvey Davis and wife, Griffin Davis and wife, Samuel Horner and wife, William R. Williams, J. W. Johnson, Eli Morgan and wife, Elam Unthank, Jedediah Price and wife, Michael Keever and wife.

Up until 1891 Fountain City was one church of a circuit. The churches which have been on the circuit at various times are: Bethel, Mt. Vernon, Sparrow Creek, Economy, White Chapel, Milton, Beunavista and Carlos City. Then from 1925 to 1934 Clarks Chapel was on the circuit.

In the early days the means of travel was mostly in the wagon over bumpy or muddy roads, but in spite of this there were gracious outpourings of the Holy Spirit upon the services. Their songs were only in poem form, and they depended upon someone to line each song for them. The evening services were generally held about four o'clock, and when darkness fell (for sermons were long in those days) their lighting came from candles which they had brought or the sexton provided. Lamps were installed about 1860.

The monthly business meetings came in the afternoons also, and the desire to uphold Bible standards was as great then as now. For example some older residents of the community remember something of the "Queries." These "Queries" were questions asked at every monthly business meeting:

1. Are any of the members sick?
2. Are there any that need assistance from the church?
3. Are there any that have been guilty of immoral conduct?
4. Has any member heard any injurious report on any of the members, and if so, has that person upon whom the report is been informed of the same, that they may give satisfaction?
5. Are any of the members guilty of evil speaking?
6. Does any member without reasonable excuse neglect any of our meetings for worship or business, and if so has care been extended?
7. Does each member as far as can be ascertained attend to secret prayer?
8. Does each head of a family attend to family devotion?
9. Does the parents (or guardian) of children endeavor to bring the children up in the fear and admonition of the Lord by taking them to the house of God and to Sabbath School and instructing them in their religious duties?

The biggest problem then, as sometimes it is today, was the securing of a sexton or janitor. Many times it would eventually fall upon the faithful ones of the church.

The use of tobacco and connection with secret societies barred any person from membership in this church several years before they were Disciplinary Rules of the Connection.

At one time, a class leader and several other members were impeached because of non-attendance. The class leader was made to inform each member impeached of the action of the church. Upon reporting back to the church he maintained such a sweet spirit that he was immediately reinstated.

Common schools at one time were allowed to be held in the building, but in 1849 it was ruled out.

Fred Douglas, James Whitcomb Riley and other outstanding speakers have spoken here—and then—on some occasions liberty was taken and the organization ruled that only Wesleyan Methodist services be held in the building.

From about 1861 until 1888 the system of raising money was to allot a certain amount for each person, such as: Christopher Williams pledged fifteen cents on every dollar for twenty-seven years, and so other members gave varying amounts. It was the steward's duty to collect this and later for many years Sister Elizabeth Marine took care of it. Now the Tithing Band is in use, which was organized by Sister Anna Linville about 1936.

Of course there were times when God's special blessings were upon the church and then the enemy of all souls would attempt to destroy, but God has been so good. One of the hardest periods was immediately after the freeing of the slaves. Their primary objective had been won, but in obtaining this other issues had been gained, and God gave them grace to hold steady with many others of our denomination throughout the nation, and are still holding up the blood-stained banner of our Lord Jesus Christ and proclaiming His power to save from all sin and sanctify wholly.

In more recent years a home given by Elizabeth Ann Fisher was maintained by the church for its older members. The property was, with the death of Sister Maggie Dalbey, sold.

The exterior itself has been unchanged with the exception of making one double door in the middle out of the two single doors. There have been some adjustments and changes inside.

The membership at this time is twenty- five, with two local preachers.

When we take in the whole century at—let's say a glance—we realize there have been severe battles and there have been hard earned victories; and too, we realize that there have been hundreds of souls saved and sanctified because of this church, and that was its outstanding mission. Many local preachers have gone from here, and some of our outstanding leaders of this community and of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection, such as Rev. Daniel Worth, who at the time of his death was President of the Indiana Conference, and was a well- known anti-slavery leader throughout the nation. The inscription on his tombstone quite portrays his life, 'While in imitation of his Master, he went about doing good.'

Rev. Aaron Worth, an outstanding Temperance speaker through the state was used of God by his gift of oratory and his ability to point others to Christ.

The list of preachers were arranged up until 1918 by Aaron Worth. 1. Mifflin Har ker. 2. Josiah Bell. 3. Jesse Prior. 4. John A. Moormon. 5. Daniel Worth. 6. Francis Root. 7. Johathon Shaw. 8.

David Semons. 9. Jobes Peal. 10. Alfred Hiatt. 11. Macy Bunker. 12. Alexander Heywood. 13. John O'Neil. 14. Wilson Payne. 15. William Mullenix. 16. Emsley Brookshire. 17. Adam Hetzler. 18. L. M. Harris. 19. Aaron Worth. 20. L. C. Beck- ford. 21. J. W. Johnson. 22. J. T. Home. 23. Levi White. 24. J. F. Pressnall. 25. Brother Bilderback. 26. W. A. Godwin. 27. Elijah Coate. 28. J. L. Fall. 29. William Moon. 30. L. H. Carter. 31. Mattie Worth. 32. W. M. Bailey. 33. W. L. Fall. 34. J. C. Colwell. 35. Dollie Goble. 36. T. J. Pierce. 37. F. W. Crowell. 38. H. C. McCullum. 39. J. Coleman. 40. C. S. Smith. 41. E. E. Cory. 42. H. G. Brown. 43. Paul Billheimer. 44. Jacob Hester. 45. Carmen Decker. 46. W. W. McMichael. 47. T. M. Bodenhorn. 48. E. J. Hodgins. 49. Rev. and Mrs Lyman Gerberich. 50. Orville Hubortt. 51. Amos Putney. 52. Anna Linville. 53. Iva Norman. 54. Howard Crim.

Centennial Program

In commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the Fountain City Wesleyan Methodist Church, a special service was held Sunday afternoon, June 13, 1943. The meeting opened with a medley of old church hymns, played by the church pianist, after which the congregation sang, "A Charge to Keep" and "My Redeemer." The Crim children then sang a special song entitled, "Up-to-date Religion." Rev. Lyman Gerberich of Portland, a former pastor, led in prayer. A love offering was received for the speaker, Rev. E. J. Pitts, our Conference President. The pastor, Rev. Howard Crim, read Psalm 122 for the scripture lesson and commented upon it. The congregation was then favored with another special selection, "The Old Faith" by Mary McQuiston and Dorothy Fulks. Mrs. Crim presented a paper on the Centennial History of the Church. The pastor read a list of former pastors and gave a report on those now living.

Two articles having appeared in past Wesleyan Methodist periodicals were read, the first on the "Life of Daniel Worth" by Aaron Worth, given by Dorothy Fulks, and the second on the "Life of Aaron Worth" by W. W. McMichael, given by Robert Kenworthy.

After a congregational song Brother Pitts paid tribute to former leaders and preachers who had spoken from the pulpit. He then presented a very inspiring sermon from Psalm 65: 11, "Thou crownest the year (century) with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness."

After the closing hymn, "Faith of Our Fathers" was sung, Rev. E. J. Hodgins, pastor of Mt. Zion Wesleyan Church, closed the service with a dismissal prayer.

We, the church, appreciate the background that we have and desire to push forward for the work of our Master in this, the next century.—Leah Kenworthy, Reporter.